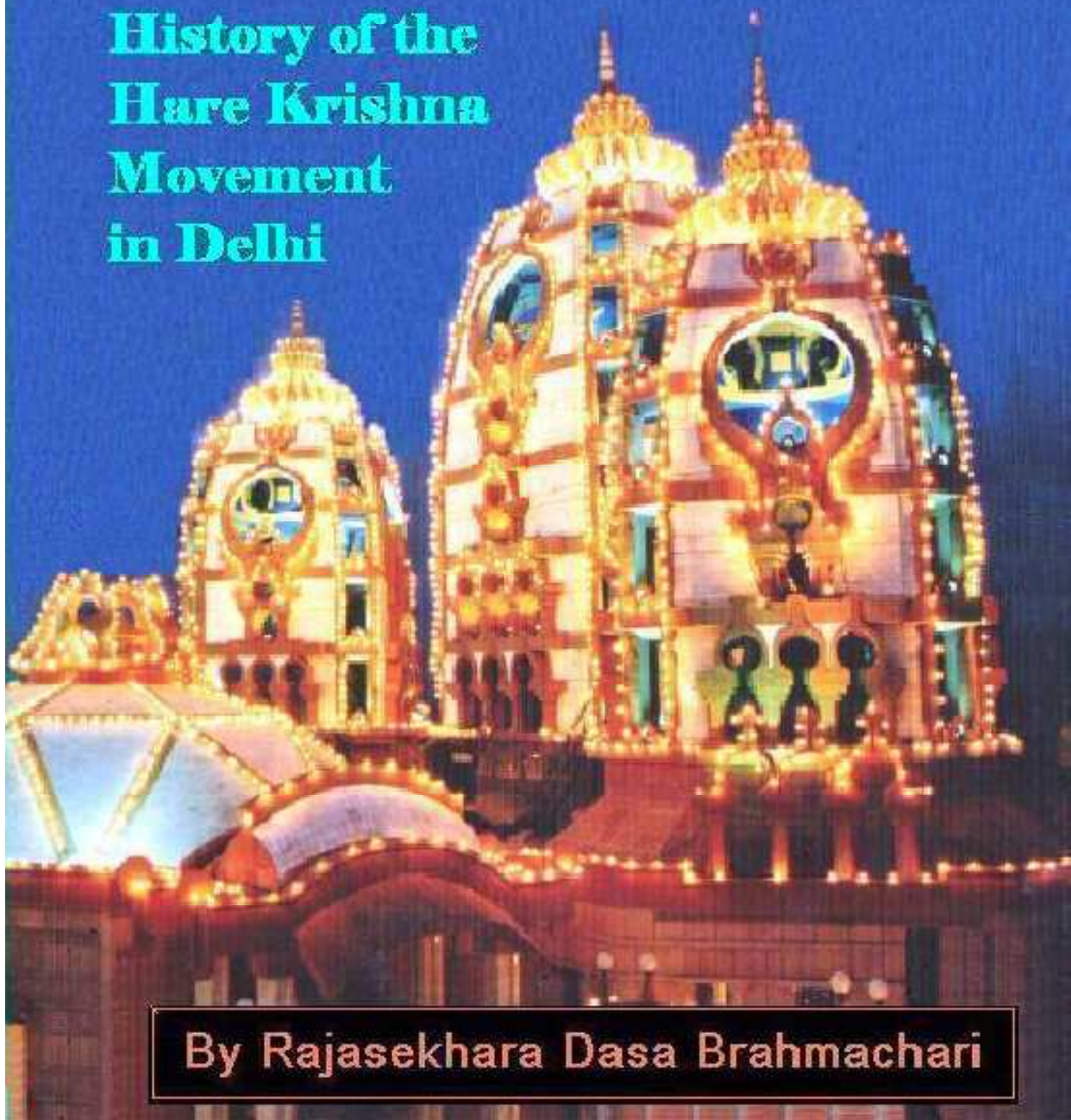


Glory of India

**History of the
Hare Krishna
Movement
in Delhi**



By Rajasekhara Dasa Brahmachari

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Vedanta Vision Publications

“If today the *Bhagavad Gita* is printed in millions of copies in scores of languages and distributed to all the nooks and corners of the world, the credit for this great sacred service goes chiefly to Iskcon.

For this one accomplishment alone, Indians should be eternally grateful to the devoted army of Swami Prabhupada’s followers.

The voyage of Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada to the United States in 1965 and the spectacular popularity his movement gained in a very short spell of twelve years must be regarded as one of the greatest spiritual events of the century.”

Atala Bihari Vajpayee
(Prime Minister of India)

The Glory of India

The History of the Hare Krishna Movement in Delhi

Researched and written by Rajasekhara Dasa Brahmachari

Assistant Editor Akhiladhara Dasa Brahmachari

The words found in *italics* in this book are Sanskrit, Hindi, or Bengali words.

Readers interested in the subject matter of this book are invited to correspond with the author at:

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We wish to acknowledge the following books that were instrumental in producing this new edition. The *Prabhupada-lilamrta* by Satsvarupa Dasa and the *Transcendental Diary* by Hari Sauri Dasa. These two transcendental literatures are essential reading matter for all sincere Vaishnavas and others who are interested to learn more about the life and times of His Divine Grace A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Front cover photo: The Radha-Parthasarathi Temple illuminated at night

Back cover photos: (anti-clockwise from top left)

Shrila Prabhupada presenting Shrimad Bhagavatam to Prime Minister Shastri

Shrila Prabhupada greeted by Government officials at the Delhi pandal program

American devotees performing kirtan at the Delhi pandal program

Shrila Prabhupada lecturing at a program in Chanakya Puri

Prime Minister Atala Bihari Vajpayee inaugurates the Glory of India project

Prime Minister Atala Bihari Vajpayee delivering his inaugural speech

A view of the Radha-Parthasarathi Temple

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This Book Is Dedicated To The Lotus Feet Of



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Founder-*acharya* International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*Namah om vishnu-padaya krishna-presthaya bhu-tale
srimate bhaktivedanta swamin iti namine
namas te saraswati deve gaura-vani-pracarine
nirvisesa-sunyavadi-pascaty-a-des-a-tarine*

We bow down with great reverence and adoration before your Divine Grace
Because you are so firmly situated in serving the lotus feet of Lord Krishna
You are the most worthy and trusted disciple of Saraswati Goswami
And without fear you preached aloud the glories of the Lord's holy names
The transcendental vibration of the Hare Krishna mantra was heard around the world
You came as an emissary on the order of your Gurudeva and Lord Gauranga
And most forcefully dispelled atheistic belief in impersonalism and voidism

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INTRODUCTION

This book about the exploits of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and the Hare Krishna movement in Delhi is based upon interviews and personal memoirs of Shrila Prabhupada's disciples, grand-disciples, Iskcon life-members, well-wishers, and others, who came into contact with Shrila Prabhupada during the period that he preached in the city of Delhi from the year 1955. The book is also based in part upon two previous publications written by Shrila Prabhupada's disciples - *Prabhupada-Lilamrta*, and *Transcendental Diary*.

This book materialized when I was requested by the Iskcon's temple authorities in Delhi to assist them with the opening of the 'Glory of India' project in 1998. Due to being an experienced writer and photographer and known for my various guide books on the holy land of Vrindavana, I was asked to photograph the opening ceremony of Iskcon's 'Glory of India' project by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Atala Bihari Vajpayee.

Because the opening of the 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' was an important milestone in the history of the Iskcon movement in India, I decided to write a detailed account of the movement's activities from the period when Shrila Prabhupada first arrived in the city of Delhi in 1955, up to the year 1998, when Shrila Prabhupada's transcendental desire to build a landmark Radha-Krishna temple in the national capital, was eventually fulfilled by his disciples - with the opening of Iskcon's 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre'.

This book has been specifically published for the pleasure of the pious citizens of Delhi, including the thousands of Iskcon devotees, life-members, friends, and well-wishers, who have recognised the great work undertaken by Shrila Prabhupada in spreading India's Vedic religion all over the world. This book provides an intimate insight into the life of Shrila Prabhupada, now acknowledged as India's greatest-ever preacher of love of God, and records the gradual development of the Iskcon movement from its humble beginnings in Delhi, to the world-wide spiritual organization that it has become today.

Rajasekhara Dasa Brahmachari

PROLOGUE

New Delhi, the year 1955 - a Vaishnava Saint Begins an Incredible Spiritual Journey

The story of Shrila Prabhupada's journey from relative obscurity to becoming the greatest preacher of Indian religion and philosophy in the history of the world, began when he arrived in Delhi in the year 1955, looking for the opportunity to fulfill the order given to him by his spiritual master, which was to preach the message of Lord Krishna in the English language, and to somehow or other spread that message of God's love to the people of the world.

Having renounced family life at the age of fifty eight in order to take up the life of a Vaishnava mendicant, as was the age-old practice amongst devout followers of India's Vedic religion, somehow or other, by the will of providence, Shrila Prabhupada found himself in New Delhi, the capital city of India. Although he was homeless, alone, and without financial support, nevertheless, he had resolute faith in the mercy of Lord Krishna, whom he had worshiped since childhood, as well as the words of his spiritual master, Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami, who he felt was always there to guide him. He had received the order of his spiritual master to preach the message of Krishna consciousness all over the world, and he knew, as a follower of the *Bhagavad Gita*, that if he performed his duty to the best of his ability, whatever the result might be, was entirely in the merciful hands of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Shri Krishna.

Over the next ten years, the city of Delhi would become Shrila Prabhupada's base for his missionary activities and it was also the place where he underwent a titanic personal struggle in order to achieve his goal of eventually taking the teachings of ancient India to the modern world of America. It was in Delhi, where he began to regularly produce what would eventually become the flagship publication of the Hare Krishna movement, the English monthly periodical 'Back to Godhead' magazine. Shrila Prabhupada not only wrote all the articles, he also printed it, and went out onto the streets of Delhi and personally distributed it amongst the local population.

It was in the city of Delhi in 1961, that Shrila Prabhupada established the first 'de-facto' Iskcon office located in old Delhi's Chippiwada area, and it was from that place that Shrila Prabhupada began his now world-famous English translation of the classical Vedic literature the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, and from where he printed its first editions at a local printing press, and then distributed the copies to local book shops, libraries, educational institutes, and to the people of Delhi.

In 1964, Shrila Prabhupada presented a copy of his *Shrimad Bhagavatam* to the Prime Minister of India Lal Bahadur Shastri. The prime minister later wrote thanking him for his great contribution to Indian culture and recommended that government institutions purchase copies of his books. Then one year later, Shrila Prabhupada sent two large metal trunks containing his English translations of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* from Delhi to the port of Calcutta, where they were loaded onto the steamship Jaladutta, the same ship that on August 13TH 1965, Shrila Prabhupada began his now historic journey to the United States of America.

From the earliest days of his preaching in Delhi, Shrila Prabhupada had envisioned establishing a magnificent temple dedicated to Lord Krishna in India's capital city, where the divine teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Srimad Bhagavatam* could be broadcast to the people of India's premier city. In the year 1970, when Shrila Prabhupada returned triumphantly from America with a large group of his western disciples, the establishment of such a temple suddenly became a distinct possibility.

When the western devotees of Iskcon first arrived in Delhi in 1970, to take part in Shrila Prabhupada's missionary activities of preaching the glories of Lord Krishna, their ultimate goal was to eventually establish an Iskcon temple in the nation's capital. Each and every one of Shrila Prabhupada's disciples were aware of their spiritual master's desire to build a 'landmark' Iskcon temple in Delhi, a temple that would not only promote the revival of India's ancient Vedic culture, but also provide a place where the citizens of the country could receive the greatest benediction of spiritual emancipation.

There is no doubt that Shrila Prabhupada had a very special affection for Delhi and its people, because during the early years of his great struggle to preach Lord Krishna's message, the people of Delhi had supported him and provided him with food and shelter during some of the most difficult times of his life, and had generously contributed towards the printing of his books and his 'Back to Godhead' magazine. In fact, Shrila Prabhupada believed that the citizens of Delhi were amongst the most pious, intellectually inclined, and sophisticated people in the country. And besides this, Shrila Prabhupada considered Delhi to be the most important capital city in the world, and being the nation's capital, it was also its political, educational, and cultural nerve-centre.

Shrila Prabhupada had once told his disciples, that because every country in the world has an embassy in New Delhi, Iskcon should also have its own spiritual embassy in the capital in the form of a Vedic cultural centre, where not only the Indian public, but foreign diplomats and dignitaries, foreign tourists, and the international business elite, could experience for themselves a living example of India's ancient Vedic culture based on the principles of the immortal *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

Shrila Prabhupada's long cherished desire to establish a 'landmark' Iskcon temple in India's capital city was eventually fulfilled through the concerted efforts of his dedicated followers. Thus, on the most auspicious occasion of Ramanavami, April 5TH 1998, the Prime Minister of India, the Honorable Shri Atala Bihari Vajapayee, inaugurated Iskcon's 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' and dedicated it, not only to the people of Delhi, but to the people of India and the whole world.

PART ONE

Shrila Prabhupada's Lonely Struggle - Attempting to Preach the Message of Lord Krishna

1954 - 1965

After adopting the renounced order of *vanaprasta-ashrama* in the year 1954, Shrila Prabhupada left behind his family members, his business, and his home, to embark on a life dedicated to fulfilling the order of his spiritual master - which was to preach the message of Lord Krishna in the English language and specifically to the people of the western world. Although it was certainly very painful for Shrila Prabhupada to leave his wife and children, after reaching the age of fifty-eight, he firmly believed that fulfilling the order of his spiritual master and taking Lord Krishna's message contained in the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* to the people of the western world, would be far more beneficial to the human race – than to remain at home, caring only for his family members.

In India's ancient Vedic culture, a man is not expected to remain throughout his life in the comfort of his home, surrounded by his wife and children, and instead, after the age of fifty, a man is required to retire from all material activities and go to the forest or an *ashrama* to practice yoga and meditation, and cultivate pure devotion to the Supreme Lord in preparation for his ultimate death. The Vedic scriptures declare that by taking to the path of renunciation and the practice of devotional service, a person can do far more good, not only for himself and his family, but for the whole of human society. By becoming a pure devotee of the Lord and achieving liberation, a man automatically achieves liberation for all his family members, who at the time of their death share the results of his spiritual achievements.

From the very first meeting with his spiritual master Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami at the Gaudiya Matha temple in Calcutta in 1922, due to his being a well-educated young man, Saraswati Goswami asked him to spread the transcendental teachings of Lord Krishna, as enunciated by the 'Golden Avatara' Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, amongst the English speaking people of the world. After taking formal initiation from Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati in 1933, Shrila Prabhupada contributed many articles to various publications of the Gaudiya Matha, the mission established by Saraswati Goswami that had over sixty temples around India. After reading some of these articles written by Shrila Prabhupada, and being highly impressed by the erudite and scholarly content of the articles, Saraswati Goswami ordered his editors to print every single article sent to them by Shrila Prabhupada. When on one occasion his disciples were eulogizing Shrila Prabhupada's scholarship, his Sanskrit erudition and his extraordinary devotional qualities, Saraswati Goswami told them, "You do not need to recommend him; I have already marked him out." Adding that, "In the future, he will do everything."

In 1939, due to his profound Vedic scholarship, Shrila Prabhupada was honored by the Gaudiya Vaishnava Society with the title 'Bhaktivedanta', one of the highest epithets a Vaishnava scholar can receive. By the year 1944, besides writing innumerable articles and essays, Shrila Prabhupada had also completed an English commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* entitled *Gitopanishad*, and had also started his own monthly magazine in English which he called 'Back to Godhead'. Unfortunately, after just two editions, he was unable to continue due to the high

cost of printing, as paper was expensive at that time and in very short supply due to rationing. The 'Back to Godhead' magazine again reappeared for a brief period in 1952, but then once again, due to paucity of funds, it could not be continued. However, after retiring from family life and accepting *vanaprasta*, Shrila Prabhupada once again revived 'Back to Godhead', this time from Delhi, and it became one of the important mainstays of his future preaching activities.

Preaching in Jhansi

In October 1952, two years before accepting *vanaprasta-ashram*, while still running his pharmaceutical business from Allahabad, Shrila Prabhupada was invited by some of his business acquaintances to lecture at the Gita Mandira in Jhansi, Madhya Pradesh. The lecture was very much appreciated and a number of local people plus some of educated young men from the city, requested Shrila Prabhupada to start a society in Jhansi for spreading the message of Lord Chaitanya's *sankirtan* movement and the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*. On May 16th 1953, Shrila Prabhupada established a society under the name 'League of Devotees' from a rented building known as Bharati Bhavana, located on the outskirts of the Jhansi, and from this place Shrila Prabhupada began to teach the articulate and educated young men of the city about pure Krishna consciousness. One of the young gentlemen who joined the 'League' was twenty five year old Dr. Prabhakara Mishra, the principle of the Vedanta Sanskrit College, who later became Shrila Prabhupada's first-ever disciple. Over the next year or so, Shrila Prabhupada divided his time between his preaching centre in Jhansi, running his pharmaceutical business in Allahabad, and taking care of his family. However, in 1954, feeling it was his duty to dedicate the remainder of his life to spreading the message of Godhead, Shrila Prabhupada closed his pharmaceutical business and left home, adopting the renounced *vanaprasta* order of life so that he could fulfill the order given to him by his spiritual master, to preach the message of Lord Krishna in the English language to the people of the world.

After having made a very successful start in Jhansi, the building that Shrila Prabhupada's 'League of Devotees' was using, was commandeered by the wife of the Madhya Pradesh State Governor, for the purpose of running a ladies organization known as the 'Mahila Samity', and as she had powerful political connections, Shrila Prabhupada was forced to close down the 'League of Devotees' and move out. Nevertheless, Shrila Prabhupada had gained valuable experience during the period that he ran the fledgling 'League of Devotees', and it was certainly a precursor to his later success, when some eleven years later, he would travel to New York City in the U.S.A. and establish the 'International Society for Krishna Consciousness' (Iskcon).

After being forced to leave the Jhansi center in early months of 1955, Shrila Prabhupada went to Mathura where his *sannyasi* god-brother and close friend Keshava Maharaja, had just opened a branch of the Gaudiya Matha. Shrila Prabhupada lived in the Matha for a few months and spent his time editing the Matha's journal, the *Gaudiya Patrika*, and assisted in the training of the young *brahmachari* disciples of Keshava Maharaja.

Shrila Prabhupada Arrives in Delhi

In July of 1955, Shrila Prabhupada received an invitation from one of his *sannyasi* god-brothers Bhaktisaranga Goswami Maharaja, the president of the Delhi branch of the Gaudiya Matha, located in Karol Bagh's Chauri Bazar and known locally as the Gaudiya Sangh. Bhaktisaranga Maharaja, being well-aware of Shrila Prabhupada's erudite scholarship and proficiency in Sanskrit, wanted Shrila Prabhupada to join his Delhi Matha and become the editor of the

Matha's monthly journal called *Sajjana-tosani*. The *Sajjana-tosani* was originally known as 'The Harmonist' and had been an English language publication established by the great Vaishnava *acharya* Shrila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, the father of Shrila Prabhupada's own spiritual master, and therefore Shrila Prabhupada felt very enthusiastic about the proposal. He could take up this very important assignment as editor of the *Sajjana-tosani* and still continue to edit the Mathura Matha's *Gaudiya Patrika* from Delhi. After moving to Delhi, besides editing the *Sajjana-tosani*, Bhaktisaranga Maharaja also asked Shrila Prabhupada to manage the Matha while he was away from Delhi on a prolonged visit to Navadwipa in West Bengal.

Shrila Prabhupada soon discovered that the Matha had no typewriter for writing or editing articles and that the Matha's devotees were extremely lazy and uncooperative, furthermore, there was an acute shortage of funds and the printers were not on good terms with Bhaktisaranga Maharaja, due to non-payment of bills for the previous edition of *Sajjana-tosani*. However, regardless of all these drawbacks, Shrila Prabhupada was able to produce the August edition of *Sajjana-tosani*. Taking the work of writing articles, editing, and printing *Sajjana-tosani* very seriously, Shrila Prabhupada wanted to improve the quality of the journal on the lines of the 'Illustrated Weekly of India' and the famous 'Time Magazine' of the U.S.A.. Shrila Prabhupada also wanted to double the number of copies for the September issue of *Sajjana-tosani* that could be accomplished at no extra cost. Shrila Prabhupada wrote to Bhaktisaranga Maharaja, but unfortunately his idea was not well received by Bhaktisaranga, who wrote back saying he did not want any increase in the number of copies. During his stay in the Matha, for the benefit of the Hindi speaking people of Delhi including the many regular visitors to the Matha, Shrila Prabhupada began translating the first-ever Hindi language version of the Bengali classic *Shri Chaitanya-charitamrita*, and wrote requesting Bhaktisaranga Maharaja for a loan of six hundred rupees in order to publish the first few chapters of the translation. However, Bhaktisaranga Maharaja, who was still in Navadwipa, was not very favorable to this idea. In a letter sent to Shrila Prabhupada by Bhaktisaranga Maharaja's secretary, Shrila Prabhupada was unceremoniously relieved of his editorial duties and requested to leave the Matha as soon as possible.

Homeless in Delhi

Having been abruptly forced to leave the Gaudiya Matha, Shrila Prabhupada found himself on the streets of Delhi, penniless and without any place to stay. Out of their kindness, a number of Delhi's residents, who had met Shrila Prabhupada during his short stay in the city, came forward to provide him with both food and shelter. They were of the opinion that Shrila Prabhupada was a genuine *sadhu*, as well as an erudite Vedic scholar, and being religious minded Hindus, they felt privileged that they could offer their help to such a noble and saintly person. In this way, Shrila Prabhupada would spend a few days at one gentleman's residence, and then a few more days at another's, and in this way he managed to survive. During this difficult period, regardless of his almost penniless and homeless existence, Shrila Prabhupada continued preaching Lord Krishna's transcendental message wherever he went, and also continued to write articles whenever he got the chance. During this trying time, he also spent a number of days staying in a room at the Kapoor College of Commerce, and on another occasion, he spent a few days in a room at a local Vishnu temple. Shrila Prabhupada continued to receive support from the pious people of Delhi, and thanks to them, he managed to survive what was the most testing time of his entire life. Those early days in Delhi were extremely difficult and it was certainly a very severe test of his faith and determination to fulfill the order of his spiritual master.

Despite the many reversals that he had to face, Shrila Prabhupada's faith in Lord Krishna did not diminish even slightly, but instead it increased dramatically, because he knew that it was only by the Lord's special mercy that he was able to continue with his preaching mission due to the help provided by the pious people of Delhi. Undaunted by his near beggarly existence, Shrila Prabhupada always remembering the order of his guru maharaja, continued to write articles and essays in English and was always enthusiastic to preach about Krishna consciousness to anyone who was eager to listen. All those who heard Shrila Prabhupada speak on the philosophy of the *Gita* and the *Bhagavatam*, were greatly impressed by his deep understanding of the subject, his knowledge of Sanskrit, his scholastic presentation, and his absolute faith in guru and Krishna.

Revival of 'Back To Godhead' Magazine

Shrila Prabhupada, who was always brimming with enthusiasm to preach, would regularly visit many of Delhi's leading businessmen, industrialists, educators, religious leaders, judges, lawyers, government officials, and a host of political luminaries, in the hope of convincing them about the importance of spreading India's Vedic culture, not only in India, but more importantly all over the world. Shrila Prabhupada also attempted to garner donations from these gentlemen for printing books and for restarting his magazine 'Back to Godhead'.

The Vedas say that it is the duty of all *sadhus* and holy men, to engage the common man in works of religious merit, like publishing books and building temples. This not only helps to spread the glories of the Supreme Lord, but greatly benefits the donors and the people in general, and is one of the few ways in which wealthy materialistic people can be engaged in religious acts. In olden days, most Indians were eager to give donations to *sadhus* in order to purify themselves from the sinful contaminations of materialistic life, and to make advancement on the path back to Godhead. It was quite common for very wealthy persons to print hundreds of copies of books like the *Bhagavad Gita* and distribute them freely amongst the masses. Although India was changing due to the influence of gross materialism and the people were becoming eager to amass great personal wealth, nevertheless, Shrila Prabhupada always tried to engage everyone he met in serving the mission of spreading Lord Krishna's transcendental message.

Over the next four months Shrila Prabhupada's undying desire to continue to preach regardless of his personal difficulties, eventually began to bear fruit. With the support of some very favorable trustees of the Birla Mandira, Shrila Prabhupada's was able to organize a public gathering at the Trusts famous Lakshmi-Narayana Mandira in Delhi on December 22nd 1955, which Shrila Prabhupada advertised in the Hindustan Times. The meeting was presided over by the then president of Delhi Municipal Committee, Mr. R. N. Agarwal, and was attended by many respectable gentlemen of Delhi. All those in attendance appreciated the scholarly discourse given by Shrila Prabhupada in which he discussed Vedic philosophy and the great relevance in today's world of scriptures like *Bhadavad Gita* and *Shrimad Bhagavatam*.

Because of the successful program held at the Birla Mandira, Shrila Prabhupada had managed to raise sufficient donations to again publish his 'Back to Godhead' magazine. During the chilly winter mornings of January 1956, without a *chaddar* or any warm clothing, wearing just a thin cotton jacket and cotton hat and without taking any breakfast, Shrila Prabhupada walked all the way to the printers in Old Delhi, rather than take a bus or *rickscha*, in order to save money, and would spend the morning hours checking the proofs of the magazine and making the necessary corrections. The proprietor of the press, Surinder Kumar Jain, was amazed at the austerities Shrila Prabhupada underwent in order to print his 'Back to Godhead' magazine and his

unflinching enthusiasm to preach the message of Lord Krishna. He saw that Shrila Prabhupada had very little money, but whatever he did collect by way of donations, he never wasted it on his own needs, but would instead spend every penny for printing his 'Back to Godhead' magazine. Knowing that Shrila Prabhupada was not taking any breakfast, Mr. Jain would arrange a little breakfast to be brought from his house, which Shrila Prabhupada graciously accepted while reading through the proofs of his magazine.

Surinder Kumar Jain: **My first impression was that he was a nice person and straightforward. I felt pity also because of the conditions under which he would come. I know he didn't have even twenty-five paisa. He would come all the way on foot and without any breakfast or anything. He would come in the morning to the press, and when I would ask him, "Swamiji, did you have anything to eat this morning?" he would say, "Oh, no, Mr. Jain. I just came because I had to see the proofs."**

"That's all right," I would say, "I will get breakfast for you." I would call for breakfast, and then he would sit and work.

He would do the proofreading himself. The printing was done by me, and most of the time he would like to be present when that final printing was being done. He would come in the morning around seven and stay until he had seen all the proofs. It was a regular thing that he would come without breakfast, I would arrange for breakfast, and we would sit across the table from one another for hours together. He was always talking on religious subjects only. But when we would be sitting, especially when waiting for the proofs to come, we would discuss many things. I felt that he knew quite a lot, because he was a well-read person. He was more a friend than just a person coming to get things printed. He was a very simple man, straightforward in his habits. But his mission at that time was particularly to further the movement of Back to Godhead. His financial condition was very, very weak. Sometimes the printing would be difficult because he was not able to arrange for the paper. Many times I told him that if he was feeling difficulty, why was he continuing? But he said, "No, it is my mission, and I will always carry it on as far as possible." I tried to accommodate him to the maximum possible extent. But he was a real pauper.

I only did the printing, and he had to arrange for the paper. So sometimes it was delayed. Although my job was printing, sometimes I would say, "All right, you are so keen. I will give you the paper." But usually he would arrange for it himself, since we only did printing. He would bring it in a *rickscha*. We were not uncomfortable together, but as business would have it, if the bills were standing for a long time, then I would ask him if he could do something about it. He would say, "Don't worry; you can be sure that your money is coming." I never asked him where his funds were coming from, because I felt that it was his personal matter. But it was embarrassing for him when he could not pay, so I never tried to embarrass him. He was concerned that if he didn't have money, how could he print the paper? And he definitely wanted to run that paper. He wanted to preach the teachings of the *Gita*. He thought of it as a sort of movement, that it was the only way that people in the world could find peace. His conviction was very strong.

During the year 1956, Shrila Prabhupada was producing 'Back to Godhead' magazine on a regular basis thanks to the contributions he received from the pious and religious-minded people of Delhi. Shrila Prabhupada would personally distribute the copies of 'Back to Godhead', firstly to the various donors who contributed to the printing, and then on the streets of Delhi, as well as to shop-keepers, business establishments, and to various offices located around the city centre. On some occasions, although he never touched tea himself, being a strict Vaishnava, he

would visit the many tea-shops where office workers and government servants would congregate during their break, and distribute his 'Back to Godhead' magazines amongst them. Shrila Prabhupada would also mail-out copies of the magazine to friends, acquaintances, and prospective donors in different parts of India.

Although it began as a simple four-page pamphlet-style magazine containing articles and essays written exclusively by Shrila Prabhupada, the importance of the 'Back to Godhead' magazine could never be minimized on the grounds that it was just a magazine; it was in fact an important introduction to Krishna consciousness for hundreds and thousands of people who would otherwise never have read books like the *Bhagavad Gita* or *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. In the western world, when 'Back to Godhead' was first published there, it gained the status of a 'new-age magazine' and its sales world-wide eventually reached a staggering one million copies every month.

Spreading Krishna's Message in Delhi

Having surmounted the difficulties of his first year in the capital, although still without any fixed abode, Shrila Prabhupada had already achieved considerable success in his preaching and was now producing a monthly edition of 'Back to Godhead' magazine. On November 21st 1956, Shrila Prabhupada sent all of the previously printed editions of the magazine to Dr. Rajendra Prasada, the then President of India, along with a letter requesting him to at least read the headlines of the magazine, which concerned the decline of spiritual values amongst the general population. Shrila Prabhupada also requested Dr. Rajendra Prasada to grant him an interview so they could discuss the propagation of India's spiritual heritage amongst the citizens of India. Unfortunately there was no response to Shrila Prabhupada's letter.

A friend and well-wisher of Shrila Prabhupada, and one of the donors of 'Back to Godhead' magazine, the former High Court Judge, Justice Bipin Chandra Mishra, once said that he did not think that Shrila Prabhupada would have much of an impact on the people of Delhi, because he chose to preach and write in English, rather than in Hindi, the local language of most Delhiites.

Justice Misra: He used to come to me once a month. I gave him donations for his paper. It was only a four-page magazine, but it showed his study of the subject and his earnestness and his devotion to Lord Krishna. He appeared to be a very simple man and modest, and it was pleasant to talk to him. He had a smiling demeanor. The main thing was his humility. He could talk with affection and confidence, and he knew we were discussing things near to God. So every talk with him would sublimate us.

I was a rather important personality at that time in religious affairs. But he would not be expected to make any contribution to the main religious life of Delhi at that time, because of the language difficulty, because his aim was to reach the English-educated persons, not the Hindi ones. And also, because his means and his popularity were not at all established, the magazine did not have a wide appeal among these people. Other religious leaders were all well established. The only thing that impressed one and was worth noticing at that time was the simplicity of his abiding faith in God's name and His mission.

Shrila Prabhupada had received the order from his spiritual master to preach in the English language, and although it was certainly very difficult in a Hindi speaking city, he was duty-bound to persevere and continue his efforts to propagate Lord Krishna's message by writing in English. Although Justice Mishra has long since passed on, he would certainly have been surprised, not

only at the great success that Shrila Prabhupada eventually achieved, but also how many millions of Indian's, and in particular Delhiites, are today speaking and reading in the English language. In fact, all higher education in India is now predominantly conducted in the English language.

Regardless of whatever negative responses he might have received, undaunted, Shrila Prabhupada continued with his mission to preach Lord Krishna's message in the English language and continued to produce his monthly magazine 'Back to Godhead'. On one occasion, while out distributing his 'Back to Godhead' magazines on the streets of Delhi, Shrila Prabhupada was gored and knocked to the ground by a rampaging cow, and was forced to take bed-rest. However, within days he was back on the streets distributing his magazines just as before. On another occasion, later that same year, during the intense summer heat that afflicts Delhi, with temperatures hovering around 44 degrees centigrade (112 Fahrenheit), Shrila Prabhupada began to feel suddenly very weak and dizzy, and was on the verge of collapsing in the street due to the effects of heat-stroke. Fortunately, at that very moment, one of the regular donors of the 'Back to Godhead' magazine, who knew Shrila Prabhupada, was passing by in his car, and seeing that Shrila Prabhupada was experiencing some difficulty, took him in his car and drove him to the nearest doctor. After thoroughly checking Shrila Prabhupada, the doctor advised him to rest for a number of days, but as soon as Shrila Prabhupada had recovered sufficiently, he was back on the streets of Delhi distributing his 'Back to Godhead' magazines once again.

The many reversals and hardships that Shrila Prabhupada had faced since accepting *vanaprasta*, certainly tested his resolve and determination to continue preaching the message of Lord Krishna. However, these same reversals and hardships would ultimately prepare Shrila Prabhupada for the future, when he would have to endure the loneliness of living in a foreign land, amid the inhospitable people of a highly materialistic and morally decadent culture, what to speak of the surviving the freezing cold winters of New York City, with its biting cold winds, snow and ice – when in the future he would arrive on the shores of America, where his greatest test still awaited him.

Finding Refuge in Vrindavana

Towards the end of 1956, Shrila Prabhupada visited the holy city of Vrindavana and by Lord Krishna's mercy, the *mahanta* of the Vamsi Gopala Mandira, whom Shrila Prabhupada had first met on a previous visit to Vrindavana in 1953, offered Shrila Prabhupada a permanent residence in a first floor room at the Vamsi Gopala Mandira. The temple was located near Keshi Ghata, just a few minutes' walk from the medieval temples of Radha Gokulananda, Radharamana, and Radha Gopinatha. It was the perfect place for Shrila Prabhupada to find a permanent refuge.

Shrila Prabhupada had visited Vrindavana on a number of previous occasions, starting in 1925 with his family, and then again in 1932, where he met his spiritual master Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami at Kosi, during the Gaudiya Matha's annual Vraja Mandala Parikrama. Then again in 1935, he had met Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati for the very last time at Radhakunda, just one year before his spiritual master disappeared from the world. During that last meeting, his spiritual master advised him that if he ever got sufficient funds, he should print books rather than build temples, as books had a far greater impact on the population and was the most effective way of spreading the teachings of Lord Krishna. On December 13th 1936, just eighteen days before his disappearance from the world, Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati wrote a letter to Shrila Prabhupada, asking him to preach the message of Lord Chaitanya in the English

language. This was the final order that Shrila Prabhupada received from his spiritual master. It confirmed all the previous instructions he had received about preaching in the English language, starting from their very first meeting in 1922.

Although Shrila Prabhupada had now found a permanent residence in Vrindavana, nevertheless, he continued to travel by the early morning train to Delhi where he continued with his preaching work, distributing his 'Back to Godhead' magazine, and raising funds for printing further editions of the magazine. Shrila Prabhupada would either spend the night in Delhi or return to Vrindavana by the evening train. However, by January 1957, having successfully printed over twelve consecutive editions of his 'Back to Godhead' magazine, Shrila Prabhupada had run out of funds and unable to find another donor, he was forced to stop further printing.

Being unable to continue 'Back to Godhead' magazine, Shrila Prabhupada decided to remain in Vrindavana and concentrate on his writing. Thus, in order to sustain his simple existence, Shrila Prabhupada performed the age-old tradition amongst mendicants known as *madhukari*. The performance of *madhukari*, which literally means 'collecting honey like a bee - from flower to flower' is a spiritual practice undertaken by holy men for maintaining the body and soul. The practice also involves the development of humility, by begging alms from door to door and accepting only a small amount from each house so as not to burden the householder. The householders would usually give chapattis or raw flour, rice, and lentils, which the holy men would either soak in water or cook on a fire. This practice is ordained in the Vedic scriptures for all mendicants including *brahmacharis*, *vanaprastas*, and *sannyasis*. Each morning, Shrila Prabhupada, while carrying his small begging bowl and his umbrella, would first take *darshan* at the Radha Damodara Mandira, and then after performing *madhukari*, would go for *darshan* to the Radharamana Mandira, and then chant *japa* while sitting beside the *samadhi* of Gopala Bhatta Goswami. He would then return to Vamsi Gopala Mandira just before noon to honor the *prasadam* that he had received while performing *madhukari*.

During the next two years, from 1957, Shrila Prabhupada continued to write articles as well as prepare manuscripts for future books. He would also go on *parikrama* to the various temples of Vrindavana both morning and evening. Life in Vrindavana was very peaceful and also spiritually rejuvenating; especially after the severe hardships he had faced since accepting the *vanaprasta-ashrama*. During his time staying in Vrindavana, Shrila Prabhupada also received various invitations to attend preaching engagements in such places like Bombay, Kanpur, and Kurukshetra, which he had accepted and gave several discourses on the *Gita* and the *Bhagavatam*.

Prabhupada writes to Jawarhal Nehru

In the month of August 1958, Shrila Prabhupada wrote a letter to the then Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, expressing concern that the people of India, under the leadership of the modern politicians, were rejecting their own spiritual culture and imitating the culture of the Europeans and Americans. Shrila Prabhupada was familiar with Pandit Nehru and his family, because the Nehru family hailed from Allahabad and had always purchased their medicines from the pharmacy owned by Shrila Prabhupada, when he was a businessman in his householder days at Allahabad. In the letter, Shrila Prabhupada glorified the ideal life epitomized by such leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Chanakya Pandit, who lived very simply and promoted Vedic culture. Shrila Prabhupada proposed to Nehru that it was the responsibility of political leaders to guide the masses on the path of spiritualism, as Mahatma Gandhi had tried to do. However, there was no reply from Nehru. Unfortunately, Pandit Nehru and his

fellow political leaders had already decided to lead India down the path of westernized materialism that included massive industrialization of the country. In one of his well known speeches, Nehru had boldly declared that ‘the factories would be the new temples of modern India’.

It was Mahatma Gandhi who had led India to independence, and had envisioned that once the British were out of India, there could be a spiritual revival of Vedic culture in the country and the *Bhagavad Gita*, of which the Mahatma was a devout follower, could be taught in all the schools across the sub-continent. He had also said that there should be a temple built in every single village of India to help the revival of spiritualism and Indian culture, and that economic development should start from the village level first, in order to bring relief to the suffering masses of India. Unfortunately for Mahatma Gandhi, as well as Indian religion and culture, Nehru and his supporters never intended to fulfill Gandiji’s desire for the spiritual upliftment of India.

During the period of his stay in Vrindavana, Shrila Prabhupada continued to regularly visit Delhi to continue with his preaching work in the capital. On one such visit to Delhi in October 1958, he received a generous donation from a pious city businessman for printing ‘Back to Godhead’ magazine. He therefore immediately printed one thousand copies for an October edition, the first edition to appear in almost two years, and then personally distributed all the copies himself. After the success of the October edition, Shrila Prabhupada received yet another donation for the November issue, which he immediately printed and distributed himself. After printing those two editions Shrila Prabhupada was unable to raise further donations, and therefore during the next six months Shrila Prabhupada mostly stayed in Vrindavana.

In July 1959, the *mahant* of the Radha Damodara Mandira in Vrindavana informed Shrila Prabhupada that he had some vacant rooms and invited him to stay there. Shrila Prabhupada considered that the chance to stay at the Radha Damodara Mandira was most auspicious, because the Radha Damodara Mandira had been established by Shrila Jiva Goswami, and was the place where Shrila Rupa Goswami had written many of his important books including the *Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu* (Nectar of Devotion). This ancient temple had also been Rupa Goswami’s spiritual headquarters for spreading Lord Chaitanya’s *sankirtan* movement, and the place where the Six Goswamis of Vrindavana would regularly meet to discuss transcendental topics. Shrila Prabhupada believed it was the ideal place for him to reside and write his English translation of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. Without hesitation, and looking forward to living in the close association of both Rupa and Jiva Goswamis, Shrila Prabhupada immediately accepted the offer to move his residence to the Radha Damodara Mandira.

Prabhupada Takes Sannyasa

One night, while asleep in his room at the Radha Damodara Mandira, Shrila Prabhupada had an amazing dream, it was the same dream he had had earlier in his life, just after the first meeting with his spiritual master in 1922. In the dream, Shrila Prabhupada suddenly saw the tall and elegant figure of his spiritual master, Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami, descending from the spiritual world and calling Shrila Prabhupada to follow him. Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati was repeatedly calling him to follow in his footsteps and become a *sannyasi*. On waking from the dream, Shrila Prabhupada felt ecstatic and realized that his spiritual master had personally appeared before him giving him direct instructions to take *sannyasa*. It was the same dream he had seen on two previous occasions when he was a newly-married young man with a family to look after. But at that time Shrila Prabhupada had been horrified at the thought of having to

leave his young wife and small children behind, in order to live the renounced and austere life of a *sannyasi*. But now things had changed, the idea of taking *sannyasa* now seemed to be a very good idea. He felt extremely blessed that his spiritual master had once again beckoned him to take *sannyasa*.

In the Gaudiya Vaishnava *sampradaya* to which Shrila Prabhupada and his spiritual master both belonged, acceptance of the *sannyasa-ashrama* is recommended for those who wish to preach the message of love of God amongst the innocent masses. The order of *sannyasa* is the fourth and last stage in the Vedic religious system known as *varnashrama-dharma* and Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the 'Golden Avatara', also took *sannyasa* in order to preach the divine message of love of God.

Shrila Prabhupada decided to accept the order of *sannyasa* from one of his *sannyasi* god-brothers, and after some deliberation, he informed his close friend at the Gaudiya Matha in Mathura, Keshava Maharaja, about his intentions. Hearing about his dream, Keshava Maharaja told Shrila Prabhupada to immediately take *sannyasa* and also offered to initiate him into the renounced order of life. Thus, at a ceremony at the Mathura Gaudiya Matha on September 17th 1959, Shrila Prabhupada accepted the *tridandi-sannyasa* order from his god-brother Keshava Maharaja and was given the *sannyasa* name A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami.

At the time of birth in 1896, Shrila Prabhupada's father gave him the name Abhaya Charan, meaning 'fearless at the lotus feet of Krishna'. At the time of his initiation in 1933, Shrila Bhaktisidhanta Saraswati Goswami gave him the name Abhaya Charnaravinda Dasa, and then in 1939, due to his profound Vedic scholarship, the Gaudiya Vaishnava Society awarded him the title 'Bhaktivedanta'. After accepting the *sannyasa* order from Keshava Maharaja he was awarded the title Swami thus becoming Abhaya Charanaravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami.

A New Chapter in Prabhupada's Life

Sometime after taking *sannyasa*, Shrila Prabhupada happened to meet a librarian who advised him that it would far better for him to publish books rather than magazines, as books lasted a very long time, whereas magazines are generally thrown away after having being read only once. Around this same time, Shrila Prabhupada also met an officer from the Indian army who had been regularly reading 'Back to Godhead' magazine, and he also advised Shrila Prabhupada that it would be better to print books, as they had a far greater value than magazines. Shrila Prabhupada took this advice as the direct mercy of his spiritual master. Therefore Shrila Prabhupada decided to concentrate on writing and publishing books, even though books would be far more time-consuming and certainly more costly to print than magazines. Shrila Prabhupada decided that he would begin by writing the first ever English translation of the great Vedic classic the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, which was considered to be the cream of all Vedic literature. The *Bhagavatam* was also Shrila Vyasadeva's own personal commentary on his famous *Vedanta Sutra*, the greatest-ever treatise on Vedic philosophy. The *Shrimad Bhagavatam* was without doubt the most important of all the Vedic literatures and was also revered by Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who declared it to be the 'spotless *Purana*'. Lord Chaitanya has advised all Vaishnavas to study it daily in order to achieve God realization. In fact the *Bhagavatam* is considered to be a literary incarnation of Lord Krishna, and by reading it under the guidance of a pure devotee, one automatically develops pure love for God. Shrila Prabhupada concluded that it would take at least sixty volumes to produce the entire *Bhagavatam* in a thoroughly scholarly manner, with Sanskrit text, English equivalents and word for word synonyms, as well as his own elaborate purports.

Iskcon's First Office in Delhi

Shrila Prabhupada continued to travel regularly to Delhi, sometimes staying overnight at the invitation of old friends and acquaintances. Then, by Lord Krishna's mercy, on one such visit, Shrila Prabhupada had been invited to stay at the home of Mr. Hitsharan Sharma, the manager of Radha Press, where Shrila Prabhupada had some years earlier printed pamphlets and leaflets on behalf of Jhansi's 'League of Devotees'. Mr. Sharma introduced Shrila Prabhupada to Pandit Shri Krishna Sharma, a learned scholar, pious religionist, and *mahant* of the Shri Shri Radha Krishna Temple in Old Delhi's Chhipiwada area, which was located behind the famous Jama Masjid. Realizing that Shrila Prabhupada was a very saintly person and also an erudite Vedic scholar, Sharmaji wanted to help Shrila Prabhupada in his missionary activities, and immediately offered Shrila Prabhupada a permanent place to stay in Delhi, free of rent, in a room on the upper floor of his temple, to be used as both an office and living quarters whenever Shrila Prabhupada's was visiting the city.

Having obtained the office in Chhipiwada at the end of 1959, Shrila Prabhupada began his now famous translation of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* and would spend long hours of the day and night engaged in typing the manuscript. Shrila Prabhupada believed that the English edition of the *Bhagavatam* would form the spiritual and philosophical basis from which he would preach in America, and by selling these books, he could generate enough funds to support himself in America while he established his mission which he planned to call the International Society for Krishna consciousness.

After taking *sannyasa*, Shrila Prabhupada's focus changed and he began to seriously think of going to America and establishing a world-wide spiritual organization devoted to spreading Krishna consciousness and propagating Lord Chaitanya's *sankirtan* movement, which was based on the congregational chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra; Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

Shrila Prabhupada had formulated the name 'International Society for Krishna Consciousness' (Iskcon) based on Shrila Rupa Goswami's original idea. While living at the Radha Damodara Mandira in Vrindavana, Shrila Prabhupada had imbibed Shrila Rupa Goswami's conception of an integrated world-wide Vaishnava movement under the banner of Lord Chaitanya's *sankirtan* movement. Thus, from his new office at the Radha Krishna Mandira, Shrila Prabhupada embarked on a new phase in his life as he began to write the first-ever English translation of *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. It can therefore be said that Shrila Prabhupada's office in Old Delhi's Chhipiwada area, besides being a base in Delhi for printing his books and magazines, was in fact, Iskcon's first 'de-facto' office.

In 1960, Shrila Prabhupada published his first ever book, a small paperback edition entitled 'Easy Journey to Other Planets'. The publication of this book occurred after Shrila Prabhupada had heard that two American scientists had received the Nobel Prize in physics for discovering the anti-proton. This discovery gave rise to speculation in scientific circles about an anti-material world, and coupled with the ongoing 'space race' between the Americans and the Russians after the Russians had launched the world's first satellite called the 'sputnik', the media was full of talk about the 'new frontiers' of science and space exploration. Thus feeling inspired, Shrila Prabhupada began writing the book 'Easy Journey to Other Planets', about the transcendental process of *bhakti-yoga* and the ability of yogis to travel to other planets that included a description of the anti-material spiritual world called Vaikuntha. In August 1960, after raising sufficient donations, Shrila Prabhupada published his 'Easy Journey to Other Planets' as a paperback edition with a foreword by Dr. N.K. Siddhanta, the then Vice-Chancellor of Delhi

University. After publication, Shrila Prabhupada received a lot of very good reviews from a number of prominent scientists around India. It was a momentous occasion for Shrila Prabhupada as it was the first complete book that he had ever published.

When this same book, popularly referred to as 'Easy Journey', was later re-printed in America in 1970, it was such a revelation that it created a sensation amongst the younger generation. After reading it, many Americans and Europeans became convinced about the authenticity and scientific basis of *bhakti-yoga* and many were converted to Krishna Consciousness and joined Shrila Prabhupada's Iskcon movement.

During the year 1960, Shrila Prabhupada was spending his time between Vrindavana and his Chippiwada office in Delhi. During this period, after receiving some donations from well-wishers, Shrila Prabhupada once again began printing the 'Back to Godhead' magazine and was also holding regular discourses on the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* at the residence of Dr. Bannerjee, a former director of the National Museum of Delhi

Dr. Bannerji: He used to come to the library and consult some books, and I met him there. He gave me a book called Easy Journey to Other Planets. He gave me some copies to distribute for a rupee or half a rupee each. I felt attracted to him. I thought he was a saintly person with pure devotion and without any outward glamour. He was not out to attract people just for name and fame. He had little support from anybody. He was living alone in a small room in Chippiwada. He was devoted to his studies. So I asked him, "Sir, if you have time and you don't mind coming to my house, could you kindly come on Sundays and recite the *Bhagavatam* in my house?" He readily agreed. He was a good scholar. He was learned in the scriptures, and he was fond of communicating his ideas to others. He was a good speaker and a good conversationalist. He was very polite.

Whatever he said he said very distinctly. He spoke in Bengali and explained the essence of the verses. Sometimes he also referred to the commentaries, just to give me more information. The others were not very much interested in commentary or in difficult aspects, but because he knew that I had some studies in the field, he explained the commentaries for my sake and for the sake of one or two other gentlemen who were also very elderly and very scholarly. The gatherings at my home would be attended by about twenty or thirty people and he would continue his explanation for one or two hours. Then he would recite the Hare Krishna mantra, and we would also take part with the *karatalas* and harmonium. So it was a very enjoyable gathering, because he made the difficult things very easy and he explained everything to all of us according to our needs. He knew that this much is for this person, this much is intended for this man, this much for the others.

After the meetings, he used to take a little rest in my house. I requested him to take meals in my house, but he said he did not take meals prepared by others. But when he met my wife and she said she would be happy to prepare the meals, he said, "All right, I will take," and she used to prepare meals on Sundays when he would come.

He sometimes asked me how to get more and more people attracted towards this field. But as a government worker, I could not persuade anyone very openly. Nor had I the time to organize anything on a big scale for him. But he was not satisfied with that. He asked me if I could organize on a bigger scale. He knew that the people who attended the meetings at my house were very old-seventy, eighty, one was ninety years of age-retired, educated persons. It lasted for no less than a year. After that, he said he would be trying to go out to other places. He asked me to continue the gatherings, but I said, "I am not initiated." He said I could continue anyway, because I was born as a *brahmana*. He gave me the authority to continue

for some time. But I could not continue, because I used to go out. I lost all interest after he left. I was a government servant.

Translating the Bhagavatam in Delhi

During the year 1961, Shrila Prabhupada spent most of his time at his office in Old Delhi and concentrated on the task of completing part one of the *Srimad Bhagavatam's* momentous 1ST canto. Shrila Prabhupada's daily schedule was to wake around 1:00 A.M., and after bathing and chanting *japa* on his beads, he would begin translating the *Bhagavatam* around 3:00 A.M. He would continue translating for most of the day, taking only a short break for *darshana*, take a morning walk, take lunch, and then continue translating for as long as possible throughout the day, unless there were some important meetings or preaching engagements which he would attend. Shrila Prabhupada was feeling greatly inspired, at long last his life's mission to fulfill the order of his spiritual master to preach in the English language was now progressing nicely. He firmly believed that the English translation of the spiritually potent *Shrimad Bhagavatam* would be the medium by which he could convert the English speaking people of the world to Krishna consciousness.

Hearing about an important spiritual convention taking place in Japan called the 'Congress for Cultivating Human Spirit', which was scheduled to take place on May 10th 1961, Shrila Prabhupada wrote to the organizers, the International Foundation for Cultural Harmony, and promptly received an invitation from the foundations secretary general, Mr. Toshihiro Nakano, to attend the convention as India's special representative. As part of his presentation at the conference, Shrila Prabhupada had written an essay for the occasion based on the 10TH canto of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* entitled 'Light of the *Bhagavata*', a wonderful description and glorification of Vrindavana Dhama. Shrila Prabhupada had wanted that the Japanese should print this essay in book form with illustrations drawn by traditional Japanese artists. After having obtained the invitation, Shrila Prabhupada had been attempting to find sponsors who could help with the travel expenses to Japan and had approached the Ministry of Culture for assistance because he had been invited to attend the prestigious conference as India's special representative. However the ministry's officials were disinclined to lend financial support. Shrila Prabhupada had even obtained a private meeting with the Vice-President of India Dr. Radhakrishnan, but Dr. Radhakrishnan also declined to offer any help. As no sponsors could be found to support his proposed trip to Japan, Shrila Prabhupada was unfortunately unable to attend the conference. (The essay that Shrila Prabhupada had written entitled 'Light of the *Bhagavata*', was eventually published as a book in 1976 by the American BBT and included many traditional Japanese illustrations that had been painted by a well-known Japanese artist).

In July 1962, Shrila Prabhupada moved his quarters located on the upper floor of the Radha Damodara Mandira, to two rooms on the ground floor. In one room he performed his *bhajana* and translated the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, and in the other he cooked and honored *prasadam*. By late summer of 1962, Shrila Prabhupada had almost completed translating part one of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, and was now looking for donors to help cover the cost of printing. Shrila Prabhupada thought about approaching the philanthropist and well known industrialist, Seth Jai Dayal Dalmia, to donate for the printing, but Mr. Hitsharan Sharma, the general manager of Radha Press, who was also the secretary to Mr. Dalmia's Trust, advised Shrila Prabhupada that Mr Dalmia would not be interest in sponsoring such a book and advised him that he should instead travel to Gorakhpur and show his *Bhagavatam* manuscript to the philanthropist publisher, Shri Hanuman Prashad Poddar, the proprietor of the famous Gita Press, as he would

be far more favorable to printing religious books than Mr. Dalmia. Therefore, Shrila Prabhupada immediately travelled by train to Gorakhpur and on seeing the *Bhagavatam* manuscript, Hanuman Prasad Poddar was very impressed with Shrila Prabhupada's scholarly translation and immediately agreed to donate four thousand rupees towards the cost of printing one thousand hard-bound copies.

Shrimad Bhagavatam Printed in Delhi

On receiving the advance payment, Hitsharan Sharma began printing Shrila Prabhupada's *Shrimad Bhagavatam* at the O.K. Press, as that particular press had the correct type face that Shrila Prabhupada wanted used in his book. From September that year, Shrila Prabhupada stayed continuously at his Chippiwada office in order to personally oversee all the printing work. He not only arranged for the paper and transported it himself by cycle *riksha*, he also checked all the proofs, oversaw the binding of the book, and also designed the dust-cover. By the month of December 1962, a total of eleven hundred copies of part one of the 1ST canto of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* had been completed. From the sales of his books, Shrila Prabhupada planned to gradually pay-off the balance amount that was due on the printer's bill.

After receiving the first batch of his *Shrimad Bhagavatams*, Shrila Prabhupada immediately sent a complimentary copy to Hanuman Prasad Poddar, the principle donor, who wrote a very favorable review. He also sent a copy to the Vice President of India Dr. Radhakrishnan, who gave Shrila Prabhupada a personal audience and promised to read the book and then inform Shrila Prabhupada about his impressions. Shrila Prabhupada then sold copies to various libraries, colleges, and over forty schools around Delhi. The Ministry of Education also took fifty copies for selected universities and institutional libraries around India, and the U.S. embassy took eighteen copies for libraries in America. Besides the sales to various institutions, Shrila Prabhupada also distributed his *Shrimad Bhagavatam* on the streets of Delhi, to offices and business establishments, and also amongst previous donors, friends, and acquaintances. Shrila Prabhupada also supplied books to one of Delhi's famous book shops located on Ansari Road in Darya Ganj known as the Manohara Book Shop.

In the months that followed, Shrila Prabhupada received many favorable reviews, extolling his great scholarship and deep knowledge of the subject, including those from the newly appointed Vice President of India Dr. Zakir Hussain, who had also received a complimentary copy, and also from the Governor of Uttar Pradesh Shri Bishwanath Dasa, who had also received a complimentary copy from Shrila Prabhupada. Other favorable reviews were also received from a number of Shrila Prabhupada's senior god-brothers from the Gaudiya Matha, who glorified his scholastic presentation and the great service he had done for his spiritual master. Publishing the first-ever English translation of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, was till then, perhaps Shrila Prabhupada's single greatest achievement, and it proved to be a milestone in his long and sometimes arduous march towards fulfilling the order of his spiritual master, to spread the message of Lord Krishna to the English speaking people of the world.

Completing Bhagavatam in Vrindavana

Now that part one of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam's* 1ST canto had been published, Shrila Prabhupada set about with great determination to finish translating part two. As soon as all three parts of the 1ST canto of *Shrimad Bhagavatam* were completed, Shrila Prabhupada would be fully armed with the most potent of all Vedic transcendental literatures, and then he planned to sail to America to convert the English speaking people of the western world to Krishna consciousness.

Shrila Prabhupada returned to Vrindavana in the spring of 1963, and then spent many long months in translating part two of the 1ST canto, working day and night and hardly resting in order to complete the book and thus quickly return to Delhi and get it printed. By the end of 1963, when Shrila Prabhupada had finally completed the translation of part two, he immediately travelled to Delhi in the hope of raising funds for printing. By showing the first part of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* to prospective donors, Shrila Prabhupada received a contribution of five thousand rupees from an executive director of the L & H Sugar factory of Delhi, and immediately went to the O.K. Press and began printing part two. Shrila Prabhupada went through all the same motions as with part one, arranging the paper, checking the proofs, and overseeing the binding. When part two of the 1st canto of *Shrimad Bhagavatam* finally arrived from the press in January of 1964, Shrila Prabhupada went to all the same libraries and educational institutions to distribute the book, and also gave copies to Manohara Book Shop in Darya Ganj, where the sales of his first edition of the *Bhagavatam* had been very good. Mr. Manoharlal Jain, the book shop proprietor, was very impressed by Shrila Prabhupada's English translation, as it contained the Sanskrit verses, transliterations, and word for word synonyms, and there was no other book like it available in the book market. He had sold around two hundred copies of part one to customers in India and abroad, and expected part two to be just as successful.

Manoharlal Jain: **He would come to me for selling his books. He would come often, and he used to chat with me for one or two hours. He had no other business except selling his books as much as possible. We would discuss the difficulties he was having and also many other things, yoga, Vedanta, and religious aspects of life. His problem was distributing his work, because it was a big publication. He had planned to publish it in many volumes. Naturally, I told him it was not possible for any individual bookseller or publisher here to publish it and invest money in it. So that was a little bit of a disappointment for him because he could not bring out more volumes.**

But my sales were good because this was the best translation-Sanskrit text with English translations. No other such edition was available. I sold about one hundred and fifty to two hundred copies in about two or three years. The price was very little, only sixteen rupees. He had published his reviews, and he had a good sell, a good market. The price was reasonable, and he was not interested in making money out of it. He was printing in English, for the foreigners. He had a good command of Sanskrit as well as English. When we met, we would speak in English, and his English was very impressive.

He wanted me to publish, but I didn't have any presses and no finances. I told him frankly I would not be able to publish it, because it was not one or two volumes but many. But he managed anyhow. I referred him to Atmaram and Sons. He also used to go there.

He was a great master, a philosopher, a great scholar. I used to enjoy the talks. He used to sit with me for one or two hours, as much as he could afford. Sometimes he would come in the morning, eleven or twelve, and then sometimes in the afternoon. He used to come in for

money: "How many copies are sold?" So I would pay him. Practically, he was not doing very well with finances at that time. He only wanted that his books should be sold to every library and everywhere where the people are interested in it.

We used to publish a catalog every month, and I would advertise his book. Orders would be coming from all over the world. So, at least for me, the sales were picking up. If I sold one hundred copies of the first volume, then I figured the second volume would be sold in the same number, naturally. But definitely those who would take the first volume would also take Volume Two, because it was institutional and the institutions will always try to complete their set. He used to discuss with me how the volumes can be brought out and how many it would take to complete the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. He was very much interested in bringing out the whole series.

Staying in Delhi to promote his books, Shrila Prabhupada arranged to meet the Vice President of India Dr. Zakira Hussain at his official residence. Dr Hussain had already written an appreciation for Shrila Prabhupada's previous edition of *Shrimad Bhagavatam* and Shrila Prabhupada was going to present him with part two. Although a Muslim, Dr Hussain was a scholar and took interest in all religious matters. At the meeting, he had enquired from Shrila Prabhupada how love of Godhead could help humanity at large. Shrila Prabhupada later wrote a lengthy letter to the vice-president, explaining in great detail the answer to his question.

During March, Pandit Shri Krishna Sharma arranged for Shrila Prabhupada to spend a month at the Shri Radhavallabha Mandira in the Rosanpura Naisarak area of Delhi, where he lectured both morning and evening on *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. The program was well advertised with billboards and pamphlets and the temple authorities encouraged the local congregation to take full advantage of such a rare opportunity to hear from a learned and scholarly Vaishnava *sadhu* like A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami.

Prabhupada Meets Prime Minister Shastri

In June 1964, arrangements were made by a mutual friend, for Shrila Prabhupada to meet the newly elected Prime Minister of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri, at a formal engagement in the gardens of the Parliament Building. Shrila Prabhupada presented the prime minister with a complimentary copy of the 1ST canto of *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. An official photographer at the event took a photo of the Prime Minister, receiving the book from Shrila Prabhupada. A pious Hindu from the *brahmana* caste, Prime Minister Shastri, impressed by the first English edition of the *Bhagavatam*, discussed its contents with Shrila Prabhupada. Later, Prime Minister Shastri personally wrote to Shrila Prabhupada thanking him for the gift of *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, and complimented him on his valuable contribution to humanity while suggesting that Government Institutions and libraries should purchase copies of the book. Within a few days, the Ministry of Education also wrote to Shrila Prabhupada requesting fifty copies of part two of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*.

At the end of June, Shrila Prabhupada returned to Vrindavana in order to start the translation of the third and final part of the 1ST canto of *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. In July, Shrila Prabhupada made a trip to Bombay in the hope of meeting the owner of the Scindia Steamship Company, the well known philanthropist, Mrs. Sumati Morarji, in order to secure a donation for printing part three of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. After making the long journey from Vrindavana, and having spent a number of days waiting, Shrila Prabhupada was unable to secure an appointment to meet the very busy Mrs. Sumati Morarji. He therefore resolved to sit on the steps in front of the Scindia

Lines Company office with the hope of seeing Mrs. Morarji as she left the building for home in the evening. Sure enough, after waiting for some five or six hours, Mrs. Morarji finally emerged from the building late in the evening and seeing Shrila Prabhupada sitting there on the steps, enquired from her secretary about who the elderly *sadhu* was. After hearing that Shrila Prabhupada had been trying to get an interview with her, she immediately approached Shrila Prabhupada and asked what service she could render. Shrila Prabhupada informed her about his translation of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* and the need for a donor to print the final part of the 1ST canto. Mrs. Morarji told Shrila Prabhupada to meet her the next day in order to discuss the matter further. The next day, Shrila Prabhupada presented parts one and two of his *Shrimad Bhagavatam* to Mrs. Sumati Morarji and also showed her the unfinished manuscript of part three which he was still working on. Being impressed with Shrila Prabhupada's translations of the *Bhagavatam*, Sumati Morarji agreed to pay for the entire printing cost. His mission accomplished, Shrila Prabhupada very happily returned to Vrindavana and immediately started work on the final part of the 1ST canto.

In order to promote the English translations of his *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, Shrila Prabhupada organized a special Janmashtami celebration held on August 31ST 1964, at the Radha Damodara Mandira in Vrindavana, and invited the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Bishwanath Das, to be the honorary guest at the celebration. The program was well attended and Shrila Prabhupada sang a number of Gaudiya Vaishnava *bhajans*, gave a stirring lecture on *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, and distributed *prasadam* to all those who attended the celebrations. Shrila Prabhupada presented the guest of honor Shri Bishwanath Das, with a complimentary copy of part two of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* and informed the governor about his plans to go to America in order to spread the message of Lord Krishna. One month later, Shri Bishwanath Das, U.P. State Governor, sent a personal invitation to Shrila Prabhupada inviting him to attend a banquet and *kirtan* recital at the governor's official residence at the Raj Bhavana in Lucknow.

By the winter of 1964, Shrila Prabhupada had completed translating part three of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* and having already secured the donation for printing from Mrs. Sumati Morarji, he immediately went to Delhi to start the printing. Once again Shrila Prabhupada engaged the O.K. Press to print the book and went through all the same motions as he had done with the first two editions, arranging the paper, checking the proofs, and overseeing the binding. By January of 1965, the third and final part of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam's* 1ST canto came off the press, much to Shrila Prabhupada's great transcendental satisfaction.

Making Arrangements to Preach in America

Having completed the three volumes of the 1ST canto of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, Shrila Prabhupada was now thinking of going to America to fulfill the order of his spiritual master Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami, to spread the message of Lord Krishna throughout the English speaking world. Already Shrila Prabhupada had seen how Lord Krishna had guided him on his long and sometimes arduous journey over the last eleven years since accepting the *vanaprasta-ashrama*, and although he had been a penniless and homeless mendicant, by the blessings of his spiritual master, he had survived and somehow or other had managed to translate and print three large volumes of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. Shrila Prabhupada now felt that the final obstacle on his often difficult but nevertheless successful journey towards his goal of preaching the glories of Lord Krishna in the western world, would surely now be crossed.

It was by the will of providence that Shrila Prabhupada happened to meet a local businessman from Mathura named Mr. Agarwal and during the course of their discussions, Mr. Agarwal

mentioned that his son Gopal lived in America and had married an American girl. Shрила Prabhupada told Mr. Agarwal that it was his desire to go to America in order to spread the message of Lord Krishna in the western world. Mr. Agarwal felt that it was a good idea and also mentioned that he would try to help.

There were many difficulties in those days for people of Indian origin to travel to America, especially for a mendicant *sadhu* without any funds, and it was necessary to have a sponsorship from an American citizen in order to get permission from the Indian government to make the journey to the U.S.A., and also obtain a visa from the American Embassy. However, while in Vrindavana during the month of May 1965, Shрила Prabhupada was surprised to receive a letter from the Ministry of External Affairs, informing him that his 'No Objection Certificate' for travelling to America was ready. Because Shрила Prabhupada did not know what the ministry was referring to, he went to Delhi and upon visiting the ministry in question, was shown a 'Statutory Declaration', made by one Mr. Gopal Agarwal, a resident of Butler, Pennsylvania, declaring that he would bear all the liabilities and expenses of Shри A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, during his visit to the United States of America. Shрила Prabhupada was surprised to receive the sponsorship, and realized it was from the son of Mr. Agarwal, the kind businessman from Mathura.

Now that the first hurdle regarding sponsorship had been so easily crossed, it seemed possible that Shрила Prabhupada's desire to preach in the western world was being fulfilled by the grace of Lord Krishna. By July 10TH 1965, Shрила Prabhupada obtained his Indian passport with the help of Pandit Shри Krishna Sharma and immediately travelled to Bombay to meet Mrs. Sumati Morarji of the Scindia Steamship Company, in the hope of getting a free passage on one of Scindia's cargo ships to America. On reaching Bombay, Shрила Prabhupada went straight to the Scindia Company's office and Mrs. Morarji's secretary Mr. Choksi, informed her of Shрила Prabhupada's arrival and about his desire to go to America. Mrs. Morarji immediately replied in the negative, telling Mr. Choksi that Swamiji was far too old at the age of almost seventy to go to America, adding that it would be far too difficult at such an advanced age to accomplish anything. Mr. Choksi conveyed Mrs. Morarji's opinion to Shрила Prabhupada, but he was not ready to give in so easily, and asked Mr. Choksi to try once again to convince Mrs. Morarji on his behalf. Nevertheless, once again Mrs. Morarji refused, fearing that Shрила Prabhupada would face untold problems in such an inhospitable place like America and may even die in the process. After conveying once again Mrs. Morarji's negative response, Shрила Prabhupada pleaded with Mr. Choksi to arrange a personal meeting with Mrs. Morarji in order to convince her. She ultimately agreed to meet Shрила Prabhupada and after defeating one by one all of her various objections, she finally agreed to give Shрила Prabhupada free passage to America on one of her company's ships.

The next step was to obtain an American visa from the U.S. Consulate in Bombay and the statutory 'P. Form' from the State Bank of India. As this would take some time, Mrs. Morarji invited Shрила Prabhupada to stay at the Scindia Company employee's colony at Andheri in the north-western suburbs of Bombay. Then on July 28th, with the help of the Scindia Company, Shрила Prabhupada obtained his U.S. visa. However the 'P. Form' proved to be far more difficult, because Shрила Prabhupada had not been invited to America by any institution, but by a private citizen, and the bank had doubts about how he would be supported in America. After personally pleading with the senior officials at the State Bank of India, Shрила Prabhupada finally received the all-important 'P. Form'.

Prabhupada's Historic Journey to America

Arrangements were made by the Scindia Company for Shrila Prabhupada to board their cargo vessel named the Jaladutta from the port of Calcutta, and therefore Shrila Prabhupada immediately left Bombay by train bound for his old hometown of Calcutta. Shrila Prabhupada arranged for the printers in Delhi to send two trunks containing his *Shrimad Bhagavatams* to Calcutta where they were directly loaded onto the ship. The day before his scheduled departure for America, Shrila Prabhupada went to Shridhama Mayapur, the birth-place of Lord Chaitanya, where he visited the *samadhi* of his spiritual master, Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, praying for his blessings that his journey to America would be successful and he would be able to fulfill everything that his spiritual master had ordered him to do.

Five hundred years earlier, the 'Golden Avatara' Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, had prophesized that the holy names of Lord Krishna would be chanted in every town and village in the world. The great soul who was about to fulfill that divine prophesy of Lord Chaitanya was now about to start the most important journey of his life. Although Shrila Prabhupada was without personal funds and had just forty Indian rupees in his pocket, he did have two full trunks containing his English translations of *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, and therefore he was not perturbed, having absolute faith in the words of his spiritual master and the mercy of Lord Krishna - which was in actual fact his real wealth.

Having been born and raised in Calcutta, Shrila Prabhupada's departure for America to preach the message of love of God in the western world was reported in all the leading newspapers of the city, along with Shrila Prabhupada's photograph. It was an important day for the people of Calcutta, that a Vaishnava *sadhu* from their city was making such a momentous journey half-way across the world, to spread the teachings of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in America. Amongst the newspapers that published the report were; The Statesman, The Telegraph, The Hindustan Times, The Times of India, Anandbazar Patrika, Aajkal, Ganashakti, and the Jansatta.

On August 13th 1965, Shrila Prabhupada set sail from Calcutta on the Scindia Lines steamship Jaladutta, bound for the United States of America. There he would singlehandedly create an unprecedented spiritual revolution by introducing the chanting of Lord Krishna's holy names and establish an international movement based on the teachings of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, which would very soon become famous across the face of the earth and be known to everyone as the 'Hare Krishna Movement'

Prabhupada's Great Success in America

It is now a part of world religious history, that in the seventieth year of his life, Shrila Prabhupada left the shores of India on his historic journey to the United States of America, where he arrived on the 30th of September 1965. For the first few weeks he stayed in Butler, Pennsylvania, with his sponsor Gopala Agarwal, and then moved to a rented room in New York. Having arrived in America almost penniless, in order to support himself he sold his English translations of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* to libraries and book shops around the city. Shrila Prabhupada was then forced to face the harsh and bitterly cold winter months while residing in the dilapidated and economically depressed area of New York known as the Bowery. When spring eventually arrived, Shrila Prabhupada would often go to Tompkins Square Park where he would sit under a tree and accompanying himself on a small bongo-drum or finger-cymbals known as *kartals*, while he chanted the holy names of Lord Krishna. Gradually, he began to attract a small following and by the summer of 1966, the first Iskcon temple opened in a rented

store-front at 26 Second Avenue, in the lower east-side of Manhattan, right in the heart of New York City. Then in the month of September 1966, Shrila Prabhupada officially incorporated the International Society for Krishna consciousness, and Iskcon was born.

The Iskcon temple in New York's lower east-side soon became a refuge for seekers of spiritual knowledge where they could hear the lectures given by Shrila Prabhupada and take part in the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra. Anyone who was serious about spiritual life could join Shrila Prabhupada's movement as long as they were willing to give-up all forms of sinful life and follow the four regulative principles of Vaishnava Dharma including: no eating of meat, fish, and eggs, no indulgence in intoxicants including tea and coffee, no illicit sex, and no gambling or speculation. All those wanting to join Shrila Prabhupada's mission had to promise to chant a minimum of sixteen rounds of the Hare Krishna mantra on beads every day, as well as shave their heads, wear traditional Indian *dhotis* instead of western-style trousers, and refrain from eating outside food and take only temple *prasadam*, pure vegetarian preparations, that are first offered to the temple Deity. Shrila Prabhupada organized his New York temple on the same lines as the Gaudiya Matha monasteries in India, where the monks live a celibate life while voluntarily offered their services in devotion to God. Shrila Prabhupada was greatly encouraged when he saw so many young American men and women surrender themselves at the lotus feet of Lord Shri Krishna and had once commented that when the western youth shaved their heads and put on *dhotis*, they look like they have come directly from the spiritual realm of Vaikuntha.

Shrila Prabhupada had arrived in America at a time of great social change and there was immense disaffection amongst the younger generation, who were rejecting the status-quo imposed on society by the establishment. The youth were disenchanted with modern-life, having realized that the so-called 'American dream', was after all simply a dream and far beyond the reach of the average person. The true reality was that everyone had to struggle to survive in the material world while undergoing immense suffering. The late 1960's in America, was a period when political discontent was rife as thousands of young men were being drafted into the army to fight against the communist in Vietnam. The great majority of Americans did not agree with the United States being drawn into a war on the other side of the world, especially as it appeared completely irrelevant to the needs of most Americans.

Shrila Prabhupada's message of love, peace, and eternal life, was what many amongst the youth of America had been longing to hear. Shrila Prabhupada had boldly declared that God was not dead, as the modern scientist had said, but eternally exists in the spiritual world and in the hearts of all living beings. Shrila Prabhupada taught the American people about the devotional path of *bhakti-yoga* which leads directly to the kingdom of God, saying that it was possible for even a child to achieve success simply by chanting God's holy names with devotion. Shrila Prabhupada had said that to develop pure Krishna consciousness and love for God was the real purpose of human existence and the greatest achievement that anyone could achieve as it guarantees that at the time of death, one's soul will be liberated and immediately return to the kingdom of God.

As Shrila Prabhupada's movement began to spread, it gained wide attention in both the U.S. and world media. Within a short time, due to such wide coverage, Shrila Prabhupada's movement soon became famous around the world as the 'Hare Krishna Movement'. From that small beginning in a store-front in Manhattan's lower east-side, due to Shrila Prabhupada's inconceivable spiritual potency, Iskcon temples began opening in all the major cities across America. The chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra became an everyday spectacle on the streets of almost every American city, from New York City on the east coast - to Los Angeles in the west, the throbbing hypnotic drum beats and the clash of cymbals rang out as Shrila Prabhupada's devoted disciples chanted and danced their way through the congested mayhem of the concrete

jungles of North America, bringing great joy and happiness to the millions of onlookers who happened to see them. As thousands of young men and women flocked to join the Hare Krishna movement, the world's media began to take note that a dynamic spiritual revolution led by an Indian Swami, was not only sweeping across North America, but across the entire western world.

Another of Shрила Prabhupada's greatest achievements in America was the phenomenal success of his books. Shрила Prabhupada's presentation of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, the first in the English language, created considerable interest amongst western scholars including Indologists, religionists, and academicians, who eulogized Shрила Prabhupada's translation, saying that it was a great contribution towards mankind's understanding of India's ancient Vedic culture, religion and philosophy. Shрила Prabhupada also received immense praise for his thoroughly scholastic presentation of such an epic Sanskrit work as the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, terming it as a 'spiritual masterpiece of unparalleled excellence'. Within a short time, Shрила Prabhupada's books were available in almost all major U.S. libraries and also became part of the regular curricular in universities and colleges across America in the field of religion study.

End of Part One

PART TWO

The Early Years of Iskcon in Delhi

- Shrila Prabhupada Returns from America

1967 – 1975

After spending two eventful years preaching in America from 1965 to 1967, Shrila Prabhupada had established a considerable following amongst the young men and women of the country and had opened over twenty Iskcon temples in cities like; New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Boston, Buffalo, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. However, due to his strenuous schedule of travelling extensively throughout America, during the month of December 1967, while at Iskcon's New York temple on Second Avenue, Shrila Prabhupada suffered a minor stroke and remained incapacitated for the next four months. As Shrila Prabhupada's recovery was extremely slow, due in part to the cold and damp climate of the winter months in North America, Shrila Prabhupada decided it would be best to go back to India in order to fully recuperate. In India the weather was warm and sunny and Shrila Prabhupada felt that such a climate would help him to regain his health much more quickly.

In July 1967, Shrila Prabhupada arrived at Delhi airport around midnight on a flight from New York, accompanied by one of his American disciples, Kirtanananda Dasa, who acted as Shrila Prabhupada's personal assistant during his stay in India. After clearing customs and immigration, Shrila Prabhupada hired a taxi to take him to his old office at the Radha-Krishna temple in Old Delhi's Chippiwada area, where he had formerly lived prior to his journey to America in 1965. The taxi stopped near to the Chippiwada temple and although his American disciple was carrying petty cash for travelling expenses, it was in American dollars, and therefore Shrila took forty rupees from his *kurta* pocket to pay the taxi. This was the same forty rupees that Shrila Prabhupada had taken with him to America, and as it happened, he never needed to spend it. His sponsor in America Mr Gopal Agarwal, had provided sufficient financial support until Shrila Prabhupada began to receive funds from selling his English translations of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* in the book shops of New York. Now on his return to India, Shrila Prabhupada was finally able to utilize the forty rupees he had kept for the last two years.

When Shrila Prabhupada reached the door of the Chippiwada temple he knocked loudly and the watchman arrived, and recognizing Shrila Prabhupada, he immediately opened the door and Shrila Prabhupada went up the stairs to his room on the first floor. Everything was just as Shrila Prabhupada had left it, with piles of printed pages and book covers left over from the time he printed his *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. Shrila Prabhupada was very happy to be back at the place from where he had begun translating the *Bhagavatam* into English. After Kirtanananda prepared a mattress, Shrila Prabhupada rested peacefully for the remainder of the night.

The next morning arrangements were made for two *ayurvedic* doctors to examine Shrila Prabhupada. They pronounced that although he had suffered a severe heart-attack, the danger was now over and advised him to simply rest as much as possible and to take meals at exactly the same time each day. The doctors also gave some *ayurvedic* medicines to help speed-up the

recovery. After hearing that Shrila Prabhupada had arrived from America, Pandit Shri Krishna Sharma came to meet him and they began discussing Shrila Prabhupada's phenomenal success in America. Shrila Prabhupada played a record on his disciple's portable record player for Pandit Sharma that had been recorded in America; it was of Shrila Prabhupada singing devotional *kirtans* accompanied by his American disciples. Pandit Sharma very much appreciated the recording and was extremely happy to see Shrila Prabhupada once again back in India.

Later that day, Shrila Prabhupada began to feel ill, probably due to the long flight from America. His temperature rose and he became feverish and started coughing. During the night Shrila Prabhupada was unable to get any sleep. The next morning the same *ayurvedic* doctors returned and by the time they arrived Shrila Prabhupada was running a temperature of 104 degrees. The doctors gave some more *ayurvedic* medicines, but by afternoon, Kirtanananda decided to call a regular allopathic doctor who gave Shrila Prabhupada an injection of penicillin, and after this, Shrila Prabhupada's temperature began to subside. The penicillin was very effective and Shrila Prabhupada was able to sleep peacefully for the whole night.

The next day, Shrila Prabhupada's temperature was down, but he was still feeling sick and weak. During the day, many old friends and acquaintances came to see him and each of them invited him to their houses for *prasadam*, but as Shrila Prabhupada was too ill to go, he sent his American disciple instead. Over the next few days, while visiting the homes of Shrila Prabhupada's old friends to take *prasadam*, Kirtanananda would play the record on his portable record player and then sing and dance along with the record, much to the pleasure of everyone. He would also give short lectures on Krishna consciousness and the importance of chanting the 'Hare Krishna' mantra.

Prabhupada Returns to Vrindavana

On August 1st 1967, Shrila Prabhupada had recovered sufficiently and therefore decided to visit the holy city of Vrindavana, where he planned to spend the next few months simply resting. He wanted to regain his strength as early as possible so that he could return to America and continue with his preaching work. Leaving his office in Old Delhi, accompanied by his disciple Kirtanananda, Shrila Prabhupada travelled by train to Vrindavana where he stayed in his old rooms at the Radha Damodara Mandira. During the following days he simply rested and spent his time reading from various Vaishnava literatures. Shrila Prabhupada was once again in the spiritual environs that he loved so much, next to the *samadhis* of the great Vaishnava *acharyas* like Rupa and Jiva Goswamis. Shrila Prabhupada continued to keep in touch with his American disciples through regular correspondence, and they all said they missed his association and wanted him to return as soon as possible. In early September, another of Shrila Prabhupada's American disciples, Achyutananda Dasa, arrived from Iskcon's New York temple to spend some time with Shrila Prabhupada. In the middle of September, after recuperating sufficiently thanks to the warm Indian climate, Shrila Prabhupada declared himself to be ninety percent fit. One of Shrila Prabhupada's god-brothers at the Gaudiya Matha in Navadwipa, Shridhara Swami, wrote to Shrila Prabhupada inviting him to visit Navadwipa during the holy month of *karttika*. Liking the idea of going to Bengal, Shrila Prabhupada and his two American disciples travelled back to the Chippiwada office in Old Delhi where they made various arrangements including train reservations for the forthcoming trip to Navadwipa. While in Delhi, Shrila Prabhupada decided to send Kirtanananda back to the west to help with the preaching work in America.

Attempts to Establish a Temple in Delhi

Shrila Prabhupada was always thinking of how to expand his preaching mission and open more Iskcon temples whenever the opportunity arose. He was also thinking that the Chippiwada Radha-Krishna Mandira would be the perfect place to open an Iskcon temple in Delhi, and had been trying to convince Pandit Shri Krishna Sharma to sell the premises to Iskcon, or at least sell the office on the first floor that Shrila Prabhupada had been using rent free since 1960, and the discussions were still ongoing. While in Delhi, Shrila Prabhupada went to meet many of his old acquaintances, including the industrialist Mr. Seth Jai Dayal Dalmia. Shrila Prabhupada wanted to print his English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* that he had completed while in America, and was looking for possible donors, but Mr. Dalmia seemed reluctant to help in printing books. Shrila Prabhupada was hoping that he could print his *Bhagavad Gita* in Delhi and take it back to America when he eventually returned there by the end of the year.

Many more friends and well-wishers came to the Chippiwada office to meet Shrila Prabhupada and hear all about his preaching exploits in America. The visitors would always bring gifts of cloth, fruit, and sometimes home-cooked food. One day Pandit Shri Krishna Sharma arranged for Shrila Prabhupada to give a lecture at the famous Gauri Shankara Mandira in Chandni Chowk. Shrila Prabhupada agreed and accompanied by Achyutananda, he lectured for about one hour in the evening to a crowd of enthusiastic members of the local congregation. The next day, a very devoted middle-aged Vaishnavi lady, who had heard Shrila Prabhupada speak at the Gauri Shankara Mandira, came to the Chippiwada office to ask if Shrila Prabhupada would accept her as his disciple and initiate her. After talking with her and determining that she was following all the rules and regulations of strict Vaishnava *sadhana*, Shrila Prabhupada agreed. He asked Achyutananda to make a small *haven*, the traditional square shaped brick and mud hearth, where Shrila Prabhupada performed the fire sacrifice and gave her the name Mukunda Dasi. After a day or so, an American disciple named Ramanuja Dasa, arrived at the Chippiwada office from the Iskcon temple in San Francisco, hoping to spend some time with Shrila Prabhupada. Having secured train reservations on the Kalka Mail bound for Calcutta, Shrila Prabhupada and his two disciples were due to leave Delhi on October 9th. On the day of departure, Pandit Shri Krishna Sharma was supposed to meet Shrila Prabhupada with regard to the sale of the Chippiwada Radha Krishna Mandira to Iskcon, but Pandit Sharma did not arrive to attend the meeting as he had already decided not to let Iskcon have the temple. (In the year 2008 the Radha-Krishna temple was eventually donated to Iskcon by the temple's trustees and it is now under Iskcon management)

After reaching Calcutta by the Kalka Mail, Shrila Prabhupada and his disciples caught the local train to Navadvipa Dhama where on arrival, Shrila Prabhupada received a very warm welcome from his friend and god-brother Sridhara Swami and the devotees of his Matha. Many other devotees from various branches of the Gaudiya Matha in Navadvipa also gathered to greet Shrila Prabhupada and one after another they whole-heartedly praised him for his courageous and highly successful preaching activities in America. During his stay in Navadvipa, Shrila Prabhupada went with Achyutananda by boat to Sridhama Mayapura on the other side of the River Ganges where he visited the birthplace of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the *samadhi* of his spiritual master Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami, located at the famous Yoga-Pitha. While on his return to Navadvipa, Shrila Prabhupada looked at a plot of land not far from the Yoga-Pitha that was available for sale, and considered that it would be an ideal location where Iskcon could build its own temple in Sridhama Mayapura.

After spending two months in Navadwipa, Shrila Prabhupada was feeling completely rejuvenated and ready to return to America to continue his preaching mission. His intention was to greatly expand the preaching by further increasing the number of devotees and by opening many more Iskcon temples. Before his departure, he decided that his American disciple Achyutananda should remain in Navadwipa with his god-brother Shridhara Swami, until such a time that Achyutananda could find a suitable place in Calcutta to open an Iskcon centre there. On Shrila Prabhupada's return to America in January 1968, the preaching gained further momentum and many more Iskcon temples opened across the United States, as well as in countries like Canada, South America, Europe, and Australia. During the next two years, hundreds of young men and women joined the Hare Krishna movement and Iskcon temples were established in major cities around the world including; London, Paris, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Sydney, and Honolulu.

Prabhupada's Spiritual Conquest of India

After having spent another two years preaching in America and having achieved even greater success, Shrila Prabhupada was now planning to return with a large number of his American disciples to conquer India with Krishna consciousness. Shrila Prabhupada wanted to open temples in all the major cities of India especially Delhi, Calcutta, and Bombay. He had made arrangements for around fifty of his American and European disciples to join him in India for a nationwide Krishna conscious preaching tour. There was a lot of enthusiasm from Shrila Prabhupada's senior western disciples to join the India preaching tour which had been named as the 'World Sankirtan Party', because devotees were coming from all over the world to join it.

On August 29th 1970, Shrila Prabhupada returned to India via Tokyo, where he had placed an order valued at over sixty thousand dollars for printing his books and magazines with the Dai Nippon Company of Japan. At Calcutta airport Shrila Prabhupada was greeted by his American disciples, Achyutananda Dasa and Jaya Pataka Dasa, who were accompanied by a group of Shridhara Swami's disciples from Navadwipa who performed a rousing *kirtan* to welcome Shrila Prabhupada back to India. On seeing his disciples at the airport, Shrila Prabhupada personally embraced both Achyutananda and Jaya Pataka in appreciation of their exemplary service of preaching alone in Calcutta. Then Achyutananda Dasa and all the devotees escorted Shrila Prabhupada to the V.I.P. lounge at Calcutta airport where many friends and acquaintances were waiting to greet him with garlands and sweets. Shrila Prabhupada then spoke to the reporters waiting there to interview him, after which he was driven to the residence of Mr. Das Gupta who was hosting Shrila Prabhupada during his short stay in Calcutta.

Shrila Prabhupada was certainly very happy to be back in India and on this visit he planned to spread his Krishna consciousness movement throughout the sub-continent. This time he had arrived in India along with ten of his senior American disciples, and twenty more disciples were on their way from America by another flight due to land in Bombay within days. Other disciples were making their way from Europe to join Shrila Prabhupada who was amassing his spiritual forces for a major Krishna conscious crusade across India.

On August 30th 1970, while in Calcutta, Shrila Prabhupada inaugurated the now famous 'Iskcon Life-membership Program' for the benefit of Indians who wanted to support Iskcon's activities of spreading the message of Lord Krishna. Anyone from India could enroll as a life-member by making a donation of 1,100/- rupees. Each life-member would receive all the books that Shrila Prabhupada had published to date, and could also stay for three days in any Iskcon temple anywhere in the world.

On Radhashtami day, in recognition of their valuable preaching work in Calcutta, Shrila Prabhupada gave *sannyasa* initiation to both Achutananda and Jaya Pataka, who had without any support, opened a small Iskcon centre in Calcutta and had gone onto the streets of the city every day to perform *Hare-nama sankirtan* and distribute Shrila Prabhupada's books and magazines.

Prabhupada's 'Dancing White Elephants'

While in Calcutta, the American disciples who had arrived with Shrila Prabhupada would go every day with Achutananda and Jaya Pataka to Dalhousie Square and Chowringee Esplanade to perform *Hare Hare-nama sankirtan*. Because there were so many shaven headed, dhoti wearing western Vaishnavas, dancing and chanting 'Hare Krishna' in the street, it caused quite a sensation, and large crowds of hundreds of people gathered to witness the ecstatic *kirtans*. Hearing about the large crowds gathering to see his western disciples, Shrila Prabhupada made his now famous comment, "They are coming to see my dancing white elephants."

In ancient India, as well as in other Southeast Asian countries like Burma and Thailand, the wealth of a king was calculated by how many elephants he owned, and his prestige is increased by the number of his white elephants. This was because a white elephant is the rarest amongst all elephants and extremely valuable, and people would flock just to get a glimpse of such a white elephant. Therefore, because large crowds came to see the white-skinned Americans chanting and dancing in the street, Shrila Prabhupada affectionately referred to his disciples as his 'dancing white elephants'. Shrila Prabhupada also said that when Indians, who were imitating western culture, saw that the westerners were seriously taking to Krishna consciousness, they would soon realize the value of their own culture.

After spending a few days in Calcutta, Shrila Prabhupada accompanied by his disciples, travelled to Bombay to meet the devotees arriving from America. When all the American devotees, numbering around forty, including around half a dozen American girls, had all assembled together, they would go on to the streets of Bombay every day to perform *Haranama sankirtan*, which created another sensation, just as it had done in Calcutta. Shrila Prabhupada held a number of very successful preaching programs in the city and all the newspapers and radio stations reported the arrival of the American devotees in Bombay. After a few days, Shrila Prabhupada took all his disciples by train to Amritsar where some preaching programs had been organized. The programs went on for ten days and Shrila Prabhupada gave daily lectures while his western disciples would chant and dance ecstatically while performing *Harenama kirtan*. After the successful programs in Amritsar, Shrila Prabhupada and his party returned to Bombay by train to attend more programs there.

Iskcon's First Preaching Party in Delhi

It was October 30th 1970, when the train going from Amritsar to Bombay carrying Shrila Prabhupada and his disciples, made a ten minute halt at the New Delhi railway station. While the train was at the platform, a gentleman named Mr. D. D. Gupta, a resident of Delhi, suddenly approached the first class carriage where Shrila Prabhupada was seated and requested him to spend a few days in Delhi. Although they had not met before, Shrila Prabhupada remembered Mr. Gupta from letters he had received from him in America. Mr. Gupta had been following the exploits of Shrila Prabhupada and his American disciples, and when he heard that they were on the train from Amritsar, he went to the station to meet them. Although it was not possible for

Shrila Prabhupada to stop off in Delhi because of the many programs that were already arranged in Bombay, seeing an opportunity to preach in Delhi, Shrila Prabhupada asked his senior American disciple, Guru Dasa Adhikari, to get off the train and go with Mr. Dutta who had volunteered to help them preach and also meet some important and influential people in Delhi. Perhaps they could also establish an Iskcon centre in the capital. Guru Dasa immediately selected a small group of devotees to help him in Delhi, including his wife Yamuna Devi, and three American *brahmacharis*, Giriraja Dasa, Banu Dasa, and Gopala Dasa.

The five devotees initially stayed in two rooms at a local *dharamshala* near New Delhi station and went around the city with Mr. Gupta, meeting various people and preaching about Krishna consciousness. After about ten days the devotees received a letter from Shrila Prabhupada from Bombay, encouraging them in their preaching activities in Delhi and suggested that they could achieve greater success if they started making Iskcon life-members, as this would help them fund their preaching activities and provide the means to open a temple in Delhi. Shrila Prabhupada told them that in Bombay, at least three people each day were enrolling as life-members and the program was very successful and much appreciated by everyone. Shrila Prabhupada advised them to meet an old acquaintance of his, the industrialist Mr. Seth Jai Dayal Dalmia, and ask him to become an Iskcon life-member. Guru Dasa and Giriraja Prabhu went to meet Mr. Dalmia and he immediately became a life-member, the first in Delhi. Mr. Dalmia then invited one of his friends, Dr. Lokesh Chandra, who was visiting Mr. Dalmia's office at that time, to also become a life-member and he immediately agreed. Dr. Chandra was on his way to see the Mayor of Delhi, and Mr. Dalmia asked him to take Guru Dasa and Giriraja Prabhu to meet the Mayor. At the Mayor's residence, Dr. Chandra met one of his friends who also became an Iskcon life-member. On another occasion, an appointment was made for all five of Shrila Prabhupada's disciples to meet the Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and they presented her with a three-part set of Shrila Prabhupada's English translation of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* and a copy of 'Back to Godhead' magazine.

Giriraja Dasa: At the Delhi train station, one gentleman named D.D. Gupta came to meet Shrila Prabhupada and asked if Shrila Prabhupada could give some disciples for preaching in Delhi. Shrila Prabhupada called Guru Dasa and discussed the matter with him. Then he formed a party of five people including Guru Dasa, Yamuna, Gopala, Banu, and myself. "See what you can do." Prabhupada said.

We were in Delhi for about a month. The life-membership program had just begun in India. In Delhi we had a lot of programs and were quite popular, but being such a small group, and without Prabhupada's presence, we weren't making such a big impact. Shrila Prabhupada suggested that we meet Jaya Dayal Dalmia. So Guru Dasa and I went there and Mr. Dalmia immediately agreed to become a life-member. Not only that, but he told one of his friends, Dr. Chandra, who was visiting his office at that time, that he should also become a member which he did. Mr. Dalmia told Dr. Chandra, "Why don't you take them with you when you go to meet the Mayor." The Mayor was very pleased to meet us. Then while at the Mayor's house, a friend of Dr. Chandra also became a life-member. So in one day we made three life-members. (In 1978 Giriraja Dasa accepted the *sannyasa* order and became known as Giriraja Swami).

Gopala Dasa: I came to India for the first time in 1970 to be part of Shrila Prabhupada's World Sankirtan Party. We all met up with Shrila Prabhupada in Bombay, and for the next couple of weeks we went with Shrila Prabhupada to various preaching programs. After Bombay we went to Amritsar. Wherever we went we were given a wonderful reception and fed

sumptuously with all kinds of nice *prasadam*. Because I was not used to the hot climate and the hot spicy food, I became sick.

When the Amritsar program was over we all left by train for Bombay. I was feeling really sick and because in the third class compartment there was very little space to lie down during the day, I simply crawled under the seat and slept on the floor. When the train arrived at the Delhi station I was picked by Guru Dasa to stay in Delhi with a few other devotees for preaching. We stayed in two small rooms near the station. I was so sick I could not move for two or three days. When I recovered I went out with the other devotees for preaching in Delhi. One day we went to visit Indira Gandhi the Prime Minister of India and presented her with some of Shrila Prabhupada's books.

After having preached in Delhi for just over one month, Shrila Prabhupada requested Guru Dasa and his Delhi preaching party to join him and the other devotees in Indore, to take part in the annual 'Gita Jayanti' celebration at the city's famous Gita Bhavan being held on December 3rd 1970, where Shrila Prabhupada had been invited to speak and as one of the chief guests at the function. From Indore, the western devotees then travelled with Shrila Prabhupada to attend programs in Surat, Allahabad, Gorakhpur, and Benares (Varanasi). They then returned to Bombay where the first Iskcon temple had just been established on the seventh floor of the up-market Akash Ganga building on Bombay's exclusive Balubhai Desai Road. In the first week of March 1971, Shrila Prabhupada took all the devotees to Calcutta where the Iskcon devotees had just opened a temple on Albert Road and where they attended Iskcon's first-ever 'Gaura Purnima Festival' celebrating the appearance day of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Iskcon's First Temple in Delhi

A day or so after the Gaura Purnima celebrations in March 1971, while in his room at Iskcon's Albert Road temple in Calcutta, Shrila Prabhupada called one of his Indian-born *grihasta* disciples from London, named Kshiradakashayi Vishnu Dasa, and requested him to go to Delhi to open an Iskcon temple. Therefore, Kshiradakashayi Prabhu and two other devotees, an American *brahmachari* named Revatinandana Dasa, and Sarvasuhrit Dasa, a Pakistani-born devotee also from London, immediately left by train for Delhi in the hope of opening an Iskcon temple in the city.

Kshiradakashayi Vishnu Dasa: **In March 1971, just after Gaura Purnima, Shrila Prabhupada sent me with two devotees, Revatinandana and a Muslim boy named Sarvasurit Dasa, to open an Iskcon centre in Delhi. Within a short time a centre in Delhi was established and we started so many new activities.**

During the first week in Delhi, Kshiradakashayi Prabhu and his two companions stayed in a *dharmshala* in Old Delhi not far from the River Yamuna. After meeting the Mayor of Delhi, Mr. Hans Raj Gupta, an old acquaintance of Shrila Prabhupada, with his help the devotees were able to relocate to the Devidayal Dharmshala in Kamla Nagar, North Delhi. Another old friend of Shrila Prabhupada, Mr. Suriya Kumar Joshi, who lived nearby to the *dharmshala*, provided the devotees with *prasadam* every day for the next few weeks and helped them as much as he could. When Shrila Prabhupada used to travel between Vrindavana and Delhi, he sometimes stayed in Mr. Joshi's house and his eldest son later became Shrila Prabhupada's disciple, receiving the name Radharamana Dasa. From the Devidayal Dharmshala, the devotees would go

out preaching every day and began enrolling the local businessmen into Iskcon's life-membership scheme and searching for a more permanent place to stay. Although the Devidayal Dharmshala was centrally located and clean, it was a temporary arrangement and could not be used as a temple. After spending three weeks preaching in Delhi, Shrila Prabhupada asked Kshiradakashayi Prabhu to make arrangements to arrange two sets of Radha-Krishna deities from Jaipur and take them by train to Bombay in time for Iskcon's Bombay *pandal* program at the Cross Maidan grounds.

Taking Bombay and Calcutta by Storm

After the Gaura Purnima celebrations were over in Calcutta, Shrila Prabhupada had returned to Bombay where his disciples had organized a huge 'Hare Krishna Festival' that was being held at the Cross Maidan exhibition grounds in the heart of the city, from March 25th to April 4th 1971. Kshiradakashayi Vishnu Dasa, after leaving his two companions in Delhi and having collected two sets of deities from Jaipur, went to Bombay and remained there to attend the Bombay *pandal* program. One set of deities were going to be installed in the new Bombay temple and the other set would be worshiped during the Bombay *pandal* program and then sent to another Iskcon temple outside India. The Bombay *pandal* program was a phenomenal success and was reported widely in the newspapers. The whole of Bombay was talking about Shrila Prabhupada and his American disciples and every evening Shrila Prabhupada gave a lecture to over fifteen thousand people inside the *pandal*. After the Bombay program, Kshiradakashayi Prabhu had to leave for London to attend to personal family matters.

In the first week of May, 1971, Shrila Prabhupada sent his western disciples to Calcutta for an upcoming program in the city and departed by air on a short preaching tour to Malaysia and Sydney in Australia, where an Iskcon temple had recently opened. On May 13th Shrila Prabhupada returned to Calcutta in time for a ten day *pandal* program being held in the city, on similar lines to the *pandal* program held earlier in Bombay. All the Calcutta newspapers were full of news about Shrila Prabhupada's great success in spreading Lord Krishna's message in the western world. The Calcutta *pandal* program attracted even bigger crowds than the Bombay program, with some thirty thousand people attending every day and forty thousand on the final day. On May 28th, a few days after the Calcutta *pandal* program, Shrila Prabhupada finally obtained the three acre plot of land near the Yoga-Pitha at Sridhama Mayapura, which he had previously seen along with Achutananda back in 1970. Shrila Prabhupada wanted to build a very big temple at Mayapur that would eventually become Iskcon's world headquarters.

After the Calcutta program, Shrila Prabhupada flew to Russia at the invitation of Professor Kotovsky, an Indologist at the Academy of Science in Moscow. Professor Kotovsky had been corresponding with Shrila Prabhupada and being an Indologist, had a great interest in Indian religion and culture. Shrila Prabhupada visited Moscow in order to plant the seed of devotional service and spread Lord Krishna's message amongst the people of Russia. On June 25th 1971, Shrila Prabhupada flew from Moscow to Paris, then to Los Angeles, and then to San Francisco for Rathayatra. He then visited the Iskcon temples in Detroit, New York, Atlanta, and Gainseville. Shrila Prabhupada then flew on to London in the first week of August where he planned to spend Janmashtami. Shrila Prabhupada became ill while in London and at the invitation of Mr. R. B. Pandhya, an Indian resident of Mombasa, he flew to Nairobi in Kenya where an Iskcon temple had just been opened, and then to Mombasa, a Kenyan beach resort where he convalesced at the house of Mr. Pandya for about ten days. On regaining his health, he returned to Nairobi on

19th September and then went on an extensive preaching tour of Africa. After preaching in Africa for about five weeks, Shrila Prabhupada returned to Bombay on October 19th 1971.

Organizing the Delhi Pandala Program

After the successful Bombay *pandal* program, Kshiradakashayi Vishnu Dasa had returned to London, however, on September 6th 1971, Kshiradakashayi Prabhu received a letter from Shrila Prabhupada requesting him to go back to Delhi and take charge of the temple there, as the devotees in Delhi were finding it very difficult to continue with the preaching work. Taking Shrila Prabhupada's request seriously, Kshiradakashayi Prabhu immediately went back to Delhi and within a short time he established an Iskcon temple in a rented apartment in West Patel Nagar, a suburb in western Delhi. After considering different ways to increase the preaching mission in Delhi, Kshiradakashayi Prabhu decided the best idea would be to organize a big *pandal* program in the heart of the city, on similar lines to the highly successful *pandal* programs held in both Bombay and Calcutta.

Kshiradakashayi Vishnu Dasa: **Once again Shrila Prabhupada desired me to go to Delhi. On September 6th 1971, he wrote asking me to take charge of Iskcon's Delhi center. After returning to the Delhi center, we decided to organize a huge ten-day discourse function at the L.I.C. grounds in the heart of New Delhi.**

Kshiradakashayi Prabhu made arrangements to hold the Delhi *pandal* program on November 11th 1971, and Shrila Prabhupada was scheduled to speak at the *pandal* every morning and evening for ten consecutive days. In order to organize the ten day *pandal* program, Kshiradakashayi Prabhu formed an organizing committee consisting of local residents, government officials, political leaders, prominent businessmen, and the Mayor of Delhi, Mr. Hans Raj Gupta, who acted as the committee's Chairman.

Kshiradakashayi Prabhu wanted to hold the *Pandal* program at the prestigious L.I.C. grounds near to Connaught Place right in the heart of New Delhi. Although the L.I.C. (Life Insurance Corporation of India), usually rented their grounds for ten thousand rupees per day, after three weeks of hard bargaining, at the behest of the Delhi Mayor, Mr. Hans Raj Gupta, the L.I.C. decided to rent the grounds to Iskcon for just one rupee a day. Shrila Prabhupada was in Bombay at the time, and heard that Mr. Hans Raj Gupta, the Delhi Mayor had got such a huge concession from the L.I.C., he was extremely happy and said that it was a very good sign that the whole program would be a great success. From Bombay, Shrila Prabhupada sent three of his experienced American devotees to help Kshiradakashayi Prabhu in organizing the Delhi *pandal* program, including Tamala Krishna Dasa, an experienced manager, Guru Dasa, an expert in public relations who had already preached in Delhi the previous month, and Tejas Dasa, an experienced manager who had just arrived in India from Iskcon's temple in Buffalo. Tejas had formerly been an American Peace Corps volunteer and had previously spent some years managing Peace Corps projects in India. Sometime after the Delhi program, Tejas became the temple president of Iskcon's Delhi centre, a post which he held for over six years.

Tejas Dasa: **I first met Shrila Prabhupada in May 1971, at Iskcon's New York temple on Henry Street, when he had just returned from India. While in New York, Shrila Prabhupada had been discussing the wonderful life-membership program that he had just recently launched in Calcutta and about the preaching in India. I was then engaged in service at Iskcon's Buffalo**

temple along with Rupanuga Dasa, the temple president. Because Rupanuga knew that I had been a member of the Peace Corps in India, he had asked Shrila Prabhupada if I should go to India to help in Iskcon's fledgling mission there. Shrila Prabhupada had immediately said that I should go. On my way to India I stopped off at the London temple in Bury Place, because Shrila Prabhupada was visiting London at that same time. When I arrived, I went to Shrila Prabhupada's room and during the meeting he suggested that I should go to Delhi, because a big *pandal* program was being organized there by the Iskcon devotees and that they could probably use my help. I then left for India and the next time I saw Shrila Prabhupada was when he arrived for the Delhi *pandal* at the LIC grounds where he was scheduled to lecture for ten consecutive days.

In order to advertise the *pandal* program, the Mayor of Delhi Mr. Hans Raj Gupta, held a press conference at the Delhi Town Hall and invited all the newspaper reporters in Delhi to attend. Mr. Hans Raj Gupta gave a very nice speech glorifying Shrila Prabhupada as India's spiritual ambassador to the world and detailed all of Shrila Prabhupada's wonderful accomplishments. He also mentioned that he had known Shrila Prabhupada even before he went to America, and revealed that he had also given support to Shrila Prabhupada at the time when he was struggling to print his 'Back to Godhead' magazines and his English translation of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. He said that Shrila Prabhupada was a genuine *sadhu* who was spreading love of God all over the world, and he was extremely proud of his personal association with Shrila Prabhupada, and all the wonderful devotees of Iskcon.

The speech of the Delhi mayor deeply impressed the news reporters and this led to extensive coverage in all the newspapers of Iskcon's forthcoming 'Hare Krishna Festival' at the L.I.C. grounds. Consequently, the upcoming *pandal* program became the talk of the town and everyone was eager to hear Shrila Prabhupada's lectures and see his American disciples perform *Harenama sankirtan*. The Delhi devotees began to receive many inquiries from interested people who wanted to know more about the program as well as Iskcon's life-membership scheme. The devotees had also printed fifty thousand leaflets advertising the *pandal* program and distributed them all over the city.

The organizing committee decided that on each of the ten days that Shrila Prabhupada was going to speak there would be a different chief guest each day who would give an introductory speech and outline the details of the lecture that Shrila Prabhupada was going to deliver. These special guests included; the Mayor of Delhi, Mr. Hans Raj Gupta; India's Poet Laureate Harivanshrai Bhachchan (father of actor Amitabh Bachchan); Delhi Metropolitan Council Chairman, Mr. S. B. Agarwal; Delhi High Court Judge, Mr. Bipin Chandra Mishra; the famous Indian scientist, Dr. Atma Ram; Industrialist and former Mayor of Delhi, Colonel B. R. Mohan; the well known industrialist and philanthropist from Lucknow, Mr. L. N. Saklani; the Lt. Governor of Delhi, Dr. Adityanath Jha; the Indian Defense Minister, Mr. Jagjivan Ram; and His Excellency James George, the Canadian High Commissioner.

When Kshiradakashayi Prabhu was trying to find suitable accommodation for the more than fifty American devotees who would attend the Delhi program, Mr. Seth Jai Dayal Dalmia, Iskcon's first life-member in Delhi, offered his residence on Tilak Road, just a short distance from the L.I.C. grounds, as the place where everyone could stay. Kshiradakashayi Prabhu was also wondering how he could get a set of marble Radha-Krishna deities for the program. Mr. Seth Jai Dayal Dalmia suggested that he should speak with the secretary of his charitable trust, Mr. Hitsharan Sharma. On hearing from Kshiradakashayi Prabhu about the need for deities, Mr. Sharma immediately donated forty-five thousand rupees of his own money for purchasing a set of deities from Jaipura. Kshiradakashayi immediately went to Jaipur and purchased a very

beautiful set of Radha Krishna deities. These deities were worshiped every day during the *pandal* program and sometime later were sent to England where in 1973 they were installed by Shrila Prabhupada at Iskcon's Bhaktivedanta Manor near London and named as Shri Shri Radha Gokulananda.

Prabhupada Arrives for the Delhi Pandal

On November 10th 1971, Shrila Prabhupada arrived in Delhi on an Indian Airlines flight from Calcutta. There was a large reception committee waiting to greet him at the airport that included the Delhi Mayor, Mr. Hans Raj Gupta, along with some local government officials and many newspaper reporters. The Mayor garlanded Shrila Prabhupada as he stepped down from the airplane. Amongst the reception committee were many well-wishers and a large number of Iskcon devotees chanting the holy names. An elaborate reception and press conference was held next to the airport terminal where a temporary stage had been erected. This was from where the Mayor addressed the press and officially greeted Shrila Prabhupada and welcomed him to the city of Delhi on behalf of himself, the city administration of Delhi, and all the citizens. Shrila Prabhupada also spoke briefly, saying that it was his duty to travel all over the world to preach about the purpose of Lord Chaitanya's *sankirtan* movement and to spread the message of Lord Krishna to the people of the world. Shrila Prabhupada said, "So my Guru Maharaja ordered me long, long ago, when I was twenty-five years old, my Guru Maharaja ordered me to go to the foreign countries and preach Lord Caitanya's message. But somehow or other I could not assimilate his order until I was seventy years old. But it was better late than never. So also I was trying how to make a successful tour for preaching Caitanya Mahaprabhu's message. So by the grace of my Guru Maharaja and by your blessings (the people of Delhi), I went to the western countries and had such a very good response, very good response. I went there empty handed with forty rupees in my pocket and a free ticket by the Scindia Steam Navigation Company. And for one year I had no place to live, I had no money to eat; still I was going here and there. I went in America in 1965. After struggling for one year, in 1966 I incorporated the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. So these boys, when I started my class, 26 Second Avenue, in New York City, some of these students were coming, and then I started my *kirtana* at the Thompkins Square Park, sitting on the ground beneath atree. These boys and the girls were coming. Then the first publicity appeared in the New York Times, about my *kirtana*, and gradually it developed. The next branch was opened at San Francisco, then at Montreal, then at Boston, Buffalo. In this way now we have sixty-five branches all over the world." Referring to his recent preaching tour to Africa, Shrila Prabhupada said That even the Africans are also now dancing in ecstasy and chanting the holy names of Lord Krishna, adding that there is a need for thousands of preachers to help spread the Krishna consciousness movement to every part of the world.

Ksiradakashayi Vishnu Dasa: **We greeted Shrila Prabhupada at the airport with the Mayor of Delhi, Mr. Hans Raj Gupta. It was a big reception and after the Mayor's speech, Shrila Prabhupada also spoke. On that occasion during the airport reception, I presented Shrila Prabhupada with the first ever Hindi BTG which was called 'Bhagavat Darshan'. Shrila Prabhupada was very happy to see the Hindi version of his magazine.**

Yamuna Devi: **What an appropriate event for Shrila Prabhupada to be received as a very important person at the Delhi Palam Airport by the Mayor of Delhi when he arrived for the**

first Delhi *pandal* in Connaught Circus. It was so appropriate for someone who had struggled so hard in Delhi during the '50s and '60s, when he was all alone and without help, and then within just a few years there has been such a tremendous change. Now Shrila Prabhupada was being so much appreciated and had also become really big news.

After leaving the airport, Shrila Prabhupada was driven to the house of Mr. Ram Niwas Dandaria, where he was going to stay overnight. On reaching Mr. Dandaria's house there was a newspaper reporter waiting to interview him. Shrila Prabhupada was discussing the teachings of Lord Krishna as mentioned in the *Bhagavad Gita*. The reporter then asked Shrila Prabhupada that, "I take it that by Krishna, you mean some eternal principle." "No." Shrila Prabhupada replied, "I do not mean a principle, I mean a person just like you and me, except that Krishna is the Supreme Person." Due to the influence of Dr. Radhakrishnan's impersonal commentary on the *Gita*, explaining that everything in the *Gita* should be taken as an allegory, all those who had read the book had become confused. This is because mundane politicians and worldly minded men are not qualified to speak on highly religious matters such as the *Gita*, because to teach the *Gita* one must spend a life-time of sacrifice, dedication, and deep study of the Vedas under a bona-fide spiritual master. The proof of this is that although there had been hundreds of versions of the *Gita* by ordinary materialistic men like Dr. Radhakrishnan, not even one man had become a devotee of Krishna. But when Shrila Prabhupada published his translation of *Bhagavad Gita - As It Is*, thousands of men and women around the world surrendered their lives and became devotees of Lord Krishna.

The interview with the reporter took place in the evening and during the interview, there was the sudden sound of air-raid sirens and all the lights went out. Everyone in the house began shouting, "Blackout! Blackout!" and the reporter informed Shrila Prabhupada that it was an air-raid drill because there was fear of an imminent war between India and Pakistan. The reporter said that the air-raid drill, the sirens, the blackout, and the threat of war, was a sign of the ugly reality that everyone now faced. Shrila Prabhupada responded by saying, that although the reporter had not realized it, the 'ugly reality' was present at every moment, twenty four hours a day, three hundred and sixty five days of the year, and quoted the verse from the *Bhagavatam*, "*padam padam yad vipadam*" meaning in everyday life, "There is danger at every step."

First-ever 'Hare Krishna Festival' in Delhi

The Delhi *pandal* program began at 6:00 A.M., on November 11th 1971, with an elaborate *arati* and *kirtan* performed by the western devotees before the beautiful deities of Radha and Krishna, who had been enthroned upon the stage on a large flower-bedecked altar. At noon the devotees performed another *arati* and *kirtan* for the pleasure of the deities and then distributed *prasadam*. In the evening, as the crowds began to pour into the *pandal*, it was estimated that at least fifteen thousand people had gathered to hear Shrila Prabhupada speak. The devotees began the program with an ecstatic *kirtan* on the stage which gradually built with intensity for over half an hour until Shrila Prabhupada finally arrived. As Shrila Prabhupada entered the *pandal*, many people in the crowd surged forward in order to touch his lotus feet and the devotees escorting Shrila Prabhupada had a torrid time trying to protect him and guide him through the thronging masses towards the stage. When Shrila Prabhupada climbed upon the stage the crowds began clapping and cheering, but when Shrila Prabhupada sat down on the large *vyasasana* in the middle of the stage, the crowds suddenly went silent.

The Mayor of Delhi, Mr. Hans Raj Gupta, stepped forward and placed a flower garland around Shрила Prabhupada's neck, and then as chief guest on the first night, began his opening address to the large crowds packed into the *pandal*. The mayor gave a brief history of Shрила Prabhupada's successful preaching activities in the west and his founding of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Iskcon) in New York in 1966, adding that although he had on many occasions welcomed important visitors to Delhi during the last five years of his being the mayor, for him personally, Shрила Prabhupada was the most important, because he had done the most important work for mankind and the world at large by spreading the sacred teachings of the Vedas across the face of the earth. The mayor then outlined the details of the ten day program and also named each of the 'chief guests' who would give the introductory address each day.

After the mayor's speech, Shрила Prabhupada chanted the 'Jaya Radha Madhava' prayers and then gave a wonderful discourse expounding upon the great science of Krishna consciousness and its vital importance in the modern world. Often quoting from the *Bhagavad Gita*, Shрила Prabhupada outlined the basic philosophy of Krishna consciousness, saying that the spirit soul or *jivatma* is eternal, and exists separately from the temporary material body, which will ultimately perish within a few short years, adding that the human form of life was a rare opportunity to revive one's forgotten relationship and love for Krishna. Shрила Prabhupada also condemned the modern materialistic way of life, saying that it is simply based upon working hard 'day and night' in the pursuit of mundane sense gratification, and because there was no inclination in modern westernized society for self-realization - such a society was no better than a society of hogs and dogs, camels and asses. Shрила Prabhupada also informed the audience that India possessed the greatest treasure-trove of spiritual knowledge and it was the solemn duty of every Indian to spread this knowledge far and wide for the benefit of the world. During his lecture Shрила Prabhupada sadly noted that today, even Indians were firmly under the influence of so-called 'modern society' and were forgetting their real duty in life, which was to achieve self-realization. Shрила Prabhupada then invited everyone to perfect their lives by joining the Krishna consciousness movement, which he emphasized, was non-sectarian and open to everyone regardless of race or religion.

After Shрила Prabhupada finished speaking and rose from the *vyasasana* to leave the stage, he was again mobbed by the enthusiastic crowds who once again surged forward in order to touch his lotus feet, and many people were throwing themselves on the ground before him in order to offer their obeisances. The *pandal* program in the heart of the city had created a major sensation with large enthusiastic crowds gathering every day to hear Shрила Prabhupada's lecture and see the newly converted American and European devotees perform *kirtan*. The Hare Krishna Festival at the L.I.C. grounds was widely reported in all the newspapers and the phenomenal success of the *pandal* program created an extremely favorable beginning for Iskcon's fledgling mission in the nation's capital city.

Ksiradakashayi Vishnu Dasa: The Delhi Mayor Mr. Hans Raj Gupta opened the event held at the L.I.C. grounds. He came on stage and garlanded Shрила Prabhupada. He then began an address glorifying Shрила Prabhupada's exploits. He told the audience that Shрила Prabhupada had gone to America in 1965 and converted many young people to Krishna consciousness. He has now brought them with him from America, and you can see that some of them are here today.

Krishna Gopala Dasa: I first came into contact with Shрила Prabhupada and the Iskcon movement during the 1971 Delhi *pandal* program at the L.I.C. grounds in Connaught Place. After seeing the advertisements for the Hare Krishna Festival, I decided to attend the early

morning program at around 6.30 A.M., on November 12th, which was the second day of the festival. Shrila Prabhupada was seated on the stage surrounded by a large group of his foreign disciples and was speaking before a crowd of many thousands of people. Shrila Prabhupada was speaking in Hindi and was telling the audience that his disciples had voluntarily given up their former bad habits and had adopted all the principles of religion, in order to practice pure Krishna consciousness. Shrila Prabhupada then asked if there was anyone in the audience who was also willing to give up all their bad habits, just as his foreign disciples had done. On hearing Shrila Prabhupada's words, I resolved to immediately give up all my bad habits and follow the four regulative principles and I began to regularly chant the Hare Krishna mantra. After the *pandal* program was over, I continued to strictly follow all of Shrila Prabhupada's instructions including sixteen rounds of *japa* daily and regularly attended the Iskcon temple in Delhi. Around one year later I was formally accepted by Shrila Prabhupada as his disciple. My initiation took place at the Radha Damodara Mandira in Vrindavana on November 7th 1972.

Baleshwara Agarwal: I first met Shrila Prabhupada when he came to Delhi in 1971 to attend the Hare Krishna Festival which was being held at the L.I.C. grounds in Connaught Place. At that time I was the editor of the Hindusthan Samachar, a Delhi based news agency disseminating news in Hindi and other Indian languages. Iskcon's Delhi *pandal* program was featured prominently in the local news at that time, and there were also claims by certain Communists Party politicians from Bengal claiming that Iskcon was a front for the notorious American C.I.A. I decided to find out more about Iskcon and made an appointment to interview Shrila Prabhupada. During the Delhi *pandal* program, Shrila Prabhupada was staying at Seth Dalmia's bungalow on Tilak Road and when I arrived there, I saw many American devotees sitting here and there studying books or chanting on their beads. I arrived early and while I was waiting to meet Shrila Prabhupada, I was quite surprised to see that none of the devotees drank Coca-Cola, which at that time had become the most popular cold drink in India, and besides this, none of them drank any tea either. I also noticed that they were eating pure vegetarian food and ate with their fingers as is done in India. I had gone there as an investigative journalist looking for some kind of a story, as I had been told by a number of my journalist friends, that the Iskcon devotees were all C.I.A. agents; therefore it was a surprise for me to see a group of very dedicated and sincere foreigners very strictly following Indian religion. When the time arrived to interview Shrila Prabhupada, I asked him many pointed and controversial questions on a variety of subjects. My critical journalistic style of questioning would certainly have provoked any normal person, but I was surprised that Shrila Prabhupada was completely unfazed by even the most subjective of my critiques. Shrila Prabhupada presented me with some of his books which I later read with great interest. That first meeting with Shrila Prabhupada made such a great impression on me that sometime later I became an Iskcon life-member. I was also very impressed that Iskcon were translating the *Bhagavad Gita* in different languages like Chinese and Russian, in fact, our Hindustan Samachar always released news bulletins whenever Iskcon published an edition of the *Gita* in any new language, and for me, this remains one of the most unique contributions made by Iskcon. As a journalist I have supported Iskcon as much as possible, especially during the Russian crackdown on the movement and also when the British government attempted to close Iskcon's Bhaktivedanta Manor near London.

Tejas Dasa: During the period of the Delhi *pandal* program, I was appointed as the temple commander with the responsibility to help manage all the devotees attending the program. On a number of occasions I was at Seth Dalmia's bungalow on Tilak Road where Shrila

Prabhupada was staying. One day, a postman arrived with a registered letter for Shрила Prabhupada, as I was about to sign the delivery receipt when the postman objected, saying that only Shрила Prabhupada could sign the receipt. As I did not wish to disturb Shрила Prabhupada, I informed the postman that I was Shрила Prabhupada's assistant and was authorized to receive registered letters, and had done so on previous occasions, but the postman was not agreeable and insisted that Shрила Prabhupada must personally sign the receipt. Although I persisted, I soon realized that the postman was stubborn and not ready to let me sign the receipt. I then informed the postman that I would take the registered letter to Shрила Prabhupada and get his signature on the receipt, but the postman again objected saying that he must witness that Shрила Prabhupada had personally signed the receipt. Reluctantly, I went to Shрила Prabhupada's room and informed him about the registered letter and the demands of the postman. Shрила Prabhupada agreed to sign the receipt and told me to bring the postman to his room. I brought the postman into Prabhupada's room and Prabhupada signaled for me to wait outside. The postman was with Shрила Prabhupada for at least ten minutes and when he finally came out from Shрила Prabhupada's room, he had a big ecstatic smile on his face and kept repeating over and over again, "I have met Swamiji, I have met Swamiji," and then immediately left on his postal round. I then realized that the postman had simply wanted to have *darshan* of Shрила Prabhupada. Shрила Prabhupada was always very kind and ready to meet anyone and it did not matter what was that person's caste, creed, or status in life, he simply wanted to encourage everyone to engage in Krishna consciousness.

Yadubara Dasa : I came to India to be part of Shрила Prabhupada's World Sankirtan Party in September 1970. I first met Shрила Prabhupada during one of the big *sankirtan* programs held in Surat and was later initiated by Shрила Prabhupada in March 1971 at the Iskcon center in Calcutta, along with another devotee named Jananivasa. In November that same year I arrived in Delhi with a large number of devotees from Calcutta to attend the first Delhi *pandal* program in Connaught Place. The program was very successful and many thousands of people attended each day. There were also really ecstatic *kirtans* on the stage every evening. Many important guests spoke during the ten-day program and Shрила Prabhupada gave a lecture every day. A photo-exhibit had also been erected outside the *pandal* showcasing Iskcon's activities around the world.

As I had been a film-maker in my previous profession, I therefore organized the filming of the Delhi *pandal* program which was later included in my first film about Iskcon called 'Hare Krishna World'. I remember at the program Shрила Prabhupada asked me to time his lectures. I am not sure, but I guess he wanted to see exactly how long he was speaking for; he was always absorbed during his discourse and didn't want to speak for too long as there were a number of guests also speaking in the evening. After each discourse I would tell Shрила Prabhupada how long he had spoken for, it was always about forty-five minutes.

Delhi Pandal a Huge Success

The ten day *pandal* program was a resounding success and thousands flocked both morning and evening to hear Shрила Prabhupada's discourses and see his foreign disciples perform *kirtana*. Many prominent citizens of Delhi attended the event which became the talk of the town and was widely reported in all the newspapers. A host of important and prominent persons of Delhi also spoke at the program glorifying Shрила Prabhupada for taking the teachings of India's ancient Vedic culture to the western world. A number of speakers also hailed Shрила

Prabhupada as India's greatest spiritual ambassador and that his contribution towards the spiritual upliftment of the world was unparalleled in modern history. The highlight of the last day of the *pandal* program was the address given by the Canadian High Commissioner, His Excellency Mr. James George, who was highly appreciative of Shрила Prabhupada's missionary work in re-introducing religion back into the lives of the North American youth.

During his speech, His Excellency James George said. "For several years I have been wanting to meet Swamiji and see what it was about him that he was able to affect so many of our young people in Canada and North America. I was very happy to have been invited to attend this program and especially to meet with Swamiji. Something is happening and whoever doubts it, he should be here tonight and see this program for himself. It is not only happening here in Delhi. But it's happening in Toronto, Cleveland, Los Angeles, and New York, and many other places. What is it? I don't know and I can't answer that question, but for me something is happening at a deeper spiritual level. It is the awakening of a search for the answers to life."

Gurudas: As the host, my job was to invite chief guests to the program, and so I thought it would be a good idea to have titles for what subject Prabhupada would talk about and the guest speakers would speak on these different themes. One of the chief guests was James George, the Canadian ambassador to India, who was very favorable. His talk was appreciated by everyone. We also invited Dr. Atmaram, the chief scientist, and he talked on how religion and science actually don't have to be at odds with each other. After Dr. Atmaram's talk, Prabhupada spoke on *Easy Journey To Other Planets* which was very scientific. We also invited Hans Raj Gupta, the Mayor of Delhi, who was a very good friend of Prabhupada. His talk was more anecdotal, how Prabhupada began his preaching mission and his great perseverance. How he first started the League of Devotees and then eventually printed the *Srimad Bhagvatam*. It was very enlightening for us to hear that Prabhupada went through so many difficulties in the beginning of the movement.

Ksiradakashayi Vishnu Dasa: **One of the guests was Pandit Mooli Chand Sharma, secretary of the Sanatana Daram Sabha and a leading member of the opposition in the Indian Parliament. In his speech he glorified Shрила Prabhupada's preaching of Sanatana Dharma all over the world, adding that for the first time in Delhi's history a discourse on the *Bhagavatam* was taking place right in the heart of India's capital city. Pandit Sharma also said, "Swamijis preaching is perfect and therefore people from all over the world are following it. So my humble request is that all of you help and encourage them and join the Hare Krishna movement. I offer my sincere thanks to Swamiji for the opportunity to join with you on this occasion."**

In his discourse that followed Pandit Sharma's speech, Shрила Prabhupada said, "After Independence, Indians are trying to develop themselves, so please develop spiritually, because spiritual development is the best form of development for human beings. Don't imitate the Americans and Europeans who are living like cats and dogs, and who engage in the four sinful activities, meat eating, intoxication, illicit sex, and gambling. The atomic bomb is already there and as soon as the next war breaks out all the skyscrapers and everything else will be finished. Try to understand this from the viewpoint of human life. The human form is attained after many millions of years of evolution. This human form of life actually means developed consciousness; therefore we should not waste our lives like dogs and hogs. We are all part and parcel of God, but somehow or other we have fallen into this material existence, now we have to evolve in such a way that we can go back home, back to Godhead. That is the

highest perfection and the best form of development." (In 2005, Ksiradakashayi Prabhu accepted the *sannyasa* order becoming Ksiradakashayi Vishnu Swami)

Yamuna Devi: **The *pandal* programs in Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta, were very widely covered in the press and India's political leaders were very aware of Prabhupada's activities, including Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the important ministers in her cabinet. The Prime Minister herself was very appreciative of our Krishna consciousness movement. Some of the members of Parliament often spoke to her on our behalf. She was very helpful in the early years of our movement and met with the devotees on various occasions and always gave encouraging words.**

It so happened that I was the person who was arranging for the worship and installation of the Deities at the various *pandal* programs. The Deities of Radha-Gokulananda were officially installed by Srila Prabhupada on the occasion of the Delhi *pandal* and were later sent to Bhaktivedanta Manor in England. The deities from the Bombay *pandal* went to Australia and New Zealand, the deities from the Jaipur *pandal*, Radha-Govinda, went to New York. Prabhupada considered that the festival programs were also installation ceremonies of the Deities. In other words, They were worshipped in his presence. So for a pure devotee to be introducing Them to worship is naturally a form of installation. When Prabhupada heard that some devotees were making some adjustment to the *arca-vigraha* in some small way, he said, "No, these Deities have already been worshipped, this should not take place."

Prabhupada Takes His Disciples to Vrindavana

After the successful ten day *pandal* program in Delhi, Srila Prabhupada decided to take all his disciples to Vrindavana. He had taken his American and European disciples to many places in India for preaching the message of Krishna consciousness including; Amritsar, Surat, Indore, Gorakhpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Calcutta, Bombay, and Delhi, but he had not yet taken them to Vrindavana, the sacred abode of Lord Krishna. Therefore after the conclusion of the Delhi *pandal* program, Srila Prabhupada took all his disciples to the holy city of Vrindavana. While in Vrindavana, Srila Prabhupada stayed at Saraf Bhavan at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Saraf, who later donated the land in Vrindavana where the Krishna Balarama Mandira now stands. Srila Prabhupada also took his disciples to many important holy places around Vraja Mandala including; Mahavana, Brahmanda Ghata, Govardhana, Radha-kunda, Varsana, and Nandagram. While staying in Vrindavana the threat of war with Pakistan appeared inevitable. The Government in Delhi ordered a total blackout across the country as a precaution against bombing raids by the Pakistani air force. Srila Prabhupada and his disciples were forced to remain indoors and as a precaution the authorities had also cut off the electricity. Everyone was forced to use candles and every household had to cover their windows so that light could not escape, which might inadvertently help the Pakistani bombers locate the strategic Indian Army cantonments, especially those at Mathura and Agra.

War Erupts Between India and Pakistan

After spending some time in Vrindavana, on December 1st 1971, Srila Prabhupada decided to return to Delhi along with his disciples in order to continue with his preaching program around India. Srila Prabhupada and his disciples were invited to stay at the famous Birla Mandira, where Srila Prabhupada was given a private cottage in the ornate gardens just behind the main

temple. The next day Shrila Prabhupada visited the American Ambassador to India, His Excellency Mr. Kenneth Keating, and after explaining the philosophy of Krishna consciousness to him, presented him with some of his books. The threat of war with Pakistan was imminent and the following day on a morning walk, Shrila Prabhupada asked one of the devotees to purchase a newspaper from a passing vendor and had another disciple read aloud.

'Emergency declared! Three enemy planes shot down.

Pakistan has launched a massive attack on the western front, bombing seven Indian airfields and Pakistani armed forces have crossed the cease-fire line in Poonch'.

Shrila Prabhupada turned to his disciples and said, "This war will not last long, it will soon be finished, and Pakistan will lose." Shrila Prabhupada did not appear to be alarmed by the war with Pakistan and informed his disciples, "War was not the only 'ugly reality' - birth, death, old age, and disease, and other material sufferings are inevitable, war or no war." After spending a few days at the Birla Mandira, Shrila Prabhupada and his disciples moved to a *dharmshala* in Kamala Nagar in Old Delhi. Due to the ongoing conflict with Pakistan, there was a total blackout throughout the capital and all the windows of the *dharmshala* were coated in black paint, black paper, or dark colored blankets. The loud scream of Indian Air-force Jet fighters heading to the conflict zone could be heard throughout the day and night. While staying at the Kamala Nagar *dharmshala*, Shrila Prabhupada gave classes to the devotees by candlelight, in what were later called 'the blackout lectures'.

In one of the so-called 'blackout lectures', Shrila Prabhupada said, "The propensity to fight is very strong in this age of Kali, and the population is becoming so sinful that they are trying to accumulate atomic weapons for ultimate destruction of humanity." During these lectures there were no guests present because during the night-time blackout, no one was allowed on the streets and the police often banged on the door of the *dharmshala* demanding that even the candles be put out. Shrila Prabhupada's preaching activities were somewhat curtailed and the devotees found it difficult to preach in Delhi as everyone was consumed by the fear of the war.

In Mayapur, West Bengal, the Government had ordered that all the foreign devotees staying there had to leave, as the East Pakistani border was just a few miles away and there was a lot of fighting near the border area. Besides fighting on the western front, the Indian army had crossed into East Pakistan and was attempting to liberate the country from the hands of the ruthless Pakistan military, who were committing wholesale genocide against the local inhabitants who were predominantly of Bengali origin.

Tejas Dasa: **When we returned to Delhi from Vrindavana, we all stayed at the Birla Mandira and then at the Gita Bhavan in Kamala Nagar. We were forced to remain in Delhi for about twenty days due to the war with Pakistan. There was a total blackout in the evenings but Shrila Prabhupada continued to give classes and also translated the verses of *Bhagavad Gita* into Bengali, with the help of a Bengali disciple Sacinandana Dasa. I think that Prabhupada called it the *Gitagan*. I was very sick with jaundice at the time and could hardly move, but nevertheless I managed to crawl into Shrila Prabhupada's room each day to hear his lectures.**

As Shrila Prabhupada had predicted, the war with Pakistan was soon over with a resounding victory for the Indian armed forces. The Indian soldiers had driven back the Pakistani forces on the western front and had also routed the Pakistan army in the East. Thus East Pakistan gained

independence and became known as Bangladesh. Shrila Prabhupada had his disciples bring the newspapers whose headlines boldly stated,

‘General Niazi Surrenders, Bangladesh Is Free, Unilateral ceasefire declared’

On hearing the news Shrila Prabhupada was joyous and said that due to the spiritual impact of holding huge *sankirtan* festivals held in Delhi and other big Indian cities, victory was assured for the Indian army. Due to the war, Delhi was now a hot-bed of international politics and the feelings towards America was at an all-time low. This was because America had cut off essential supplies to India and had also threatened the Indian Government with reprisals if they did not stop the war with Pakistan. The American government even sent the U.S. seventh fleet into the Bay of Bengal in support of the Pakistan army. In fact the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had directly blamed the Americans, and more specifically President Nixon for the war. Not wanting his western disciples to remain in Delhi during a time of so much animosity towards America, Shrila Prabhupada decided to send them to different locations in India in order to continue with the preaching. Shrila Prabhupada believed that neither war nor political intrigue should stand in the way of Lord Chaitanya’s *sankirtan* movement and the mission of inundating the world with Love of God.

Prabhupada’s Successful Tour of India

The return to India of Shrila Prabhupada in August 1970, and the extensive preaching tour undertaken by Shrila Prabhupada and his American and European disciples around India had been a phenomenal success, and Indians everywhere had spontaneously greeted Shrila Prabhupada and heaped praise upon him for the great work he had done by spreading the message of India’s Vedic culture in the western world. The *sankirtan* programs held in the major Indian cities had met with an amazing response from the people of India who had flocked in thousands to hear Shrila Prabhupada speak and to see the foreign Vaishnavas performing *kirtan*. Although Shrila Prabhupada had attempted to start the Krishna Consciousness movement in India from as early as 1955, he did not meet with the success he had desired. Indians were no longer taking spiritual life seriously and were either too absorbed in mundane politics or completely mesmerized by the so-called ‘westernized life-style.’ Most Indians were simply interested in getting money to gratify their senses and enjoy the numerous imported goods flooding the Indian market. There was also a general belief amongst most Indians that anything Indian was useless, and that also included Indian culture and Indian religion. Many Indians had already abandoned their traditional *deshi* culture and a large majority wore western-style clothing in the form of trousers, jeans, shirts, and tailored suits, and had developed western-style habits like smoking, drinking liquor and consuming meat, fish, and eggs, and there were some who even ate beef. On the other hand, there were also millions upon millions of Indians who were simply too poverty stricken to care about anything other than their basic survival needs and were struggling hard just to obtain food, clothing, and shelter, for themselves and their families.

Shrila Prabhupada had firmly believed that if he could go to the west and convert the highly intelligent and materially advanced westerners to Krishna consciousness, Indians would immediately take note of it and realize there must be some greater value in their own Vedic culture than they had realized. After seeing the westerners embrace Krishna consciousness, Shrila Prabhupada had calculated that the Indian’s would certainly be inspired to follow their

American and European brothers and also embrace Krishna consciousness. Shrila Prabhupada often gave the analogy of 'the blind man and the lame man', saying that America was blind and India was lame, but if they worked together, the blind man America, could carry the lame man India, thus the lame man could direct the blind man which direction to go. In this way, if Americans and Indians combined their energy, they could conquer the world in the name of Krishna consciousness.

By 1972, many new Iskcon projects were underway in various places like Bombay, Hyderabad, Mayapur, and Vrindavana, and for the first time in its short history, Iskcon began constructing its own temples, instead of using rented residential buildings; consequently, the future of the Krishna consciousness movement in India appeared to be extremely bright. After the Delhi *pandal* program, Shrila Prabhupada dispatched his disciples to various places in India and then travelled to Bombay and a number of other cities in India. Shrila Prabhupada then went to Mayapur for the cornerstone laying ceremony of Iskcon's new Mayapur Chandradoya Mandira, which was held on February 29th 1972. Shrila Prabhupada then travelled to Vrindavana to sign the deed and perform the ground-breaking ceremony for Iskcon's Krishna Balarama Mandira temple in the Ramana Reti area of Vrindavana.

After the ground-breaking ceremony in Vrindavana, Shrila Prabhupada left for Bombay and then went to Sydney where he arrived on April 1st 1972, for a preaching tour of Australia and New Zealand, which would also take him to Japan, where a new Iskcon temple had just opened. After visiting Japan, Shrila Prabhupada went to Hawaii and then to Los Angeles where he arrived on May 18th 1972.

On October 17th 1972, after an extensive preaching tour of America, Shrila Prabhupada returned to India in order to attend the *Karttika* festival in Vrindavana. Shrila Prabhupada stayed in his rooms at the Radha Damodara Mandira, while his disciples stayed at the Bharatpur Maharaja's palace near Keshi Ghata. It was at this time that Shrila Prabhupada delivered the now famous 'Nectar of Devotion' lectures in the courtyard of the Radha Damodara Mandira next to the *samadhi* of Shrila Rupa Goswami.

Iskcon Delhi Continues Under Tejas

Due to the great success of the Delhi *pandal* program, the preaching in Delhi had received a tremendous boost and many people wanted to become Iskcon life-members. Sometime after the Delhi *pandal* program, Ksiradakashayi Vishnu Dasa once again returned to London and Tejas Dasa took over as the Delhi temple president. Tejas Dasa had formerly been a volunteer with the American Peace Corps in India and had learned to speak fluent Hindi which was a great advantage. He was very successful in enlisting life-members and eventually gained a lot of respect amongst the people of Delhi. He was also a very good preacher and expert in presenting the philosophy of Krishna consciousness.

Krishna Gopala Dasa: **The first Iskcon temple in Delhi was in West Patel Nagar, where we had rented four small rooms in the house of a Sikh gentleman. One day, Shrila Prabhupada was due to arrive at the airport and I went with Tejas, the temple president, and a few others including Mr. Hans Raj Gupta, the former mayor, to meet Shrila Prabhupada. We then escorted Shrila Prabhupada back to the temple in West Patel Nagar where we arrived at around 11:00 P.M.**

Tejas Dasa: **After the Delhi *pandal* program in November 1971, the next time Shrila Prabhupada came to Delhi was in October 1972. He was due to arrive at Delhi airport late in the evening, so with a small group of devotees and well-wishers, we went to the airport to greet Shrila Prabhupada on his arrival. Amongst our group was Shrila Prabhupada's old friend Hans Raj Gupta, the former mayor of Delhi. After Shrila Prabhupada had cleared the immigration and customs area we all came forward to welcome him and offer him flower garlands. I was quite astonished that as soon as Shrila Prabhupada saw Hans Raj Gupta Prabhupada immediately embraced him and they sat down together on a nearby seat and began talking. Shrila Prabhupada was telling Hans Raj Gupta about the degrading situation in the west, about the spate of plane hijackings, and about the temporary and frustrating nature of the material world.**

It was quite late in the night by the time we got Shrila Prabhupada back to the temple which was at that time in West Patel Nagar. It was very small building and not so nice. When we arrived at the temple, Shrila Prabhupada immediately enquired about how I was keeping the temple accounts and I gave him a basic update on our financial situation. In fact, whenever Shrila Prabhupada came to Delhi, he always enquired first about the status of the temple accounts. Shrila Prabhupada attached great importance to Delhi and was eager that the affairs of the Delhi temple were being properly looked after. Shrila Prabhupada never wanted even one paisa wasted, as he said everything belonged to Krishna and should only be used for Krishna's service. Although it was late, before taking rest, Shrila Prabhupada spoke for some time with the guests who had been waiting at the temple and those who had greeted him at the airport.

The next day we took Shrila Prabhupada by car to Vrindavana where he stayed at the Radha Damodara Mandira. This was the time that he gave the famous 'Nectar of Devotion' classes and I also stayed in Vrindavana for a few days. One day, while on a morning walk with Shrila Prabhupada, he told me to return to Delhi and find a better temple, suggesting I look in the Connaught Place area. After the walk we returned to the Radha Damodara Mandira and while in his room Shrila Prabhupada asked me to locate some land in Delhi where Iskcon could build its own temple. He then called his secretary Shyamasundara Dasa, to bring some paper and Shrila Prabhupada gave instructions on how to build a temple. He said he wanted a temple just like the Govindaji Mandira, saying that the temple should have a very nice courtyard with rooms located around the inside. Shrila Prabhupada had always wanted a big Iskcon temple in Delhi and I remember that on numerous occasions I would go with Shrila Prabhupada to different parts of Delhi to look at land where we could build an Iskcon temple, but unfortunately we never found any suitable land.

The Delhi Temple Moves

After leaving Vrindavana, Tejas Dasa returned to Delhi and after searching for a suitable place, he finally found a small house to rent in Baba Lane, Bengali Market, not very far from Connaught Place and quite near to the city centre. Therefore at the end of 1972, the Iskcon temple moved from West Patel Nagar to Baba Lane and remained there for the next one year. In October 1973, Tejas Dasa found a very large house for rent in the up-market Ananda Niketan suburb in South Delhi, not far from the Delhi airport. Because it was a very large and spacious house with many rooms, Tejas Dasa decided to re-locate the Iskcon temple to Ananda Niketan. It was during this time while at Ananda Niketan, that the installation ceremony of Iskcon Delhi's presiding deities, Their Lordships Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi took place.

Dhananjaya Dasa: Tejas had rented a house near the airport and when Shrila Prabhupada arrived in Delhi on his way to Vrindavana, Tejas Prabhu was very happy to show the house to Shrila Prabhupada. It was a really big house with a very large garden and it certainly looked very grand – but unfortunately there was no water – just a trickle twice a day, morning and evening, and the devotees had to wait with buckets for ages just to get water for bathing, cooking, cleaning, and other things. When Shrila Prabhupada arrived at the house and saw the situation regarding the water, he really blasted Tejas saying, “What is this, where are you bringing us, how can anyone live without water?” Shrila Prabhupada was extremely upset. Consequently, Tejas began looking for another house where there was plenty of water.

Tejas Dasa: Mr. Lakshman S. Agarwal, had a very nice Mercedes Benz, and he was an expert driver, so I sometimes asked him to pick-up Shrila Prabhupada in his car. Normally, when the devotees were driving, Shrila Prabhupada would not let them go more than 60 mph. because he thought it was unsafe. I remember one time Mr. Agarwal was driving us along the Delhi to Mathura highway at 160 mph. We had a tape playing of Prabhupada singing *bhajans* and Prabhupada was sitting very relaxed in the back seat listening to the tape. I don't think he realized that we were travelling at such a high speed.

Mrs. Lila Agarwal: An American boy called Tejas who had enlisted my husband as an Iskcon life-member, came to our house along with his wife. He was observing an *ekadashi-vrata* and when I offered him and his wife *prasadam*, he requested only fruits. Tejas had noticed our Mercedes car parked outside the house and asked if it could be used for his spiritual master, who often visited Delhi. Because the temple had no car in those days, Tejas asked if it would it be possible for us to send our car for Shrila Prabhupada? I told him that I would be absolutely delighted to help.

Shrila Prabhupada had informed Tejas that he wanted him to organize a very big 'Hare Krishna Festival' in November at the same L.I.C. grounds in Connaught Place where a previous festival had been so successfully held in 1971. Although the local Municipal authorities who controlled the land, initially agreed to give the L.I.C. grounds for Iskcon's *pandal* program, they later declined stating that there had been recent changes in the rules pertaining to religious functions being held on Municipal land. Tejas was forced to shift the venue of the *pandal* program to the Talkatora stadium grounds located in an isolated part of Delhi some distance away from the city centre.

Annada Devi: Shrila Prabhupada had wanted to make a grand presentation of Krishna consciousness for the benefit the people of Delhi. He asked Teja to hold a big *pandal* program at the L.I.C. grounds where the Air India office now stands. Even though Tejas tried very hard to obtain permission to hold Iskcon's program at the L.I.C. grounds, the local Municipal authorities did not grant permission. Even my father, K.R.F. Khilnani, a former Indian Ambassador and Iskcon life-member also tried to persuade the local authorities to give Iskcon the L.I.C. grounds for thair program, but to no avail.

Tejas Dasa: We had organized a series of festivals at the Talkatora Stadium in South Delhi. Mr. Lakshman Agarwal would drive Shrila Prabhupada to the program every evening. Shrila Prabhupada gave all of his senior disciples an opportunity to speak. I also got the opportunity to give a lecture at the program. We would speak for around fifteen minutes and then Shrila

Prabhupada would speak, adding his comments to whatever subject we had lectured on. On the first night when I was returning in the car with Shрила Prabhupada, he told me he did not like the *kirtan* led by Dinanatha. Generally, everyone appreciated Dinanatha's *kirtan* and he was one of Iskcon's famous *kirtan* leaders. Prabhupada said, "This screaming is not good; *kirtan* must be sweet and melodious." When we returned to the temple Shрила Prabhupada went to his room and started playing the harmonium and led a very sweet *kirtan*. He then invited Bharadwaja, another well known singer in Iskcon, to play harmonium and lead *kirtan*. Bharadwaja started playing a new melody and Prabhupada remarked, "Oh, a new melody." He liked the new tune very much.

Annada Devi: Talkatora Gardens were not in a very central place to hold a successful *pandal* program. During the three-day program the weather was really bad and every evening there was a big storm with swirling winds followed by a heavy downpour. Due to this and the isolated location, the crowds were very sparse. After the *pandal* programs were over, while the devotees were sitting in his room at the Ananda Niketan temple, Shрила Prabhupada commented that Tejas had arranged the *pandal* program in such a place, that only the most sincere people would come, because they had to cross the seven seas and seven continents to get there. Prabhupada was obviously disappointed that the program was not such a great success. He had wanted to hold a really grand festival for the pleasure of Lord Krishna. He then quoted a verse from Lord Chaitanya's *Siksastakam* prayers, "*yugayitam nimisena caksusa pravrsayitam, sunyayitam jagat sarvam govinda virahena me.*" Shрила Prabhupada then asked if anyone knew this verse. There were many devotees in the room including Drishtadyumna, but no one knew. Prabhupada then said, "Rukmini knows." Rukmini, the wife of Bharadwaja, then quoted the whole verse in English. "My Lord Govinda, because of separation from You, I consider even a moment a great millennium. Tears flow from my eyes like torrents of rain, and I see the entire world as void."

Towards the end of the *darshan*, Shрила Prabhupada moved from behind his low desk to the cushion next to his harmonium. He then began playing different melodies while singing the Hare Krishna mantra. As he finished singing and playing the harmonium he said, "This is the way to please Krishna, to chant the Hare Krishna mantra in different melodies."

On November 11th 1973, Shрила Prabhupada, gave the morning *Bhagavatam* class at Iskcon's Ananda Niketan temple, in which he made the following observation. "Human life is not meant for wasting like cats and dogs, simply eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. That is not human life. At the present moment humans are simply engaged in these four principles of bodily demands of life—how to eat, how to sleep, how to have sense gratification and how to defend. Unfortunately, human beings have become less than the animals. Out of 8,400,000 species of life, the human species are only 400,000. The majority of living entities are in forms of animals." In his lecture, Shрила Prabhupada is making the important point that to take birth in the human form is very rare, and therefore the human form should not be wasted simply living as the animals do, only interested in eating, sleeping, mating, and defending, Shрила Prabhupada then outlined the process of spiritual advancement for human beings. "The process to understand God is by hearing. If you simply hear about God, then you will see God by hearing. Because there is a cloud of dirtiness within our heart unless that dirtiness is cleansed, we cannot perceive God. Therefore this process of chanting the Hare Krishna mantra is described by Shri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, '*ceto-darpana-marjanam*', cleansing the mirror of the heart'. Unless you cleanse the mirror which is full of dust, you cannot see your face very nicely; similarly, unless you cleanse your heart very nicely, or in other words, unless your heart is cleansed of all sinful

reaction, you cannot understand what is God. That is not possible. In the *Bhagavad-gita* (Bg. 7.28), it is said, '*yesam tv anta-gatim papam jananam punya karmanam, sarva-bhutani sammoham sarge yanti parantapa*. They can see God, those who are fully washed of all sinful reactions'.

During the *pandal* program at the Talkatora Stadium grounds, Tejas had arranged a set of very beautiful Radha-Krishna Deities that were placed on a throne in the centre of the stage, just as had been done at the other big *pandal* programs held by Shrila Prabhupada in India. After the *pandal* program was over, Shrila Prabhupada held a simple ceremony attended by just a few devotees at the temple in Anand Niketan and duly installed Them as the presiding Deities of Iskcon Delhi, giving them the names Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi.

Prabhuvishnu Dasa: In March 1974, I arrived for the first time in India to attend the Gaura Purnima Festival at Mayapur; I spent the night at the Iskcon temple in Delhi which was then in Anand Niketan. The Deities of Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi were being worshiped in a separate room on the roof-top and during mangala-arati all the devotees went to the roof and held kirtan in the open-air.

Prabhupada Managed Everything in India

From the year 1972, Shrila Prabhupada had specifically concentrated his efforts towards establishing his Iskcon movement in India. Although Shrila Prabhupada had achieved great success in the west, he found it to be both uncultured and uncivilized. He felt that if there was a trace of civilization anywhere in the world, it was in India, the heart of Vedic civilization. Therefore, it was imperative for him to establish the Krishna consciousness movement in the Vedic homeland of India.

Shrila Prabhupada was deeply involved in all the new projects that were underway in India, and he always personally supervised all the accounts of the various Iskcon projects, especially those at Vrindavana, Bombay, and Mayapur. Shrila Prabhupada personally audited every account and also signed all the checks. In fact, it was acknowledged that Shrila Prabhupada was the 'de-facto' GBC in India. Shrila Prabhupada had first instituted the Governing Body Commission (GBC) in 1973, in order to help manage the affairs of Iskcon. Even though a number of senior American devotees had held the post of GBC in India; none of them were that successful in managing things in the sub-continent, mainly due to the unique contradictions prevailing in a third-world country like India, with rampant corruption in every aspect of life. Shrila Prabhupada was always concerned that his project managers in India were being cheated, which was causing unwanted financial losses to the movement. Shrila Prabhupada tried desperately to find an experienced disciple who could properly look after Iskcon affairs in India. For this reason, in December 1974, Shrila Prabhupada appointed a new GBC for India, Gopala Krishna Dasa, a Delhi-born Indian disciple living in the U.S.A., who had obtained an M.B.A. from Montreal University and had worked as an executive manager with the Coca-Cola Company. At that time Gopala Krishna Prabhu was a *grihasta*, but in the year 1981 he accepted the order of *sannyasa* becoming known as Gopala Krishna Goswami.

Iskcon Returns to Bengali Market

After the somewhat disastrous move to Anand Niketan, Tejas Prabhu re-located the Iskcon temple back to Bengali Market around the autumn of 1974, but this time to a small rented

house at 19, Todarmal Lane. The deities of Shri Shri Radha Parthasarathi were also moved there and cared for by Tejas Prabhu's wife Madira Devi, who also cooked for the deities as well as the temple devotees. A few months later, Tejas also rented another house in the same street at No.9 Todarmal Lane, where the ground floor was occupied by Tejas and his wife Madira Devi, while the apartment on the second floor of the house was kept as Shrila Prabhupada's quarters, where he could stay whenever he was visiting Delhi.

Iskcon's temple at Bengali Market was perhaps at that time the most important Iskcon temple in India, especially with the ongoing construction of the Krishna Balarama Mandira in Vrindavana. Tejas Prabhu was also in-charge of the Vrindavana construction account and Iskcon Delhi provided considerable funds towards building the Vrindavana temple. Devotees involved in the construction work in Vrindavana were always popping in and out of the Delhi temple while conducting their work in the city. Besides this, Delhi airport had more international flights than any other airport in India and most Iskcon devotees arriving or leaving India in those days, would transit through the Delhi temple. Consequently the temple in Bengali Market was always a beehive of frenetic activity.

Tejas Dasa: One time at around 3:00A.M., when Shrila Prabhupada was staying in his room at Todarmal Lane, he sent his secretary Brahmananda to call me. I immediately got up from bed and hastily putting on my *dhoti* ran up the stairs to Prabhupada's room. "Where is the bank passbook?" Shrila Prabhupada asked, adding, "Where is your pen and paper?" I immediately ran downstairs and got the passbook, a pen, and some paper, and ran back up to Prabhupada's room. Shrila Prabhupada began asking me various questions about our Iskcon account and began dictating different instructions about banking. Shrila Prabhupada told me that accounting simply means writing everything down. I remembered once when I was in Prabhupada's room in Bombay, Prabhupada called the temple president, Giriraja, and because he did not have a pen or notebook, Prabhupada was not happy and scolded him saying, "You must always carry a pen and paper to take notes."

One afternoon a female Bengali journalist had arranged to interview Shrila Prabhupada at the temple and I remained in the room when the meeting took place. During the interview the journalist raised a question regarding the Ramakrishna Mission. Prabhupada answered by saying, "Please do not mind it, but our understanding is that the *sannyasis* of the Ramakrishna Mission are eating meat." In this way Prabhupada very politely explained that the Ramakrishna Mission did not follow genuine Vedic culture.

Dhananjaya Dasa: I spent some time at the Todarmal Lane temple from around November 1974. I had come to India from London in October, with the intention of opening an Iskcon temple in Colombo, Sri Lanka. I had gone to Vrindavana to seek Shrila Prabhupada's permission, but instead he asked me to become the temple president of the soon to be completed Krishna-Balarama Mandira in Vrindavana. As the construction work was going to take another seven months to complete there was not a lot for me to do, so Shrila Prabhupada asked me to search for land around Vrindavana for growing crops for feeding cows saying, "If the land has sweet water, buy it immediately." Unfortunately, all the land we saw had salty water so we couldn't purchase anything. Because there was little service for me in Vrindavana, I suggested to Shrila Prabhupada that I could go to Delhi and help Tejas Dasa, and in this way I could keep myself engaged. Shrila Prabhupada immediately said, "Yes" adding that, "An idle mind is the devils workshop, so go to Delhi and work with Tejas."

Working with Tejas in Delhi was a very wonderful experience for me. Tejas was a very active devotee and made a lot of life-members in Delhi. He also trained me how to make life-

members. I really liked his association and I found him to be a very interesting person and also very intelligent. We not only made life-members in Delhi but Faridabad as well. Tejas could speak fluent Hindi which was a big asset as most Indians we met did not know English. The Todarmal Lane temple was very small and it was painted bright yellow, so we used to call it the Yellow submarine (after the Beatles song of the same name). During my stay in Delhi, Tejas and I became very close friends and I served the Delhi temple until March, when I left to attend the Mayapur festival and then later took up my post as Vrindavana temple president.

Rajasekhara Dasa: I came to India in the first week of January 1975, with the intention of serving as a *pujari* at the Krishna-Balarama Mandira in Vrindavana, which was due to open in April. After arriving at the Delhi airport I took a taxi to the Iskcon temple in Bengali Market. I was surprised to see that Delhi was a well developed modern city with many high-rise apartments and broad tree-lined avenues. As the taxi made its way through South Delhi, I was also surprised to see so many well-appointed palatial residences of great architectural beauty, replete with manicured gardens. I had imagined India to be somewhat underdeveloped and mostly covered with a great jungle. I was mildly amused to see that every car on the roads of Delhi was of the same model, called an Ambassador, whose design was based on an outdated '50's model of the British-made Morris Oxford.

After arriving at the temple, I found it to be quite small and rather cramped and the only large room in the building was where the deities Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi were being worshiped. The temple president Tejas Dasa and his wife Madira Devi were extremely courteous and immediately offered me *maha-prasadam* and a glass of cow's milk. I told Tejas of my plans to serve in Vrindavana as a *pujari*, but he requested me to stay in Delhi and help Dhananjaya with life-membership preaching, at least for some time, saying that they did not have any qualified devotees there, except Dhananjaya. I had known Dhananjaya from England and he also requested me to help the Delhi temple for the time-being. I had already set my heart on serving in Vrindavana, but as the Krishna-Balarama Mandira would not be completed for another few months, I agreed to become Dhananjaya's preaching partner and stay in Delhi until the Mayapur festival in March. However, I did make a pilgrimage to Vrindavana and spent three days there, before returning to Delhi to help support the life-membership program.

India appeared to be a very wonderful and exciting place, the atmosphere appeared surcharged with spirituality, and the sun was shining radiantly every day. The sights and sounds of India and the pace of life were all-together different from England. When I first went to Old Delhi, it seemed to me that I had been taken back in time about one hundred years; there were hardly any cars or trucks, but scores of bullock carts loaded with goods and long lines of porters making their way through the streets carrying really huge loads on their backs. It was rather like looking at a very old photograph of a bygone era. Once when I was heading down Chandni Chowk, I saw a group of about five or six young Indians dressed like *sadhu-babas* in *lungis* and *kurtas*, dancing down the street rhythmically playing drums and cymbals while singing the Hare Krishna mantra, I was surprised and it reminded me of our own Iskcon devotees. I could immediately realize that India was not an ordinary place and that the people of India were very closely connected to spiritualism and Krishna consciousness.

Tejas Dasa: Once Shрила Prabhupada arrived in Delhi and there was no one to cook for him, my wife was also not there, so I decided that I would do the cooking. It was *Varaha Ekadashi* and I made some potato *halavah*. It was very difficult to concentrate on cooking because the

devotees in the temple were all extremely passionate, and nobody really wanted to help, they would come to the kitchen for ten minutes and then run off and disappear. The potato *halavah* was supposed to be very creamy, but it ended up being lumpy. I felt extremely sorry because after so many years as Shрила Prabhupada's disciple, I now had the chance to personally cook for him, and besides that, potato *halavah* was one of my specialties, but it was not turning out exactly as it should. Nevertheless, I concentrated on cooking for my spiritual master and made a number of other *ekadashi* preparations. Feeling a little ashamed because of the lumps in the potato *halavah*, I requested one of the other devotees to take the *prasadam* to Shрила Prabhupada. After Prabhupada had finished eating, I sheepishly entered his room to see if there was anything else he required. Prabhupada looked up at me and asked, "Who has cooked the *prasadam*." I replied that it was me who had cooked. Then Prabhupada said, "The *prasadam* was very nice, especially the potato *halavah*, it was very tasty." I was amazed and immediately had the realization that Prabhupada must have tasted the devotion I had put into the cooking, rather than the cooking itself. Later on, Shрила Prabhupada enquired from his servant Brahmananda why I was doing the cooking. Brahmananda explained that no one else in the temple was able to properly cook. Prabhupada replied saying, "That is a great shame, he is a very good preacher, why should he have to do the cooking." Even though Prabhupada appreciated my cooking, he felt that it was more important for me to continue preaching rather than to cook for him, and was not happy that my preaching that day had to stop, simply for cooking.

Rajasekhara Dasa: Every morning at around 6:30 A.M., a milkman would arrive at the Todarmal Lane temple and milk his cow and the devotees took it in turns to keep an eye on the milkman while he milked the cow. One day Tejas asked me to keep an eye on the milkman and told me a very funny story about this particular milkman. He said that they had been getting milk delivered by this same milkman for quite some time, but the devotees had said that the milk was becoming watery, therefore Tejas complained to the milkman and threatened to cancel the order. Denying any wrongdoing, the milkman promised to bring his cow to the temple everyday so that the devotees could see for themselves that there was no water mixed in the milk. Therefore, every day the milkman arrived with his cow at the temple, and in full view of the devotees, milked the cow and handed the milk directly to the devotees. Nevertheless, the devotees still said that the milk was very watery. After a few more days, one of the devotees was closely watching the milkman milk his cow, when he suddenly noticed a small jet of water coming out from the milkman's shirt sleeve straight into the milk bucket. Catching hold of the milkman and lifting his *chaddar*, the devotee discovered a plastic bag full of water under the milkman's armpit, which was connected to a long plastic tube hidden under his shirt sleeve. As the milkman milked the cow, he was simultaneously pumping the bag, and the water was running down the plastic tube into the milk bucket. Because the milkman was thoroughly exposed, he became ashamed and while paying his obeisances, prayed to the devotees for forgiveness, promising never to cheat again. After this incident the devotees always made the milkman remove his *chaddar* before milking the cow, and Tejas said that the milk had always been very good after that.

Tejas Dasa: Once when I was visiting Vrindavana, Guru Dasa, who was the Vrindavana temple president at the time, informed Shрила Prabhupada that my wife had run away because she was not very satisfied with me. Shрила Prabhupada called me to his room and asked me why my wife was not staying with me in Delhi. I explained that she was always arguing with me and then running away to Vrindavana. "Do not argue with your wife," Prabhupada said, "In

the house where there is no argument with one's wife, Laxshmi, the goddess of fortune will stay there and prosperity will follow. There is a Bengali proverb which says that if a man argues with his wife, then he is condemned. So do not argue with your wife." I told Prabhupada that she never ever listens to me. Prabhupada immediately replied, "If she does not listen to you, then you must listen to her, but no matter what, do not argue with your wife."

Shushil Kumar Agarwal: I became a life-member of Iskcon in 1973 thanks to Tejas Dasa. I was most fortunate to meet personally with Shrila Prabhupada at the Iskcon temple in Bengali Market. He was seated on the floor behind a low desk surrounded by his disciples and I also sat down on the floor with the devotees. I immediately noticed that Shrila Prabhupada had the most wonderful effulgence and his face was really shining. Although I have met many other saints of India, I always remember Shrila Prabhupada as being very special. Shrila Prabhupada's most amazing accomplishment is that when the east was running after the west, he brought the west to the east - that is his great credit. No one else could have done it. At that time, while I was sitting with Shrila Prabhupada, he explained to me the meaning of the aphorism, '*aham brahmasmi*' (I am *Brahman*). He said that we are all small particles of God. God is the Supreme Brahman and we are all *jiva-shakti*, or small parts and parcels of the Supreme Brahman's energy. Not that we are God, but just a small fraction of God's energy. Shrila Prabhupada also mentioned to me that he had written to Mahatma Gandhi and requested him to give up politics and instead preach the message of *Bhagavad Gita*, as he had promised to do once Indian independence had been achieved. Prabhupada said that he himself was ready to become a follower of Gandhiji, if he became a preacher of the *Gita*. Then added that, "Gandhi could not give up politics and ultimately he was shot dead." In those days when Tejas was the president I was very active in helping him to make life-members. We used to go together and I would introduce him to my friends and acquaintances who would then become Iskcon life-members. When the temple eventually moved to Lajpat Nagar, Tejas left Delhi and I lost contact with him and the Iskcon devotees. Fortunately for me, the devotees are again visiting me after a very long time and I am extremely happy. Throughout my life I will never be able to forget Shrila Prabhupada.

Tejas Dasa: Once when I was going by car with Shrila Prabhupada from Delhi to Vrindavana, we had been talking about organizing festivals and Prabhupada said we should hold festivals all over Delhi in the different localities. Prabhupada said that all it required was a good speaker, *kirtan*, and sumptuous *prasadam*. And while one festival was going on, you can make arrangements for the next in another locality. I mentioned that during a recent festival, we had distributed pieces of *burfi* to well over 25,000 people. Prabhupada immediately said, "No, that is not sumptuous. Sumptuous *prasadam* means *puris*, *subji*, and *halavah*." On another occasion, as we were driving through Delhi, Shrila Prabhupada said that we could have at least ten Iskcon centers in Delhi, as it was such a big city, Delhi was more like ten towns in one, and therefore we could also have ten Iskcon temples.

(In the years that followed since this conversation between Shrila Prabhupada and Tejas, Iskcon have opened over fifteen centers in Delhi and its satellite townships)

Iskcon's Vrindavana Temple Opens

On the occasion of Ramnavami 1975, the magnificent Krishna Balarama Mandira in Vrindavana opened amidst great fanfare. Shrila Prabhupada personally supervised and also presided over the opening ceremony. Iskcon devotees from around the world attended the ten day function including all the members of the Governing Body Commission (G.B.C.), as well as all the Iskcon *sannyasis*. It was a landmark achievement for Iskcon which drastically changed the perception of the movement, not only in the eyes of local *Vrajavasis* or the people of India, but of people all around the world.

The opening of the Krishna Balarama Mandira in Vrindavana was also perhaps one of the defining moments of Shrila Prabhupada's life, a moment comparable to the day he first met his spiritual master, or the day that he took *sannyasa*, or the day he completed the 1ST canto of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, or the day he landed in American to preach Lord Krishna's message in the western world. A truly momentous day that filled him with a sense of spiritual accomplishment and great transcendental satisfaction, that after such a long and arduous struggle, from the time he left home in 1954 to carry out the order of his spiritual master, to the time he spent struggling alone in New Delhi and then in New York, while attempting to push forward Lord Chaitanya's *sankirtan* movement. Now at long last, Shrila Prabhupada had finally established a permanent Iskcon landmark in the holiest city of the world, in the heart of Lord Krishna's own transcendental abode, a temple that would become a place of pilgrimage for the whole world, and an eternal spiritual home for all his beloved disciples and dedicated followers for generations to come.

End Of Part Two

PART THREE

The Final Phase

- of Prabhupada's Mission on Earth

1975 – 1977

After the historic opening the Iskcon's Krishna-Balarama Mandira in Vrindavana on the occasion of Rama-navami 1975, Shrila Prabhupada left India and took a flight first to Australia, then on to Hawaii, and then finally to Los Angeles, where he arrived on June 20th. Shrila Prabhupada had returned to America for the purpose of dramatically increasing book distribution around the world. Therefore, in order to distribute more books, he would first have to increase the volume of books that were presently being printed.

The first two phases of Shrila Prabhupada's preaching mission had now been completed. The first being to convert the westerners to Krishna consciousness and establish Iskcon temples throughout the western hemisphere, and secondly, to return to India along with his American and European disciples in order to inspire the people of India to take part in the Krishna consciousness movement. By 1975, preaching in India was going on very nicely and the time was now ripe for Shrila Prabhupada to embark on the third phase of his mission, which was to expand transcendental book distribution to a level that had never been achieved before in the religious history of the world.

As early as 1968, Shrila Prabhupada had established the Iskcon Press in New York where he began printing his 'Back to Godhead' magazine and other publications. Then in 1972, Shrila Prabhupada established the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) in Los Angeles, in order to exclusively publish his books and distribute them world-wide. In 1974, inspired by Shrila Prabhupada, book distribution in America and Europe reached an all-time high and for the first time large hard-bound books like the three-part Krishna Book and the *Srimad Bhagavatam* became the main focus. By June 1975, the Iskcon Press had been re-located to a new building in Los Angeles, complete with an ultra-modern production unit and an art department. Shrila Prabhupada informed his BBT managers, that their first task was to print all seventeen volumes of the Bengali classic *Shri Chaitanya-charitamrita*, about the life and teachings of Lord Chaitanya, which Shrila Prabhupada had just translated, in the record time of just two months. Their second task was to complete the printing of the already translated volumes of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, and the third task was for the BBT to become the main driving force behind increasing book distribution world-wide. Although it appeared inconceivable at the time, the dedicated devotees at the BBT accomplish everything that Shrila Prabhupada had asked them to do.

Shrila Prabhupada's visit to America in June 1975 marked the beginning of a new chapter in Iskcon's book distribution and he was able to inspire his disciples in a massive effort to inundate the world with transcendental literature. When explaining the great spiritual value of transcendental literatures like the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, Shrila Prabhupada had once told his disciples during a lecture in Los Angeles:

“There is no comparison; every word is good for the human society. Therefore we stress so much on book distribution. Somehow or other, if a book goes into a person’s hand he will be benefitted. If he reads one verse or even one word, his life will become successful. This is such a nice thing. Therefore we are stressing so much – please distribute books, distribute books, distribute books.”

After remaining in Los Angeles for some time, Shrila Prabhupada continued with his regular program of travelling to the various Iskcon temples around America in order to inspire his disciples in their devotional service to Lord Krishna. Shrila Prabhupada’s disciples were always enlivened by seeing their beloved spiritual master and hearing him lecture from the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad Gita*. Shrila Prabhupada would also attend Iskcon festivals like Rathayatra and Janmashtami and would personally perform the deity installation ceremonies whenever new temples were opened as well as initiate new disciples into Krishna consciousness.

Prabhupada Meets the Indian Prime Minister

By August in 1975, Shrila Prabhupada was travelling around the various Iskcon temples in North America and had just arrived at the Iskcon temple in Toronto, when an urgent telegram arrived from Tejas Dasa in Delhi. The telegram said that a meeting with the Prime Minister of India, Shrimati Indira Gandhi had been arranged, and that Shrila Prabhupada should immediately return to Delhi. Shrila Prabhupada’s secretary tried to reach Tejas by phone to find out further details, but it was impossible to get through on the phone-line to India. Regardless, Shrila Prabhupada did not need to know any further details as he had full faith in Tejas, one of his best managers, and he immediately made arrangements to fly back to India. Shrila Prabhupada informed his secretary that, “When an auspicious opportunity arises for preaching, a devotee should act immediately”.

Shrila Prabhupada had wanted to meet the Indian prime minister for a long time, in order that she might help Shrila Prabhupada’s American and European disciples obtain long-term visas for India, and Tejas had been working hard to make an appointment with the prime minister. Iskcon’s progress in India was being obstructed due to the fact that senior American devotees were only getting six-month visas, and this was creating problems in managing Iskcon’s major projects in the country and Indira Gandhi could definitely help.

At the very last moment, there was some doubt that the meeting with the Indian prime minister would actually go ahead, because two days before the meeting was due to take place, the prime minister of Bangladesh had been assassinated by a group of army officers, and there was a lot of talk in the capitol that the Indian prime minister could be next. Indira Gandhi had also declared an ‘emergency’ in India two months earlier due to political unrest, and there had been a major security clampdown across the country. Nevertheless, Shrila Prabhupada’s meeting with the Indian prime minister was still scheduled to take place.

A day or so before the meeting with the Indian prime minister, Shrila Prabhupada arrived in Delhi and stayed in his rooms at Iskcon’s Bengali Market temple. At 9:15 A.M. on the morning of August 22nd 1975, Shrila Prabhupada met Indira Gandhi at her Racecourse Road residence in Central Delhi. Due to security concerns, Shrila Prabhupada was alone when he was ushered into the Prime Minister’s private office. Indira Gandhi immediately rose from her seat to greet Shrila Prabhupada and invited him to sit down and they began to talk. On observing Indira Gandhi’s face, Shrila Prabhupada could immediately perceive that her mind was disturbed and she looked

anguished and distraught. Indira Gandhi welcomed Shrila Prabhupada and complemented him on his preaching work around the world and Prabhupada told her that his western disciples were 'very good boys'. Shrila Prabhupada raised the issue of her helping his western disciples obtain permanent visas for India and she agreed to see what she could do. Indira Gandhi mentioned to Shrila Prabhupada that she was in a state of great anxiety due to the fear that there may be an assassination attempt on her life. Although Shrila Prabhupada wanted to raise a number of other important issues, he realized that due to Indira Gandhi's mind being completely preoccupied due to fear, he concluded that any further discussions would at that moment in time be futile, and after a few more cordial exchanges, the meeting ended.

Shrila Prabhupada later commented to his senior disciples that Indira Gandhi appeared almost half-dead because of anxiety and that her mind was completely distracted due to the fear of being assassinated at any moment. Besides the granting of visas to Iskcon devotees, Shrila Prabhupada had written down a list of items on the subject of Vedic administration that he wanted to discuss with Indira Gandhi which included;

1. The immediate closure of all slaughter-houses in India and a ban on the sale or consumption of all meat products in public places.
2. Corporal punishment for all smugglers, hoarders of essential items, drug dealers, and prostitutes.
3. All members of parliament should receive *brahminical* training and public servants should attend daily *Harenama kirtan*.
4. The government should declare *Bhagavad Gita* as the only state sponsored religious scripture in India
5. The government should organize mass *sankirtan* programs for the benefit of the general public.
6. The government should actively promote Krishna consciousness and Vedic culture in India and around the world.

Shrila Prabhupada had hoped to discuss the principles of Krishna conscious leadership with the Indian prime minister and encourage her to introduce a Vedic-style government on the lines of the great *rajarishis* that had ruled India in ancient times. This he believed would help the people of India to become spiritually advanced and automatically bring about peace and prosperity to every citizen in the country. It was well known that Indira Gandhi had a tendency towards authoritarian rule, but Shrila Prabhupada believed that if she exercised such authority in terms of the Vedic directives, her rule would be effective and beneficial to all, and India would undoubtedly become the greatest nation on earth.

In a conversation with his secretary, Prabhupada also said that if Indira Gandhi's government arrested and hung all those anti-social elements that were hoarding essential items including; flour, rice, pulses, sugar, kerosene and cooking oil, and then freely distribute all the stockpiles of hoarded items to the poor, she would become the most popular prime minister in Indian history and would immediately gain the full support of the people. She could then easily implement all the principles of Vedic government with the full backing of the entire Indian electorate.

Tejas Dasa: It was at the end of summer and we were driving through Delhi with Shrila Prabhupada. It was really very hot and Shrila Prabhupada asked me how the weather had been in Delhi that summer. I told him that it had been very hot. Then Prabhupada asked, "Was it unbearably hot?" So thinking to impress Shrila Prabhupada, I somewhat impudently replied, "In Krishna's service we can tolerate everything". "No", Shrila Prabhupada said, "That

is not what I meant. Was it unbearably hot? Of course you have to tolerate everything, but I asked was it unbearable?" So I humbly replied, "Yes Shrila Prabhupada, it was unbearably hot". I later remembered that Prabhupada himself had suffered from heat during one 'unbearably hot' summer in Delhi, in the days before he went to America.

After his meeting with the Indian prime minister on August 22nd, within a few days, Shrila Prabhupada left Delhi for Bombay, from where he would embark on a preaching tour of South Africa, which would take him to Durban and Johannesburg, and would also include the island nation of Mauritius where there was a large population of ex-patriot Indians.

Focusing On Preaching in India

From the years 1965 up until 1970, Shrila Prabhupada had concentrated his efforts exclusively in the western world, travelling and preaching throughout America and Europe. Then from the years 1971 up until 1974, he had been dividing his time between India and the West as his Iskcon movement gradually expanded in India. Then from the year 1975 onwards, Shrila Prabhupada devoted much more of his time to India, as his movement established important projects in major cities across the sub-continent. On November 1st 1975, Shrila Prabhupada arrived in India for the third time in the year having completed a successful tour of South Africa and Mauritius. After spending time in Bombay, on November 26th, Shrila Prabhupada flew to Delhi where he stayed in his rooms next to the Iskcon temple in Bengali market and was planning to spend a few days in the capital before going to Vrindavana.

Dhananjaya Dasa: **The Todarmal Lane temple as very small and there was hardly any room for even the devotees to stay there; therefore, Shrila Prabhupada had a separate apartment a few doors down the road at No.9. I once visited him in his room when he had just returned from a trip to Mauritius, where he had injured his knee in a road accident. Although Shrila Prabhupada had been miraculously saved from severe injury, in a very grave mood, he told the devotees present there in his room that we should always remain in full Krishna consciousness, because death may strike at any time.**

Hari Sauri Dasa: **Shrila Prabhupada arrived in Delhi in November after completing a tour of Africa and Mauritius. Shrila Prabhupada intended to spend a few days at Iskcon's centre in Bengali Market and then travel to Vrindavana. I was visiting Delhi from Vrindavana for the day on personal business and while I was there, because Delhi temple were short of devotees, Gopala Krishna Prabhu, the GBC for India, asked me to stay on in Delhi for a few extra days to help in cleaning Shrila Prabhupada's quarters as well as act as a guard outside Shrila Prabhupada's door, at least for the period that Shrila Prabhupada would be in Delhi.**

The following day, while Shrila Prabhupada was taking his early morning walk I cleaned his rooms. Later on in the morning I was chanting my rounds in the temple room when Harikesa, Shrila Prabhupada's secretary arrived and asked if I knew how to give a massage. I said that I didn't, but he told me to go up to the roof of Shrila Prabhupada's apartment and watch Upendra Dasa give a massage to Shrila Prabhupada, because the next day Upendra was leaving India for Fiji to open a new Iskcon temple and someone would have to give Shrila Prabhupada his mid-morning massage. The next morning at 11 A.M., I arrived at Shrila Prabhupada's apartment to give him his massage and he went up to the roof, and after putting on a *gumsha*, Shrila Prabhupada sat down on a straw mat in the sunshine and I started

to first massage his head with sandalwood oil, and then I massaged his body with mustard oil. Later in the day, Shrila Prabhupada told his secretary that I had given him a very good massage, and I was both relieved and elated at the same time.

During his November stay in Delhi, Shrila Prabhupada attended a program at the local community hall in Jorbhag Colony which was organized by Mr. Sushil Ansal, who was the son-in-law of Mr. S. K. Saigal, a prominent life-member and proprietor of the well-known Tiger Lock Company. Shrila Prabhupada gave a lecture from the 5TH canto of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* concerning Lord Rishabhadeva's instructions to his sons about the futility of striving for material pleasure which is readily available even to the hogs and dogs. The meeting was well-attended by mostly well-to-do residents of the area, who were big business people and industrialists. While at Iskcon's temple at Bengali Market, Shrila Prabhupada decided to appoint Hari Sauri Dasa as his personal servant, a post that he held until March 1977.

Tejas Dasa: I had been advised by some senior Iskcon leaders that I did not need to send all the book fund money to the BBT and that some amount could be kept back as a reserve in case of any emergency needs. When Shrila Prabhupada visited Delhi in 1975, as usual he enquired about the accounts and then suddenly asked me if I was sending all the book fund money to the BBT. I had to admit that I wasn't, because some of the senior leaders had advised me not to send it all. Shrila Prabhupada became immediately upset and while shaking his head, told me to call his secretary, Brahmananda, at once. Then for about one hour Shrila Prabhupada instructed me about how we must pay 50% of our life-membership collections to the BBT. He said that 50% of the collections can be used for construction or other projects and 50% should be sent to the BBT, saying that all our collections are based on the books and that he started the life-membership program simply for distributing books in India. He went on to say that just like in any regular business, capital assets were imperative, and that managing Iskcon was similar to managing a regular business, if we eat up all the capital assets, then everything will fail and no more books can be printed, therefore 50% of all the collections must be sent to the BBT book fund. Then Shrila Prabhupada said, "So is that all right? Will you do that from now on?" I immediately said, "Yes Shrila Prabhupada," and from that day on, even though I maintained a very large credit with the BBT book fund, whatever collections I received from life-membership, I always sent 50% to the book fund.

On November 28th, Shrila Prabhupada gave the morning *Bhagavatam* class at the Todarmal Lane temple. In his lecture, Shrila Prabhupada said, "So Veda means knowledge and from the Vedas you can get all kinds of knowledge, both material and spiritual. Therefore it is called Veda, knowledge. In that tree of Vedic knowledge the ripened fruit is *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. The *Shrimad Bhagavatam* is written by Vyasadeva, he wrote it after writing the four Vedas and the eighteen *Puranas*, the 108 *Upanisads*, then *Vedanta-sutra*, and *Mahabharata*, in which *Bhagavad-gita* is found. So after compiling all these Vedic literatures, Vyasadeva was not satisfied. Then his spiritual master advised him to describe the activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So he wrote *Shrimad-Bhagavatam*. Every *sloka* of *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* is full of spiritual information. If we take advantage of this great Vedic literature, then we become fully aware of Bhagavan (Lord Krishna) and also the devotees of Bhagavan. Therefore it is named *Bhagavatam*. But this *Bhagavatam* has to be studied from the very beginning and take the lessons from a living Bhagavata. There are two kinds of *Bhagavatam*—one, this book *Bhagavatam*, and the other is a person Bhagavatam. Caitanya Mahaprabhu advised that if you want to understand *Bhagavatam*, then you must approach a person whose

life is *Bhagavatam*. He said, '*bhagavata para-giya bhägavata sthane*', that means if we listen and learn *Shrimad-Bhagavatam* from the person Bhagavatam, then it is very easy to understand the spiritual knowledge given in the *Shrimad-Bhagavatam*."

On December 1st, at daybreak, Shrila Prabhupada left Delhi by car for Kurukshetra where he met a former Prime Minister of India, Shri Gulzarilal Nanda, who took Shrila Prabhupada on a tour of the various holy places including Brahma-sarovara. Shrila Prabhupada wanted to get some land at Kurukshetra in order to build an Iskcon temple and was hoping that Gulzarilal Nanda would help. Shrila Prabhupada returned by car to Delhi arriving by 9 P.M. On December 2nd, Shrila Prabhupada left by car for Vrindavana where he spent the next twelve days staying in his rooms at the Krishna Balarama Mandira. On December 13th, Shrila Prabhupada returned to Delhi where he spent a few days at Iskcon's Todarmal Lane temple.

Tejas Dasa: **One day I had another opportunity to cook for Shrila Prabhupada and I enquired what he would like to eat, and he said *kicheri*. Shrila Prabhupada then began describing how to make *kicheri*, saying in one pot you half cook the *dahl* and rice, then in another pot you cook the vegetables – eggplant, green pepper, cauliflower, and tomatoes – then you combine the two together and finish the cooking. So I made the *kicheri* just as Prabhupada said, and everybody said it tasted just like nectar.**

Hari Sauri Dasa: **On December 14th, Shrila Prabhupada took his regular early morning walk which took him from Bengali Market past the various government *kendras* and *bhavans*. The area was deserted except for the occasional car or truck that sped by on the empty roads. Besides me, Shrila Prabhupada was being accompanied by his secretary Harikesa, Hamsadutta, Tejas, Nayanabhiraama. As we walked along Shrila Prabhupada noticed that there was litter and all kinds of rubbish lying everywhere and he remarked with disapproval, "If this is the capital, then what does it indicate about the rest of the country?"**

Shrila Prabhupada always took an early morning walk wherever he was in the world. His morning walks were a special time when some of his senior disciples could accompany him and would hear great words of wisdom as Shrila Prabhupada commented on the world around him. While walking in the Bengali Market area, he had been surprised to see so much rubbish littering the streets. Shrila Prabhupada considered Delhi to be one of the world's most beautiful cities; therefore it was a shock to see the roads of the Indian capital strewn with heaps of garbage. Shrila Prabhupada saw it as the result of modern India's pursuit of economic development through massive industrialization.

When Queen Elizabeth of England visited India, while she was being driven around New Delhi, she quite candidly remarked that the city was very dirty, with waste-paper and other garbage scattered all over the streets of the capital. Naturally the government officials were somewhat dismayed by her comments and there were loud protests by some politicians. Nevertheless, a concerted effort was made by the city officials to clean up the capital.

In today's world, economic development is based solely upon massive technological and industrial development, which in turn has resulted in massive pollution, not only in the cities and towns, but of the land, the rivers, the ground water, and the air. In the near future the earth will be completely unfit for human habitation – and all this pollution is going on in the name of economic development - and providing the people with a so-called 'better life'. As Shrila Prabhupada continued with his morning walk he made further remarks about the futility of so-called economic development

Hari Sauri Dasa: Shrila Prabhupada then questioned the wisdom of pursuing economic advancement. Pointing to a tree he asked, "Where does the tree get its food from? From Krishna, but these rascals cannot understand that. The animals have no arrangements for industrial development, but by nature's arrangement food is already there. The animals are not opening factories but are depending on nature. Modern man claims to be more civilized than the animals, but they have simply complicated their lives by opening factories. Formerly the sages took fruits from the trees and milk from the cows. Whatever nature was supplying them, they accepted, that's all."

Prabhupada somberly observed an overloaded hand-drawn cart pulled by several dirty, poorly dressed, barefoot men. Their veins bulged as they strained and sweated to get their load to its destination. "Economic development," he said. "Where is economic development for these men? When there was no economic development, the same *taila* (handcart) and poor people with blackened cloth were there. And now, the same thing is still there. So where is development? Nature's law you cannot check. It must go on. The *Bhagavatam* says, 'Don't try to improve all these things, it is not possible. Improve your Krishna consciousness; that will be benefit for your life.'"

During an early morning walk, while passing the famous Bharatiya Kala Kendra, an Indian cultural institution that promotes the performing arts, Shrila Prabhupada told Tejas that he should hire some of the local halls in Delhi for a week at a time and present plays, *kirtana*, and *prasadam*. "Five minutes talking and ten minutes *kirtana*—alternate." Turning to Nayanabhirama, who had previous experience in the performance of dramas, Prabhupada suggested that he should arrange dramatic performances all over Delhi. Shrila Prabhupada seemed certain that such Krishna conscious cultural programs would attract thousands of people.

Tejas Dasa: At the end of 1975, my wife Madira gave birth to a little girl. Shrila Prabhupada was in Delhi at the time and in the morning the devotees were offering *guru-puja* to Shrila Prabhupada in the temple with Harikesa leading the *kirtan*. Suddenly, when Shrila Prabhupada saw my new-born daughter in the arms of my wife, and he immediately signaled for Harikesa that it was time to end the *kirtan* and called my wife over to where he was on the *vyasasana*. Shrila Prabhupada then took some flowers and after lifting the little woolen bonnet on my daughter's head, he pushed the flowers right under the bonnet. Later in the day, Malati Devi took my daughter to Shrila Prabhupada's room and he gave her the name Tejasini. Shrila Prabhupada then went to Vrindavana and after about ten days, my wife also went to Vrindavana along with the baby, and when Shrila Prabhupada saw my wife with the baby he asked, "Is she dancing yet?"

On another occasion some months later, when Shrila Prabhupada was staying in his apartment at No.9 Todarmal Lane, as I was accompanying Prabhupada through the building to his quarters, he noticed Tejasini lying on a small cot in her room. She was about four months old at the time and Prabhupada went up to her cot and started to tickle her tummy. Smiling broadly, Tejasini caught hold of Prabhupada's finger and as Prabhupada tried to pull his finger away, Tejasini would not let go. As Prabhupada pulled, Tejasini was holding on tightly to his finger and was being gradually lifted up into a sitting position. Suddenly she let go of Prabhupada's finger and flopped back down on the cot. Once again Prabhupada began to tickle her tummy and once again Tejasini caught hold of Prabhupada's finger. Prabhupada began to pull and once again Tejasini held on tightly to his finger and was again lifted upwards

just as before. She then let go of his finger and flopped back down on to the cot. It was amazing to see Prabhupada take the time to play with my daughter and I felt extremely blessed. Every day that Shrila Prabhupada stayed at the Delhi temple, he would always spend at least a few minutes to play with Tejasini.

As Tejasini got a little older, she would try to chant the *maha-mantra* but always got the order completely mixed up; she was never able to get it right. When Shrila Prabhupada came to Delhi one day from Vrindavana, he came up on to the roof of the temple to where the devotees were all sitting taking morning *prasadam*. The devotees immediately paid obeisances and stood up, but Shrila Prabhupada told them to sit down and finish their *prasadam*. He then went over to where the ladies were sitting with their children and enquired how they were all doing. While turning his attention to the children, Shrila Prabhupada went over to Tejasini and placed his hand on her head and gave her a gentle massage, and then left for his apartment. The very next day, Tejasini began chanting the *maha-mantra* absolutely perfectly, much to my great happiness.

On December 15th, Shrila Prabhupada left Delhi for Kurukshetra where he had been invited to speak at an important religious gathering that was being attended by many Hindu religious leaders. Shrila Prabhupada also looked at land in Kurukshetra where he proposed to build an Iskcon temple. Shrila Prabhupada wanted around ten acres and as soon as land was acquired, he had said that Iskcon would immediately begin building a Krishna-Arjuna Mandira in Kurukshetra. On December 16th, Shrila Prabhupada returned to Delhi and caught a flight to Bombay. On arrival at the Iskcon temple in Bombay, he received some wonderful news from his disciples at the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) in Los Angeles, one million copies of Iskcon's flagship 'Back to Godhead' magazine had just been printed and the devotees in America were totally fired up to distribute all of them in record time. This unprecedented increase in the number of 'Back to Godhead' magazine's being printed also marked the beginning of a massive increase in book distribution, not only in America, but around the world. For the first time in history, literatures based on India's ancient Vedic religion were now being distributed in ever-increasing numbers across the face of the earth. Shrila Prabhupada's long-standing ambition to inundate the world with transcendental Krishna conscious literatures was now becoming a reality - and the desire of Shrila Prabhupada's beloved spiritual master, Shrila Bhaksiddhanta Saraswati Goswami, was finally being fulfilled.

Having spent a few days in Bombay, Shrila Prabhupada left India on a preaching tour and would return to India by January 1976, where he would go to Mayapur and attend the annual GBC meetings. He planned to remain in Mayapur till March to take part in Iskcon's annual Gaura-Purnima Festival, where he would be joined by over five hundred of his disciples from around the world.

Janananda Prabhu: In February 1976, I joined a group of around twenty-five devotees from the London temple who were going to attend the annual Gaura-Purnima Festival in Mayapur. For most of us it was our first trip to India, and naturally the suspense and expectations were very high. It was early morning when our plane touched down at Delhi airport and although the terminal appeared rundown and was over-crowded, noisy, and chaotic, everything appeared really wonderful to us, because at long-last we had finally arrived in the holy land of Bharat-bhumi. The invigorating morning air, the sounds, the people, it was an amazing feeling to be in India and we absorbed everything with a sense of awe and reverence. My dear god-brother Mahavishnu was feeling especially ecstatic and appeared overwhelmed by his first visit to the sacred land of India. When we eventually came out of the airport terminal we were

confronted by hordes of children trying to get small-change. There were also taxi drivers, money changers, beggars, and a number of local touts, who grabbed at our bags while shouting out the names of various hotels. We found ourselves being pushed and shoved around and had to desperately hang on to our baggage before we eventually piled into auto-rickshaws and headed to the Birla Mandira, where we were to stay overnight as our flight to Calcutta was leaving the following afternoon.

From the Birla Mandira we all went to the Iskcon temple which was located in Todar Mal Lane, Bengali Market. We were all very excited to visit our first Iskcon temple in India, even though it was a bit of a surprise to see its very modest facilities. The temple was located in an extremely small building and there was practically no room for devotees to stay there. The Deities of Radha-Parthasarthi were very beautiful and it was fascinating to see the way they were tucked in to a tiny alcove at one end of the small temple room. It was impossible for more than a few devotees to have *darshan* of the Deities at any one time. The following day we left for Mayapura where we would be able to see Shrila Prabhupada who would be attending the Gaura-Purnima celebrations. (In 2007, Janananda Dasa accepted the renounced order of *sannyasa* becoming Janananda Goswami).

Prabhupada Stays in Chanakya Puri

On March 24th, 1976, Shrila Prabhupada arrived at Delhi airport where he was met by a small group of devotees including; Tejas Dasa, Gopala Krishna Prabhu, Guru Dasa, Lokanatha Swami, and Mr Lakshman Agarwal and his wife Mrs. Lila Agarwal. It had been arranged that Shrila Prabhupada would be staying for four days at the residence of Iskcon life-member, Mr. Lakshman Agarwal, and whose two-story residence was located in the secluded diplomatic enclave of Chanakya Puri in South Delhi. On the second floor of his house, Mr. Agarwal had a small temple room where deities of Radha Krishna were being worshiped by his family. Shrila Prabhupada had stayed with Mr. Agarwal on previous occasions and Mr. Agarwal, who was a wealthy businessman and a very influential person, had been helping Shrila Prabhupada to meet high government officials in regard to getting long-term visas for his American disciples. Mr. Agarwal had often given the use of his car to Shrila Prabhupada whenever he was visiting Delhi, and had brought his Mercedes Benz to the airport in order to take Shrila Prabhupada to his home. A *pandal* had also been erected on the small park in front of Mr. Agarwal's house where a festival would be held and where Shrila Prabhupada was also going to speak. In the evening, Shrila Prabhupada was scheduled to address the New Delhi Rotary Club at the Imperial Hotel in downtown Delhi.

Hari Sauri Dasa: In the evening, Shrila Prabhupada was invited to speak to the members of the New Delhi Rotary Club at the Imperial Hotel. The meeting was held in a large stately room where the devotees had set up a small stage covered with white cloth from where Shrila Prabhupada would address the audience. Shrila Prabhupada was accompanied by six Iskcon Governing Body Commission (GBC) members and a large number of devotees. Many important people from Delhi's social and business elite had gathered to hear Shrila Prabhupada deliver a very forceful lecture based on the *Bhagavad Gita*. The program at the Imperial Hotel was a resounding success.

In his lecture on *Bhagavad Gita* before the members of the Rotary Club, Shrila Prabhupada said, "So *Bhagavad Gita* means to understand what is God, the science of God. And God Himself is

speaking about Himself. Otherwise it is not possible to understand what is God. So if we carefully understand the *slokas* and the passages mentioned in the *Bhagavad Gita*, we can understand what is God. And the human form of life is meant for understanding God. The human being has no other business. According to Darwin's theory, the human form evolves from monkeys. But the evolution mentioned in the Vedic literature is different to Darwin's theory. The process of evolution according to Vedic scriptures is based on the fact that the living entity (*jiva-atma*) is different from the body, and that the living entity passes through many different bodily forms (both human and animal). So we get different bodies according to our desire. Just like there are so many ladies and gentlemen sitting here, but not one of them is similar to anyone else. They have got different bodies. That body is created according to one's desire. The mind, the subtle mind, is the creator of the next body. '*Yam yam vapi smaran bhavam tyajaty ante kalevaram*' (Bg. 8.6). At the time of death, whatever I am thinking, a similar body will be offered to me by the laws of nature. Subtle body consists of the mind, intelligence and ego, they are subtle body, and the gross body is made of earth, water, air, fire, ether. So when we give up this gross body, the subtle body carries us to another gross body. This is the way of transmigration of the soul. The *prakrti* nature, nature's law, is very strict and stringent. The nature will immediately offer you a similar body according to your thinking at the time of your death. '*Tatha dehantara-praptir*' (Bg. 2.13). Therefore this human form of body is meant for going back to home, back to Godhead. '*Yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama*' (Bg. 15.6). We are eternal. As God is eternal, we are also eternal because we are part and parcel of God. As God is always blissful and jolly, similarly our nature is always blissful and jolly. '*Sac-cid-ananda-vigraham*' (Bg. 5.1). *Sat* means eternal, *cit* means full of knowledge; and *ananda* means blissfulness. That is our nature. Therefore we want to live. We do not wish to die. Nobody wishes to die, but we are forced to die. That is our punishment. '*Nityah sasvato yam purano na hanyate hanyamane sarire*' (Bg. 2.20). This instruction you will find in the *Bhagavad Gita*, that 'The living entity (*jiva-atma*) is eternal, or '*sāsvata*', it is very, very old. '*Nityah sāsvato*' (Bg. 2.20) 'when the body is destroyed, annihilated, the soul continues to exist. It simply goes to another body'."

Mrs. Lila Agarwal: We sometimes used to pick-up Prabhupada from the airport and he sometimes stayed at our house. My husband introduced him to several ministers including Kamalpathi Tripathi who was a minister in those days. I remember that he was very interested in spreading the message of Krishna. He came back from America after a very successful tour and by then he was quite an established guru. Of course, I believed he was a very divine soul. Whatever he spoke, everybody listened with rapt attention. He was interpreting the philosophy of *Gita* in a way we could understand. Most people think that the *Gita* is too difficult to understand, but his interpretation was so simple, so sublime, and so solemn. He always said he was interpreting *Gita* as it is. He had written the *Gita* in such a beautiful way and he presented a copy of it to us. He always told me to chant the Hare Krishna mantra for one hour everyday and try to preach to somebody. We were so fortunate; I sometimes think that I did not properly realize that such a great soul was in our house. His knowledge of the scriptures was incredible; he seemed to know every scripture, and for every topic he had a *sloka*. He was not ordinary, he was empowered, there is no doubt about it and I think later on people will come to understand. He started this movement when he was already seventy years old. In less than fifteen years he had established a whole empire with around two hundred temples all over the world. I have seen some of the temples like New Vrindavana, but Mayapur is the most beautiful. When I went to that temple I could really feel Shрила Prabhupada's presence there.

Our whole family became Iskcon life-members, including my youngest son who was about five and my eldest son who was ten. Once on a morning walk along with my husband, Prabhupada said that my sons would grow up to be good boys. He assured me of that. Many times I cooked for Prabhupada and at other times I assisted the disciples who cooked for him in our kitchen. He always had many disciples with him. Usually in the mornings my husband would accompany Shрила Prabhupada to the Buddha Jayanti Park where they would go for walks. My husband discussed the idea of converting a part of the park into a 'Krishna Jayanti Park' and Prabhupada thought it was a good idea and encouraged him. My husband was making plans, but unfortunately he is no more.

Mrs. Lila Agarwal's son: **When I was five, I remember I would sometimes sit on Prabhupada's lap. Even though I was very young I can still remember it very clearly. He was always very loving and kind-hearted. We often used to sit outside our house on the grass. He once held a *maha-yajna* here along with all his devotees.**

Hari Sauri Dasa: **Prabhupada would be driven in the morning to Buddha Jayanti Park by Mr. Agarwal for his morning walk. It was a very spacious park with natural rocky outcrops cleverly integrated with bright purple shrubs and groves of frangipani, *neem*, and banyan trees. Spacious lawns were divided by man-made waterways and connected by small bridges and dams. While walking down the red sandstone pathways that wind in and out of tall bamboo groves, Shрила Prabhupada was discussing the idea of transforming a section of undeveloped land into the 'Krishna Jayanti Park'. Mr Agarwal was saying that Lord Krishna was far more important than Lord Buddha in Indian history so why not a park to honor Him. Prabhupada liked the idea and encouraged him to do it.**

Lokanatha Swami: **I remember when Prabhupada was in Delhi staying at Lakshman Agarwal's house. He used to take his morning walk in the Buddha Jayanti Park. One day I accompanied him and he was discussing the idea of creating a Krishna Jayanti Park with Mr. Agarwal saying, "Yes, why not Krishna Jayanti Park?" We later decided to incorporate this idea of a Krishna Jayanti Park into our 'Glory of India' project on the underdeveloped land just behind our Radha Parthasarathi temple. Unfortunately, that gentleman, Mr. Agarwal passed on.**

Hari Sauri Dasa: **After breakfast Shрила Prabhupada held an excellent press conference wherein he spoke strongly to the reporters about the necessity of accepting the *Bhagavad-gita*. He emphasized how unfortunate the people of India have become. Although they have access to a wonderful spiritual culture, they are avoiding Lord Krishna's instructions, seeking material enjoyment instead. This, he said, is due to the influence of bad leaders, which they themselves have selected.**

Then Prabhupada gave a short class to the few devotees present. In the verse Prahlad Maharaja expressed the mood that Shрила Prabhupada himself epitomizes. "My dear Lord Narsimhadeva, I see there are many saintly persons indeed, but they are simply interested for their own deliverance, and thus, without caring for big, big cities and towns, they go to the Himalayan forest for meditating, taking *anuvrata*, the vow of silence. They are not interested to deliver others. So far I am concerned, I do not wish to be liberated alone and leave aside all these poor fools and rascals. I know that without Krishna consciousness, without taking shelter of Your lotus feet, nobody can be happy, and therefore I wish to bring them to You, to the shelter of Your lotus feet."

March 26th was the first day of Iskcon's three-day *pandal* program held at the famous Ram Lila grounds in Old Delhi. The enthusiastic audience of over 4,000 was very receptive and many asked questions after Shrila Prabhupada had finished his lecture. Shrila Prabhupada stayed to see the Krishna-*lila* play performed by the devotees and was very pleased by the whole affair.

On the 27th, Gopala Krishna Prabhu took Shrila Prabhupada to see a large property in South Delhi owned by the American Embassy that was up for sale and could be used for a new Iskcon temple. The lease on the present temple in Bengali Market has expired and the building at 19, Todarmal Lane, must be immediately vacated. Shrila Prabhupada liked the South Delhi property and told Gopala Krishna to go ahead and try for it.

On the morning of Sunday March 28th, Mr. Lakshman Agarwal hosted a small 'Hare Krishna Festival' in the *pandal* erected in front of his house which was attended by all the residents of the area. It was a great success and Shrila Prabhupada was very happy that so many high-class gentlemen of the area attended with their families. The Delhi temple devotees thoroughly enjoyed the festival where they performed *guru-puja* to Shrila Prabhupada and everyone was able to offer flowers at his lotus feet. Later that morning on the 28th, Shrila Prabhupada left by car to attend preaching engagements in Modinagar and Aligarh and then he went directly to Vrindavana where he stayed for few days at the Krishna Balarama Mandira.

On April 11th, 1976, Shrila Prabhupada left Vrindavana in order to catch a flight to Bombay. On the way to the airport Shrila Prabhupada went to see a house in South Delhi that was still under construction. Gopala Krishna Prabhu was considering it as a possible site for a new Iskcon temple in Delhi, but Shrila Prabhupada rejected the idea because it was far too expensive. Shrila Prabhupada then he went to see the Delhi temple Deities, Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi, who were temporarily lodged in Shrila Prabhupada's old apartment at 9, Todar Mal Lane, because the lease on number 19 had run out. Although the situation was difficult, they Deities are being well looked after by Tejas and his wife Madira.

Iskcon's Temple Moves to Lajpat Nagar

In 1976, the Iskcon temple re-located to a large semi-detached rented house in the South Delhi suburb of Lajpat Nagar. Tejas Prabhu had been searching for larger premises because Iskcon's activities in the city were gradually expanding now that the Krishna Balarama Mandira had opened in Vrindavana, and more foreign devotees were arriving in India to take part in Iskcon's increased preaching activities across the Indian sub-continent. Delhi temple now had many new *brahmacharis*, both Indian and western who were going out on life-membership preaching. The Delhi temple was busier now than it had ever been before. On August 25th 1976, Shrila Prabhupada arrived back in Delhi after completing a preaching tour of America and Europe.

Hari Sauri Dasa: I remember we arrived with Shrila Prabhupada at Delhi airport at 9:30 P.M., and by the time we got to the new Iskcon temple in Lajpat Nagar it was about 10:15 P.M., yet there was still a big turn-out of two or three hundred local people along with the temple devotees to greet Shrila Prabhupada, and he was very pleased to see this. It was the first time in Delhi that we had seen such a welcome. Lokanatha Swami was also there with his travelling *sankirtan* party that included many new devotees that he had recruited during his recent preaching tour. The large gathering of well-wishers and devotees were so enthusiastic that

Shrila Prabhupada allowed them to offer *guru-puja* in the temple room before he went up to his quarters. Once in his room he talked with Gopala Krishna Prabhu, the GBC for India, and Gargamuni Prabhu, who had arrived from Calcutta, after which Prabhupada took rest just after 1:00 A.M.

The new Iskcon temple at Lajpat Nagar was a vast improvement over the Bengali Market temple. It was a large eight-roomed house with a spacious lawn on one side and flower gardens on the other. It was in a very peaceful neighborhood and the house was located next to a small park. The temple-room was large and could accommodate at least fifty or sixty devotees and a large framed-glass double-door opened onto the lawn at the front of the building. Shrila Prabhupada's room was also large and located on the second floor above the temple room and overlooked the well-kept lawn below. Shrila Prabhupada appeared to be very satisfied that Tejas Prabhu had found such a nice place with such good facilities.

Hari Sauri Dasa: On the 27th, Shrila Prabhupada went for his morning walk to the Lodi Gardens accompanied by a few devotees including his secretary Harikesa, and Tejas Prabhu. Prabhupada did not talk much but he was appreciating the well-kept gardens, with raised walkways lined with bottle palms and immaculate lawns. He noted the many *neem* trees, commenting that they were unique to India. He also mentioned that he had received news that book sales had reached \$60,000 per day saying, "This is preaching, very substantial. It will remain." As Prabhupada walked through the gardens he noted the very large mausoleums that dated back over 550 years to the period of the Lodi Empire. Harikesa said they were good examples of decorating a dead body. Prabhupada said he recalled seeing similar buildings in Rome which are visited by thousands of tourists. He quoted the verse from the *Gita: yanti deva-vrata devan* saying, "After this body is finished, one has to go somewhere. One can go to a higher planet or a lower planet, or you can go back to Godhead, but you have to go somewhere. That is being described in this verse." Prabhupada then said. "If someone asks why are you chanting? You can reply by saying, we have to go somewhere after death - so we are going back to Godhead - but you do not know where you will go".

The Lodi gardens were one of the places where Shrila Prabhupada regularly went for his morning walk during his stay in Delhi in August of 1976; this was because of its close proximity to the Lajpat Nagar temple. Various devotees would join Shrila Prabhupada on his morning walk. One morning, Giriraja Prabhu the Bombay temple president, also joined Shrila Prabhupada for his morning walk. He had arrived from Bombay with a very favorable report about the construction work on the Bombay temple project and Shrila Prabhupada was very happy to hear that the work was progressing nicely.

The Lodi Gardens was the place where the Lodi kings were buried. All the Islamic rulers of India were famous for developing very expansive manicured gardens. The Lodi Empire flourished during the latter part of the Islamic period known to historians as the Delhi Sultanate. The Lodi kings of Afghani-Pathan descent had ruled over Delhi and parts of Northern India from 1451 until the Mughal invasion in 1526.

Hari Sauri Dasa: On August 30th, a *pandal* had been erected on the front lawn of the Lajpat Nagar temple and in the evening several hundred people attended the program. Shrila Prabhupada sat on a small stage while Lokanatha Swami led the *kirtan*. Towards the end of the *kirtan*, after singing the *maha-mantra*, Lokanatha started singing; "*Gaura Nityananda bol - Hari bol - Hari bol - Gaura Sri Advaita bol - Hari bol - Hari bol*", with a lot of emphasis on the

refrain *Hari bol - Hari bol*. Shrila Prabhupada suddenly signaled to him to stop the *kirtan*, he apparently didn't like it, although he didn't say why. Shrila Prabhupada then gave a lecture in Hindi from the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*.

Rajasekhara Dasa: I was present that day when Shrila Prabhupada stopped the *kirtan*. Lokanatha was an influential *sankirtan* leader and it appeared that Shrila Prabhupada was giving him an important directive. I had been told much earlier that Shrila Prabhupada did not like the repeated singing of *Hari bol* which was often sung by his disciples at the end of *kirtans*. This singing of *Hari bol* had originated in the Gaudiya Matha and was introduced into Iskcon by devotees residing in Mayapur. Shrila Prabhupada never taught it to his disciples or ever sang it himself, although it had become widespread in Iskcon from around 1975. Nevertheless, he did not approve of it, and this was not the first time he had stopped the *kirtan* when he heard the repetitive chanting of *Hari bol*, although on other occasions he had simply ignored it. Some of the *kirtans* and *bhajans* sung by Iskcon devotees had also originated from the Gaudiya Matha where the *sahajiya* mentality had become prominent after the disappearance of the Gaudiya Matha founder, Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami. To begin singing *Hari bol*, which means 'chant the Lord's name' at the end of the *kirtan*, is in fact *rasa-bhasa*, because the Lord's name has already been chanted during the *kirtan*.

Shrila Prabhupada was extremely careful not to allow any deviations or allow the *sahajiya* mentality to creep into his movement, especially in the *kirtans* and *bhajans*. When the Krishna-Balarama Mandira opened in 1975, Shrila Prabhupada was sitting in his room translating in the early hours of the morning, when he over-heard the *kirtan* from the well-known *sahajiya ashrama* located behind the Iskcon temple. The *sahajiyas* were singing; *bhaja Nitai Gaura-Radhe Syama - japa Hare Krishna Hare Rama*. Shrila Prabhupada immediately called his secretary and drafted a letter to all Iskcon temples world-wide, that from now on the invocation at the start of all Iskcon *kirtans* should be changed from; *bhaja Sri Krishna Chaitanya Prabhu Nityananda - Sri Advaita Gadadhara Srivasadi Gaura bhaktavrinda*, to a new version; *Jaya Sri Krishna Chaitanya Prabhu Nityananda - Sri Advaita Gadadhara Srivasadi Gaura bhaktavrinda*, completely removing the word *bhaja* from the invocation, saying we did not want to be associated in any way with the *sahajiyas*.

Once in Bombay while sitting in his room, Shrila Prabhupada could hear the *kirtan* going on in the temple. When he heard the devotees singing *jaya gurudeva - jaya gurudeva*, over and over again, he said to his secretary, "Which guru are they referring to." At that time he gave instructions that there should not be any deviation from the standard Vaishnava songs introduced by him, and the repetitive singing of *Hari bol* or *Jaya gurudeva* should be discouraged.

Hari Sauri Dasa: Today is Radhashtami and Shrila Prabhupada observed a half-day fast along with the rest of the devotees. Shrila Prabhupada finished translating the 8TH canto of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* in the early hours of this morning. He added an interesting postscript: "This commentary has been finished in our New Delhi center today, the first of September, 1976, the day of Radhashtami by the grace of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the *acharyas*. Shrila Narottama Dasa Thakur says *tandera carana sevi bhakti-sane vasa janama janama haya ei abhilasa*. I am attempting to present *Shrimad Bhagavatam* in the English language by the order of my spiritual master, Shrimad Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, and by his grace the work of translation is gradually progressing, and the European and American devotees who have joined the Krishna consciousness movement are helping me considerably.

Thus we have expectations of finishing the great task before my passing away. All glories to Shri Guru and Gauranga.”

At the end of this morning’s walk Shрила Prabhupada told us that after he completes the 9TH canto, he may do the 11TH and 12TH cantos, and then go back to the 10TH canto, because he had already done the 10TH canto in his summary study ‘Krishna-the Supreme Personality of Godhead’ (also known as the Krishna book).

Tejas Dasa: Shрила Prabhupada once told me that everything one needs to know about Krishna consciousness is in the 1ST canto of *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. He said that when he wrote the first volume of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, he did not know if he was going to live or die, so he put everything that he knew into the 1ST canto.

Government Ministers Support Iskcon

During the year 1976, due to the great success of Iskcon preaching activities and increased book distribution in India, and the opening of so many new Iskcon projects in places like Vrindavana, Bombay, Hyderabad, and Navadvipa, the communists in West Bengal grew fearful of Iskcon’s growing popularity amongst the Bengali masses. After the inauguration of the now famous ‘long building’ at Iskcon’s Mayapur temple in Navadvipa, which the newspapers had glorified as the longest building in West Bengal, politicians belonging to constituents of the ruling ‘Left-Front’ government, became disturbed, and began raising false and unsubstantiated claims in the Indian parliament, that Iskcon was connected to the notorious American spy agency the CIA, and demanded that the Indian Government should investigate the activities of Iskcon. Of course, everyone in the government knew that this was just a ‘political stunt’ of the communists, who were generally viewed as ‘rabble-rousers’, and who were always trying to create problems for the ruling party at the centre. Nevertheless, the communist members of parliament continued to raise the issue in the Rajya Sabha, causing acute embarrassment to the ruling Congress Party.

While staying at the Delhi temple during August 1976, Shрила Prabhupada became involved in trying to counter the negative propaganda being directed against him and his movement by the atheist politicians belonging to the communist parties in Bengal. Although Iskcon had always received the full support of the Indian government, both at the centre and in the various states, in Bengal there was fierce opposition from the communists, because they saw that Iskcon was leading a powerful revival of India’s ancient Vaishnava religion and the Bengali youth were joining Iskcon in the thousands.

Hari Sauri Dasa: Shрила Prabhupada has been very active in counteracting the negative propaganda against him and directed Gopala Krishna Prabhu to visit some of the favorable government officials in Delhi. At around 11:00 A.M., on Radhashtami day, Mr. Krishna Modi, a prominent member of the Indian parliament, came to see Shрила Prabhupada in order to discuss how to deal with the accusations leveled against Iskcon, and the communists demands for an enquiry into Iskcon’s activities. Krishna Modi, a very cultured and highly educated man, expressed his strong support for Shрила Prabhupada’s work. He informed Shрила Prabhupada that he had met with the Indian Home Minister, Mr. Brahmananda Reddy, to discuss the questions raised by a few communist agitators in the Rajya Sabha, saying that Brahmananda Reddy has no doubts whatsoever about the credentials of Iskcon, but because he was under

great pressure, he wanted him (Mr. Modi) and other members of parliament, who were favorable to Iskcon, to step forward and answer the communists allegations.

Krishna Modi said that he had spoken strongly in Iskcon's favor, and supported by other members, he had vehemently refuted the communist's invective. He had argued that now Indian culture was being spread all over the world for the first time, so why should Shrila Prabhupada be harassed. Krishna Modi also revealed that Brahmananda Reddy said that we should not mind if the communists were agitating, because after all, just like the *rakshasas*, it was their duty. "Let them do it," he had said, his mood indicating that it was all part of a political game.

Shrila Prabhupada appeared to be pleased; at least there were some important members of the government who were recognizing his work. He then raised an important point saying that as he was writing books and selling them in foreign countries and as a result he was bringing much needed foreign exchange into India which was a great benefit to the country. Krishna Mody agreed that this was a very important point and that it should be mentioned before parliament. Shrila Prabhupada suggested that Krishna Mody could do that, adding that Iskcon's total world-wide book sales now stood at \$60,000 per day and the profits were being spent in India for constructing temples. Shrila Prabhupada also mentioned that as the author of such bestselling books, he would ordinarily earn a handsome royalty, but had never accepted even a penny and every single *paisa* went directly to the book fund.

Gopal Krishna Prabhu informed Krishna Mody that Shrila Prabhupada was bringing into India far more foreign exchange than many of India's big business houses and exporter concerns. Shrila Prabhupada added, "I am bringing regularly at least ten *lakh* rupees into India every month. It is a great credit that I am selling books and bringing money from foreign countries to India." Krishna Modi wholeheartedly agreed, "Yes," he said, "I will speak," adding, "The Home Minister, Brahmananda Reddy, his mind is very clear, he is fully appreciating your work and he is one hundred percent in your favor."

Sometime later, the Indian Defense Minister, Mr. J. B. Patnaik arrived to meet Shrila Prabhupada. He gave similar advice to Shrila Prabhupada that we should make a presentation of Iskcon's work as this would certainly create a favorable impression with other members of the government. Mr Patnaik's visit gave further encouragement that important members of the political establishment were taking his missionary activities seriously.

The overwhelming support that Iskcon received from such important leaders like Krishna Modi, Brahmananda Reddy, and J.B. Patnaik, and other honorable members of parliament, was sufficient to cause the communists to back-down and completely abandon their attempts to tarnish Iskcon's reputation. Besides, the communists did not have even a shred of evidence to back-up their outrageous claims. Since then, neither the communists nor any other politicians have attempted to make false allegations against Iskcon.

Lokanatha Swami: **On Radhashtami day, I went to meet Shrila Prabhupada in his room to ask his opinion regarding my *sankirtan* party. We had been using Hamsaduta Prabhu's two big buses from Germany over the last six months, but now the permits (carnets) were running out and the buses would have to leave India, therefore my preaching would come to a halt. Shrila Prabhupada immediately said, "You can purchase a bullock-cart and go from village to village all over India. It will be a big success." I was immediately very enthusiastic about the idea of bullock-cart *sankirtan* and the next day I went to Vrindavan and purchased a bullock cart and two bulls. Within a few days the party was ready and we started going from village to village**

while heading south towards Allahabad where the Khumba Mela was going to be held in January the following year.

Hari Sauri Dasa: In the evening Shrila Prabhupada went down to the temple room to perform an initiation ceremony for around twenty devotees, many of whom were from Lokanatha Swami's *sankirtan* party. During the initiation ceremony, Tejas Prabhu had recommended a local businessman who lived in Delhi and was chanting sixteen rounds and following the four principles, but because his head was not cleanly shaven and having a *sikha*, Shrila Prabhupada refused to give him initiation.

Rajasekhara Dasa: It was a shock for everyone in the temple and especially for Tejas and Gopala Krishna Prabhu, that Shrila Prabhupada refused to initiate that gentleman, but I remember in London during an initiation ceremony, Shrila Prabhupada said, "At the time of initiation, one must promise the spiritual master to remain shaven-headed throughout his entire life, or alternately, never again shave throughout his entire life." Adding that, "However, in our Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, we promise the spiritual master to always remain with our head shaven throughout our entire life." In Gaudiya Vaishnavism, shaving of the head and keeping a *sikha* is one of the most important symbols of the disciple's surrender to the spiritual master and his renunciation of all material attachments.

I had once heard that in Los Angeles, two initiated devotees came to meet Shrila Prabhupada in his room and they had both grown their hair. When Shrila Prabhupada asked why, they said that it was not so important and that they were still Krishna's devotees, regardless of having long hair or not. Shrila Prabhupada replied that, "Devotees of Krishna you may be, but my disciples you are not." The only time that Shrila Prabhupada did not object to devotees growing hair was when they were going to either Muslim or communist countries to preach; otherwise Shrila Prabhupada wanted all his disciples to be cleanly shaven with a *sikha* in the true Vaishnava tradition.

According to Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy, when an initiated devotee grows long hair, it is considered to be a sign of *ahankara* or false ego, and having fallen under *maya's* influence, thinking the material body to be the self. It can therefore be concluded, that Shrila Prabhupada was demonstrating an important point during the initiation ceremony at the Delhi temple, and also the one in London. That even if one has achieved a high position in society or accumulated vast amounts of wealth, if one is not prepared to remain shaven-headed with Vaishnava *sikha* throughout his life, he is not actually ready to surrender his life to the spiritual master, and consequently, should not be given initiation. Such persons can remain as regular congregational members of the Iskcon society. Initiation is not meant for everyone, but only the most sincere persons who wish to dedicate their life in the service of Guru and Krishna. Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had Himself recommended that chanting the holy names and regularly reading *Shrimad Bhagavatam* was sufficient in itself for advancement in Krishna Consciousness.

Hari Sauri Dasa: Mr. Surendra Kumar Saigal, proprietor of the Tiger Lock Company, visited Shrila Prabhupada and purchased one hundred *Bhagavad Gitas* for distribution amongst his friends and factory workers. He invited Shrila Prabhupada to once again visit his house in Aligarh and made the suggestion that Shrila Prabhupada should first travel to Aligarh and then to Vrindavana, as the Mathura Road had been flooded by the overflowing waters of the Yamuna River due to the heavy monsoon. He also mentioned that many temples and *ashrams* in Mathura were under four feet of water.

Shrila Prabhupada's ten day stay at Iskcon's Lajpat Nagar temple in August 1976 was one of the most action-packed and dynamic visits that Iskcon's Delhi-*yatra* had ever experienced. Besides the Radhastami celebrations and the *abhisheka-mahotsava*, the initiations and the fire-*yajna*, there were also the important visit from the honorable members of parliament, plus the arrival of Iskcon managers from the various projects around India, and there was also the visit by Lokanatha Swami and his entire travelling *sankirtan* party. The Iskcon temple in Delhi temple had never been busier.

New Delhi – the World's Most Beautiful City

New Delhi was a very special city for Shrila Prabhupada. This is where he had started his preaching mission in 1955 and where he had begun translating the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* and printed the first three volumes at a local printing press. Delhi was also the place where he had revived his 'Back to Godhead' magazine, printed it, and distributed it around the city. Shrila Prabhupada had developed a genuine support base amongst the pious citizens of Delhi who had supported him at a time when he was alone, without funds, and with no fixed abode.

Tejas Dasa: **On one occasion, I was riding in a taxi with Shrila Prabhupada and a few other devotees when Prabhupada asked us which city did we think was the most beautiful city in the world. One of the devotees said Washington, while another said London, and yet another said New York. When Shrila Prabhupada asked what I thought, I said that of all the cities I had seen, New Delhi was undoubtedly the most beautiful, because Delhi has so many beautiful tree-lined roads, wide avenues, nice grassy circles, fountains, and spacious tree-filled parks, and many nice buildings with beautiful architecture, and beautiful suburbs like Chanakya Puri. "Yes." Shrila Prabhupada said, "New Delhi is the most beautiful city in the world."**

On another occasion when I was taking a morning walk with Shrila Prabhupada, he explained to me that he used to walk over three miles each way, between Chandni Chowk and Kamala Nagar, to take lunch at Mr. Joshi's house, just so that he could save the five *paisa* that it would have cost if he had gone by the bus. He said he used to walk all over Delhi in order to save the bus fare. He also mentioned that what is now South Delhi, was previously a vast jungle, and within just a short span of time, buildings started coming up all over the place. He said that the first factory built there had been an American owned company named Goodyear Tires, and gradually everything had come up, adding that Delhi had been far greener than it was today. Shrila Prabhupada then explained to me how he used to sell books in the government offices. He said he would call various people on the phone and make an appointment to meet them. After distributing a book or magazine to them, he would then go from office to office distributing books and would also leave books on trial. Later he would return to take the donation from those who wanted to keep the books.

Dhananjaya Dasa: **One day I visited Shrila Prabhupada at the Lajpat Nagar temple with my wife and daughter. Prabhupada was sitting on a cushion behind a large white desk. He called my daughter over because he had a big jar full of sweets known as *pera* and wanted to give one to my daughter. He then took one of the sweets from the jar and held his out his hand half-way across the desk, beckoning my daughter to come and take the sweet. My daughter was only ten months old at the time and could hardly walk, but she managed to toddle forward and on reaching the desk started to climb on top of it to reach the sweet. She then stretched**

out her hand and first of all caught hold of Prabhupada's hand that was holding the sweet. Prabhupada then began to pull his hand back across the desk, but my daughter did not let go as she was determined to get the sweet from Prabhupada's hand, and therefore she was slowly being pulled across the table by Prabhupada. Then she finally managed to get the sweet from Prabhupada's hand and immediately climbed back down off the desk and ate the *pera*. Prabhupada said that my daughter was a very intelligent girl. I remember that Prabhupada was very fond of children and always spent a little time to play with them.

Tejas Dasa: Towards the end summer, I was travelling by car through Delhi with Shrila Prabhupada, when he once again asked me a similar question that he had asked me a year earlier, when he inquired whether it had been very hot that summer. Remembering Prabhupada's question from the year before, I said, "Yes, Shrila Prabhupada, it was an 'unbearably hot' summer, so hot in fact, that I got heat stroke and it made me very sick." Shrila Prabhupada then said that actually the heat was generally very good for health, as long as one did not get overexposed to the sun. He said that because the heat enters the body it creates a very good digestion. I mentioned that besides the tremendous heat, there were great red clouds covering the sky and that for about forty days the sun could not be seen at all. Shrila Prabhupada said that if the clouds obscured the sun, then that was very good, because it helped to bring the temperature down. Prabhupada then explained that to take advantage of the heat, one should just take a little fruit in the morning, fast through the day, and then eat sumptuously at night, because all the heat that has built up in the body during the day, will help one digest everything at once. Shrila Prabhupada also said that at night, when everything has cooled down and cool winds blew, it was best to sleep outside, not directly on the ground, but on a straw mat.

Material Life is full of Suffering

It was always very clear, that even when Shrila Prabhupada was preaching to guests in his room or before large audiences, whatever he said to others was also meant for his own disciples. It had also become very clear that in the final year or so of Shrila Prabhupada's life on earth, his preaching had become even more direct and pointed, as if he knew that his days on earth were drawing to a close, and there was little time left for him to cut through the illusion remained in the hearts of his followers and all those who came to hear him speak.

Rajasekhara Dasa: **During one of Shrila Prabhupada's visits to Delhi, it had been excessively hot with temperatures hovering around forty degrees centigrade. I remember in the late afternoons, Shrila Prabhupada would invite the devotees up to his room where they would sit and chant or discuss various topics. There were not many devotees around at that time of day, and Shrila Prabhupada would be sitting in a very relaxed mood without a shirt with his white *brahmana* thread strung across his golden hued body. It was a rare sight which I had not had the chance to see previously, and I was struck by his effulgent and saintly demeanor and his extraordinary transcendental beauty. From the very first time I saw Shrila Prabhupada at the Bhaktivedanta Manor in England in 1973, I immediately noticed his shining effulgence and although I have seen most of India's famous saints, gurus, and mahatmas during my life, I have never seen anyone with such a brilliant effulgence and saintly demeanor as Shrila Prabhupada.**

That particular afternoon, a few visitors came and went then at around 6 P.M., a Sikh gentleman came to see Shrila Prabhupada, bringing along with his wife and two young children. He had been regularly visiting the temple for a number of months and was very eager to meet Shrila Prabhupada. He entered the room and sat before Shrila Prabhupada, who warmly greeted him and they began discussing various topics. Shrila Prabhupada had been talking in a very friendly and intimate way with the Sikh gentleman, and also shared a few laughs. Suddenly Shrila Prabhupada asked him in a nonchalant sort of way, "So what do you think, this married life is simply full of suffering." The Sikh gentleman was completely taken aback and utterly surprised by Shrila Prabhupada's question. After stuttering to find an answer for a few moments, he replied saying that it was a matter of doing one's duty. Shrila Prabhupada said, "Yes, duty is there, but it is simply suffering, don't you agree?" I could see that the Sikh gentleman was feeling uncomfortable and perhaps somewhat embarrassed by such direct questioning, especially as he was sitting there with his wife and children; once again he tried to avoid giving a straight answer, replying instead that there were many things in life that were unpleasant, but out of duty we must do them. There was a momentary pause as Shrila Prabhupada looked at the Sikh gentleman and everyone was wondering what Shrila Prabhupada would say next. The tension in the room was palpable as the exchange took place because the Sikh gentleman was deliberately avoiding a direct answer. The entire room became silent and one could have heard a pin drop. Shrila Prabhupada was obviously not satisfied by the Sikh gentleman's answer and once again posed the same question saying, "Doing your prescribed duty to your family is one thing, but do you admit that it is simply suffering." Realizing that there was no escaping Shrila Prabhupada's question, the Sikh gentleman went momentarily silent as he looked into Shrila Prabhupada's eyes. Then, heaving a huge sigh of relief said, "Yes Shrila Prabhupada, it is true, family life is full of suffering." The tension suddenly dissipated and Shrila Prabhupada was extremely happy that the Sikh gentleman was honest enough to admit the factual truth. Even the devotees in the room felt relieved, it was as if every single person in the room was being directly asked the same question. The great illusion of so-called happiness in family life lay shattered and the Sikh gentleman's vision on life had been completely changed forever.

According to the Vedic scriptures, every creature born on the earth has the inherent desire to enjoy sex pleasure. Within the human society, the institute of holy matrimony, in the form of *grihasta-ashram*, has been bequeathed to humanity by God, so they may simultaneously fulfill their propensity for sex-life, but at the same time become purified of that desire by following the regulations that govern the *grihasta-ashrama*. Nevertheless, family life is without doubt a great burden and at the same time full of suffering, and that was the crux of Shrila Prabhupada's instructions to the Sikh gentleman. Shrila Prabhupada was very expert in exposing the illusion of so-called material happiness, in as much that every man must struggle very hard just to maintain his family, and work hard like an ass 'day in and day out'. A man does not realize that for the pleasure of sex-life and being surrounded by his wife and children, he must suffer untold hardships. Unless one can understand that married life is full of suffering, the Vedas say that one will continue to suffer repeated birth and death life after life.

Tejas Dasa: **Shrila Prabhupada had called me into his room on the second floor of our Lajpat Nagar temple and then asked me to close the door. I was thinking that he was going to give me a heavy chastisement for some foolish mistake I had made, and he didn't want others to hear. He began speaking in a soft voice saying, "Some life-members had been complaining." My heart jumped and I thought, "Wow! This is it, my life is finished." Then Shrila Prabhupada**

said, "They are complaining that you are not taking care of your health, that you have some sort of kidney infection. It is important that you take care of your health, kidney infection is very serious and you should not neglect this." I was immediately relieved, and at the same time humbled to think that Shrila Prabhupada cared so much about his disciples, and that the life-members were also concerned enough to speak to Shrila Prabhupada. Then Shrila Prabhupada explained that I should not sleep on the floor in summer, as the heat rises from the floor then builds up in the body and then after entering the liver it causes sickness. He said I should sleep outside on a cot with a straw mat beneath to stop the heat rising up.

On another occasion sometime later when I had become very sick, Shrila Prabhupada insisted that when he was not in Delhi, I should use his room. He told me that I should not be shy, and because of my sickness I needed to rest properly. Of course I was very hesitant because once I heard Shrila Prabhupada say that there were four things we should never use: the spiritual master's shoes, his bed, his room, or his *asana*, as it was considered to be offensive. But Shrila Prabhupada was insisting that due to my sickness, regaining my health to continue my service was of the utmost importance and therefore I should use his room.

Tejas Prabhu had been the Delhi temple president for the last five years, but during Shrila Prabhupada's August visit to the Delhi temple, Tejas had informed him that due to his continuing ill-health and the strain of management, he wanted to resign from his post in order to rest and regain his health, saying that after recovering, he would prefer to be engaged only in life-membership preaching rather than undergoing the strain of management. Shrila Prabhupada had discussed the issue of appointing a new president with Gopala Krishna Prabhu, the local GBC, and therefore notified Giriraja Prabhu in Bombay to send Jagat Purush Das to take temporary charge until a permanent appointment could be made. Shrila Prabhupada had been very pleased with Tejas Prabhu's service in Delhi and it was certainly a disappointment that one of his best managers was being forced to resign due to ill health. Dhananjya Dasa remembered one day he visited Shrila Prabhupada in his room at the Krishna Balarama Mandira in Vrindavana to discuss some details regarding the Delhi temple and Shrila Prabhupada had told him, "Tejas is Delhi - and Delhi is Tejas."

The Illusion of 'Modern Life'

During the year 1976, Shrila Prabhupada spent a lot more time in India, and consequently he was often travelling between Vrindavana and the Delhi airport on his way to visit the various Iskcon temples in other parts of India or around the world. Because Iskcon's Delhi temple was very close to the road that went to the airport, Shrila Prabhupada often stopped off at the Lajpat Nagar temple. On 11th October 1976, Shrila Prabhupada arrived in Delhi from Vrindavana for a two day stay while on his way to visit Chandigarh.

Rajasekhara Dasa: **Early one morning Shrila Prabhupada arrived by car from Vrindavana just in time to give the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* class. During his lecture, Shrila Prabhupada began saying that on his way from Vrindavana that morning, he had seen hundreds of men cycling along the road on their way to work in the factories in order to earn their daily bread. He said that these men were cycling many miles to reach their workplace. They would then labor very hard the whole day, and then they had to cycle the long distance back home after work. Shrila Prabhupada said that these men were all *sudras* and had no idea about the actual purpose of human life. They were simply toiling day and night like animals, just to get money. Shrila**

Prabhupada said that this was the plight of modern Indians, saying it would have been far better if they remained in their villages and earn just enough to look after themselves and their families. That was real Indian culture - simple living and high thinking, but due to misguided education, they were leaving the villages and cycling miles upon miles just to maintain an artificial standard of living.

Hearing Shрила Prabhupada's words in the class struck a chord, as a few days earlier I had travelled by the same road and also seen thousands of men cycling along the highway to Delhi in the early morning in order to reach the factories and offices in Faridabad. These people had abandoned their simple life in the villages in order to get more money so they could enjoy all the modern gadgets and modern conveniences that the new-age consumer society was offering them. Unfortunately, they do not realize they had been brain-washed by the atheistic educational system, to become willing slaves in the hands of their capitalist bosses, who dangle the carrot of improved sense gratification and the 'good life' in front of their noses. The roadside hoardings along the Delhi Road encourage everyone to 'Live life king-size'. According to such advertisements, living life 'king-size' involves smoking a nicotine filled cigarette which eventually causes cancer resulting in premature death.

As a result of having fallen into the cancerous trap of 'Living life king-size', the foolish victims of materialism are forced to cycle every morning to labor hard the whole day like beasts of burden. They no longer have time for morning *puja* or meditation, or to hear from the Vedic scriptures. They don't even have time to eat a decent breakfast, or see their children, who are still asleep by the time they leave for work. And all these hardships are going on in the name of 'living life king-size'. They cannot understand they have been reduced from human beings to 'beasts of burden', and are now part of the 'rat-race', having to rush to work every day of their lives and work hard like donkeys, camels and asses, all in the name of so-called material advancement and a better life.

India was once a country where success in spiritual life was of paramount importance and self-realization was the goal of every Indian's life. Consequently the people of India devoted many hours of their day to religious practices while preparing themselves for the time of death and the journey to the next life. In fact, India was known throughout the world as the land of saints, holy men, yogis, and mystics, and Indian people were famous for being devoted to God. However, with the industrialization of the world and the advent of the consumer driven society, everything has changed, and Indians are now willing slaves of materialism, having forgotten the real purpose of human life.

Rajasekhara Dasa: **Once, Shрила Prabhupada related a true story about a man who strived very hard to provide all the so-called 'modern facilities' for his wife and son. He left home before dawn to reach his place of business, worked hard the whole day, and did not return home till late at night. He never took a day off and eventually accumulated a lot of money and all the material things associated with the 'good life'. Then finally after many years of hard labor, one day he took a holiday. When his son suddenly noticed him sitting in the living room, he became frightened and ran to their mother asking, 'Who is that stranger sitting in our house?' Over the years the man had been so hard at work, he only saw his son when his son was asleep. When he left home in the early morning his son was asleep, and when he got back at night, he son was also asleep, therefore the son actually never saw his father for a number of years. Although the mother and son now had all the 'good things in life', nevertheless, the son could never actually relate to the 'stranger' who said he was his father. Due to being rejected**

by his son, the father was a broken-hearted man and felt that his life had been a complete waste.

As Shrila Prabhupada's story illustrates, materialism only leads to ultimate suffering. By striving for materialism, one automatically neglects the most important things in life and that is one's relationship with God. Therefore, at the 'fag-end' of one's life, when death suddenly comes knocking at the door and the soul cries out in fear while praying to be saved by the Lord... but alas!, the Lord does not recognize him because the foolish soul was always hard at work striving to enjoy the 'good things in life', instead of taking time to develop his forgotten relationship with the Supreme Lord. Thus the soul is dragged down to hell where he must face the reaction of his sins. Therefore it is said, at the time of death, all the 'good things in life' cannot save you and therefore have absolutely no real value whatsoever

Tejas Dasa: On one occasion when Shrila Prabhupada arrived back in Delhi, he saw that there were not as many visitors taking *darshan* in the temple as before, and he asked me why this was so. I replied I had absolutely no idea. Then Prabhupada said that when the visitors first came to the newly opened temple, they thought that if we worship these deities, Radha and Krishna, we will receive blessings and become immediately rich, but after some time they saw that their wealth had not increased, and concluded that these deities will not make us rich, and therefore stopped coming.

In India, amongst the modern day followers of Hinduism, almost everyone who goes to the temple prays before God to be blessed with happiness and wealth (*sukhi-sampati*). This is because for the majority of the common people, getting money in order to enjoy material happiness is the only goal of life. They cannot understand that there may be a higher purpose to human life, other than enjoying sex-life with their spouses and raising a family, sleeping in a comfortable bed, filling their bellies, or protecting their property and wealth. This is due to a misguided educational system created by atheistic politicians that completely neglects the real purpose of human existence.

Of course, the people are correct in going to the temple to ask God for *sukhi* and *sampati*, this is also an aspect of religion, but only a very small aspect, and in fact it is the very lowest aspect. But even if one gets great wealth and so-called happiness, one still has to suffer the three-fold miseries that afflict everyone in this world, both rich and poor alike; miseries caused by one's physical body and mind, miseries caused by other living entities, and miseries caused by natural disturbances. One must also suffer the miseries caused by birth, disease, old age, and death.

To achieve the plane of higher consciousness, which is beyond the suffering and duality of this world, one must give up all desires for mundane materialistic pleasure and worship Lord Krishna. This is because only Lord Krishna can bless us with a higher consciousness whereby we can understand that we are all eternal spirit souls and different from the material body, which is made of flesh and bones that will ultimately die. Therefore, to worship Lord Krishna simply to get money and temporary material happiness is completely foolish, when one can achieve a far greater benediction of eternal life and unending spiritual happiness.

In this regard, the *Bhagavatam* reveals that when the boy saint Dhruva Maharaja, after performing great austerities in order to achieve great wealth and an opulent kingdom, came face to face with Lord Vishnu, he momentarily experienced the ecstasy of pure Krishna consciousness as he gazed at the beautiful face of the Lord. At that moment, he regretted ever having asked the Lord for any material benediction and condemned himself for having been such a fool. Thus, having experienced the transcendental bliss of Krishna consciousness and

having seen the beautiful form of the Lord, Dhruva compared his desire for great wealth and an opulent kingdom to be equal to begging for useless pieces of broken glass.

On October 13th, Shрила Prabhupada left to attend a function in Chandigarh where Iskcon had just opened a new temple. Shрила Prabhupada returned to Delhi on the October 19th where Gopala Krishna Prabhu presented him with the first-ever Hindi version of *Bhagavad Gita – As It Is*, printed by the Indian division of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust located in Bombay. The following day on October 20th, Shрила Prabhupada left Delhi by road for Vrindavana.

Tejas Dasa: Prabhupada had been talking with a young Christian man from England who was interested to join Iskcon. During his lecture in the temple he made an interesting comment about Christianity saying, “If you follow Jesus Christ you will go back to Godhead.” But then he said that the problem was that Christians were not strictly following Jesus Christ. Prabhupada then said “If you have a spiritual master but do not follow him, then you are not his disciple”. He also said that the Christians do not follow even the first commandment, ‘Thou shall not kill’, and are experts in killing all kinds of animals, even cows, and eating them.

Rajasekhara Dasa: During a morning lecture at the Lajpat Nagar temple, Shрила Prabhupada had talked about Christianity and Lord Jesus Christ. Once while preaching in the West, Shрила Prabhupada had said that Jesus Christ was also our guru, because he was a Vaishnava preacher and had taught the world about love of God.

On many occasions, when I saw Shрила Prabhupada surrounded by his disciples, I was reminded of what it would have been like to have seen Jesus Christ with his own disciples, and I used to think how fortunate we all were, to be in the association of such a spiritually exalted personality. However, it was always my own belief that Shрила Prabhupada was a far more important preacher of God's message than Jesus, because it took the message of Jesus more than a thousand years to spread around the world, whereas Shрила Prabhupada had spread the message of Krishna consciousness throughout the world in just fifteen short years. Shрила Prabhupada also gave the world so many important Vedic scriptures like the *Gita* and *Bhagavatam* that have been distributed in many millions around the world. Besides this, the teachings of Jesus were simple and rudimentary such as; ‘Though shall not kill, though shall not steal’, etc., whereas Shрила Prabhupada’s teachings were on a much higher spiritual platform, and he was revealing before the world, God’s holy name, His personality, His fame, His transcendental activities, and His eternal abode called Vrindavana. Shрила Prabhupada also taught the scientific method of spiritual advancement by chanting the Lord's holy names and serving Him through devotion (*bhakti-yoga*). Such transcendental knowledge had never been revealed in the world before. It is my conviction that in the future, when Krishna consciousness becomes the predominant religion in the world, as was predicted by Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the whole world will recognize the spiritual preeminence and great divinity of Shрила Prabhupada, as one of the most important messengers of God to have ever appeared on the face of the earth.

Prabhupada’s Health Deteriorates

In the month of March 1977, while attending Iskcon’s annual Gaura Purnima Festival in Sridhama Mayapur, West Bengal, Shрила Prabhupada’s health suddenly deteriorated, much to the dismay of hundreds of his disciples who had gathered to celebrate the appearance day of

Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Shrila Prabhupada, who was eighty two years old at that time, had fallen ill before, but this time it appeared that he may depart the world at any time. Regardless of the precarious condition of his health, Shrila Prabhupada decided to travel to Bombay where the new temple construction at Juhu was facing unnecessary delays. Although his senior disciples pleaded that he should remain in Mayapur to rest, Shrila Prabhupada took the flight to Bombay in order to supervise the temple construction. Shrila Prabhupada remained in Bombay for around a month, however his health did not improve but instead appeared to be deteriorating further. On the advice of an old friend from Bombay, Shrila Prabhupada decided to go to Rishikesh in the hope of recuperating. There the climate and water would be far more favorable for him to regain his health. On May 3rd 1977, Shrila Prabhupada left by flight to Delhi on his way to Rishikesh in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Rajasekhara Dasa: I was at Delhi temple for a few days visiting my younger brother Krodhaha Dasa, who was engaged in life-membership preaching. It was in the early afternoon when the news suddenly came through from Bombay that Shrila Prabhupada, who was still very ill, would be arriving at the Delhi airport within half an hour. The Bombay temple authorities requested that some devotees should go to the airport with a car in order to take Shrila Prabhupada to the Delhi railway station, while other devotees should proceed directly to the station and perform *kirtan* for Shrila Prabhupada while he was being escorted through the station to the train. The Bombay devotees also asked that a chair be brought so that Shrila Prabhupada could be carried up and down the stairs leading to the platform, as he was far too weak to walk.

There was a mad scramble for the vehicles because the phone call from Bombay came very late and Shrila Prabhupada's flight would be landing in Delhi in less than thirty minutes. The Delhi temple president Damodara Pandita immediately left by the temple car for the airport, and because the BBT library party headed by Mahavishnu and Prabhuvishnu were in Delhi temple that day, we immediately left for railway station in their van. It was decided that the library party devotees would carry Shrila Prabhupada in the chair, while I was deputed to lead the *kirtan* along with Krodhaha. As we headed out of the temple, I took one of the temple *mrdangas* and Krodhaha took a pair of hand-cymbals (*karatalas*). We reached the railway station and after finding out from which platform the Haridwar Express to Rishikesh was leaving from, we returned and waited outside the station for Shrila Prabhupada. Within minutes the temple car arrived with Shrila Prabhupada who was being accompanied by his servant and secretary. It was very clear to everyone that Shrila Prabhupada was extremely weak. As I started the *kirtan* with Krodhaha, the other devotees gently lifted Shrila Prabhupada from the car into the chair. As I led the way, chanting the holy names and playing the *mrdanga*, we slowly made our way through the crowded station, over the footbridge, and then along the platform to the first-class section of the Haridwara train, where a compartment had been reserved in advance by the Bombay devotees. As Shrila Prabhupada was carried inside the compartment, his bed-roll was laid out on the lower bunk and he immediately lay down to rest. The library party devotees then assembled outside the carriage window and joined in the *kirtan*. As we all looked through the train window at Shrila Prabhupada, it was very painful for us to see our spiritual master in such a debilitated physical condition. As we sang the holy names of the Lord, the train slowly pulled out of the station and we were left wondering if we would ever see Shrila Prabhupada again.

After spending about a month in Rishikesh, Shrila Prabhupada's health improved slightly, but then again relapsed. He informed his secretary and servant that as he felt the end of his life was

near, and wanted to go to Vrindavana saying, "If I am going to die, it is better to die in Vrindavana than anywhere else." As there was no time to make a train reservation, it was decided that Shrila Prabhupada would travel to Vrindavana in the Delhi temple car. Damodara Pandita immediately made arrangements and asked Yadubara to drive the car to Rishikesh. Shrila Prabhupada was made as comfortable as possible on the back seat where he could also lay down to rest, and with Yadubara driving, the car headed for Vrindavana. After driving for more than four hours, the car carrying Shrila Prabhupada reached Delhi. Because it was quite late in the afternoon by the time the car arrived in Delhi, it was decided to stay overnight at Iskcon's Lajpat Nagar temple and continue the journey to Vrindavana the next morning. The Delhi temple devotees watered down the roof so that it became cool and placed a wooden cot there so that Shrila Prabhupada could take rest. At around 6:00 A.M., the next morning Shrila Prabhupada continued his journey to Vrindavana.

While staying at the Krishna Balarama Mandira in Vrindavana, Shrila Prabhupada's health remained more or less the same, some days his condition improved and on other days it got worse. In August, invitations arrived from devotees in England and America asking Shrila Prabhupada to visit them. Due to feeling some improvement in his condition and enthusiastic to see his disciples from the West, where book distribution had expanded exponentially breaking all previous records, Shrila Prabhupada decided to travel once again. On August 28th 1977, Shrila Prabhupada left Vrindavana and took a flight to England, where he stayed at the Bhaktivedanta Manor in Letchmore Heath, twenty miles north of London. *Sankirtan* devotees arrived from all over Europe to see Shrila Prabhupada and he was certainly overjoyed to see them. He remained in England for two weeks until his health suffered a sudden setback, so on September 14th, he returned to Bombay where he hoped he might witness the temple opening. The date for the grand opening was over a month away, and after having been in Bombay for the a few weeks, there was absolutely no improvement in his health. Therefore in the first week of October, Shrila Prabhupada decided it was best to go back to Vrindavana to prepare for what he believed was his imminent departure from the world.

A Final Farewell to Shrila Prabhupada

Even though all of Shrila Prabhupada's disciples knew that his health was in a very precarious condition, none of them could ever imagine that one day he would leave them behind. In fact, it felt that there could be no existence without the presence of His Divine Grace at the helm of the Iskcon movement, to guide and encourage everyone in their service at the lotus feet of Lord Krishna. Everyone in Delhi temple was acutely aware of Shrila Prabhupada's ill-health, because there were daily bulletins from Vrindavana regarding his physical condition, plus transcripts of everything that Shrila Prabhupada had been saying, which were being posted on the temple notice board. There were also reports of Shrila Prabhupada's desire to perform *parikrama* around Govardhana Hill by bullock-cart. However the *kaviraja* (*ayurvedic* doctor) attending to Shrila Prabhupada had objected, saying that he would die at the first bump in the road. Regardless of the warning, Shrila Prabhupada had challenged the *kaviraja* saying that to perform *parikrama* of Govardhana Hill would in fact give him life. Shrila Prabhupada had also added that if he was to die while on *parikrama* of Govardhana Hill, it would be a far more glorious death than to die in bed. Shrila Prabhupada had requested Lokanatha Swami to arrange the bullock cart and it appeared that Shrila Prabhupada was determined to go on *parikrama*. A day or so before the Govardhana Puja and the proposed *parikrama*, Shrila Prabhupada's secretary and another senior devotee pleaded with him not to undertake the Govardhana *parikrama* as they

were filled with anguish at the thought of him dying on the road. After hearing their ardent pleas, Shrila Prabhupada relented and said he would not go. Needless to say, many devotees believed Shrila Prabhupada should go on Govardhana *parikrama* as it was his fervent desire and had said that the *parikrama* would in fact give him life.

Rajasekhara Dasa: I had recently returned to Delhi temple after having been to Jagannatha Puri on pilgrimage. Since returning to Delhi temple, I had been helping my god-brother Pippalai Dasa, who was experiencing some difficulty in India, to collect funds for his return ticket to America. Having heard that Shrila Prabhupada had the desire to go on Govardhan *parikrama* by bullock-cart, I was also planning to join the *parikrama* and had heard that Lokanatha Swami had already arranged the bullock-cart to carry Shrila Prabhupada around Govardhana Hill.

It was about 2:30 P.M., in the afternoon of the 14th of November, as I was sitting in the *brahmachari ashrama* with Pippalai when we suddenly heard Gopala Krishna Prabhu, the local GBC, arrive by car from Vrindavana and immediately rush into the temple and head straight for the office telephone. We were surprised by the loud commotion downstairs and as we listened we could hear Gopala Krishna frantically trying to book a long distance telephone call to the Iskcon temple in Los Angeles. There were no international telephone lines from Vrindavana in those days and even the phone lines from Delhi were usually quite bad, therefore Gopala Krishna Prabhu had to raise his voice in order for the operator to clearly hear him. We then heard him pleading with the telephone operator saying, "Please connect me immediately to Los Angeles, my spiritual master is dying and I must inform his disciples in America." It was a terrible shock to hear what he had just said. The operator certainly took the request very seriously and within minutes the connection to the Los Angeles temple went through. Waiting with baited breath, we then heard Gopala Krishna Prabhu inform the Los Angeles devotees regarding Shrila Prabhupada's imminent departure from the world and suddenly heard him say, "According to the *kaviraja*, Shrila Prabhupada has only another six hours to live."

Shocked to hear the devastating news that Shrila Prabhupada would depart from the world within six hours, we immediately ran downstairs to confirm all the details from Gopala Krishna Prabhu. I then told Pippalai that we should immediately go to Vrindavana and suggested that he use some of his air ticket money to hire a taxi, as the bus in those days would have taken at least six hours to reach Vrindavana, and unless we went by taxi, we may never see Shrila Prabhupada alive again. He agreed and we hurried to the nearby Lajpat Nagar market to hire a taxi and immediately left for Vrindavana.

It was around 6:45 P.M., when we reached Vrindavana and as we reached the Krishna-Balarama Mandira I noticed the bullock-cart parked in the road outside the temple. As I entered Shrila Prabhupada's room, there were some fifty or so devotees gathered around Shrila Prabhupada's bed, the mood was very solemn as the devotees simply stood there transfixed, their eyes gazing at Shrila Prabhupada, while they very softly chanted the *maha-mantra*. I could see sitting or standing around the bed, the various Iskcon GBC members and senior devotees from different temples around the world. Shrila Prabhupada, who was unbelievably thin, was lying motionless on a large bed, and the last shafts of sunlight were filtering through the partly drawn curtains, illuminating his transcendental form. It was a very surreal and mystical scene and somehow I was reminded of the final scene from the world famous opera, 'The Dying Swan'.

Just then, all the various GBC members and senior devotees who were around the bed were called away to a meeting in to the ante-room. Therefore I was then able to move forward and

to my great fortune, found myself standing at the bottom of the bed, right next to Shrila Prabhupada's lotus feet. As I was right next to the bed, I saw that Shrila Prabhupada was lying slightly on his left side. His eyes were closed and he was breathing very lightly through his slightly opened mouth. To the right of me sitting on the floor was Bharadwaja Prabhu, who was very quietly playing *karatalas* and leading the *kirtan*. Sitting on the right side of the bed were Shrila Prabhupada's god-brother Ananda Maharaja, and his god-sister Bhavatarini Devi, along with three devotees. I simply stood there for about ten minutes, chanting softly along with all the devotees, observing the final moments of Shrila Prabhupada's life on earth. Then one of the servants arrived from the ante-room with a water pot. As the servant gave water to Shrila Prabhupada, he coughed twice or thrice, and then after slightly lifting his head from the pillow, he opened his eyes. As I looked into Shrila Prabhupada's eyes, I was surprised, as he appeared completely normal and fully conscious, and I immediately got the impression that he was going to rise from the bed, because I knew that he had wanted to go on Govardhana *parikrama*, but within a moment, his eyes again closed, and by the time his head had returned to the pillow, his breathing had stopped. The devotees were left momentarily speechless and the *kirtan* suddenly stopped. Hearing the chanting suddenly stop, the *kaviraja* immediately ran into the room followed by the GBC members and within a moment declared that Shrila Prabhupada had departed from the world. The *kirtan* began again amongst anguished cries with some devotees sobbing loudly. All the devotees in the room began to chant Lord Krishna's holy names. Within a few minutes, the devotees in the room were asked to leave so that Shrila Prabhupada could be prepared for his *samadhi* ceremony. Before I left the room, I leaned forward and touched Shrila Prabhupada's lotus feet with my hands and anointed my head for the very last time, with the lotus-dust from the feet of Lord Krishna's pure devotee, and then left the room.

Shrila Prabhupada's disappearance occurred at approximately 7:30 P.M., on November 14th 1977. Then at around 8:30 P.M., Shrila Prabhupada's transcendental body was taken by palanquin in a *kirtan* procession around the circumambulation path of the temple and then, after having *darshan* of the deities, he was placed on his *vyasasana* in the temple, where an all-night *kirtan* was performed by his disciples. Early the next morning, sometime after *mangala-arati*, Shrila Prabhupada was taken in a huge *kirtan* procession by his disciples to the seven important Goswami temples of Vrindavana. When we entered Vrindavana town, I was quite shocked to see so many hundreds of *Vrajavasis* lining the streets and crowding the rooftops, whole families were there including women and children. Many were throwing flower petals from the roof-tops on to the procession, while others in the street offered flower garlands, incense, and ghee-lamps. I was wondering how on earth all these people knew that Shrila Prabhupada was coming. It was still very early in the morning and I had never seen Vrindavana so crowded like that with just local people. It seemed quite incredible and I felt that the demigods must have arrived in human form to take *darshan* of His Divine Grace, on his final *parikrama* through the holy city of Vrindavana. After returning to the Krishna Balarama Mandira, Shrila Prabhupada's *samadhi* ceremony and *abhisheka* took place as the assembled devotees all chanted the holy names of the Lord. It was my great fortune that I was able to lead part of the *kirtan* just when Shrila Prabhupada was being lowered into his *samadhi*. In accordance with the Vedic rituals, each devotee was able to throw a handful of Vraja soil into the *samadhi pitha* and then take a few drops of Shrila Prabhupada's *abhisheka charanamrta* water.

End of Part Three

PART FOUR

Shrila Prabhupada's Dream

- An Iskcon Temple & Vedic Cultural Centre in Delhi

1978 – 1998

After the disappearance of Shrila Prabhupada in November 1977, his disciples continued to push forward Iskcon's world-wide preaching mission with renewed enthusiasm in memory of their beloved spiritual master. In India, one of Shrila Prabhupada's most important projects, the new temple at Juhu in Bombay, finally opened on January 14th 1978. Gradually, new Iskcon projects began springing up right across the Indian sub-continent, however, in the nation's capital, there were no immediate plans for a new temple project, but the devotees knew it would only a matter of time, because it had been Shrila Prabhupada's desire to build a big temple New Delhi. After Tejas Prabhu left Delhi at the end of 1976, there was a succession of devotees who took up the post of Delhi temple president. It wasn't easy serving in Delhi, and very few devotees wanted to stay there because of the intense heat in summer, plus the high levels of air pollution choking the city, considered to be amongst the worst in the world.

After Tejas Prabhu left in 1976, in order to recover his health, there had been a series of temple presidents including Sarvabhavana, Bhagavata Ashraya, and Damodara Pandit. Eventually, in late 1978, Gopala Krishna Maharaja appointed Lokanatha Swami as the Delhi temple president and he brought with him most of the devotees from his travelling *sankirtan* party, giving the preaching in Delhi a much needed boost.

Lokanatha Swami: Becoming the president of Iskcon's Delhi temple at the end of 1978, was what I considered to be my first really substantial service. I had joined Iskcon in Bombay during 1974, and had been temple commander, the *sankirtan* leader, and also vice-president for some time, and then I went on travelling *sankirtan* for a couple of years, but being appointed as the Delhi temple president by Gopala Krishna Maharaja, the GBC for India, was an important opportunity for me and I threw myself wholeheartedly into the service

Iskcon Temple Moves to Greater Kailash

Towards the end of 1980, under the presidency of Lokanatha Swami, Iskcon purchased its own two storied building in Greater Kailash and the Iskcon temple moved to a new location in one of the more upper-class suburbs of South Delhi. By this time the number of devotees had increased considerably and thus there was a very successful preaching program going on. Besides the life-membership program, many devotees were going out into the city to distribute Shrila Prabhupada's books. It was certainly a new phase for Iskcon's Delhi-*yatra* after years of renting buildings in such diverse places as; West Patel Nagar, Anand Niketan, Bengali Market, and Lajpat Nagar. For the first time since the Iskcon temple was established in Delhi in 1970, it appeared that the fortunes of the Delhi-*yatra* were in the ascendancy and the future looked very bright indeed. After many long years of dedication and hard work in attempting to develop a fertile

field for spreading the message of Lord Krishna in the national capital of India, at last the green shoots of success were now beginning to appear.

Iskcon Delhi's First Rathayatra Parade

In the year 1981, Iskcon Delhi celebrated the first-ever Jagannatha Rathayatra Festival to be held in the capital. It was a sign of Delhi's coming of age as one of the worldwide locations where Iskcon organized the famous 'Festival of the Chariots' that had first been held in the city of San Francisco in 1967, and had gradually spread to other major world cities including New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Toronto London, Sydney, and Honolulu. The celebration of Jagannatha Rathayatra had been first introduced to the western world by Shрила Prabhupada, who had personally prepared an elaborate design for the first-ever Ratha (chariot) built outside India, that would be used for the 1967 San Francisco Rathayatra parade. The 'Festival of the Chariots' in San Francisco was so popular with the local residents, the city authorities declared Rathayatra Day as an annual public holiday. Because of Shрила Prabhupada's transcendental vision, the Jagannatha Rathayatra that has its ancient origins in Puri, is now being celebrated by Iskcon around the world.

In the cities of Bombay and Calcutta, Iskcon had been celebrating Rathayatra on a grand scale for quite a few years, but the capital city of India had been sadly missing out on the "Festival of the Chariots", and this was most ironic, as the deities of Iskcon Delhi were Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi, and the festival of Jagannatha Rathayatra revolves around the pastime of Radha and the *gopis* meeting Lord Parthasarathi at Kurukshetra, and then taking the Lord on His chariot back to Vrindavana.

Rajasekhara Dasa: **I had been the leader of Vrindavana's travelling *sankirtan* party that included Akshayananda Prabhu and a group of enthusiastic *brahmacharis* from various countries from around the world; however, due to the loss of our vehicles, we transferred the entire party to Bombay temple and instead engaged in bullock-cart *sankirtan*, and began travelling through the villages of Maharashtra. As our bullock-cart party was engaged in preaching in and around the city of Pune, when it came time for Pune's annual Rathayatra Festival, normally being organized on a small scale by local businessmen and a few devotees from the Bombay temple, our party took on the responsibility for organizing the Pune Rathayatra festival. The difference this time was that we decided that the giant chariot used in the Bombay Rathayatra Festival, would be brought to Pune on a flat-bed truck. The appearance of such a huge chariot at Pune's normally small Rathayatra parade created massive public interest. Many thousands lined the streets to take part in the celebrations which included a ten day *pandal* program that was packed every day. The Rathayatra festival was a phenomenal success and was extensively covered in all the local newspapers of Maharashtra.**

After the great success of Pune's Rathayatra, Yasomatinandan Das, Iskcon's regional secretary for Gujarat, requested that the same chariot be brought to Surat for the city's first Rathayatra celebration organized by Iskcon. Therefore our *sankirtan* party took the chariot by flat-bed truck to Surat and the Rathayatra Festival there was really huge with *lakhs* of people taking part in what was a truly ecstatic event. After the success of both the Pune and Surat festivals, Gopala Krishna Maharaja thought that it would be a good idea if the same chariot could also be taken to Delhi where Iskcon could hold its first-ever Rathayatra Festival in the capital.

Our *sankirtan* party brought the chariot to Delhi on a flat-bed truck and helped organize Delhi's first Rathayatra Festival. The route that was decided on with the local government authorities is the same route that is still followed even today, and the chariot is the same one that we brought from Bombay. We also organized a three day *pandal* program at the Red Fort grounds which was well attended. I remember staying up late many nights getting everything ready and also sticking up posters all over the city. I had to make a completely new canopy for the chariot as the old one had become faded and torn. To get a 40 x 40 ft. multi-colored canopy stitched according to the traditional design was very difficult, and it was not ready until the very last moment. I remember rushing to the site of the parade in an auto-rickshaw and climbing to the top of the 50 ft. chariot in order to fix the canopy in place as thousands waited below ready to start the parade. I remember at some point looking down at the crowd, only to see thousands of anxious faces all looking at me, as I hung on precariously at the top of the chariot while fixing the canopy in place.

The first Jagannatha Rathayatra parade held in Delhi organized by Iskcon was extremely successful and many thousands of people took part. It was reported extensively in all the newspapers and I remember Gopala Krishna Maharaja showing me a front page report in one of the most prominent Delhi newspapers, along with a photo of the chariot, with the headline exclaiming 'the beautiful brightly colored canopy atop Lord Jagannatha's chariot has been seen for the first time in the capital'.

Planning a Big Iskcon Project in Delhi

Sometime after the Iskcon temple had moved to its own premises in Greater Kailash, Gopala Krishna Maharaja believed that it was now time for Iskcon Delhi to embark on its own temple project in the capital; he had been heavily involved in completing the Bombay temple project and felt that Delhi, the capital city of India, should not be left lagging behind. Although Gopala Krishna Maharaja knew that to develop a landmark Iskcon project in the capital city of India would be an enormous endeavor, nevertheless, because it was Shrila Prabhupada most cherished desire to have such a project, therefore, with the help of Lokanatha Swami, they began the initial planning for a large spacious Radha Krishna temple with a Vedic museum and cultural centre.

Gopal Krishna Goswami: **Shrila Prabhupada had personally expressed to me his desire to build a big temple project in Delhi and on a number of occasions I had accompanied him to see different pieces of land in and around Delhi. As early as 1967 or 1968, Shrila Prabhupada had written a letter to me while I was still working in Montreal, Canada. In the letter he said, "In Delhi since independence many big buildings have been constructed, but not one major temple. So when you eventually return to India, it will be your duty to construct these temples in India." Unfortunately, during Shrila Prabhupada's lifetime we were unable to realize his transcendental desire to build a big Iskcon temple in New Delhi.**

Once I returned to India in February 1975, to take up the post of Governing Body Commissioner (GBC) in India, Shrila Prabhupada would often come to Delhi to attend preaching programs. He would also stop off at the Delhi temple whenever he would arrive at Delhi airport while on his way to Vrindavana. The preaching in Delhi at that time was very simple, we had only five or six devotees, but Shrila Prabhupada always talked about having a big Iskcon temple in Delhi. He desired that we construct a major project in Delhi where there would not only be deity worship, but also a cultural centre that would present the ancient

Vedic culture utilizing the very latest technology. He always emphasized that Delhi was the most important city in Asia. In order to realize Shрила Prabhupada's dream, we started to make a concerted effort to find suitable land in Delhi to construct a really magnificent temple.

The 'Glory of India' Project Takes Shape

It took over one year to complete all the necessary planning whereby the devotees could make a comprehensive presentation to the local government in order to obtain sufficient land for such a massive project. The price of land in the capital was prohibitive and most of the available land suitable for such a large project was under the supervision and control of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA).

Gopal Krishna Goswami: Sometime after Lokanatha Maharaja became Delhi temple president, we began making a very elaborate plan for a temple that would also include a Vedic museum and a cultural centre. It took about one year and during that time we also came up with the wonderful name of the 'Glory of India', for our Delhi temple project. Then in 1981, we applied for land from the Lt. Governor of Delhi, Mr. Jagmohan. We presented our idea of having a totally unique temple complex with a Vedic cultural exhibition under the name of 'Glory of India', and Mr. Jagmohan really liked the idea very much. The name that we had coined, the 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' made people realize that this was not going to be just another temple, but something extraordinary. To get land from the government in India is very, very difficult. There is a lot of 'red tape' involved, but nevertheless, we made a number of attempts but without much initial success. Then finally in 1982, we met the Education Minister, Mrs. Sheela Kaul, and with her support, and the help of Mr Jagmohan, who had then been appointed as Chairman of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the government agreed to allot land for the 'Glory of India' project.

Lokanatha Swami: After becoming Delhi temple president, I got very deeply involved along with Gopala Krishna Maharaja, in planning a very big Iskcon project in Delhi. We both knew that Shрила Prabhupada had wanted a very big Iskcon project in the capital and had also gone to various places around Delhi with Tejas Prabhu, looking for suitable land. After a lot of effort, the government offered only five hundred square yards, but we were thinking of at least ten acres for our proposed 'Glory of India' project. Generally, the central government, being secular, does not give land for religious purposes, but as our project was centered on culture, and was promoting India's ancient Vedic culture, the government took a different view, and supported our proposal. After the DDA agreed to give us land, our application went to the home ministry for approval and slowly our file began to move through the various departments. At this time, I was doing a lot of running between different ministries and would go every day to the offices of the DDA in order to locate a good site for building the 'Glory of India' project; in fact it seemed to become an integral part of my daily *sadhana*. Whenever Gopala Krishna Maharaja came to Delhi, we would be running around together, trying to expedite our file in the various departments and ministries, as well as looking at different plots of land earmarked by the DDA.

Once the DDA had in principle agreed to give us land, which was still pending final approval in the concerned ministry, the next thing was to select a piece of land suitable for our project. A highly placed official with the DDA, Mr. Gupta, was assigned to our case and he took me all over the Trans-Yamuna area and South Delhi looking at different pieces of land. Finally he

brought me to this land in Sant Nagar. The place was very rocky and it was being used by the local residents of the nearby Garhi village as an open-air toilet. Mr. Gupta took me on a tour of the land and there was hardly a place to put my foot down without treading on human excrement. It was a very contaminating tour. However, the actual location of the land at Sant Nagar was really good being right next to Nehru place, which was the major office-cum-shopping centre in the heart of South Delhi. The land was also adjacent to the Bahai Lotus Temple which had already become a local landmark and tourist attraction. Although the Sant Nagar land was just three acres, we decided that this was the ideal location for our project.

From the time of the initial planning for the 'Glory of India' project, which started in 1980, it was not until 1982 that the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) agreed to the master plan and allotment of land for the project. It then took another four years until 1986, for the concerned government ministries to approve the DDA's allotment of land to Iskcon. It then took another four years until 1990 for the files to move through all the various government ministries in order to obtain final permission to begin construction on the 'Glory of India' project.

Gopal Krishna Goswami: **Although we obtained the land at Sant Nagar from the DDA in 1986, before we could start any construction, we had to go through several long and drawn-out procedures and it took almost four years to get the final approval to start clearing the land and begin the construction on the 'Glory of India' project. From the very beginning, our vision was not just to build a simple temple, but an educational and cultural centre that included a Vedic museum, that would use modern technology that would present the ancient Vedic history of India to both Indians as well as foreigners. We knew that if we constructed just another temple in Delhi, it would not be of any great significance. India has a great heritage and an even greater spiritual message to deliver to the world and we thought we should deliver it in the most modern and technologically up-to-date way possible. Our vision was to create an institution that would inspire people to dedicate their lives to the teachings of Lord Krishna. Therefore in keeping with this particular theme, the 'Glory of India' museum and exhibition should also present many aspects of India's ancient culture including highlights from various scripture including; *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *Chaitanya-charitamrita*, using advanced animatronics and traditional dioramas.**

The prospect of having to raise sufficient funds for such a dynamic project as the 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' was truly herculean in dimension. The initial budget for the project had been estimated to be not less than twenty *crores* of rupees. The responsibility to raise the necessary funds from the general public was going to be the responsibility of the Delhi temple devotees. Fortunately, the people of Delhi wholeheartedly supported the 'Glory of India' project and donated generously for a project that was very dear to their own hearts, as it was a project that would present the ancient culture of India to the whole world.

Radha Damodara Dasa: **Gopala Krishna Maharaja was always pushing very hard and exhorting us to be very sincere and do our service to the best of our ability. It was a very huge task to raise the necessary funds for such a big project and many devotees couldn't handle it and simply ran away. Those who remained tried their best and by Krishna's mercy we were able to succeed. So many nice gentlemen came forward to help. It seemed the funds were coming automatically. In the beginning, when Shрила Prabhupada first started this movement, he was simply writing books and preaching to the innocent people in the west. Simply by distributing**

his books, funds automatically started coming. In the same way, we sincerely tried our best, we always chanted the holy names and regularly read Shrila Prabhupada's books, and left the result up to Lord Krishna.

Rochana Dasa: I remember that Lokanatha Swami made a great effort to obtain the land for the 'Glory of India' project. It was really a lot of hard work but he somehow or other managed to do it. I firmly believe that the 'Glory of India' Cultural Centre is going to make a great impact on the people of Delhi and they are certainly going to be influenced to once again take up Vedic culture.

Lokanatha Swami remained as the Delhi temple president until 1984, when he resigned to take up the post of Iskcon Regional Secretary. Although he continued to be involved in the 'Glory of India' project, he wanted to spend time to fulfill his long standing ambition to help increase the preaching in his native state of Maharashtra, which would take him away from Delhi from time to time; however, Lokanatha Swami always remained deeply involved in the Delhi temple project. In order to expand his bullock-cart program outside India he opened a 'Padayatra Worldwide' office in Sant Nagar and whenever he was in Delhi, he worked tirelessly to make the 'Glory of India' project a great success.

Lokanatha Swami: It took a few more years before we could start the construction work. We put a team together and starting to prepare the basic architectural design. We also performed a big *yajna* on the spot where the deities were to be installed which is directly below the present temple domes. In the beginning, Surabhi Dasa, who had designed both Vrindavana and Bombay temples, was in our team along with another architect from Bengali Market, however, as time went by the team changed.

Radha Damodara Dasa: We got the land donated from the DDA in 1986, but it took a very long time for us to get the permission to start building the 'Glory of India' project, therefore we did not actually move to Sant Nagar until February 1992. The 'Glory of India' project is a very dynamic project that actually glorifies India's ancient Vedic culture. It will give the people of Delhi the chance to revive their spiritual lives. By keeping Shrila Prabhupada in the centre and working together cohesively, this project will not only benefit the people of Delhi but the people of the whole world as well.

The devotees in Delhi had been collecting funds over the years preparing for time when they would get the final permission and begin construction work on the 'Glory of India' project. After Lokanatha Swami had relinquished the temple president's post to become regional secretary, an American devotee, Yajna Dasa, was appointed as Delhi temple president. He was a good manager with an amiable nature and continued with the task of fund raising and inspiring all the devotees in their service, but due to suffering from the effects of air pollution, he had to leave the post and return to America. Radharamana Dasa, then took over the position of temple president and continued for the next year or so. The next president was an Indian-born Canadian-born Indian devotee named Kripa Nidhi Dasa, who worked hard in fund-raising and galvanizing the local community behind the 'Glory of India' project.

When permission was finally granted for the construction of the 'Glory of India' project to begin, a temporary temple building was erected on the construction site in Sant Nagar. The premises at Greater Kailash in which Iskcon's Delhi temple had been located since 1980 was sold and the

proceeds went towards the 'Glory of India' construction fund. The deities and devotees of Iskcon's Delhi temple then moved to the temporary temple located at the 'Glory of India' construction site at Sant Nagar in February, 1992.

Construction of 'Glory of India' project Begins

In 1991, Trikalajna Dasa, an Indian-born devotee who had been working in England as a civil and marine engineer, was appointed as Delhi temple president by Gopala Krishna Maharaja. During his tenure the construction work on the 'Glory of India' project finally got underway.

Trikalajna Dasa: I first met Gopala Krishna Maharaja in the 1980's and had been asked by the Iskcon temple authorities in England to receive Maharaja from the airport and drive him around London to meet important businessmen who were inclined to help the Delhi temple project. This service continued over the next few years and Maharaja often encouraged me to get involved with the 'Glory of India' project because of my background as an engineer. In 1990, while on pilgrimage to India, Maharaja persuaded me to visit Delhi to make a study of the Iskcon project. At that time I stayed for four months and was given the post of vice-president. The following year I returned to Delhi to take charge of the 'Glory of India' project and was appointed by Gopala Krishna Maharaja as the Delhi temple president. The most difficult thing was to raise funds and by the time I took over there were only three teams of devotees engaged in fund-raising, therefore one of my priorities was to increase the collection of donations

Such a large-scale project as the 'Glory of India' needed the services of a full-time engineer and we were most fortunate that Mr. Dave came forward to help on a purely voluntary basis. Then we obtained the services of Mr. A. P. Kanvinde, a recipient of the prestigious 'Padma-Shree' award for architecture, and following Mr. Dave's example, he also decided to offer his invaluable services as a volunteer without any fee. Due to Mr. Dave and Mr. Kanvinde, many others also came forward to volunteer their services and thus we were able to save a lot of funds.

Mr. C. J. Dave (Chaturmasya Dasa): I became an Iskcon life-member in 1981 and often took my friends and business associates to the Bombay temple at Juhu. I was at that time managing director of Dastur & Company, one of India's largest steel consultancy firms. After attending an introductory course on *Bhagavad Gita* near my office in Merchant Chambers, given by Rasaraja Dasa, I began to understand more about spiritual life. Whenever I was not away on business, I would always attend the Sunday program at Iskcon's Juhu temple. Then on another occasion, I found out that Gopala Krishna Maharaja was conducting *Bhagavad Gita* classes near my office at Merchant Chambers and attended the entire series of discourses. Due to this, I began to become far more interested in Iskcon and decided to visit Mayapur for the Gaura Purnima Festival, where I once again saw Gopala Krishna Maharaja. He enquired if I was from Bombay and also asked about my work and whether I was chanting sixteen rounds and following the principles, and I replied that I was. He then asked me to meet him when I returned to Bombay.

After returning to Bombay, Maharaja called me and I met him at the Juhu temple and he asked me to help on the new 'Glory of India' project in Delhi. I told Maharaja, "I am not an architect but an engineer, I can build a big steel factory and also manage big industry, but I am

not an architect.” Maharaja said that’s alright, no problem, but we need someone qualified like you, so why don’t you come to Delhi and see the project.

I went to Delhi with my wife to see the land and I felt inspired to help such a wonderful thing like the ‘Glory of India’ project. I told Gopala Krishna Maharaja, “OK Maharaja, I will take the responsibility, but we have to locate a proper architect.” After visiting Vrindavana for a few days, I returned to Bombay and informed the company chairman I wanted to be relieved of my post as managing director. They were completely shocked; I had been with them for thirty-five years and risen from junior engineer to become the managing director, with five hundred people under me. They were undoubtedly very good to me, and flew me everywhere and I also stayed in five star hotels, so for me to resign in order to join the Hare Krishna movement, was a really big thing for them. We had built the Bakaro steel plant and a steel plant at Vishakapatnam, and plants in Malaysia and Libya as well. It was the biggest company in India with almost four thousand engineers and draftsmen. The company had looked after me very well, I was just fifty-nine years old at that time and had certainly not thought of retirement, but I had decided I was going to abandon materialistic life forever and adopt the pure spiritual life of Krishna consciousness.

I joined the ‘Glory of India’ project full-time on May 1st 1991, and set up a small office to handle the project. Normally such projects would require at least twenty five to thirty qualified people, but with the available budget we had to manage with far less. But then two key figures arrived to help the project, Mr. G. L. Nagar, a mechanical engineer who had just retired from Indian Airlines, and Mr. A.S. Rana, a civil engineer and disciple of Lokanatha Swami, who had thirty years of experience in construction. They were very important to the success of the project. Then Mr. Surjeet Gill, also joined our team as maintenance engineer, handling everything from plumbing to electricity and every kind of small time-consuming job. He also took care of supplies and I could remain on site and concentrate on the more important matters. A little later, Mr. Kashmoti, a retired civil engineer formerly with Indian Railways also joined the team for some time. Even though it was a small team of volunteers, they all worked with great sincerity and thus we could pull-off such a big project.

I had already informed Gopala Krishna Maharaja that a top class architect was required for this project. I had been regularly visiting Delhi during the period in between leaving my company in Bombay and moving permanently to Delhi, and I could see that the people involved in the project at that time were not qualified to execute such a massive construction. The architect in charge then was in fact a junior architect and as such, a project like this was completely out of his depth, and although they had submitted an initial plan to the government, it had not met with any approval. Therefore, my first priority was to find a highly qualified architect who could handle such a formidable project. Mr. Nayar, who was also the projects assistant director, suggested the name of Mr. A. P. Kanvinde, who was a top architect, so I met him and we discussed the ‘Glory of India’ project. He was surprised that I had given up my well paid job as a managing director to serve Iskcon, and he agreed at least to help us in an advisory capacity. Later on, he met Gopala Krishna Maharaja, who preached to him at length, after which he decided to volunteer his services and join the project as principle architect, develop a master plan, and also help to get the plans passed by the DDA and the Urban Arts Commission. As soon as Mr. Kanvinde joined the team, due to his great expertise, everything moved along very quickly.

Mr. A. P. Kanvinde was one of India’s foremost architects and had been awarded the prestigious ‘Padma Shree’ in 1974, for his services to architecture. Born in Maharashtra, and educated in Bombay, he was selected by the Council of Scientific Industry Research and sent to the USA

where he received his post graduate degree in architecture from Harvard University. His illustrious career had spanned nearly fifty years and he has completed many landmark architectural projects including the campus at IIT Kanpur, the Atomic Energy Commission complex in Bombay, and the headquarters of the National Delhi Development Board, besides museums, public buildings, and various institutions.

Mr. Kanvinde had also been the visiting professor of architecture at the University of Berkeley as well as Washington, in the USA. However, during his long and distinguished career, he had never had the opportunity to design a temple. After meeting Mr. C. J. Dave and being impressed with his sincerity and devotional spirit, Mr. Kanvinde decided that he would also volunteer his services without accepting a fee, and he became the principle architect for the 'Glory of India' project. Mr. Kanvinde felt that to take part in the 'Glory of India' project was a golden opportunity to do something in the service of God.

Mr. A.P. Kanvinde: In 1991, I was invited to help the 'Glory of India' project. Mr. Dave, the project director was looking for a highly qualified architect to execute the plans. Prior to Mr. Dave becoming director, a local architect and also one of Iskcon's own architects from Holland had submitted plans, but they were not cleared by the government authorities. My name was recommended to Mr. Dave, and we met to discuss the project. I also received some of Shрила Prabhupada's books and after reading, I became more aware of a higher purpose in life. I had already reached seventy years of age by then and I saw a wonderful opportunity to offer whatever abilities I possessed as a humble offering to Lord Krishna. I was very inspired by Mr. Dave's example of voluntary service to the 'Glory of India' project, and I also decided to give my services to such a noble and worthy cause.

I also believed that this 'Glory of India' project would convey a powerful message of spiritualism to the people of India. Iskcon is seen as a highly learned organization due to the great scholarship of Shрила Prabhupada who has made commentaries on so many important Vedic *shastras*. I believe that this 'Glory of India' project is desperately needed to help provide guidance to the children and youth of our nation, because their parents have utterly failed due to their ignorance of all matters spiritual. I am particularly impressed that students from the prestigious IIT are also getting involved in Iskcon's activities, because they are the future of not only our country, but of our culture as well. In today's world, modern education completely neglects the spiritual and cultural aspects of life, concentrating only on mundane academic subjects concerning employment, one's prospects, and how much money one can earn. There are so many academic subjects but nothing on culture, tradition, or advancement of spiritual knowledge. Therefore, this 'Glory of India' project, which is dedicated to the advancement of spiritual values, purity, knowledge of the self, and detachment from gross materialism, is vitally important for the future of India.

A New Temple Built on an Ancient Rock

Although nobody knew it at the time, the rock-strewn land given to Iskcon by the DDA was marked on very old maps of Delhi as Govardhana Hill. In fact this sandstone outcrop at Sant Nagar is part of what is called the Aravalli Hills and is the last visible outcrop of the over one fifteen hundred kilometer long Aravalli Mountain range, that starts in Gujarat near the famous hill resort Mount Abu and ends in Delhi. The sacred Govardhana Hill near Vrindavana is itself a part of the same Aravalli Mountain range. The Aravalli Mountains which consist entirely of sandstone rock formations are calculated by geologists to be the oldest mountains in India and

one of the oldest in the world, dating back to the pre-Cambrian period between 4500- 590 million years ago. The fact that Iskcon had been given this particular hill named Govardhana, to build a temple dedicated to Krishna, was quite extraordinary to say the very least, especially as it was situated in a locality called Sant Nagar, the 'township of saints'.

Mr. A.P. Kanvinde: **In the old maps of Delhi, the hill where the temple was to be built was called Govardhana Hill. The fact that visitors would have to climb on top of rocks to get to the temple is really unique and contributes to the whole spiritual experience. In many of India's ancient temples, the pilgrims have to climb up many steps to reach the temple and have *darshan*. Of course, there was a lot of difficulty in cutting through the rock in order to build the temple, but it appeared to me that everything had been pre-arranged by providence, almost as if this place had been reserved for a temple.**

The 'Glory of India' project is a fusion of past and present – India's ancient culture presented for the people of the modern age. A temple has a lot of formalities based on ancient traditions and in designing this temple, I didn't believe in imitating the past superficially. Historically, the *mandapam* of this size was not possible and in even the largest temples in India, the *mandapam* is no more than twenty to twenty-five feet. But at the present time, the need is for a larger *mandapam* to accommodate a much larger community. Today technology has improved and a large *mandapam* has become possible. The hollow *shikara* (temple spire) is another important point. In ancient times stone blocks were placed one above the other and the *shikara* was completely solid, and even if some had a hollow centre, it was closed off and not visible. But the *shikara* is not necessarily a closed thing, it is in fact a symbolic element, and there is no preconceived imposition. So I opened it up, something unique and never done before, so that at night by using interior lighting, the *shikara* would be illuminated from inside, which could then be seen from many miles around.

The principle architect, Mr. Kanvinde, had prepared a unique design for the 'Glory of India' project that envisioned the complex being built on four different levels and pilgrims visiting the temple for *darshan* would have to climb up a series of steps in order to reach the main temple located at the summit of the hill. To enter the complex from the road, pilgrims would climb the first flight of steps to the first level that included the main gate, a large open promenade and Govinda's restaurant. Then the pilgrims would walk up another set of steps while passing through an ornamental archway to reach the second level where the 'Vedic Cultural Centre' was located. Then passing by manicured gardens, a series of fountains and a waterfall, the pilgrims would walk up to the third level where there would be a *prasadam* pavilion, life-members lounge, temple offices, and a place where pilgrims could keep their shoes and cleanse their feet. Then the pilgrims would walk up the final flight of steps to reach the upper level and the magnificent temple of Shri Shri Radha Parthasarathi.

As the chosen site for the complex was in fact part of a mountain with huge boulders covering the entire hillside. A major part of the engineering work on the 'Glory of India' project entailed removing large sections of solid rock from the mountain side to make way for the temple. This was a very difficult and prolonged exercise that continued in stages throughout the entire period of construction. The only way to break up the massive sandstone rock formations that ran deep below the earth for thousands of feet was to blast them loose with dynamite. Special explosives experts were engaged to undertake the task of using the dynamite and once the large rocks were broken into small pieces they were ferried out in trucks.

As various buildings of the 'Glory of India' complex began to slowly emerge above the rocky landscape, the deities of Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi were transferred from the temporary

temple to one of the large building that had been completed near the main entrance to the complex, which would later be used as the Govinda's Restaurant. All the various temple services and worship of the deities were conducted from this building until the actual inauguration of the temple. As soon as the administrative block with its many offices located below the temple *mandapam* were finished, the temple management transferred their official activities there and the life-membership lounge was also made functional. The large *prasadam* hall was also utilized for Iskcon's 'Sunday program' and for meetings of the 'Pandava-sevaks', a core group of life-members, who were actively involved in raising sufficient funds to complete the 'Glory of India' project.

Massive Public Support for the Project

Most of the funds needed to developing the 'Glory of India' project were provided by the people of Delhi, who donated most generously towards the immense construction costs and enthusiastically gave their whole-hearted support for building this beautiful temple. It took almost eighteen long years from the time that the initial planning began in 1980, until it was finally completed in 1998, and throughout that time, the local community remained solidly behind the Iskcon devotees and continually gave them encouragement to complete the project on a grand scale. Amongst the prominent donors were Vishnu Hari Dalmia and his brother Sanjay Dalmia, M. K. Jajodia, S. N. P. Punj, Ashoka Chaturvedi, Rajendra Prasada Modi, Prakash Kaitan, Rajendra Chameria, and Chandu Bhudrani, and Ved Prakash Asgarwal, who all extended wonderful support to the 'Glory of India' project.

Vishnu Hari Dalmia: **My father (Seth Jai Dayal Dalmia) first came into contact with Shрила Prabhupada before he went to the USA where he founded the Iskcon movement. I think very highly of Shрила Prabhupada. He was the first man to take the message of Lord Krishna's *Gita* to the western countries. I think that the propagation of Lord Krishna's name all over the world is a truly magnificent work which has been accomplished by Iskcon. Therefore today, in most countries around the world, people know about Lord Krishna and his message. I had the opportunity of meeting Shрила Prabhupada on several occasions to seek his blessings. He was a very saintly figure and on many occasions we had invited him to our house in order to serve him and receive his blessings. I also visited him on a few occasions in Vrindavana.**

I believe the real benefit of Iskcon's 'Glory of India' project is that more and more people will come to know about Lord Krishna's teachings, His philosophy, and knowledge of the eternal spiritual world, and that is what is needed in India today. Although India is basically a very religious country, people today are diverting from the religious path and indulging in various irreligious activities. I think that Iskcon's temples and the messages that they convey help the people to come back to the religious path, and this is certainly the need of the hour. I am also sure that the 'Glory of India' cultural project will be very prominent in the city of New Delhi. I have seen that whatever project Iskcon takes up, it executes it in a truly magnificent and impressive way. I have especially noticed that the devotees who serve in temples, they serve not just out of ritual, but with great devotion, right from the heart. That is what is most remarkable, because in most temples, the priests just perform the *puja* and *aratis* as a matter of ritual. But the devotees who perform *puja* and *arati* in the Iskcon temples, I can see they are feeling something from inside.

Ved Prakash Agarwal (Vedavyasa Dasa): Unknown to me, my father made me a life-member of Iskcon and one day in 1991, an invitation suddenly arrived for me to attend Iskcon's Shri Krishna Janmashtami celebration at the Greater Kailash temple, and so I went along and took part in the festivities. I liked the devotional mood in the temple and stayed until the deities midnight bathing ceremony. I had been searching for God for quite some time and on Sundays I was regularly going to the Birla Mandira where I could contemplate God in a spiritual atmosphere. Then one Sunday after leaving the Birla Mandira, I decided to visit the Iskcon temple to take *darshan*. The Sunday program was going on and I listened to the *Bhagavatam* class and also took *prasadam* with the devotees. From then onwards, instead of going to the Birla Mandira on Sundays, I began going to the Iskcon temple instead.

I had been attending the Sunday program for a few months and on one occasion there was an announcement about the up-coming 'Jagannatha Rathayatra Festival'. Anyone who wanted to donate towards the festival could do so. I immediately donated whatever I had in my pocket and handed over one of my visiting cards to one of the devotee, saying that if more funds were needed, they could contact me. The devotee asked me if I would like to meet with the temple president and I agreed. After talking with him about the upcoming Rathayatra festival, he introduced me to Gopala Krishna Maharaja, and that's how I first came into contact with Maharaja and the Iskcon devotees. I believe it was all due to the arrangement and mercy of Lord Jagannatha.

After that meeting with Maharaja, I also began attending the early morning *mangala arati* at the small Iskcon temple near my house in Punjabi Bagh, and I also attended the evening *Bhagavad Gita* class whenever possible. Gradually I began to associate more closely with the Iskcon devotees. As the 'Glory of India' project was one of Iskcon's most important projects, I gradually got involved and after some time I was visiting friends and business associates and encouraging them to contribute whatever they could towards this very important project. Although I was spending much more time performing devotional service, I found that my business did not suffer, and in fact, it actually improved during this time. Eventually, some members of my family also got involved in devotional practices and were also attending temple programs.

I always wondered why I did not come to the Iskcon movement earlier. The devotees were so merciful to me right from the beginning, especially Gopala Krishna Maharaja, and they gave me good association and answered all my questions. The movement is completely authorized because it is based on the bona-fide Vedic scriptures like *Bhagavad Gita* and *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. In fact, Krishna consciousness is a very natural process because it is part of our original consciousness, and the sole purpose of Iskcon is to help us revive that original consciousness. I had been attending the temple programs for over six months and had been regularly chanting sixteen rounds every day and following the four regulative principles. I therefore approached Gopala Krishna Maharaja to accept me as his disciple. On the auspicious day of the Govardhana Puja celebrations, I received formal initiation from Maharaja and my spiritual name became Vedavyasa Dasa. I will forever be obliged to Gopala Krishna Maharaja, as well as to all the devotees for giving me the opportunity to serve Iskcon's founder-*acharya* Shрила Prabhupada, and the deities Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi, as well as this most wonderful 'Glory of India' project.

Senior Officials Support the Iskcon Project

In any major endeavor like that of the 'Glory of India' project, the full support of government officials at every level is absolutely essential and of paramount importance, because primarily the 'Glory of India' project is dedicated to the people of India. The 'Glory of India' project is meant to highlight the true glory of Indian's culture, its ancient heritage and traditions, and its vibrant and living religion - known to all Indians as Bhagavata Sanatana Dharma. This project would never have seen the light of day if it were not for the benevolence and foresight of the Delhi Development Board and its dedicated officers, who recognized the value of such a monumental project in the heart of New Delhi. Furthermore, the encouragement and cooperation of high ranking officials like the Lt. Governor of Delhi, Shri Jagmohan, and the Minister of Education Mrs. Sheela Kaul, who were the first to lend support and advocate the importance of the 'Glory of India' project.

This landmark project located on three acres of land provided by the Delhi Development Board (DDA) is dedicated to the furtherance of Indian culture and includes the magnificent Radha-Parthasarathi Mandira, which features a large *mandapam* to accommodate large numbers of visitors and three separate alters to house the temple's presiding deities. The temple itself is surrounded with ornate manicured gardens that includes over twenty separate fountains and an artificial water-fall, said to be the largest man-made waterfall in India. The enormous double storied 'Vedic Cultural Centre' which presents the timeless message of Indian culture and philosophical learning occupies a ground area of over forty thousand square feet. Located on the first floor of 'A block' of the vast cultural centre is an air-conditioned auditorium complete with a stage and seating for four hundred people, where traditional Indian dance and drama is performed. On the second floor is another air-conditioned auditorium containing the animatronics exhibition where 'robots' enact scenes from the *Bhagavad Gita*. On the ground floor and mezzanine of 'B block' of the cultural centre is an exhibition based on Vedic philosophy depicting stories from the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, and *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, and on the second floor of 'B block' is a fifty-roomed executive guest house for Iskcon life-members.

Mahamantra Dasa, the projects public relations director, played a very important role in meeting a host of government officials, political leaders, and other VIP's. Iskcon received a lot of help from the Lt. Governor of Delhi, Shri Tejendra Khanna, whose support was essential in completing the project and he also took special care to see that the approach roads to the 'Glory of India' site were immaculately finished and also provided a parking area for the thousands of visitors. Other notable persons who were instrumental in helping the project were the Minister of State for Transport, Rajendra Gupta, the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Mrs. Shushma Swaraja, and the DDA Vice-chairman, P. K. Ghosh, the DVD Chairman, Navin Chawla, local MLA, Parvej Hashmi, and the Delhi Police Commissioner, Mr. Arvind Kakkar.

The 'Glory of India' Project Completed

- Shрила Prabhupada's Dream Becomes a Reality

After eighteen long years of planning, obtaining the land, getting the approval, raising the funds, and beginning the construction, Shрила Prabhupada's 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' was at last a reality. The date of the grand opening ceremony had been fixed for Ramanavami, April 5th, 1998. It had been Shрила Prabhupada's transcendental dream from the very beginning of his preaching activities in Delhi from the year 1955, that one day he would establish a magnificent temple for Lord Krishna in the heart of India's capital city. Even though in

his own lifetime, that dream could not be fulfilled, nevertheless, that same dream was inherited by his faithful disciples, who, after many years of determined struggle, would eventually fulfill Shрила Prabhupada's dream.

From the first time that the Iskcon devotees arrived in New Delhi in 1970 to preach the glories of Lord Krishna, till the completion of the 'The Glory of India' project in 1998, scores of Shрила Prabhupada's dedicated disciples had served the cause of the Delhi-*yatra*, and each one of them had made their own contribution to the fulfillment of Shрила Prabhupada's dream. Although the early pioneers of Iskcon's Delhi temple, Ksiradakashayi Vishnu and Tejas Prabhu, are well-known, the names of the other devotees who served the cause of the Delhi-*yatra* are too numerous to mention, and some of them are no longer with us, but without doubt Lord Krishna remembers each and every one of them.

The credit for the success of the 'Glory of India' project must also go to the many dedicated Iskcon preachers, grand-disciples of Shрила Prabhupada, who went out day after day, year after year, to enlist life-members and collect donations from the general public in Delhi. The team was led by life-membership director Radha Damodara Dasa, and included many stalwart devotees of Delhi temple like Rochana Dasa, Krishna Priya, Varaha Dasa, Kavichandra, Ramanama, and Samba Dasa. They all worked very hard to make the 'Glory of India' project a resounding success. The project could also not have been such a phenomenal success without the dynamic support of the 'Pandava-sevaks', a core group of Iskcon life-members, who played a crucial role in raising funds for this enormous project and who stood shoulder to shoulder with the Delhi temple devotees to make sure that the 'Glory of India' project would become a glorious reality.

Messages of Appreciation From the 'Glory of India' Team Leaders

Gopala Krishna Goswami (Iskcon GBC for India): On the auspicious occasion of the grand opening of the 'Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi Mandira' and 'The Iskcon-Hinduja Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre', I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who have worked so hard to make this project a great success. It was Shрила Prabhupada's long cherished desire to have a big temple built in Delhi so that Iskcon could fully serve the needs of the capital's population. Everyone, including the assembled devotees, life-members, Pandava-sevaks, generous donors, project team members, and construction crew, have all worked together unitedly over the years to make this glorious dream come true.

Lokanatha Swami (Iskcon Regional Secretary for Delhi): On the auspicious occasion of the grand opening of the 'The Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' and 'Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi Mandira' I would like to express my great joy and gratitude. Shрила Prabhupada desired an Iskcon project in South Delhi and his wishes are now being fulfilled with the opening of 'The Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre'. This project was after all meant as an offering to Shрила Prabhupada on his centennial. The magnificence of this project would certainly be pleasing to him, and if Shрила Prabhupada is pleased, then it is a guarantee that Lord Krishna will also be pleased. I would certainly like to see this temple become a landmark in the city of Delhi, because it is a temple with a difference, it is also a centre of learning, and the people who visit this temple will learn how to love God and serve Him, and by doing so, they can go back to Godhead. I remember when we laid the cornerstone in the winter of 1988, and I was thinking at the time what a great labor of love this would be. We had a lot of hard work ahead of us to

prepare a new home for Their Lordships Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi, not to mention design and build a unique high-tech 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre'. I would certainly like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all the devotees of Iskcon Delhi, especially our team leader His Holiness Gopala Krishna Maharaja, who worked and toiled the hardest and inspired others with his labor of love. Without the support of our congregation including all our life-members and the Pandava-sevaks, this project may never have seen the light of day. Thus, the completion of this project is a testimony of their love and appreciation for Shrila Prabhupada.

Trikalajna Dasa (Iskcon Temple President, Delhi): The sole inspiration behind this great project was the desire to please Shrila Prabhupada. This 'Glory of India' project is undoubtedly a unique contribution to the world and to be able to play an instrumental part in its development was a wonderful transcendental experience - never to be forgotten. The capital city of India desperately needed a project that could educate the people about India's ancient culture and its spiritual values. This would in turn help inspire people to adopt higher values in life and also help to reduce the growing influence of the modern age – the symptoms of which are increased crime, corruption, hypocrisy, and quarrel. The benefits of the 'Glory of India' project are truly unlimited in scope and will benefit people in all walks of life. The project will also benefit students who could learn about the higher values of Indian culture. It will help to project India's image abroad because all the diplomatic offices are located in Delhi and the diplomatic community can learn about the great cultural traditions of this country. Since the 'Glory of India' is the only project of its kind that gives the Vedic view in its original context, it will be of immense benefit to diplomats and others who wish to gain a better understanding of Indian values. The 'Glory of India' will also become a major tourist attraction for both Indians and foreigners alike, who can spend time viewing the modern high-tech presentations of India's ancient culture.

Messages of Appreciation From Distinguished Dignitaries

Shankara Dayal Sharma (the then President of India):

I am happy to know that Iskcon has completed the 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' and 'Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi Mandira' at Nehru Place in New Delhi. I send my best wishes and congratulations to the organizers who devoted their valuable time in the completion of this wonderful institute, which will be of great help not only for the people of India but also of great benefit to the tourists who visit India from all over the world.

Atal Behari Vajpayee (the then Prime Minister of India):

I am happy to know that Iskcon has been taking a keen interest in promoting and propagating the Vedic culture all over the world and with that end in view it has decided to open its centre in Delhi. It is pleasing to note that that after making a concerted effort over the last five years, it has constructed 'The Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' and the 'Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi Mandira', the opening ceremony of which is being performed on the auspicious occasion of Rama-navami, 5th April, 1998. I send my best wishes to Iskcon for the success of their efforts. I hope this beautiful temple will not only be an edifice of Indian architecture depicting the invaluable hymns and stories of Indian culture and art, but will be an important centre for giving

discourses from the Vedas, the *Gita*, and other religious books by eminent scholars and religious heads.

Tony Blair (*the then Prime Minister of Great Britain*):

I am delighted to have the opportunity to send my congratulations on the opening of 'The Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre'. India has always been able to reconcile her strong and varied religious and cultural heritage with the demands of the modern world. Britain has benefited from this heritage through the vibrant presence of the Indian community and looks forward to working with India in a truly modern partnership as we approach the next millennium. I wish 'The Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' all the success.

Lal Krishna Advani (*the then Home Minister of India*):

I am glad to know that the International Society for Krishna Consciousness is inaugurating 'The Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' on the occasion of Rama-navami. Please accept my good wishes for the success of your efforts.

Shushma Swaraj (*the then Information & Broadcasting Minister*)

I am very pleased to hear that on the occasion of Rama-navami, 5th April, 1998, Iskcon is opening the Glory of India Cultural Centre in New Delhi. The Radha-Parthasarathi Mandir and Vedic Cultural Centre being opened by Iskcon which will utilize modern technology to propagate the teachings of India's ancient Vedic culture is a significant achievement and it will be an important addition to the cultural and spiritual heritage of the city.

Tejendra Khanna (*the then Lt. Governor of Delhi*):

I am happy to learn that Iskcon is establishing a beautiful temple dedicated to Lord Krishna along with 'The Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' at New Delhi. This will help to create awareness among both national and international visitors regarding the remarkable insights of our Vedic philosophy and teachings. By imparting knowledge about the hidden spiritual potential in human beings, which had been highly developed by our Vedic *rishis* and *munis* and found expression in our ancient religious texts, the cultural centre being established by Iskcon will undoubtedly serve a very valuable purpose. I am sure that many seekers and visitors to the temple will be immediately benefited from the knowledge and teachings imparted by the Iskcon temple and the 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' which is being inaugurated on 5th April, 1998, on the occasion of Ram-navami Day.

Sahib Singh Verma (*the then Chief Minister of Delhi*):

I am very happy to learn that Iskcon is opening the Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre on the auspicious occasion of Rama-navami, 5th April, 1998. It is a great credit to Iskcon that they have been spreading the divine message of India's ancient culture all over the world and therefore, it is our good fortune that Iskcon is now opening the Radha-Parthasarathi Mandira and Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre in the city of Delhi which will be of great benefit to the citizens of the national capital.

Sonia Gandhi (*President of Indian National Congress Party*):

I am happy to know that the International society for Krishna consciousness is inaugurating the 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' and the 'Shri Radha-Parthasarathi Mandira' in Delhi on April 5th. This *mandira* promises to be a centre for preserving and disseminating the rich culture

which forms part of this country's great inheritance. I send my congratulations and good wishes to the members of Iskcon on this occasion.

The Grand Opening Ceremony

The Prime Minister of India, Shri Atala Bihari Vajpayee Inaugurates the 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre'

The grand opening of Iskcon's 'Glory of India' project on 5th April, 1998, was a truly momentous occasion and scores of Iskcon devotees arrived from all over India and the world, to join the Delhi devotees for the grand opening ceremony of Iskcon's magnificent new temple and cultural centre. The inauguration of the temple complex at the hands of the Indian Prime Minister was scheduled to take place at 11:00 A.M., in the morning.

The celebrations began in the early morning after the *mangala-arati* offering in the temporary temple building at 4:30 A.M. After the *puja* was over, the deities of Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi were taken in a huge *kirtan* procession by hundreds of devotees and Iskcon life-members to the new temple. In the huge temple *mandapam* a *murti* of Shri Prabhupada was first installed on the *vyasasana* amid great fanfare. Then the installation ceremony of all three sets of deities, Their Lordships Radha-Parthasarathi, Sita-Rama-Lakshman-Hanuman and Gaura-Nitai, began with an elaborate *abhisheka* bathing ceremony. The fire-*yajna* and deity instillation was performed by His Holiness Bhakti Vidyapurna Swami along with attendant priests and students from Iskcon's Mayapur Gurukula. The deity of Garuda was also installed on the Garuda-*stambha* outside the main entrance to the temple.

The Prime Minister of India arrives

At approximately 11:00 A.M., the Prime Minister of India Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee arrived to inaugurate Iskcon's new temple complex and deliver an address before an audience of leading dignitaries, special guests, Iskcon life-members, and assembled Iskcon devotees. Huge crowds had gathered on the roads outside the complex waiting for the prime minister to arrive. On his arrival the prime minister was greeted by a reception committee led by Gopala Krishna Maharaja and senior dignitaries from the government including the Lt. Governor of Delhi, Tejender Khanna, Information & Broadcasting Minister, Shushma Swaraj, and Delhi Chief Minister, Saheb Singh Verma.

The prime minister was then escorted on a tour of the complex and then to the main temple where he cut a ribbon and unveiled a commemorative plaque signifying the grand opening of the 'Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi Mandira & Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre'. The prime minister then entered the temple and had *darshan* of the deities, after which he was escorted to the auditorium where he delivered his now famous speech while dedicating the Glory of India Vedic Cultural Center to the people of India and the world.

Special guests present on the occasion of the grand opening were; US Congressman Stephen Solarz, a well known supporter of India; Gopichand and Srichand Hinduja, representing the Hinduja Foundation; Ms. Clair Ward, the youngest-ever member of the British parliament; and Rajya Sabha member and famous Indian movie actress, Ms. Hema Malini.

Speech Given by the Prime Minister of India – Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee

On the occasion of inaugurating the ‘Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre’

“Hare Krishna, Hare Rama. Respected Swamiji. Lieutenant Governor. Ladies and gentlemen. On the holy occasion of Sri Rama-navami, in New Delhi the capital of India, a new temple has been constructed, which is a source of inspiration in itself. Along with this is a museum depicting Vedic Culture and the ‘Glory of India’ which will assist in strengthening the cultural and spiritual life of this capital city.

Distinguished guests, it is my privilege to be present at today's pious function to mark the opening of this magnificent temple and also the ‘Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre in Delhi. The piousness of today's function is further enhanced by the fact that it is taking place on the auspicious occasion of Sri Ram-navami.

I would first of all like to express my deepest sense of appreciation for the vision, dedication and achievement of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Iskcon) and all those who have collaborated with it to present this unique spiritual gift to the nation's capital. The Iskcon movement has few parallels in the world, in terms of its rapid global spread; it's trans-national, trans-ethnic, and trans-professional appeal, its outward simplicity and the devotional energy of its followers. In less than three and a half decades since its inception it has established temples in practically all parts of the world, and many of them are marvels of beauty, such as the one that is being opened in New Delhi today.

The *maha-mantra* of Hare Krishna Hare Rama reverberates to the dancing feet of Iskcon devotees each morning and evening in temples from Stockholm to Sao Paulo and from Miami to Mayapur. What Iskcon has achieved is globalization of the message of the *Gita*. Some people say my government is opposed to globalization, but let me say this; I am all in favor of globalization of the message of the *Gita*.

If today the *Bhagavad Gita* is printed in millions of copies in scores of languages and distributed to all the nooks and corners of the world, the credit for this great sacred service goes chiefly to Iskcon. For this one accomplishment alone, Indians should be eternally grateful to the devoted army of Swami Prabhupada's followers. The voyage of Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada to the United States in 1965 and the spectacular popularity his movement gained in a very short spell of twelve years must be regarded as one of the greatest spiritual events of the century.

What accounts for the rapid spread of the Iskcon movement globally? The answer should be sought in two factors – internal and external. The external factor was, in my opinion, the disillusionment within the leading minds of the western world arising out of the domination of the materialistic ideology and culture prevailing in the west. Both capitalism and communism gave birth to disillusionment, since both are essentially materialistic ideologies and are incapable of satisfying the real needs of man. Young, sensitive, and searching minds could not have reconciled themselves to the reality of wars, violence, greed, excessive consumerism, and degradation of both the human being and his natural environment. They had to seek answers elsewhere, and Iskcon was the one movement where the answers could be found.

The internal factor was of course the inherent strength of Iskcon's message, a message founded in the philosophy of the *Gita*. It answers all the moral concerns and needs of the world, be it man's quest for inner peace, his need for belonging to the rest of the human community, his concern for the environment, his attitude towards work, and his attitude towards death. The *Gita* provides comprehensive and internally consistent answers to all these concerns. It is in this respect that Iskcon differs from other passing fads and fashions that appealed to the disillusioned western minds in the sixties and seventies. These fads come and go, but the Iskcon movement is growing from strength to strength. The transcendental and universal message of the *Bhagavad Gita* is evocatively communicated by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in his book *Bhagavad Gita-As It Is*. I would like to read the following excerpt from the introduction to this book.

'In this world men are not meant for quarreling like cats and dogs. Men must be intelligent to realize the importance of human life and refuse to act like ordinary animals. A human being should realize the aim of life, and this direction is given in the Vedic literatures, and the essence is given in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Vedic literature is meant for human beings, not for animals. Animals can kill other living animals and there is no question of sin on their part, but if a man kills an animal for the satisfaction of his uncontrolled taste, he must be responsible for breaking the rules of nature. If we properly utilize the instructions of *Bhagavad Gita* then our whole life will become purified, and ultimately we will be able to reach the destination which is beyond this material sky. That destination is called the *sanatana* sky, the eternal, spiritual sky. In this material world we find that everything is temporary. It comes into being, stays for some time, produces some by-products, dwindles, and then vanishes. That is the law of the material world, whether we use as an example this body, or a piece of fruit, or anything. But beyond this temporary world there is another world of which we have information. That would consist of another nature, which is *sanatana*, eternal'.

In this distinguished gathering of spiritual masters and spiritual seekers I am indeed a layman. But permit me to share with you a few thoughts of mine on the relevance of the *Gita's* message in today's national and global contexts. The *Gita's* relevance is universal and eternal because it provides a satisfactory answer to three basic questions of life: What are we? What should we do? And how should we live? Human beings have confronted these questions in all societies at all times. The *Gita* answers these questions through the harmonization of - *jnana-yoga*, *karma yoga*, and *bhakti-yoga*. The beauty of Indian culture is that it made the essence of these three paths of yoga available to the lowest man as well as to the highest seeker.

The *Gita* is not a prescription for non-action or passivity. It gives a radical message of action which transforms the self and the society. That is why it could inspire countless revolutionaries and freedom fighters, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Lokmanya Tilak and others. But in times of peace and nation building the *Gita* can also inspire the politician, the teacher, the worker, the scientist, and the common citizen and film actors also. Therefore the motto of all of us today should be '*yoga karmesu kausalam*' (the art of work is devotion to the Supreme). What we need is the application on a national level of the work-related ideology of the *Gita*. This will create a new work culture, and a new work culture will create a new India.

I would like to say a few words about the architectural beauty of the new Iskcon temple. It is undoubtedly a worthy addition to New Delhi's array of beautiful buildings and structures, both old and new, whose numbers, sadly, are far less than what the nation's capital ought to have, and whose collective beauty, even more sadly, is drowned under the sprawling and spreading sea of ugliness and ordinariness. A beautiful temple, of course, is more than a piece of public art. It puts people in touch with the higher beauty of the almighty creator and all His creation. The sights, sounds, and indeed all the vibrations in a temple have the effect of soothing the devotees, comforting them giving them hope and confidence, and elevating them to a transcendental plane of existence, at least for the brief time we spend praying and worshiping in the temple. I also understand that Iskcon is also propagating the message of the *Gita* through the latest gadgets of information technology, and this temple itself provides an astonishing demonstration of the use of high-tech to popularize the higher truth of life and the universe.

May I once again felicitate all those who have had a hand in making this great dream come true – the *acharyas* of Iskcon, the generous donors, the architect, the landscape designers, the engineers, the workers, and all the other humble devotees. Thank you very much indeed."

The Prime Ministers Speech Lauded

The Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's speech during the inauguration ceremony of 'The Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' was both eloquent and well-informed, and it was extremely well received by the audience, who on numerous occasions broke into spontaneous applause, especially when the prime minister eulogized Shrila Prabhupada for his unprecedented achievement in spreading the message of the *Bhagavad Gita* and India culture all over the world.

Excerpt from the Speech Given by The Lieutenant Governor of Delhi Tejendra Khanna,

Today on the auspicious occasion of the inauguration of the Hare Krishna temple and the 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre', all the residents of Delhi and in my understanding all the residents of the country are feeling very happy. Iskcon is an organization which has the message of Indian culture, its religion and spirituality, as its basis. By spreading this Indian culture, not only people of our country will benefit, but also every other foreign country will benefit. Therefore this Iskcon movement is very important. A great institution (The Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre) has come into being and our brothers and sisters of the Hare Krishna movement have come here from all over the country and also from foreign lands. And it is their contribution which will benefit India and the world at large. And it is the duty of all of us that whatever contribution and assistance we can give them we should do it with an attitude of service and friendship. Namaste

Other dignitaries who spoke on the occasion included the Delhi Chief Minister Sahib Singh Verma, British Member of Parliament Ms. Clair Ward, and US Congressman Stephen Solarz. At the end of the program, Iskcon's Governing Body Commissioner (GBC) for India, Gopala Krishna Maharaja, proposed a vote of thanks to Prime Minister Vajpayee and the other dignitaries and honored guests who had attended the inauguration.

Excerpt from the Speech Given by His Holiness Gopala Krishna Goswami

Respected Prime Minister, Lieutenant Governor, Chief Minister, Ms Ward, and honored guests and assembled devotees.

Today we are very happy that our prime minister has come on this auspicious occasion.

On behalf of the International society for Krishna Consciousness, I express my gratitude to the prime minister who so kindly consented to inaugurate our 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' here in New Delhi.

Although it is unknown to Mr. Vajpayee, our spiritual master Shrila Prabhupada had once given his blessings to him, that one day in the future he would become the prime minister of India. This was during the time that Mr. Vajpayee was India's foreign minister in the erstwhile Janata Party government in 1977. I had met Mr. Vajpayee on behalf of Iskcon to discuss certain matters pertaining to the society's work. When I reported back to Shrila Prabhupada about the meeting, he asked me what Mr. Vajpayee had said. When I related to Shrila Prabhupada everything that Mr. Vajpayee said, upon hearing it, Shrila Prabhupada immediately said, "this person will surely become prime minister of this country one day." And this has now come to pass.

We have named our institution as the 'Glory of India', because the real glory of India is its ancient Vedic culture, which can spread the light of transcendental knowledge throughout the world, and thus benefit all of humanity. It was Shrila Prabhupada's desire that the message of India's glorious Vedic culture should reach out across the earth and bring light to the darkened world of materialism. It was Shrila Prabhupada's desire that in New Delhi, the capital of India, Iskcon should build an important cultural centre where Indians and foreigners alike, could spend time and learn something about the great treasure contained in the Vedic literatures and thus perfect their lives.

Today in every corner of the world, people are coming in contact with Indian culture, because of the preaching of Shrila Prabhupada. His more than one hundred translations of the Vedic scriptures have in turn been translated into all the various languages of the world. Today there are more than four hundred universities around the world that use Shrila Prabhupada's books as standard reference material in the study of Indian religion, philosophy, and culture. Whether one goes to Oxford, Cambridge, or Harvard, you will find these books are making a deep impact on the people of the world. Shrila Prabhupada himself spent a lot of time in the city of Delhi, and used to say that it was the former capital of the world during the rule of the Kuru dynasty. And it was his desire that in this ancient capital, Iskcon should present the message of India's ancient culture through the medium of the latest technology. Hare Krishna

Opening Ceremony a Great Success

The grand opening ceremony of the 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' was a phenomenal success. From the pre-dawn deity installation ceremony, to the elaborate *agni-yajna* and *maha-abhisheka*, to the inauguration at the hands of the Indian Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the evening *pandal* program, everything went smoothly and according to plan. Over one hundred thousand people took part in what will be remembered for years to come, as one of the most important religious events in the history of New Delhi. The response to the inauguration of the Glory of India project far exceeded all expectations, especially when news of the opening ceremony was broadcast around the world through major newspapers and television channels.

From the early morning the streets around the temple were packed with enthusiastic crowds hoping to get a glimpse of the Indian prime minister and the bevy of important dignitaries taking part in the grand opening. There had been a massive security clampdown in the surrounding area and the 'PSG Black Cats' commando force, that protects government VIP's, could be seen everywhere in their trademark black uniforms and bandanas toting AK47 assault rifles. All the roads near the temple had been cut off to normal traffic and the Delhi police were out in large numbers to manage the crowds and to ensure that there were no untoward incidents. One could see police marksmen and others with walky-talkies on all the high rise buildings in the vicinity of the complex, keeping a watchful eye over the entire proceedings because so many important government officials were present at a large public gathering.

Sometime after the prime minister and all the dignitaries had left, the gates were opened to the general public and thousands flooded into the Glory of India Vedic Cultural Center to have *darshan* of the newly installed deities and witness for themselves the magnificence of the entire complex. Large crowds were seen wandering around the manicured gardens and through the various buildings of the Vedic cultural centre. In the evening, many thousand attended the *pandal* program where a dance troupe from Manipur enthralled the audience with classical Manipuri-style dances, depicting the pastimes of Lord Krishna. There was also a troupe of Manipuri drummers who performed acrobatic dances while playing their drums. An all-girl troupe from Delhi, the Urvashi Dance and Drama Company, enacted a number of very wonderful Krishna-*lila* theatrical dances that were very well received by the enthusiastic audience. A group of all-girl *gurukula* students from America also performed a number of dramas based on stories from the *Bhagavatam*. The crowds were also treated to devotional *bhajans* sung by a number of well-known persons including; Kavita Padwal and Rajiv Chopra, as well as Delhi temples own Radha Damodara Dasa.

Messages of Appreciation

From India and Around the World

- On the occasion of the grand opening ceremony

The grand opening ceremony of 'The Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' was widely reported in the Indian press and the inauguration by the Indian prime minister had also been televised. News of the event soon spread to other parts of the world and it was not long before messages of appreciation began flooding into the Iskcon's public relations office in Delhi.

Mukunda Goswami (Iskcon Temple, Potomac, MD. USA): Words cannot express how pleased Shрила Prabhupada must be with the grand opening ceremony that took place at Iskcon's temple in Delhi on April 5th 1998. The accomplishment is a truly magnificent achievement that cannot be glorified enough. Not only will the 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' be one of Iskcon's most popular temples, but it will also be the most visited temple for many years to come. But the most important thing is that the honorable prime minister of India, the leader of the world's largest democracy has inaugurated the project. He has also given a wonderful speech, glorifying Shрила Prabhupada, his books, his Iskcon movement, and his devotees, and also quoted at length from Shрила Prabhupada's *Bhagavad Gita – As It Is*. The whole event was televised and the news about the opening has been reported around the world. I offer a thousand *dandavats* to Gopala Krishna Maharaja and his team for their unflagging, steadfast determination to see this mammoth project through, even against what sometimes seemed almost insurmountable odds.

Badrinarayana Dasa (Iskcon GBC, San Diego CA, USA): Congratulations to Gopala Krishna Maharaja and the devotees of Delhi temple. News reports have been appearing about the

opening of the 'Glory of India' project in many newspapers in the United States – and all the reports are very positive. The impact of this wonderful project is already reverberating around the world.

Niranjana Swami (Iskcon GBC for Russia): I can say with sincerity that while I was reading Gopala Krishna Maharaja's report and also the text of the Prime Ministers speech, tears of appreciation were coming into my eyes. I could not help but meditate on how much Shrila Prabhupada must be pleased with this achievement. The following day in Kiev, I devoted the whole *Bhagavatam* class to read Gopala Krishna Maharaja's report to the devotees. I would like to directly express my humble gratitude to Gopala Krishna Maharaja, Lokanatha Swami, Mahamantra Dasa, Kratu Dasa, and all the hard working devotees of Iskcon New Delhi.

Guru Prasad Swami (Iskcon GBC for Mexico): Congratulations on this monumental achievement. The New Delhi project is one of the last amongst the most important pieces in the formula to re-spiritualize India. We could all see the painstaking effort to make this project happen, the step by step procedure over so many years. Many people in Mexico saw the report on the TV news channels even before I had heard anything myself. It is a landmark achievement that exhibits Shrila Prabhupada's potency and affirms Iskcon's determination to continue pushing forward Shrila Prabhupada's legacy.

Prthu Dasa: Thank you for this great achievement. This was the greatest day in the history of Iskcon since Shrila Prabhupada left the world.

Yasomatinandana Dasa: By Lord Krishna's grace, through this project, Shrila Prabhupada's unique contribution to the world has been acknowledged all the most important dignitaries in India.

Bhakti Raghava Swami: The grand opening of Iskcon's Glory of India project was a phenomenal accomplishment and the powerful devotional speech by the Prime Minister of India was truly outstanding. We cannot estimate the positive repercussions it has created around the world

Hari Sauri Dasa (Iskcon Temple, Sydney, Australia): All glories to Gopala Krishna Maharaja and all the assembled devotees of Iskcon Delhi for this wonderful achievement. It is certainly a milestone in Iskcon's preaching in India, especially as Delhi is the capital. The speech by the prime minister was remarkable. It was also another timely milestone that the leader of such an important country like India, should lavish so much praise upon Shrila Prabhupada and his Iskcon movement.

Mahanidhi Swami (Radha-kunda, UP, India): Shrila Prabhupada is offering this 'Glory of India' project to the people of Bharata (India). May they come to know, learn, and realize *the Bharata-mahatmya*, the true glory of India, which is in fact the great treasure of pure love for God.

Dhananjaya Dasa: (Iskcon Mayapur-Vrindavana Trust, Vrindavana): I am really very happy to see this huge 'Glory of India' project. I know that Shrila Prabhupada wanted Tejas Prabhu to build a big temple for Iskcon in Delhi. He said that because Delhi was the capital of India, it should have an appropriately large temple. The temple in Delhi moved so many times, from Anand Niketan to Bengali Market, to Lajpat Nagar, and then to Greater Kailash, and finally to Sant Nagar. It was certainly wonderful that the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) gave this

prime piece of land to Iskcon. I am sure that the 'Glory of India' project will influence and help guide the politicians and leaders of the society in governing the country. In the ancient Vedic times, the *brahmanas* and Vaishnavas always gave advice to the Kings on how to rule the kingdom in order to ensure peace and prosperity for all. So let us hope that today's leaders will take advantage of the 'Glory of India' project for the benefit of all Indians.

Yamuna Devi: The Glory of India project is an expansion of Srila Prabhupada's energy. When Srila Prabhupada left India for the west, he knew he was going to eventually come back and inundate India with Krishna consciousness, just as Lord Caitanya inundated the subcontinent of India with Krishna consciousness. When Srila Prabhupada brought his western disciples to India, they were very enthusiastic, even though many of them were very new disciples; nevertheless, he started sending them to various places for preaching work. Delhi, Calcutta and Bombay were the first three big cities that Srila Prabhupada cultivated; and because Delhi was the capital, it was very important for him. In 1971, we were only in Delhi for maybe a month, but that month seemed like it could have been a hundred years. It was so important at the time, the foundation blocks of what later became Delhi Iskcon's Glory of India project.

Malati Devi: The opening of the Glory of India project in Delhi is a truly landmark event in the history of Iskcon which has generated favorable news reports world-wide.

Mohan Makhijani (Iskcon life-member Delhi): My association with Iskcon began in 1974 and I am most happy to see that Srila Prabhupada's dream of Iskcon building the 'Glory of India' project has come true. Srila Prabhupada's blessings brought me closer to *Bhagavad Gita* and Krishna. I was unable to spend a lot of time with Srila Prabhupada, but I saw in him a great soul and a simple human being. Delhi has many temples but the 'Glory of India' will be the greatest. With the library and auditorium, this project will serve all of humanity.

Bal Krishna Shriya (Iskcon life-member, Delhi): The 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' will inspire people to dedicate their lives to the teachings of Lord Krishna, by presenting our ancient texts such as *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, *Mahabharata*, and *Ramayana*, through the medium of modern technology. As the capital of India, Delhi is the best place for such a centre, for it will benefit all the people of India especially school children, college students, and foreign tourists as well, who will be exposed to India's Vedic heritage and their great thirst for knowledge will be quenched.

Mrs. Lila Agarwal (Iskcon life-member, Delhi): I think Iskcon's 'Glory of India' will be one of the greatest landmarks in the capital of India. Many people will be blessed when they go there, because human life is full of troubles, and they will find peace there. Of course, it is very grand, but the Lord who created the whole world is also so grand Himself, that only something like this temple is adequate for Him. You cannot make some small thing in His honor in India's capital. I am sure many people will also benefit from the museum and the high tech animatronics which is meant for the modern man. One cannot escape technological progress you know, we must use it, and Srila Prabhupada wanted that we should utilize these things for Krishna's service.

Sita Ram Gupta (Iskcon life-member, Delhi): Iskcon's commitment to spreading Vedic culture extends to philanthropic projects such as uplifting women, education of poor children, abolition of child marriage, and eradication of numerous social evils. Iskcon is spreading education and awareness of the values of human life among people of various shades within and outside the

country. The message of Lord Krishna is particularly relevant in today's world which is ridden with hatred and suspicion. The Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi Mandira and 'Glory of India Cultural Centre' will surely become the cynosure of all eyes and will create opportunities for further propaganda and recognition of Vedic culture.

Shushil Gupta (Iskcon life-member, Delhi): I came in contact with Iskcon in the early seventies and have been inspired to help this 'Glory of India' project because it is going to be a pillar of Indian culture and religion. It will give the opportunity to both Indians and foreigners to know about the life of Lord Krishna and His great message to humanity as sung in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Mahendra Jajodia (Iskcon life-member, Delhi): I came into contact with the Iskcon movement over twenty years ago in Delhi, and my association with Iskcon has grown year after year. Gradually, as my perceptions changed, revelations started dawning, and things that were earlier vital and significant now have a different paraphrasing. I am fortunate to frequently visit several Iskcon centers around the world, especially the one in London. It is completely flabbergasting that Lord Krishna has such a tumultuous following abroad and Indians can be proud that our rich cultural heritage is so all-pervasive thanks to the Iskcon movement. In India our ancient traditions have been considerably depleted and we are becoming strangers to our own culture. An institution like Iskcon has single-handedly brought about a renaissance of our culture in India and around the world. The Iskcon society is a perpetual source of relief and inspiration for one and all. My constant association with Iskcon has enabled me to understand more clearly our Vedic culture, which is the mother of all cultures in the world. Iskcon centers provide an immense scope to better human life and help us purge our false emotions and purify our spirit, in order to bring about righteousness in our lives. New Delhi is most fortunate that Iskcon has opened the 'Glory of India Cultural Centre' – which is like a glittering jewel that will enrich people's lives. Due to my feeling so much indebted to the Krishna consciousness society, I have no better resource than to submit myself to the 'Glory of India' project which is surely going to provide peace to those who are disturbed, and solace to the troubled.

The 'Glory of India' - A Unique Presentation

The impressive 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' has been developed over a three-acre site and the ultra-modern design of the temple and surrounding buildings by the noted Indian architect A. P. Kanvinde, is quite breath-taking. The entire complex, nestled on the side of a rocky hillside is certainly a feat of great engineering skill. The landscaped gardens dotted with exotic trees, shrubs, fountains, and a water-fall, by the Delhi landscape artist Ravindra Bhan, immediately transports one to the spiritual realm of Vaikuntha. The winding terraced stairway that leads from the base of the hill to the pinnacle where the temple stands, gives the visitor the distinct sense of making a holy pilgrimage, and is reminiscent of the many ancient shrines found on hilltops in the Himalayan and other mountains of India.

Gopala Krishna Goswami: The 'Glory of India' project is unique. The beautifully designed temple has three separate alters containing the deities – Gaura-nitai with deities of Shrila Prabhupada and Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta – Radha-Parthasarathi with Lalita and Vishakha – Sita-Rama with Lakshmana and Hanumana. One of the largest crystal chandeliers ever made called the 'lotus chandelier' hangs from the ceiling of the massive temple *mandapam* and there are

paintings depicting Krishna-*lila* on the *mandapam* ceiling and around its walls. On the walls of the *parikrama* path are bronze bass-reliefs depicting episodes from the Vedic classics

There are two separate buildings housing the 'Vedic Cultural Centre'. One building contains two separate theaters; in one theater is the 'Bhagavad Gita Animatronics Experience', which is a unique show featuring for the first time in India sophisticated high-tech robotics. It has already created a huge impact on the general public and is destined to become a great attraction. The show begins with Shrila Prabhupada's days in Vrindavana and revolves around a poem he wrote on his arrival in America, and then moves on to a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurushetra, ending with Lord Krishna revealing His universal form before Arjuna.

The second theater is a four hundred seat multi-media auditorium where there will be various stage shows, dramas, and dance recitals, plus the 'Krishna-Vision Multi-Media Show' presenting slides and videos based on Krishna conscious philosophy. In the foyer there is a twelve-panel display featuring Shrila Prabhupada, the Iskcon movement, and the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, and also a 'Ramayana Gallery'. On the ground floor of the second building of the cultural centre, there is a 'Mahabharata Exhibition' including pictorial presentations and dioramas where the ancient Vedic philosophy is explained along with the teachings from the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, *Ramayana*, and *Chaitanya-charitamrita*. On the second floor of this building is the Iskcon international life-members guest facility.

One of the highlights of the whole project is the sculptured gardens with over twenty fountains plus a huge man-made waterfall and a lotus-pond which attracts large crowds who are enthralled by the pleasing atmosphere, especially in the evenings, when the multi-colored decorative lighting that illuminates the entire complex is switched on.

Lokanatha Swami: Materialism is the 'Number One' preoccupation in Delhi, but those who visit the 'Glory of India' project will immediately be purified of the contamination caused by all the different materialistic philosophies. Due to the temples proximity to government ministries, important political leaders can easily drop by for *darshan* and absorb the purifying atmosphere of the temple, this will in turn help our leaders to govern nicely and do some good for the citizens of our country. When our temple opened in Bombay, many big leaders were dropping by all the time for *darshan*. The general public will certainly flock here in their masses to have *darshan* and see this beautiful temple, and the young people, students, and intellectuals, who are generally not attracted to temples, can visit and enjoy all the high-tech scientific presentations like the robotic animatronics, which is new in India. Delhi has never seen the philosophy of God consciousness presented in this way. Foreign tourists will also come here to the 'Glory of India' as it is very near to the famous Bahai Lotus Temple which is already a major tourist attraction in South Delhi.

A Landmark in the Revival of Vedic Culture

- a befitting epitaph to a truly great acharya

The grand opening of the 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' was truly a landmark event in the history of the Iskcon movement in Delhi, and also an important landmark in the revival of India's age-old Vedic religion. It was the culmination of a hard-fought spiritual crusade that began in 1955, with the arrival in Delhi of Shrila Prabhupada, who was at that time a penniless Vaishnava mendicant without any fixed abode, but who possessed a unique transcendental vision of creating a worldwide movement dedicated to uplifting the human race through

surrender and pure devotion to the Lord Krishna. His only wealth was his absolute faith in the words of his spiritual master and his unshakable conviction in the subliminal message of the Vedic scriptures.

At a time when the general population of India were in the process of abandoning the ancient Vedic culture and were instead eagerly embracing the morally decadent and atheistic culture of the western world, Shrila Prabhupada stood alone like a great rock amidst a swirling flood-plain, unmoved and resolute, and with a dynamic plan of how to reverse the tumultuous current that was carrying his fellow countrymen, his brothers and sisters, to their spiritual doom.

Even though it seemed to be an almost impossible dream, Shrila Prabhupada accomplished the revival of a religion that even India's foremost intellectuals and thinkers had been convinced was just a mythology. Shrila Prabhupada trod a lonely path, and although there were innumerable reversals, and many pitfalls along the way, nevertheless, against all the odds, he finally emerged victorious. In just a short span of time, from 1955 to 1977, Shrila Prabhupada was able to build such a powerful spiritual movement, that it is continuing to expand day after day, and year after year, and appears destined to continue to expand into the foreseeable future, simply because it was built upon a solid bedrock of pure and unadulterated devotion to God and the authority of the Vedic scriptures. The opening of the 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' in New Delhi, although an important milestone for the fledgling Iskcon society, is not the end of a beautiful story, but just a preface to the first chapter in the remarkable history of Shrila Prabhupada's revolutionary spiritual movement.

In the many thousands of years of Indian history, there have been many great saintly persons who, at the time of religious decline, dedicated themselves to reestablish the glorious Vedic tradition, the foremost being Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, and Madhavacharya, who single-handedly carried the banner of Vedic religion throughout the Indian sub-continent, converting all who came before them, and firmly establishing the tenets of Vedic philosophy and culture. But none had imagined that one day, one of the greatest of all the Vedic *acharyas* would eventually appear on earth, and carry that same banner of Vedic religion, not only throughout the Indian sub-continent, but throughout the entire world, crossing the vast and foreboding oceans to reach the great monolithic continents of the earth. From India to America and from Europe to Australia and on to Asia, and even to the dark continent of Africa, converting all before him to the transcendent doctrines of pure Krishna consciousness and the tenets and traditions of the eternal Vedic culture.

In a short span of just over twenty years, from 1954 to 1977, one of India's greatest-ever preachers of *Bhagavata-dharma* and the foremost Vedic *acharya* of the modern age, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, singlehandedly spread the chanting of Lord Krishna's holy names to every country of the world and converted people from every race, religion, color, and caste, on the face of the Earth, to embrace Vaishnava dharma and the sublime process of pure Krishna consciousness. Such an amazing feat had never ever seemed even remotely possible before the advent of His Divine Grace.

End of Part Four

EPILOGUE

All Glories to the Glory of India

Because of the dedication and sincere efforts of just one man, a humble but learned saint from India, who possessed extraordinary faith in the order of his guru and resolute conviction in the teachings of Lord Krishna – a spiritual revolution was born that changed the world’s religious history and the lives of millions the world over.

That one man in his seventieth year, could leave the shores of his beloved homeland and the holy town of Vrindavana, and with just forty rupees in his pocket and a metal trunk full of *Bhagavatams*, simply on the divine order of his beloved guru, set sail for an alien land to spread the transcendental message of Lord Krishna.

That in just a few short years, one man could have such a powerful influence, that he brought about a remarkable renaissance of India’s ancient Vedic culture that had lay dormant for thousands of years, and establish Krishna consciousness as the fastest growing religion in the history of mankind.

That in such a short span of time, he could circle the globe more than a dozen times and spread the holy names of Hare Krishna and Hare Rama to every town and village on the face of the earth, thus making the holy name of Lord Krishna known to practically every human being on planet Earth.

Even more remarkable is the fact that he could convert thousands of young men and women, who were addicted to the sensual pleasures of modern-day life, and could inspire them to abandon their sinful acts and faithfully surrender their lives at the lotus feet of Lord Krishna.

That just one man could translate from Sanskrit so many important Vedic scriptures, like the *Gita* and *Bhagavatam*, and after printing them, inspire his disciples to distribute them in millions and millions of copies in over seventy major languages of the world, making him the most prolific religious author in the history of the world.

That one man, a Vaishnava saint from India and a powerful preacher of the Vedas, a true representative of Vyasadeva and the Vedic *sampradaya*, a pure devotee of Lord Krishna, who dedicated his life for the benefit of humanity – who is now glorified and worshiped by millions around the world as ‘Prabhupada’ – Surely, this one man alone must be without any doubt - the true ‘Glory of India’.

All Glories! All Glories! All Glories! To Shrila Prabhupada- savior of the world.

The Glory of India

– History of the Hare Krishna Movement in Delhi

APPENDIX

A Brief Sketch of Srila Prabhupada's Early Life

Shrila Prabhupada was born in the Indian city of Calcutta in the year 1896, on Nandotsava, the day after Janmashtami, as Abhaya Charan De, the son of Gaura Mohan De, a devout Vaishnava and member of the aristocratic Mullik family belonging to the *Suvarna-vanik* caste of Gold merchants. The name Abhaya Charan, given by his father, means 'fearless at the lotus feet of the Lord'. As a boy, Abhaya Charan spent many long hours observing the rituals being performed at the Radha Govinda temple in the Mullik family compound in Calcutta's Bhurra Bazar area and would organize his own annual Jagannatha Rathayatra festival amongst the neighborhood children. Because of his spontaneous devotion towards God, his father gave him a small set of Radha and Krishna deities to personally worship and encouraged him in various devotional activities like singing Vaisnava *bhajans* and playing the *mrdanga*. In his early life he went to the nearby Mutty Lal Seal School and later attended the prestigious Scottish Churches College in Calcutta, where he excelled in his studies and became highly proficient in Sanskrit. At college he became involved in India's independence struggle against British rule. As an expression of solidarity with Mahatma Gandhi's civil disobedience movement, Abhaya Charan refused to accept his Bachelor of Arts diploma at the time of his graduation. During this period he also entered the *grihastha-ashrama* when his father arranged his marriage to a highly respectable local girl. The family doctor and close friend of the Mullik family, the famous Dr. Kartick Chandra Bose, employed Abhaya Charan as a manager at his pharmaceutical laboratory in Calcutta. Within a few years after gaining sufficient experience, Abhaya Charan ventured out and established his own pharmacy and began producing medicines for a host of common ailments.

Then at the age of twenty-six, a major turning point in his life occurred when in the year 1922, Abhaya Charan was taken by his cousin Narendranath Mullik to meet the great Vaishnava saint Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami, the illustrious founder of the Gaudiya Matha, a Vaishnava mission with over sixty branches spread across India. At their first meeting at the Ultadanga Matha in Calcutta, Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta told Abhaya Charan, that because he was a highly educated young man, he should preach the message of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu into the English speaking people of the world, as it would not only bring great benefit to himself but to the whole world. Being a young married man with small children, it seemed impossible at that time for Abhaya Charan to fulfill the order of Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta, nevertheless, he was greatly impressed by Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta's powerful presentation of Vedic philosophy and was unable to forget those first instructions by the saintly Vaishnava, who would some years later become his spiritual master.

Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami was the founder of the Gaudiya Matha, a Vaishnava mission established for the purpose of propagating the teachings of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who, according to the Vedic scriptures, was a direct incarnation of God, who appeared on earth at Navadwipa in the year 1486, to introduce the *yuga-dharma* of chanting the holy names of Lord Krishna, as the only means of attaining salvation in the dark age of Kali. Within a few years, Abhaya Charan expanded his business and opened the Prayag Pharmacy in Allahabad, where he also established a factory for producing medicines which he distributed all

over India. While in Allahabad, he became closely associated with the Gaudiya Matha and assisted them in their preaching work and establishing a branch of the Matha in Allahabad. Then in the year 1933, Abhaya Charan was formerly accepted by Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati as his disciple and was given the name Abhaya Charanaravinda Dasa Adhikari. From this time onwards he began writing articles and essays for the various publications of the Gaudiya Matha. He also wrote an English commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* entitled *Gitopanishad* and in 1944 began publishing an English language magazine entitled 'Back to Godhead'. In 1947, due to his outstanding Vedic scholarship and philosophical learning, he was awarded the title of 'Bhaktivedanta' by the Gaudiya Vaishnava Society, a constituent of the Gaudiya Matha.

In 1954, at the age of sixty-eight, he retired from family life to dedicate himself to fulfilling the order given to him by his spiritual master Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami, to preach the message of Godhead to the English speaking world. He eventually moved to New Delhi where he began in earnest his life's mission of preaching the transcendental message of Lord Krishna and also once again began to publish the 'Back to Godhead' magazine in English which had not been published since 1954. In 1959, he accepted the renounced order of *tridandi-sannyasa* and received the *sannyasa* name A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. Then in 1962 while in Delhi, he began his 'magnum-opus' English translation of the great Vedic classic, the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*.

In the year 1965, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami sailed to America where he founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Iskcon) and established more than one hundred Iskcon temples in all the major cities of the world. He made the holy names of Lord Krishna known to people across the face of the earth and became internationally known as the founder of the 'Hare Krishna Movement'. In 1972, his disciples, recognizing his stature as the preeminent world teacher of Vedic religion in the modern era and the only disciple to fulfill the desire of Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, honored him with the title 'Prabhupada', and hence he became known to his disciples as His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

The Meaning of the name 'Prabhupada'

The spiritual title 'Prabhupada' is given only to a Vaishnava saint who has made a phenomenal and unprecedented contribution through his writings and preaching activities towards the furtherance of Vedic culture, philosophy, and learning, in the world during a particular era of world history. The Sanskrit word *prabhu* means master, and is generally used to address the Supreme Lord (Prabhuji), but can also be used to address any Vaishnava devotee of the Lord. The word *pada* means lotus-feet, and can refer to the lotus-feet of the Supreme Lord or the lotus-feet of the Lord's pure devotee. Thus the meaning of the word 'Prabhupada' has three basic connotations, the first and foremost being;

'One who represents the lotus-feet (*pada*) of the Lord Krishna (Prabhu).

The second meaning is;

'One at whose feet (*pada*) many *prabhus* (Vaishnavas) take shelter.

The third meaning is;

'The Prabhu at whose feet (*pada*) many great spiritual masters (*prabhus*) take shelter.

There are also three lesser-known meanings:

The representative of Lord Nityananda Prabhu's lotus feet

The representative of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Lotus feet

The representative of Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada's lotus feet

The last mentioned meaning, '**the representative of Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada's lotus feet**', is the meaning that Shrila Prabhupada himself imbibed and constantly meditated upon. Whenever his disciples addressed him as 'Prabhupada', he would immediately think of his own spiritual master's lotus feet, such are the characteristics of a pure devotee of the Lord.

Chronology of Important Events in the Life of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

1896	Born Abhaya Charana De in Calcutta, India
1922	Meets for the first time Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati at Calcutta
1932	Meets Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati at Kosi during <i>Vraja Parikrama</i>
1933	Accepts initiation from Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati at Allahaba
1935	Meets Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati at Radha-kunda
1944	Starts Back To Godhead Magazine
1947	Awarded the title 'Bhaktivedanta' by the Gaudiya Vaishnava Society
1950	Retires from family life and accepts the <i>vanaprastha ashram</i>
1956	Arrives in Vrindavana and stays at the Vamsi Gopala Mandira
1959	Begins the English translation of <i>Shrimad Bhagavata</i>
1959	Moves to the Radha Damodara Mandira
1959	Accepts the renounced order of <i>tridandi-sannyasa</i>
1960	Publishes first book 'Easy Journey to Other Planets'
1962	Publishes part one of the first canto of the <i>Shrimad Bhagavatam</i>
1963	Publishes part two of the first canto of <i>Shrimad Bhagavatam</i>
1964	Publishes part three and completes the first canto of <i>Shrimad Bhagavatam</i>
1965	Leaves India for the U.S.A. aboard the steamship 'Jaladuta'
1966	Founds International Society for Krishna Consciousness in New York
1966	Opens his first temple in New York, U.S.A
1967	Returns to India for recuperation and stays at Radha Damodara Temple
1967	Returns to the U.S.A.
1971	Returns to India with his Western disciples and stays at Radha Damodara Temple
1972	Lectures for one month on the Nectar of Devotion at Radha Damodara Temple
1972	Leads the first <i>parikrama</i> of Vraja by Western devotees
1973	Establishes Iskcon's first Indian temple at Mayapur, West Bengal
1975	Establishes the Krishna Balarama Mandira in Vrindavana
1977	Disappearance of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada on November 11 th at the Krishna Balarama Mandira in Vrindavana

The Rasa-tattva of Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi

In 1974, when the most worshipable deities of Iskcon New Delhi were originally installed by Shrila Prabhupada at the Iskcon temple in Anand Niketan, Shrila Prabhupada gave them the names Shri Shri Radha-Parthasarathi. The name Radha-Parthasarathi has a number of interesting meanings. One reason is due to New Delhi's proximity to Kurukshetra, where the Lord appeared on the battlefield as Arjuna's chariot driver, and hence became known as Parthasarathi. As all those who have read the *Bhagavad Gita* know, Partha was Arjuna's second name and was in reference to his being the son of Princess Pritha, who was later known as Queen Kunti. The Sanskrit word *sarathi* refers to a chariot driver, and because Lord Krishna took the position as Arjuna's chariot driver during the devastating battle of Kurukshetra, he therefore became glorified as Parthasarathi, Partha's chariot driver. Although Lord Krishna had vowed not to take part in the fratricidal war between the cousin-brothers of the Kuru dynasty, the Pandavas and Kauravas, He nevertheless wanted to be on the battlefield to ensure that His dear-most friend Arjuna, would not come to any harm. The 10TH canto of the *Shrimad Bhagavatama*, Lord Vishnu says that both Arjuna and Krishna (in His Vishnu form) are incarnations of the great sage Nara-Narayana Rishi, the twin avatar of Vishnu who resides at Badrikashrama in the Himalayas. The *Puranas* say that Narayana Rishi manifests the feature of *Vishnu-tattva*, and His twin expansion Nara Rishi, manifests the feature of *jiva-tattva*.

Regarding the name Radha-Parthasarathi, given to the Delhi deities by Shrila Prabhupada, there was criticism from a so-called learned scholar during the opening of the 'Glory of India' project, that Radha could never be associated with Parthasarathi, because Parthasarathi, a Vishnu form, was the consort of Rukmini and the queens of Dwaraka, and that the name Radha-Parthasarathi was *rasa-bhasa* and a misnomer. However, the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* reveals that Radharani and the *gopis* of Vrindavana actually went to meet Lord Krishna at Kurukshetra during the occasion of the solar eclipse. When Radharani and the *gopis* arrived in Kurukshetra and met Lord Parthasarathi, they immediately longed to take Him away from His royal entourage and back to the forest of Vrindavana to continue their divine *lila*. Thus, during this pastime at Kurukshetra, Radha directly associated with Parthasarathy and longed for Him to return to the rural environs of Vrindavana where They had enjoyed so many wonderful pastimes together.

According to *Vraja-tattva*, when Lord Krishna appears in Vrindavan in His original form He is referred to by the name Govinda, the transcendental cowherd boy, as well as Gopijanavallabha, the lover of the *gopis*. As mentioned in the Vedas and also confirmed by Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Lord Krishna in His original form of Govinda, never leaves Vrindavana. Therefore, when Lord Krishna appears in Mathura or Dwaraka, which are both Vaikuntha Dhamas, he does so in His two-armed Vishnu form known as Mathureswara and Dwarkadisha. Similarly, when Lord Krishna appears on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra, or in Hastinapura, or Indraprasta, He does so in his two-armed Vishnu form known as Parthasarathi, Arjuna's beloved friend and chariot driver.

Therefore, it is amazing that when the *gopis* arrived in Kurukshetra, they saw only their beloved Lord Govinda, just as he had always appeared to them during His Vrindavana pastimes. In this regard, Shrila Jiva Goswami has said that when Krishna and Balarama heard that the *gopis* were arriving in Kurukshetra along with all the *Vrajavasis*, including Nanda and Yashoda, The

transcendental brothers reverted to Their mood (*bhava*) as being cowherd boys. Therefore, when Radharani and the *gopis* met Lord Parthasarathi at Kurukshetra, they did not see the Vishnu feature, but could see only their beloved Govinda, even though He was dressed in the attire of a royal prince of the Yadava dynasty. Upon seeing Him they immediately wanted to take Him back to Vrindavana to continue their transcendental *lila*.

This particular pastime of the *gopis* taking Lord Parthasarathi back to Vrindavana is enacted during the Jagannatha Rathayatra festival, when the devotees pull the royal chariot carrying Lord Parthasarathi back to Vrindavana. Some devotees see Lord Vishnu riding on the chariot in His form as Jagannatha, the Lord of the universe, while others, like the *gopis*, see only the feature of Lord Govinda. When Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu entered the Jagannatha temple in Puri for *darshana*, while others saw the deity of Lord Vishnu in His form as Lord Jagannatha, Lord Chaitanya could see only Lord Govinda, smiling sweetly and playing on His flute. Therefore, when Radharani and the *gopis* met Lord Parthasarathi at Kurukshetra, although attired as a Yadava prince, they saw only their beloved Lord Govinda.

The forms of Lord Jagannatha, Baladeva, and Subhadra, are Their ecstatic forms in the transcendental state of *maha-bhava*, which manifested when They heard the pastimes of *gopi-lila* being narrated by mother Rohini before the queens of Dwaraka. At that time, the arms and legs of the three siblings withdrew into Their bodies as They became stunned by ecstasy while relishing the Vrindavana pastimes.

The conclusion is that Lord Parthasarathi possesses a unique quality, in as much that He exhibited the feature and *bhava* of Lord Govinda before the *gopis*. Thus it was Lord Parthasarathi in His feature of Lord Govinda that the *gopis* wanted to take back to Vrindavana. This episode also reveals that Lord Parthasarathi is non-different from Lord Jagannatha, and the celebration of Jagannatha Ratha-yatra, is the enactment of the pastime where the *gopis* desire to take Lord Parthasarathi back to Vrindavana. With reference to Lord Chaitanya seeing Lord Jagannatha as Lord Govinda, this means that according to a devotee's particular *bhava*, Lord Jagannatha, who is the self-same Lord Parthasarathi, appears differently, and for sincere devotees, seeing Shri Shri Radha Parthasarathi in Delhi is the same as seeing Shri Shri Radha Govinda in Vrindavana.

Lord Jagannatha is the *yuga-murti*, or predominating deity of the Kali-yuga, and He has the ability to manifest all the various avatars of Godhead simultaneously. Therefore, in the temple of Lord Jagannatha in Orissa, during the course of a year, the deity assumes the mood (*bhava*) of the various incarnations of Godhead, and is decorated with various *veshas* (costumes), along with the appropriate symbols representing the different incarnations. Thus, during the month when the Rathayatra Festival is held, Lord Jagannatha specifically appears as Lord Parthasarathi and is pulled by ropes along the road on His royal chariot by the *gopis*, who are represented by the assembled pilgrims, who take Him to Vrindavana, which is represented by the Gundicha temple.

Radha-maha-bhava - The Highest State of Love of God

To further illustrate that Lord Parthasarathi and Lord Govinda are non-different, when Lord Parthasarathi saw Radharani and the *gopis* at Kurukshetra, He would not have been able to maintain His Vishnu feature, and thus He would have been forced to appear before them as Lord Govinda. This is due to the unique *bhava* possessed by Radharani. This unique *bhava* is referred to as *Radha-maha-bhava*. To confirm this fact, there is a famous pastime in Vrindavana, that once, during the *rasa-lila*, Lord Krishna hid from the *gopis* just to test their love and devotion. Hiding Himself in a thicket, He disguised Himself as four-armed Vishnu. While

searching throughout the forest for their beloved Govinda, the *gopis* saw the four-armed form of Lord Vishnu, but simply paid their obeisance's and continued their search for their beloved Govinda. But as soon as Radha came to that thicket, immediately upon seeing Her so utterly devastated and crying piteously due to the loss of Her beloved Govinda, Lord Krishna could no longer maintain His form of four-armed of Vishnu due to the intensity of Radha's *bhava*, and assuming His original form of Govinda, He was forced by the strength of Her love to come before Her and surrender Himself at Her lotus feet. According to the *Chaitanya-charitamrita*, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was the only other personality in history other than Radharani Herself, to have ever manifested the symptoms of *Radha-maha-bhava*. This is due to the fact that although Lord Krishna appears in Kali-yuga as the 'Golden Avatara' Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, He possesses Radharani's same ecstatic mood and golden complexion. This has been explained in the Vaishnava classic *Shri Chaitanya-charitamrita*, based upon the life and teachings of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

The Eternal Union of Shri Shri Yugala-murti

It has been already been explained that Lord Parthasarathi is non-different from Lord Govinda. There is also another consideration that proves the eternal union of Radha and Parthasarathi, which is based upon the philosophy of *achintya-bheda-bheda-tattva*, where Radha and Krishna are understood to be simultaneously one and different. This means that Radha and Krishna, although individual personalities, are one and the same Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna, in His constitutional position, possesses three principle energies which are: internal (*hladini-shakti*), external (*maya-shakti*), and marginal (*jiva-shakti*). Lord Krishna and His various energies are non-different from the Lord and thus inseparable, because the energy cannot be separated from the energetic, just as the light of a fire cannot be separated from the fire itself, they are interdependent. Wherever there is fire, there is also light. You cannot put the fire in one place and the light from the fire in another, it is impossible

Radha is the divine manifestation of the internal energy (*hladini-shakti*), also called the pleasure potency of Lord Krishna, therefore in this regard, She is non-different from Krishna Himself, because They are manifestations of the Energy and the Energetic. Or in other words, the fire and the light of the fire. To further explain this point, the example may be given that the internal pleasure potency of *hladini-shakti* can be compared to the Lord's transcendental love-intoxicated heart, which manifests externally before the Lord and His devotees as Radharani. Therefore, wherever there is Krishna, there is also simultaneously Radharani, the Lord's internal energy. This transcendental form of Radha-Krishna, as 'one and the same person' is known as Yugala-murti or Yugala-kishore. So in this regard, Shri Shri Radha Parthasarathi can also be envisioned by the devotees as Shri Shri Yugala-murti. Thus, the conclusion according to *tattva* is that Radha and Parthasarathi are eternally inseparable.

Delhi - The Ancient City of Indraprasta

Amongst Indian scholars there has been considerable confusion regarding the actual location of Hastinapura, the capital of the Kuru Empire. It was always generally believed that Delhi was the site of the fabled city; however, this opinion has now changed due to recent archeological discoveries undertaken by the Archeological Survey of India. It has now been established that Delhi was in fact the site of the ancient city of Indraprasta, which was formerly located on the western bank of the Yamuna at a site presently known as Purana Quila, a medieval fort built by the Mughal Emperor Humayun in 1530. This ancient site which is surrounded by a natural moat created by a channel of the Yamuna River conforms to the descriptions found in the *Puranas* and *Mahabharata*. The pottery and other ancient artifacts excavated from the Purana Quila site are similar to those excavated from Hastinapura, and it confirms that this site was inhabited during the era of the Mahabharata. The excavations at Purana Quila bear ample testimony to the fact that habitation in Indraprasta continued from the time of the Mahabharata for almost 2,500 years. Thousands of years later, the Hindu king named Raja Dhilu, built a new city close to Indraprasta and it was given the name Dhilli, which later became Delhi.

Iskcon's founder, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, had on occasion, referred to Delhi as being the ancient city of Hastinapur, and this was also the general opinion amongst local scholars and residents of the city. However Shрила Prabhupada also acknowledged that there was some confusion regarding this, especially as Delhi is located on the banks of the Yamuna, and according to the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, Hastinapura was located on the bank of the Ganges. The *Bhagavatam* mentions that when Lord Balarama was about to drag the city of Hastinapura into the river, the river mentioned in the *Bhagavatam* was the Ganges. In regard to this pastime, Shрила Prabhupada had said that whenever Delhi became flooded due to a rise in the level of the Yamuna, it always reminded the residents of Delhi about the time when Lord Balarama, being angry with the Kauravas, dragged the city of Hastinapura into the river with His ploughshare. Further evidence that Hastinapur was located on the bank of the Ganges is also found in the *Bhagavatam*, where it says that when Parikshit Maharaja retired from the throne of Hastinapura, he went and sat by the bank of the Ganges, where he heard the recitation of the *Bhagavatam* spoken by Sukadeva Goswami.

According to references found in the *Puranas*, the entire region west of the Ganges River, from Kurukshetra in the north, to Delhi in the south, was part of the Kuru kingdom with its capital city at Hastinapur. The Kuru kingdom was also referred to as the kingdom of Hastinapura. Therefore, in this regard, Delhi and Indraprasta, were also within the kingdom of Hastinapura.

The *Puranas* say that the city of Hastinapura was founded by the Kuru king named Hasti Maharaja, and thus it became known as Hastinapura. However, it is also said that the city received its name because the Kuru kings possessed so many elephants, called *hasti* in Sanskrit, the city was called 'the city of elephants' or Hastinapura. During this period in Indian history there were five great kingdoms, Brahmavarta, Kuru, Panchala, Surasena, and Matsya. These kingdoms were ruled over by a confederation of various Aryan tribes including the Kurus, Purus, Panchalas, Matsyas, Vrishnis, Bhojas, Andhakas, and Yadavas. Brahmavarta was the oldest of the kingdom in ancient India and was originally established by Swayambhuva Manu. Manu's kingdom was also known as Saraswata, because it was established along the banks of the River Saraswati.

Archeologists have located Hastinapura

In recent years, the Indian governments Archeological Survey of India have set about finding the lost archeological sites of ancient India that are mentioned in the Vedas and *Puranas*. They have made a number of important archeological discoveries including the remains of the Saraswati valley civilization, and the submerged city of Dwaraka established by Lord Krishna. The recent findings by the Archeological Survey regarding the location of Hastinapura, appears to confirm that the ruins of the ancient city are located one hundred kilometers north-east of Delhi, and 37 km. from Meerut, near the village of Mawana in the district of Bareilly, not far from the banks of the Ganges. Due to these discoveries, the latest maps of India now show the ancient city of Hastinapura in this location.

The city of Hastinapura was inhabited until around 900 BC., when the Ganges River flooded the entire area and destroyed almost all the buildings. The capital of the Kurus was then moved to nearby Kausambi. There is sufficient archeological evidence to confirm a catastrophic flood caused by the Ganges River during this period. After the great flood, the bed of the Ganges moved a few miles eastwards away from the ruins of Hastinapura. The *Matsya* and *Vayu Puranas* also describe a great flood which destroyed Hastinapura, forcing its inhabitants to relocate in Kausambi. The soil of Hastinapura reveals proof of this flooding. Archaeological evidence of the new Kuru capital of Kausambi has recently been found which has been dated to the period after the great flood that destroyed Hastinapur

These recent findings by the Archeological Survey also gain support from the little-known pilgrimage made by Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami to Suka Tala, revered as the place where Sukadeva Goswami spoke the *Bhagavatam* to Parikshit Maharaja, which was located on the bank of the Ganges near the ancient archeological remains that are now known as Hastinapura in Bareilly District. The ancient riverbed of the Ganges is known locally as the Burfgangti. The antiquity of this place is also testified by the existence of many places connected to the Kuru dynasty like Sukha Tala, the small township named Parikshitgarh. There are also a number of ancient Shiva-*lingas* in the area that are said to have been worshipped by the Pandava brothers, Draupadi, Shrila Vyasadeva and also Dronacharya.

Indraprasta is mentioned in the *Padma Purana*

Once, Narada Muni and his dear-most companion Parvata Muni were travelling through the aerial route and while passing over the Khandava forest, they were attracted by the beautiful sight of Yamuna River below as it wended its way through the lush forest. They immediately decided to take bath in the sacred river and take rest there for some time, before continuing their journey. King Shibi, who ruled over the nearby province of Ushinar, saw the two celebrated saintly persons arriving through the airways and quickly hurried to the spot. While waiting for the two *rishis* to finish their bath in the Yamuna, King Shibi noticed the remains of numerous *havan-kundas* (oblation-altars) spread out over a large area near the riverbank.

When Narada and Parvat emerged from the Yamuna after taking their sacred bath, they found King Shibi patiently waiting for them. The king, after bowing down and offering his respects to the two *rishis*, enquired about their well-being and the purpose of their journey. During the discussion with the two *rishis*, King Shibi asked Narada about the origin of the *havan-kundas* scattered about the riverbank. Narada replied by saying that in ancient times, Indra, the king of heaven, had performed numerous *yajnas* at this very place to express his gratitude to Lord Vishnu, by whose blessings he had regained the swarga-loka from the clutches of the great demon Hiranyakashipu. Narada said that due to Indra's sacrifices at this place; it had become known by the name Indraprasta, meaning 'place of Indra'. The *Padma Purana* says that the sacrificial site celebrated as Indraprasta, is spread in the area of one *yojana* from east to west

and four *yojanas* from north to south, and due to the sacrifices performed here by Indra as an offering to Lord Vishnu, it has become holier than all the holy places combined together.

The History of Indraprasta and the Kuru Empire

The *Mahabharata* written by Shri Vyasadeva provides a complete history of the period when Indraprasta was being ruled by the Pandavas. This was also the time when Lord Krishna was present on the Earth. Lord Krishna was related to the Pandavas because His father's sister, Kunti Devi, was the wife of King Pandu, and therefore the mother of the Pandavas. Although the five Pandava princes, Yudhishthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva, were the rightful heirs to the throne of Hastinapura, due to the rivalry between the Pandava princes and their cousin brothers the Kauravas, headed by the evil hearted Duryodhana, they were prevented from ascending the throne of Hastinapura, which was illegitimately usurped by the Kauravas. This unrighteous act occurred because the Pandava's father, the Kuru Emperor, King Pandu, died prematurely, leaving behind his five young sons in the care of their mother. As they were still children, Pandu's brother Dhritarashtra, who was blind from birth, took over the kingdom as the regent until Pandu's sons, headed by Yudhishthira, were old enough to assume the responsibility to rule the kingdom. Although Dhritarashtra was older than his brother Pandu, due to his blindness, the Vedic regulations forbade him to become king. Due to this, Dhritarashtra could not ascend the throne upon the death of his father, and consequently Pandu became the king. However, when Pandu suddenly died, Dhritarashtra had to assume the post as the prince regent until Yudhishthira reached the age where he could become king. Unfortunately, Dhritarashtra became very attached to the post of king and due to his false attachment; he also hatched a vial conspiracy to make his own son Duryodhana the future king of Hastinapur.

Dhritarashtra's son Duryodhana, even during his childhood, always felt an inborn hatred towards the pious Pandavas, and as they grew up, this hatred only increased. Duryodhana was extremely envious towards Bhima, who he saw as a great stumbling block in the way of his ambition to be king of Hastinapura, because Bhima was the strongest and most expert in fighting amongst the Pandava brothers. Duryodhana's envy of Bhima resulted in a murderous attempt to poison him and dump his body in the river, but by the grace of Lord Krishna, Duryodhana's attempt failed and Bhima survived. Duryodhana then began conspiring with others like his friend Karna, his uncle Shakuni, and his brothers like Dushasana, to somehow or other finish the Pandavas by any means possible, so there would be no one to challenge his ambition of becoming the next king. There were a number of assassination attempts made on the Pandavas by Duryodhana and his supporters; however Lord Krishna always managed to somehow or other save the Pandavas. It was during the Pandavas fourteen year exile, they formerly accepted as their joint wife, the beautiful Princess Draupadi, daughter of Raja Draupada of the Panchala kingdom.

The Kingdom of Hastinapura Gets Divided

Due to the intense rivalry between the Kuru cousins, Dhritarashtra decided to divide the kingdom into two separate provinces, hoping that it might bring about peace. He gave the south-western portion, referred to as Kandhavaprasta, a vast and arid wilderness, interspersed with impenetrable forests inhabited by cannibals, to the Pandavas as their share of the kingdom. King Dhritarashtra then ordered the Pandavas to build their own city in that portion of the Kuru kingdom hoping they would be satisfied and stay away from Hastinapura.

In order to make way for the new city, the impenetrable forest known as Kandhava had to be cleared. Therefore Arjuna, as an offering to the fire-god Agni, set fire to the Kandharva forest and in the process many Rakshasas (cannibals) Ashuras, and Nagas, who lived in the forest also died.

The Naga prince Aswasena, the son of the Naga king Takshaka, also perished in the flames and this caused a great enmity to arise between the Nagas and the Kurus. This enmity ultimately led to Takshaka killing Arjuna's grandson Maharaja Parikshit, and Parikshit's son Janamejaya annihilating almost all the Nagas in a powerful *sarpa-yajna*. During the burning of the Kandhava forest, the Ashura named Maya Danava, was saved from the fire by Arjuna and in return, Maya Danava constructed a fabulous assembly hall for the Pandavas at Indraprasta.

Vishvakarma constructs Indraprasta

Lord Krishna requested Vishvakarma, the architect of the demigods, to build a new city for the Pandavas. The city constructed by Vishvakarma rivaled even the city of Lord Indra known as Amravati or Indrapuri, located in the heavenly planets. Lord Krishna also requested Indra, the king of the demigods, to transform the province given to the Pandavas into a second heaven, by bringing profuse rainfall and thus making the land beautiful with lush vegetation including, fruit trees, aromatic creepers, and flowering shrubs. After Indra had fulfilled Lord Krishna's request and converted Kandhavaprasta into a second *swarga*, as a token of appreciation, the new city was called Indraprasta, meaning 'a place equal to Indrapuri'. Lord Krishna attended Yudhisthira's coronation as the king of Indraprasta, which was attended by monarchs from around the world. Due to the pious rule of Yudhisthira Maharaja, the new city of Indraprasta flourished and soon became filled with great wealth and prosperity. People from all walks of life flocked to the new city and its opulence knew no bounds.

However, the fabulous assembly hall built by Maya Danava caused an even greater enmity between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, and also instigated a burning hatred in Duryodhana's heart towards Princess Draupadi, whom he once desired to marry. The assembly hall built by Maya Danava, who was a powerful sorcerer and an expert in engineering and architecture was truly magnificent. However, it ultimately led to the Kaurava prince Duryodhana being greatly insulted when he failed to recognize one of the architectural illusions built into the assembly hall, and fell headlong into a pool of water, mistaking it for a shining marble floor. As he fell into the water, Princess Draupadi and her maidservants burst out with laughter at Duryodhana's foolish mistake, which caused Duryodhana to feel greatly insulted. In a furious mood he immediately left Indraprasta.

The Crooked Game of Dice

Unable to see the Pandavas living in such great opulence and in such a splendid city like Indraprasta, the evil Kauravas began plotting the Pandavas' downfall. The Kauravas invited the Pandavas to visit Hastinapura to engage in a friendly game of dice, but Duryodhana's uncle named Shakuni secretly loaded the dice in the Kauravas' favor. During this most infamous dice game, due to Shakuni's cheating methods, Yudhisthira Maharaja, under the influence of illusion, lost all of his wealth and possessions including Indraprasta, and even gambled away his four brothers and his wife. Having won everything, Duryodhana's brother Dushasana attempted to strip naked Princess Draupadi in the assembly of the Kauravas, however, Princess Draupadi was saved from being shamed by Lord Krishna, who by His mystic power, covered Draupadi with an inexhaustible number of saris, and as Duryodhana's brother Dushasana removed one sari, another sari miraculously appeared beneath it. Realizing that Draupadi's chastity was being protected by some mystical force, the Kaurava princes gave up their attempt. However, having lost in the dice game, Yudhisthira and his brothers were subsequently banished to the forest for fourteen years and the Kauravas took control of Indraprasta.

The Battle of Kurukshetra

When the period of exile was over, Duryodhana refused to return the Indraprasta or any part of the Kuru kingdom, consequently, there was no other course for the Pandavas to take, other than to go to war in order to reclaim their rightful kingdom. Even though Lord Krishna pleaded with Duryodhana to return some small amount of land to the Pandavas, he flatly refused and therefore war between the cousins became inevitable. Lord Krishna declared that He would take no part in the fighting, decided to become the chariot driver of Arjuna so that He could be near His friend and protect him from danger. The great battle of Kurukshetra was fought in the year 3139 BC., and lasted just eighteen days. Although the Pandava army was vastly outnumbered, being devotees of Lord Krishna, and because they fought on the side of righteousness to uphold the principles of Vedic religion, they ultimately prevailed. During the eighteen days of fighting, over 650 million warriors died on the battlefield, it was one of the greatest slaughters that the world has ever seen. At the end of the battle, the only surviving members of the Pandava's army were the five Pandava brothers, Lord Krishna, Satyaki, and Yuyutsu. On the side of the Kauravas, only Kripacharya, Kritavarma and Asvatthama survived, all others were killed.

After gaining victory in the battle of Kurukshetra, the victorious Pandavas became the undisputed rulers of Hastinapur. Yudhisthira Maharaja was crowned as the Kuru Emperor and ruled over Bharatavarsha (India) from the city of Hastinapur, while Arjuna took charge of Indraprastha. Yudhisthira Maharaja ruled on the throne of Hastinapura for 36 years and 8 months until the beginning of *kaliyug* in the year 3102 BC. On that day Lord Krishna disappeared from the vision of the world and the Pandavas ultimately decided to retire from all worldly affairs and take refuge in the Himalayan Mountains. Yudhisthira Maharaja appointed Arjuna's grandson Parikshit Maharaja as the ruler of Hastinapura, and Arjuna appointed Lord Krishna's great-grandson Vajranabha Maharaja, as the ruler of Indraprasta and Mathura.

End Of Appendix

GLOSSARY

A

abhisheka – sacred bathing ceremony of the Deity
abhisheka charanamrta – sacred bathing water of the Deity
acharya – a guru who teaches by example
adhikari – a Vaishnava householder
ashuras – non-believers
ahankara – false ego
arati – ghee lamp offering
arca-vigraha – the form of the Deity
ashrama – a hermitage for holy men
avatara – the incarnation of God who descends from the spiritual world
ayurvedic – traditional Indian medicine

B

babas – Indian holy man
Bhagavad Gita – the teachings spoken by Lord Shri Krishna
bhajana – process of meditation by chanting on beads
bhajana – singing devotional songs
bhakti – the process of devotional service to Krishna
bhava – pure spiritual emotion
brahma – the anti-material spiritual energy
brahmachari – a celibate student
brahmana – a Vedic priest and learned person of the highest caste.
Brijbasi – (see Vrajavasi)
Brijbasha – local Hindi dialect spoken in the Vrindavana Area

C

chaddar – Indian shawl
Chaitanya-charitamrita – the classical Bengali scripture about Lord Chaitanya

D

dahl – pulse
darshana – to see something sacred like a deity, a holy place, or holy person
deha – the material or spiritual body
deshi culture – traditional Indian culture
Dhama – the earthly abode of the Lord like Vrindavana or Dwaraka
dharma – the practice of eternal religion and its principles
dharamshala – rest-house for pilgrims
diksha – the process of initiation by a guru

E

ekadashi – the 11th day after the waxing and waning moons, a day of fasting from grains

G

gamsha – Indian bathing towel

Gaudiya – a geographical reference meaning either Bengal or northern India
Gaudiya Vaishnava – a follower of Lord Chaitanya
Gaudiya sampradaya – the northern branch of the Madhava *sampradaya*
Gaura Purnima – full moon day on which Lord Chaitanya appeared
gopa – a cowherd boy of Vrindavana
gopi – a cowherd girl or milkmaid of Vrindavana
goswami – a holy man renounced from family life who has gained control over his senses
grihastha – a householder
grihastha-ashrama – spiritual retreat where householders live
guru – a teacher of the Vedas
gurukula – the residential school or teaching place of a guru
guru-puja – worship of the spiritual master

H

halavah – sweet dish made from farina, sugar, and milk
harinama – chanting the holy names of the Lord
harinama-sankirtana – the congregational chanting of gods names
haven – square-shaped hearth of a Vedic sacrificial fire
hladini-shakti – the internal potency of the Lord personified by Radharani

I

Indra - king of the demigods

J

Janmashtami
japa – chanting the holy names on beads
jiva – the identity of the self as pure spirit soul
jivatma – the eternal spirit soul
jiva-shakti – existence of the eternal spirit soul
jnana – knowledge, especially of the self

K

kali-yuga – the present age symptomised by irreligion, quarrel, and hypocrisy
Karttika – the most sacred and auspicious month of the Vedic calendar (Oct/Nov)
kirtana – group chanting of the holy names
kicheri – food preparation made from rice and dhal
ksatriya – a chivalrous warrior or prince of the marshal caste

L

lakh – Indian numeral (one *lakh* = 100,000)
lila – the sacred pastimes of Krishna
lila-sthana – a sacred place of Krishna's pastimes (also *lila-sthala*)
lila-smaranam – remembering the transcendental pastimes of Krishna
lungi – single wrap-around cloth covering lower body

M

madhukari – the system of collecting alms by those in the renounced order
maha-bhagavata – a very advanced Vaishnava of the very highest order

maha-bhava – the highest spiritual emotion exhibited by Radha and Krishna
maha-mantra – the great sixteen syllable chant of deliverance
mahant – proprietor or manager of a temple
mangala-arati – predawn offering of ghee lamps to the Deity
mandapam – public area in front of the Deity sanctum
mandira – a temple where one can achieve peace (*dhira*) of mind (*mana*)
mangala-arati – the pre-dawn worship of the temple deity
matha – monastery
muni – a highly realized and enlightened ascetic
murti – the deity form of the Supreme Lord worshiped in the temple

N

naishtika-brahmachari – a life-long celibate from birth
neem – tree found in the Indian sub-continent

P

pandal – large tent-like structure
parakiya-bhava – the highest spiritual emotion experienced by Krishna and the *gopis*
parampara – the bona-fide system of passing divine knowledge from guru to disciple
parikrama – the circumambulation of a holy place
pandita – a *brahmana* or any person very learned in Vedic knowledge
prasadam – sacred remnants of an offering to the deity or spiritual master
prema – unadulterated pure love of God
puja – offering various paraphernalia of worship to the temple deity or spiritual master
pujari – a priest serving the deity in a temple
Puranas – 18 historical records supplementary to the four Vedas called the fifth Veda
puri – deep-fried wheat flower bread

R

Rajarishi – saintly king
Rakshasa – cannibals or man-eaters
Ramanavami – appearance day of Lord Rama
rasa – divine taste due to ecstatic love / transcendental spiritual pleasure
rasa-bhasa – unfavorable mixture of sentiments
rasa-tattva – the truth concerning spiritual sentiments
rasa-lila – the divine dance of ecstatic love enjoyed by Krishna and the *gopis*
Rathayatra – celebration to commemorate Lord Krishna's Kurukshetra pastimes

S

sadhana – the purificatory practices of the yoga system
sadhu – a holy man
sahajiya – someone who rejects the scriptural injunctions
samadhi – the final resting place or tomb of a great saint
samadhi – a trance-like state of deep meditation, the last stage in *ashtanga*-yoga practice
sambhanda – love in direct association with Krishna
sampradaya – an unbroken line of disciplic succession originating from Krishna
sankirtana – the congregational or group chanting of the Lord's holy names
sannyasi – one who has renounced all connection with family, home, and society

shastra – any of the revealed Vedic scriptures
sarpa-yajna – the fire-sacrifice performed by Janmajaya to kill all snakes
seva – devotional service offered to the temple deity or spiritual master
seva-puja – the worship of the temple deity
shikara – the turret or spire of a temple
Shridhama Mayapur – birthplace of Lord Chaitanya
siddha-deha – one’s eternal spiritual form
sikha – tuft of hair on the crown kept by Vaishnavas
siksha – instructions given by a guru or advanced Vaishnava
siksha guru – the instructor spiritual master
sloka – verse of a sacred scripture
Srimad Bhagavatam – cream of all Vedic literature also called the spotless *Purana*
Subji – any food dish containing vegetables

T

tilak – the clay markings signifying Lord Vishnu seen on the body of a Vaishnava

V

Vaishnava – a devotee of Lord Vishnu or Krishna
vana – forest
vanaprasta-ashrama
vipralamba – love in separation from Krishna
Vraja – the innermost core of the *Dhama* where Krishna performed His pastimes
Vraja Mandala – the entire area of the holy Dhama equal to *chaurasi-kosa*
Vrajavasi – a resident of Vrindavana specifically during the time of Krishna’s pastimes
Vyasasana – seat on which the spiritual master sits during a discourse

Y

Yadava – a member of the Yadu Dynasty of *ksatriyas* in which Lord Krishna appeared
yajna – a fire sacrifice or any other type of Vedic sacrifice approved by *sashtra*
yogamaya – the internal potency of Krishna
yuga – an ancient Vedic division of time, the present age is known as *Kali-yuga*

End Of Glossary

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rajasekhara Dasa Brahmachari was born in England in 1948 and joined the Hare Krishna Movement in 1972. He received direct initiation from Swami Prabhupada in 1973 at Iskcon's Bhaktivedanta Manor near London where he served as the first temple commander. In January 1975, desiring to make further advancement in spiritual life, Rajasekhara moved to India and the holy city of Vrindavana, where he became a temple priest at Iskcon's Krishna-Balarama Mandira. During the 80's Rajasekhara became the leader of one of Vrindavana's most successful Travelling Sankirtan Parties which set new records in book distribution and Life-membership enrolment. Rajasekhara also became well-known as a kirtan singer and along with the accomplished musician Akshayananda – playing mayura-vina, they performed at festivals all over India. Being deeply attached to the holy land of Lord Krishna, Rajasekhara still resides in Vrindavana even today where he presently engaged in various aspects of Vedic research and writing books. At the present time, Rajasekhara is considered to be the world's leading authority on the subject of Vrindavana Dhama and its holy places, his numerous books about Vrindavana are read the world over by Iskcon devotees and all those interested in understanding the deeper mysteries of Lord Krishna's abode, where the Lord performed His transcendental pastimes on earth over 5,000 years ago. Rajasekhara is also well-known for his exquisite photographs of Vrindavana which are featured throughout his books and which perfectly capture the transcendental atmosphere of the holy Dhama. His personal experience and spiritual realizations, after having lived in India and the holy land of Vrindavana for almost forty years – is adequately conveyed through his writings, and those who read his books find themselves immediately transported to the transcendental spiritual platform. During his long sojourn in India, Rajasekhara has visited all the important holy places of pilgrimage from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari, including such famous places as Badrinatha, Yamunotri, Dwaraka, Tirupati, Rangapatnam, Anantapadmanabhu, Madurai, Kumbhakonam, Tanjore, and Jagannatha Puri, to name just a few. Due to his pilgrimage he has gained a treasure-trove of knowledge while imbibing the very essence of India's ancient religious culture. His understanding of Vedic philosophy has been acknowledged by all those who have heard him speak on Gaudiya Vedanta. Amongst his upcoming publications, Rajasekhara is writing a much-awaited summary study based on the 5th canto of the Shrimad Bhagavatam – Shрила Veda Vyasadeva's highly acclaimed Vedic classic, which deals with subjects like the fabled Mount Meru, ancient Bharata-varsha, the demigod's kingdom of Jambhudwipa, and the position of both heavenly and hellish planets in the universe.

Other Books by the Same Author

THE COLOR GUIDE TO VRINDAVANA

- The Holy City of over Five Thousand Temples

THE COLOR GUIDE TO GOVARDHANA

– India's Most Sacred Mountain

THE COLOR GUIDE TO RADHA-KUNDA

– the Holiest of all Holy Places

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ISKCON Centres in the Delhi Region

Since the opening of the the Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre by the Indian Prime Minister in 1998, the general public of Delhi have taken a very keen interest in Iskcon and its various activities. The many religious festivals of the Vedic calendar are celebrated at Iskcon's Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre on a very grand scale and therefore thousands flock to the Iskcon centre to take part in the festivities. It is now an accepted fact the Iskcon's celebrations of festivals like Janmashtami and Ramanavami are the best in the city.

Due to the increase in public interest, Iskcon has opened over fifteen new centers in the Delhi region so as to reach out to all those living in the sprawling National Capital Territory of Delhi and its satellite townships. This gives everyone the opportunity to take part in religious functions and experience the benefit of living a spiritual life by following Iskcon's teachings. Thus, Iskcon is giving everyone the opportunity to learn more about India's ancient Vedic culture and the real purpose of human existence.

Another important activity of the Iskcon movement is the publication and distribution of Vedic literature. Distribution of Shрила Prabhupada's books like the Bhagavad Gita and Shrimad Bhagavatam has increased exponentially since the opening of the Glory of India project, as more and more people feel the need to revive their spiritual lives because the hectic pace of today's modernised society brings with it many detrimental effects. By reading Shрила Prabhupada's books, ordinary people can transform their lives and bring about a spiritual revolution from within, thus bringing a measure of peace and equilibrium into their hectic lives, as they strive to make ends meet in this grossly materialistic world.

Since its inception in 1966, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness has been expanding at a phenomenal rate all around the world and one can find an Iskcon temple in more than one hundred countries world-wide. In India, Iskcon has opened temples in almost every major city and there are now more than one hundred and fifty Iskcon temples located right across the Indian sub-continent.

List of Iskcon centers in Delhi and the surrounding area:

ISKCON - New Delhi

Radha Parthasarathi Mandira and Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre

-Hare Krishna Hill, Sant Nagar Main Rd., East of Kailash, **New Delhi-UP** 110 065

Tele – (11) 2623-5133, 4, 5

Fax – (11) 2621-5421

Email – delhi@pamho.net; Guesthouse: guest.house.new.delhi

<http://www.iskcondelhi.com/>

[FACEBOOK ISKCON DELHI](#)

ISKCON – Punjabi Bhagh

-41/77, Punjabi Bagh (West), **New Delhi-UP** 110 026

Tele – +91 (011) 25222851, +91 (011) 25227478
Email – iskcon.punjabi.bagh@pamho.net

ISKCON – Rohini

Plot No 3, Institutional Area, Main Road, Sector 25
Rohini, **Delhi**, India – 110085
Tele – 9818014509, 9810139214
<http://iskconrohini.com/>
[FACEBOOK ISKCON DELHI – ROHINI](#)

ISKCON – Gurgaon

#1304, Sec.-31, Gurgaon, Uttar Pradesh, **Gurgaon – UP**
Tele – 0124-3271605, 9911006601, 9999948746, 9313905803
Email – iskcon.gurgaon@gmail.com
<http://www.iskcongurgaon.com/>

ISKCON – Noida

-A-5, Sector-33, 201 301 (Opposite NTPC office) **Noida-UP**
Tele – +91 (0120) 2506211, +91 (0120) 2454912
Fax: +91 (0120) 2506363, +91 (0120) 2455015
Email – vraja.bhakti.vilas.lok@pamho.net
<http://iskconnoida.org/>

ISKCON Faridabad – Haryana

Ashoka Enclave II, Sector 37
<http://www.iskconfaridabad.com/>

ISKCON – Ghaziabad

-Hare Krishna Marg, R-11/35, Raj Nagar, **Ghaziabad-UP** 201 002
Mobile – 9312438001
Email – iskcon.ghaziabad@pamho.net

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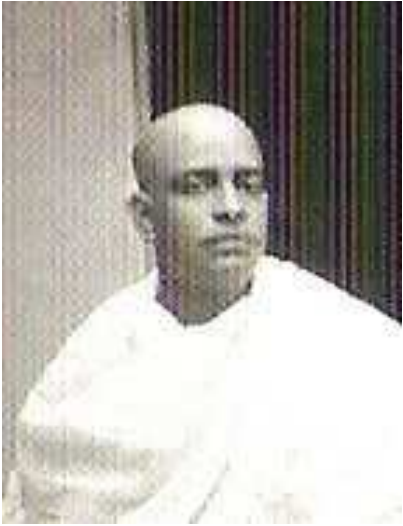
01. One of the earliest photographs of Shrila Prabhupada taken in 1930 during the last rites of his beloved father, Mohan De, who trained from boyhood in pure Krishna consciousness.
02. During a visit to Allahabad in 1932, Shrila Bhaktisidhanta Saraswati Goswami, the illustrious founder-*acharya* of the Gaudiya Matha, formerly accepted Shrila Prabhupada as his disciple.
03. In 1954, Shrila Prabhupada established the League of Devotees in Jhansi in order to spread the philosophy and teachings of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His *sankirtan* movement amongst the residents of the city.
04. The building in Jhansi where Shrila Prabhupada established the League of Devotees
05. Shrila Prabhupada (right) accepted *tridandi-sannyasa* initiation from his god-brother Keshava Maharaja (centre) at the Gaudiya Matha in Mathura in the year 1959, Shrila Prabhupada's godbrother Muni Maharaja (centre) took *sannyasa* on the same day.
06. A photo taken in 1962 of Shrila Prabhupada sitting on the verandah of his Chippiwada office in Old Delhi displaying the newly printed editions of the 1ST canto of the *Shrimad Bhagavatam*.
07. The O.K. Press in Old Delhi's Chippiwada area where Shrila Prabhupada printed the 1st canto of *Shrimad Bhagavatam* in 1962.
08. A view from inside Shrila Prabhupada's office located on the first floor of the Radha-Krishna Mandira in Old Delhi's Chippiwada area.
09. A view from outside Shrila Prabhupada's room on the first floor of the Radha-Krishna temple
10. In 1964, Shrila Prabhupada presented the 1ST canto of *Shrimad Bhagavatam* to the Prime Minister of India, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, at a function held outside Parliament House.
11. Shrila Prabhupada speaking on *Shrimad Bhagavatam* before the Uttar Pradesh Governor Shri Bishwanath Das, during *Janmashtami* celebrations in 1964, held at the Radha Damodara Mandira in Vrindavana.
12. Shrila Prabhupada arrives at the Delhi airport in November 1971, to attend the first Hare Krishna Festival being held in the Indian capital. Accompanying Shrila Prabhupada is his secretary Syamasundara and servant Radharamana.
13. Delhi Mayor, Shri Hans Raj Gupta, leading a delegation from the local Delhi Government greets Shrila Prabhupada with a garland on his arrival at Delhi airport.
14. Delhi Mayor, Shri Hans Raj Gupta, escorts Shrila Prabhupada to the podium where he will be officially welcomed to the city by a delegation from the Delhi Government. Also seen are Iskcon's first Delhi temple president, Kshiradakasayi Vishnu Prabhu and Shyamasundara.
15. Delhi Mayor, Shri Hans Raja Gupta, makes a speech at the airport on behalf of the Delhi Government, officially welcoming Shrila Prabhupada to the city of Delhi.

16. Shrila Prabhupada listens to other senior members of the Delhi Administration speak on the occasion of his official welcome to the national capital.
17. Shrila Prabhupada looks at the first Hindi language 'Back to Godhead' magazine presented to him by Ksiradakshayi Vishnu Prabhu, the Delhi temple president, during the arrival function at Delhi airport.
18. Achyutananda Swami leads the *kirtan* at the first Hare Krishna Festival at the L.I.C. grounds in Connaught Place in New Delhi. Also seen are (from the left) Kshiradakasayi Vishnu, Dinanatha, and Gargamuni.
19. Many of Iskcon's female devotees from America also took part in the ecstatic *kirtans* including (from the left) Malati, Madira, Dinadayadri (rear), Palika, and Yamuna.
20. Large crowds gather inside the *pandal* at the first Hare Krishna Festival held at the L.I.C grounds in Connaught Place, right in the heart of New Delhi.
21. More than fifty devotees from America and Europe took part in the Delhi *pandal* program and their ecstatic *kirtans* thrilled the large crowds attending the Festival.
22. Thousands of enthusiastic ladies from the national capital attended the ten-day Hare Krishna Festival at the LIC grounds.
23. The deities of Radha-Gokulananda, now at Iskcon's Bhaktivedanta Manor in England, were first worshiped during the *pandal* program at the L.I.C. grounds.
24. Shrila Prabhupada is greeted by local government officials as he arrives to attend the *pandal* program held at the LIC grounds in Connaught Place, New Delhi.
25. Shrila Prabhupada leads *kirtan* from the *vyasasana* at the Delhi *pandal* program accompanied by Achyutananda playing mrdanga and Radharamana.
26. Shrila Prabhupada speaking on the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* during the Delhi *pandal* program
27. Shrila Prabhupada leads the *kirtan* during the Delhi *pandal* program.
28. One of the special guests who spoke at the Delhi *pandal* program was Mr. James George, the Canadian ambassador to India.
29. Shrila Prabhupada surrounded by the enthusiastic crowds as he leaves the stage at the Delhi *pandal* program.
30. Shrila Prabhupada reads the startling news that India and Pakistan have declared war.
31. Shrila Prabhupada arrives at Delhi airport in 1976. Also seen are (from the left) Gopala Krishna, Drishtadyumna and Hari Sauri Prabhu.
32. Guru Dasa offers a garland to Shrila Prabhupada on his arrival at Delhi airport
33. Iskcon life-member Mr. Lakshman Agarwal offers a flower garland to Shrila Prabhupada at the Delhi airport.
34. Shrila Prabhupada and his personal servant Hari Sauri Prabhu.
35. Shrila Prabhupada walks through the Delhi airport terminus accompanied by (from the right) Jagat Guru Swami, Lakshmana Agarwal, and Gopala Krishna Prabhu
36. Shrila Prabhupada coming out of the Delhi airport accompanied by (from the left) Chayavana, Hari Sauri, , Lakshman Agarwal, Jagat guru Swami, and Lokanatha Swami.
37. Guru Dasa bathes Shrila Prabhupada's lotus feet on his arrival at Lakshman Agarwal's Chanakya Puri residence in South Delhi.
38. Shrila Prabhupada plays *karatalas* as he greets the Deities of Radha-Krishna at Lakshman Agarwal's Chanakya Puri residence

39. Shrila Prabhupada arrives at the Rotary Club convention held at the Imperial Hotel in New Delhi. Also seen are (from the left) Pusta Krishna, Hari Sauri, a Rotary Club official, and Gopala Krishna Prabhu.
40. Shrila Prabhupada lecturing on the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* at the Rotary Club convention held at the Imperial Hotel, New Delhi.
41. Shrila Prabhupada acknowledges the applause of Rotary Club Members after his lecture on the *Shrimad Bhagavatam's* 5th canto. Also seen is Shrila Prabhupada's secretary Pusta Krishna Prabhu.
42. Shrila Prabhupada answering questions at a press conference held at Lakshman Agarwal's house in Chanakya Puri in South Delhi. Also seen is Iskcon's celebrated film-maker Yadubara Prabhu (extreme right), Pushta Krishna (centre), and Hridayananda (bottom right)
43. Shrila Prabhupada taking an early morning walk in Buddha Jayanti Park.
44. Shrila Prabhupada on a morning walk in Buddha Jayanti Park accompanied by (from the left) Yadubara, Pusta Krishna, Lakshman Agarwal, Dayananda, Akshaya, Guru Dasa, Sudarma, Hari Sauri, and Khirachora Gopinatha
45. Shrila Prabhupada stops to answer questions while walking in Buddha Jayanti Park. Also seen is Sudarma, Dayananda (rear) and Hari sauri Prabhu.
46. Shrila Prabhupada attends the *pandal* program organized by Lakshman Agarwal in the park adjacent to his residence in Chanakya Puri.
47. The *pandala* program held in Chanakya Puri was extremely well attended by the local residents of the area and a large number of Iskcon devotees.
48. Iskcon devotees offer *guru-puja* to Shrila Prabhupada at the start of the *pandal* program held in Chanakya Puri. Also seen in the photo (from the left) Shiradakasayi Vishnu, Tribhuvanatha, Hari Sauri, Kirachora Gopinatha. (Others remain unidentified)
49. Shrila Prabhupada lectures on the *Bhagavad Gita* during the *pandal* program in Chanakya Puri. Also seen in the photo is Gaurasunder Dasa.
50. Shrila Prabhupada distributes *prasada* to guests at the end of the *pandal* program in Chanakya Puri.
51. Shrila Prabhupada gives a flower to one of the guests at the end of the *pandal* program in Chanakya Puri.
52. Shrila Prabhupada answers questions during a morning walk in Chanakya Puri.
53. In the late afternoon, Shrila Prabhupada used to sit in Lakshman Agarwal's rear garden along with his disciples
54. Shrila Prabhupada relaxing in Lakshman Agarwal's garden
55. While in his room at Lakshman Agarwal's residence, Shrila Prabhupada is shown a host of very favorable newspaper reports about Iskcon, by local GBS secretary Gopala Krishna Prabhu.
56. Shrila Prabhupada would often spend the late afternoons sitting in Lakshman Agarwal's garden.
57. Shrila Prabhupada appreciating the aroma of fresh flowers as he sits in Lakshman Agarwal's garden
58. Shrila Prabhupada on a morning walk in Lajpat Nagar accompanied by his disciples (from the left), Hiranya, Pancha Dravida, Jayapataka Swami, Gopala Krishna Prabhu, Pradyumna, Paramahansa, Sruta Kirti, Satadhanya, Brahmananda, Krishnadasa, and Yasomatinandana.

59. Shрила Prabhupada pauses while on a morning walk to discuss some important issues with Iskcon's local GBC secretary, Gopala Krishna Prabhu
60. Shрила Prabhupada leading *kirtan* from the *vyasasana* during the morning *Bhagavatam* class at Iskcon's Lajpat Nagar Temple
61. Shрила Prabhupada giving the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* class during his first visit to the new Iskcon temple in Lajpat Nagar in South Delhi.
62. Shрила Prabhupada distributes *prasada* in his room at Iskcon's Lajpat Nagar temple.
63. In the late afternoons, when the temperatures had dropped and cool breezes filled the air, Shрила Prabhupada would often sit in the small park opposite Iskcon's Lajpat Nagar temple and peacefully chant on his beads.
64. A panoramic view of the Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre and the Radha-Parthasarathi Mandira. On the right can be seen the building housing the Vedic museum that also includes an animatronics exhibition and a large auditorium.
65. The Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, is greeted by Gopala Krishna Goswami as he arrives for the inauguration of Iskcon's Glory of India project.
66. The Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, waves to the crowds as he takes a tour of Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre and Radha-Parthasarathi Mandira.
67. The unique architecture of the Radha-Parthasarathi Mandira including the landscaped gardens was much appreciated by the Indian Prime Minister, who said that the temple looked spectacular and it was a wonderful edition to the Indian capital's array of beautiful buildings.
68. The Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, unveils the inauguration plaque while declaring the temple open to the public. Also seen (from the left) Mahamantra Dasa, Gopala Krishna Goswami, and Delhi Chief Minister, Sahib Singh Verma
69. The Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, poses for an official press photograph along with (from the left) Lokanatha Swami, Gopal Krishna Goswami, and Delhi Chief Minister, Sahib Singh Verma.
70. A view of the Radha Parthasarathi Temple
71. The Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, seated on the stage at the Glory of India Cultural Centre during the inauguration ceremony. Also seen are (from the left) Gopala Krishna Goswami, Delhi Lt. Governor Tejendra Khanna, Delhi Chief Minister Saheb Singh Verma, and Miss Clair Ward, a member of the British Parliament. Standing at the speaker's podium is well known U.S. Congressman, Mr. Steven Solarz.
72. The Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, delivers his now famous inaugural address on the auspicious occasion of the grand opening of Iskcon's Glory of India Project
73. Shri Tejendra Khanna, the Lt. Governor of Delhi, speaking during the inauguration ceremony of Iskcon's Glory of India Project.
74. The Indian Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari acknowledges the audience that included many dignitaries and celebrity guests such as the famous Indian actress Miss Hema Malini.
75. Delhi Chief Minister, Sahib Singh Verma, addresses the audience during the inauguration ceremony.
76. Special guest, the honorable member of the United States Congress, Mr. Steven Solarz, delivering his speech on the occasion of the inaugural ceremony.

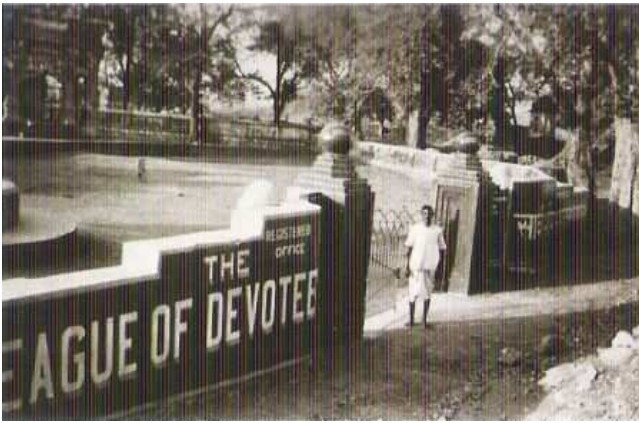
77. The Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, is seen listening to the other speakers during the inauguration ceremony.
78. The *shikaras* of the Radha-Parthasarathi Mandira tower above the Delhi skyline and can be seen for many miles around.
79. A view of the inside the temple *mandapa* during the *abhisheka* and installation ceremony of the Delhi temple Deities. The new temple has been designed with three separate altars.
80. The Iskcon temple deities of Shri Radha-Parthasarathi pictured on the occasion of the first-ever *darsana* in the new temple.
81. The deities of Shri Shri Sita-Rama with Lakshman and Hanuman have also been installed in the new temple.
82. The deities of Shri Shri Gaura-Nitai with Shrila Prabhupada and Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati are also installed in the new temple.
83. In the evenings the Glory of India Vedic temple is fully illuminated and can be seen from most parts the national capital. In fact, it is so well illuminated that the temple is clearly visible from aircraft flying into Delhi airport. The Glory of India complex includes a beautifully landscaped garden that includes innumerable colorfully illuminated fountains and one of the longest man-made waterfalls in the country.
- 84-87. The variously colored fountains, located around the Glory of India's manicured gardens, creates an amazing ambience of peace and tranquility.
88. A section of the illuminated waterfall at the bottom of the photo appears to have a golden shimmering hue, as water glides down its face into a stream below.
89. The various lighting effects are exenterated due to the unique design of the temple's three *shikaras* that are hollow inside. The iridescent blue dome over the temple *mandapa* appears to be
90. Sunrise at the Glory of India Cultural Centre is a spectacular event, as the sun appears to rise directly behind the three *shikaras* of the temple which is a wonderful sight to behold.



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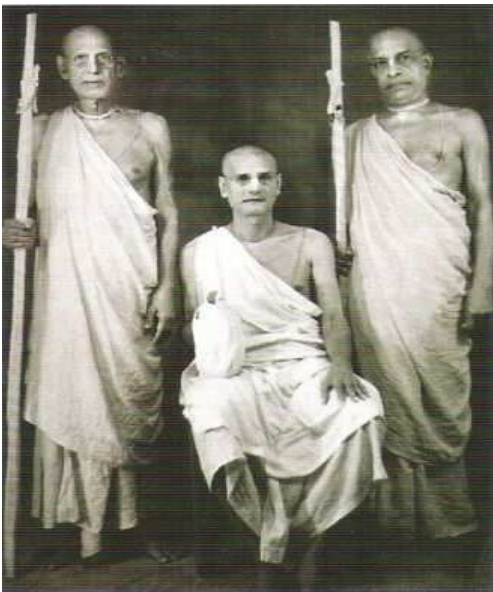
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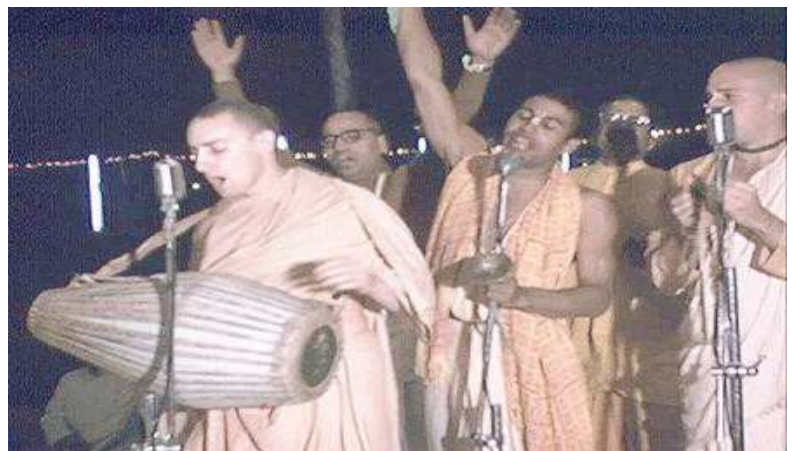
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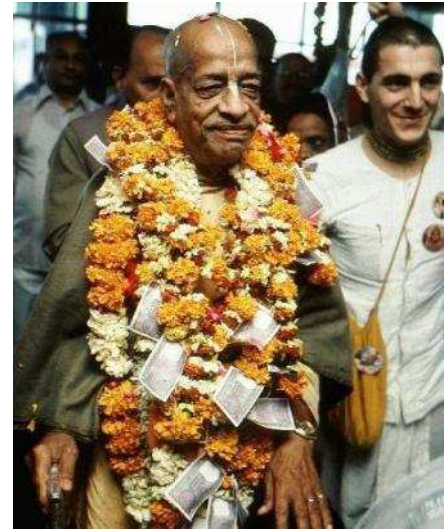
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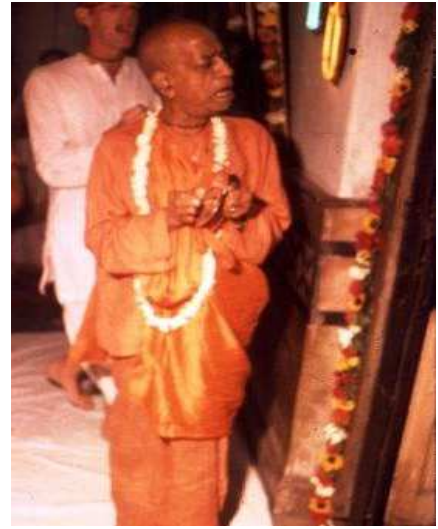
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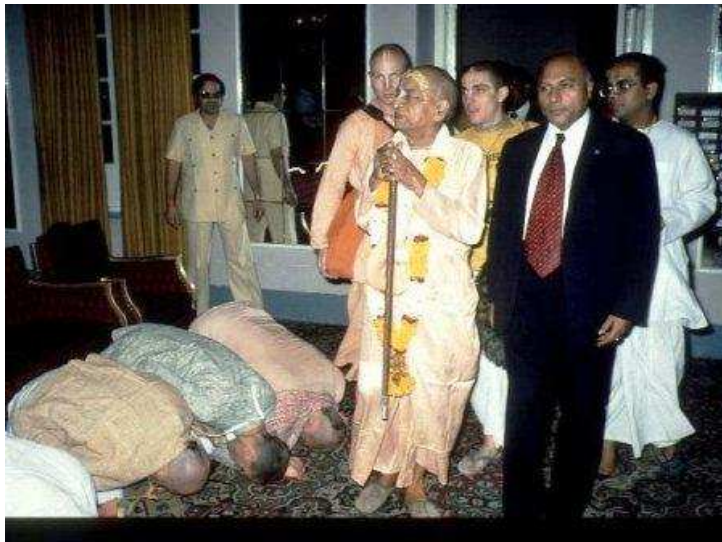
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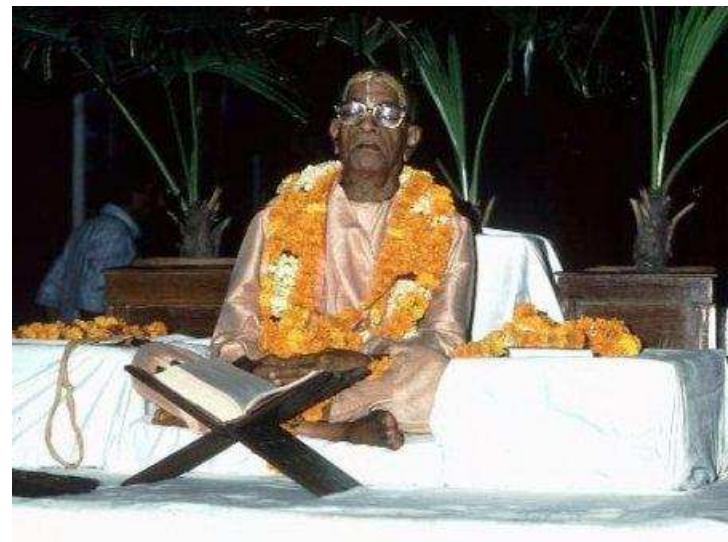
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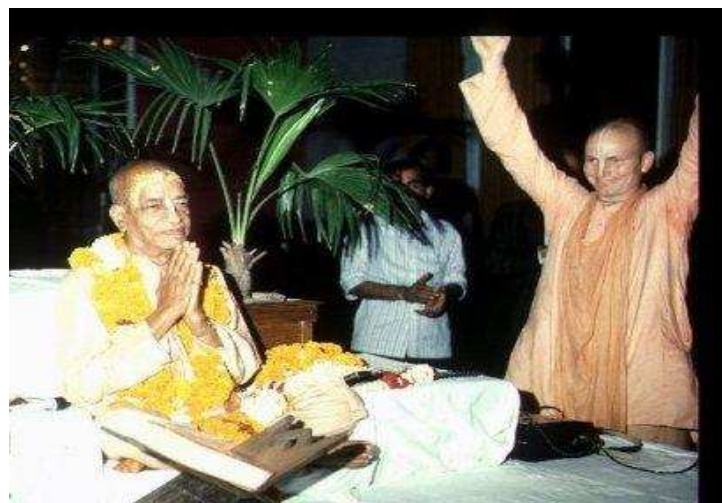
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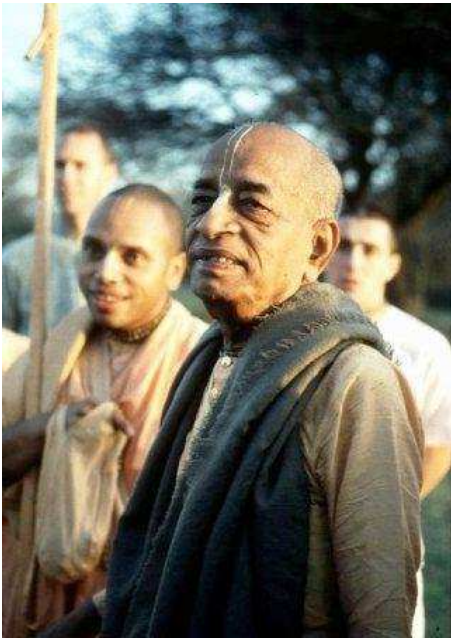
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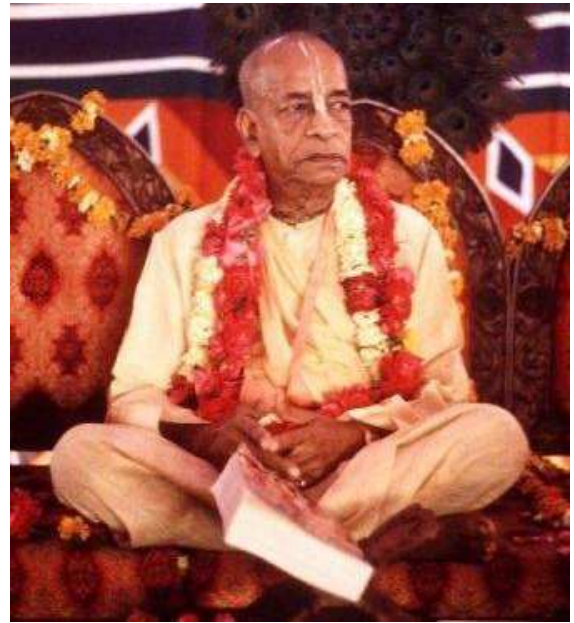
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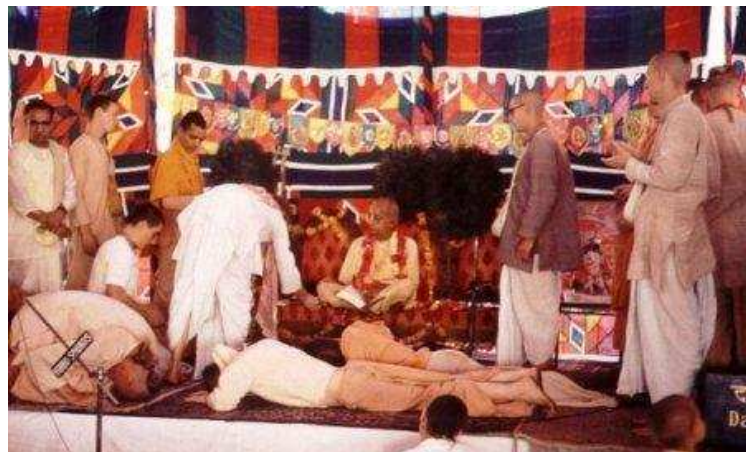
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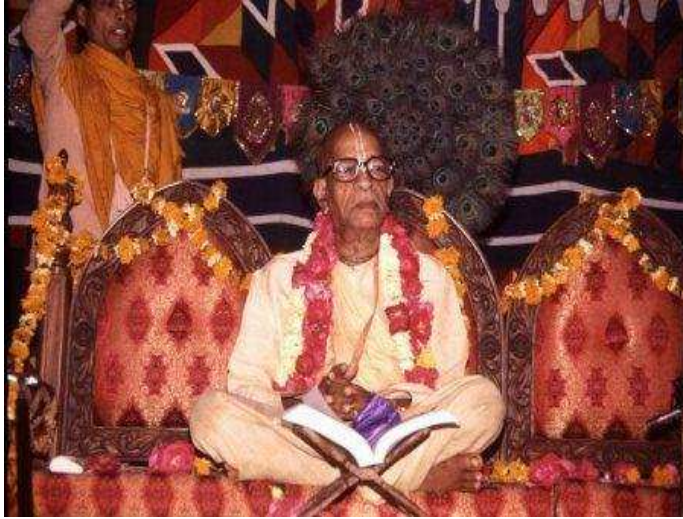
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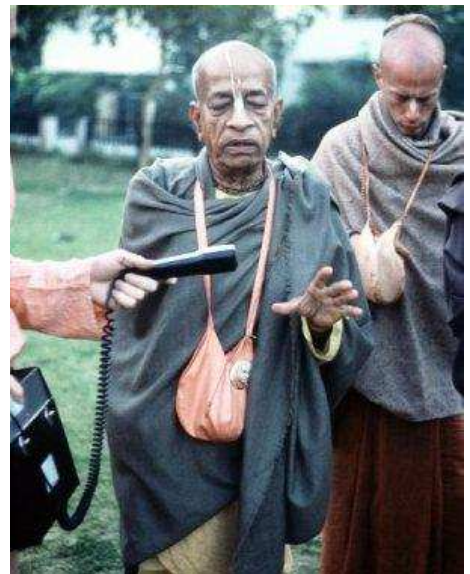
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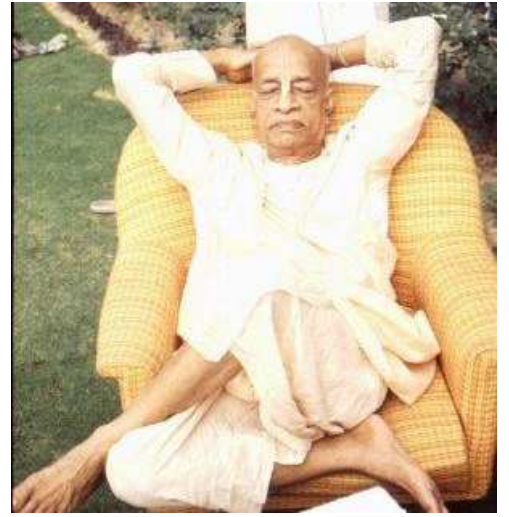
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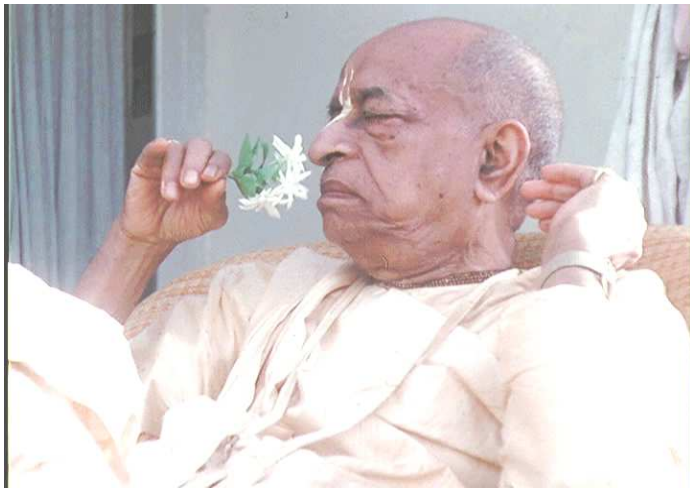
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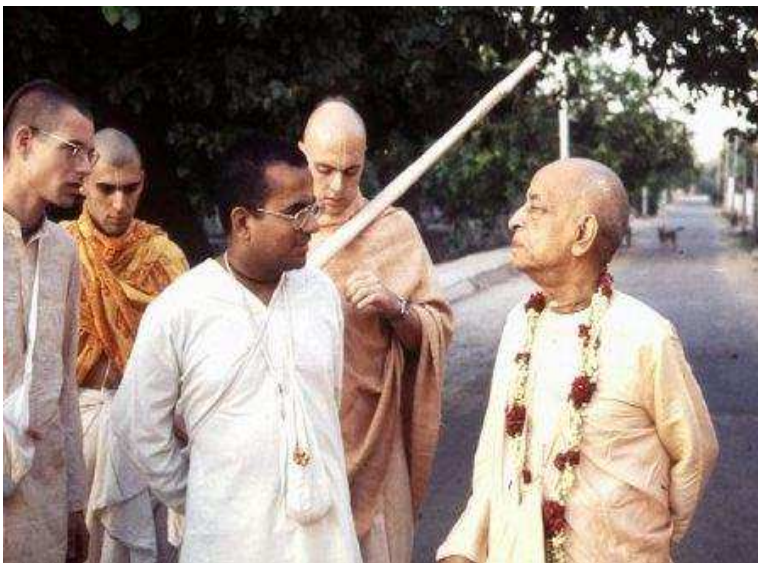
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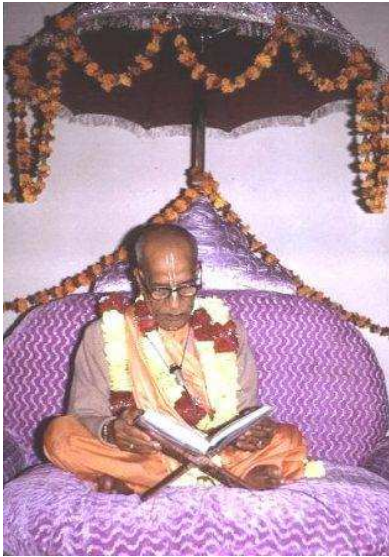
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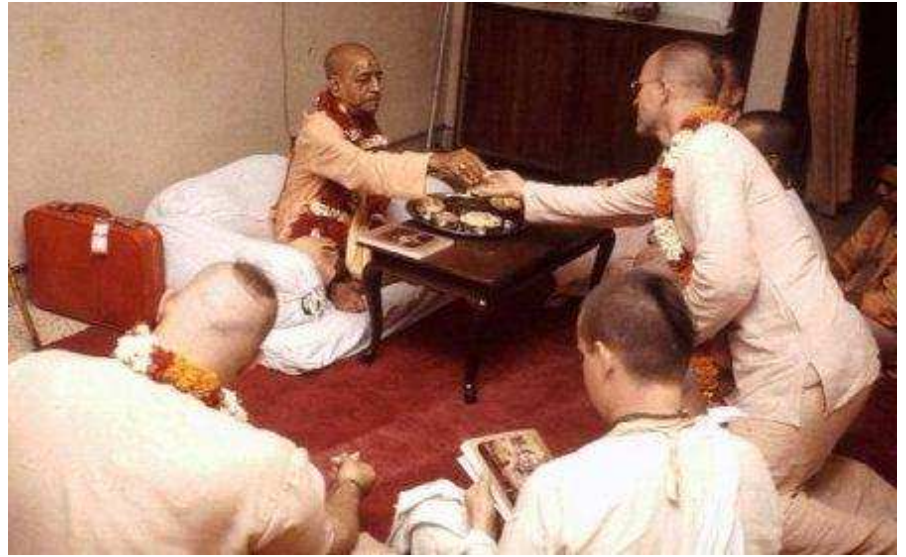
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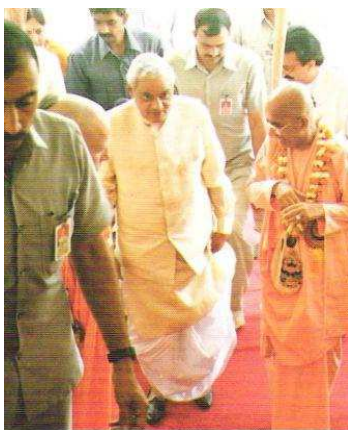
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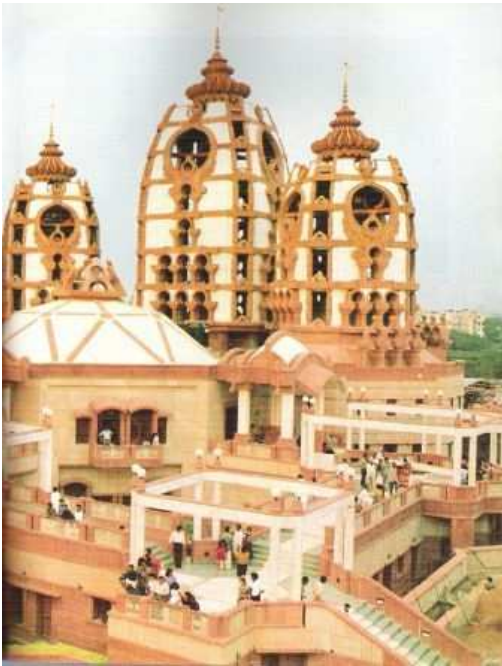
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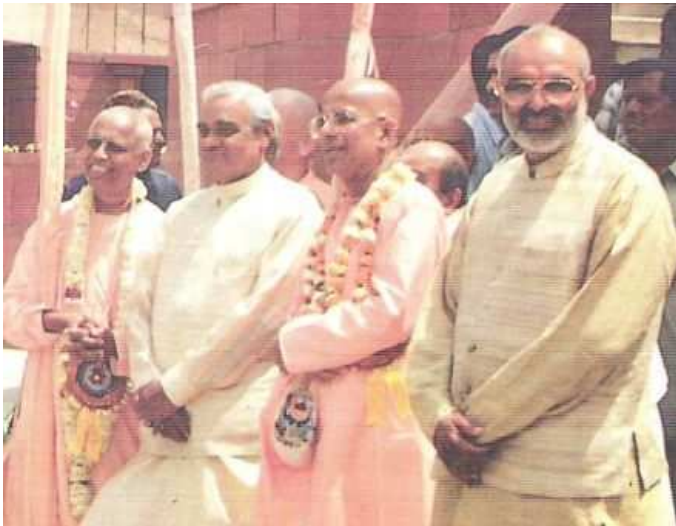
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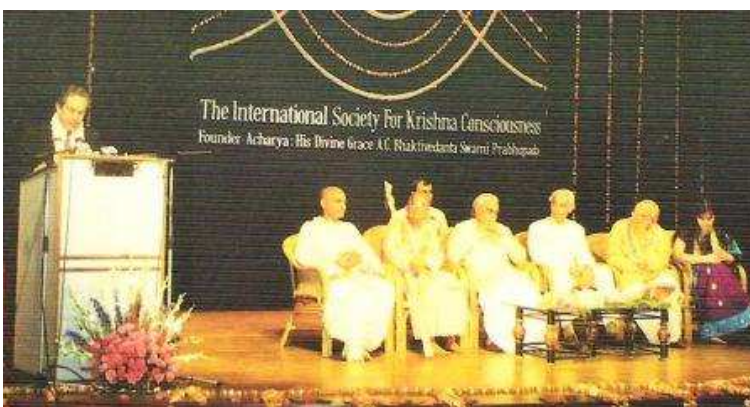
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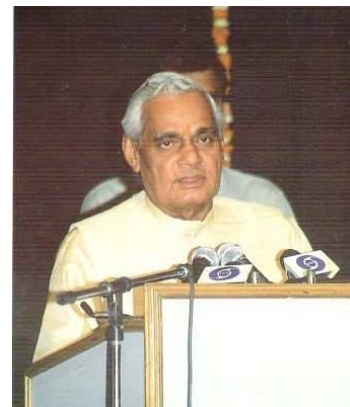
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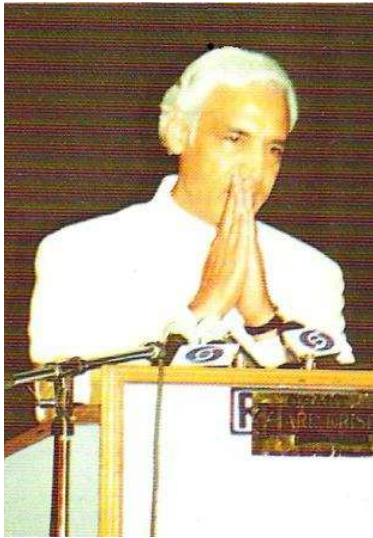
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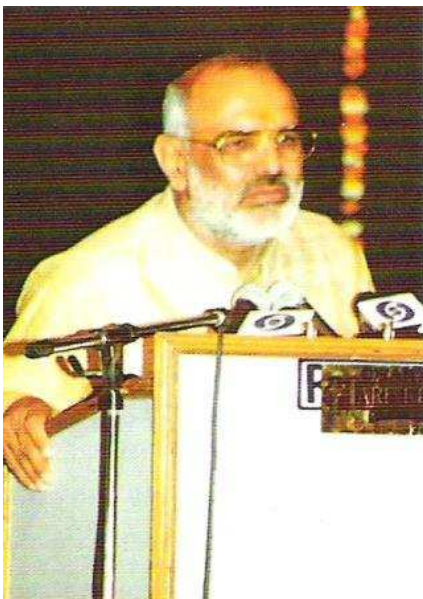
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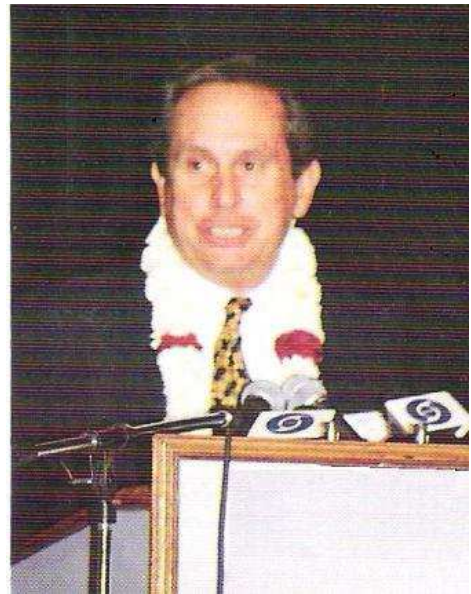
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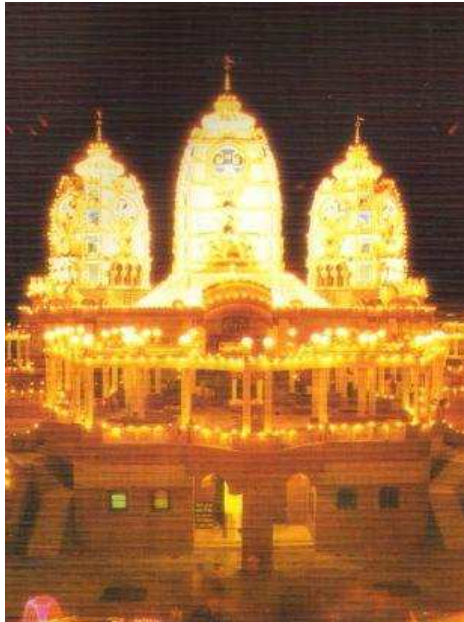
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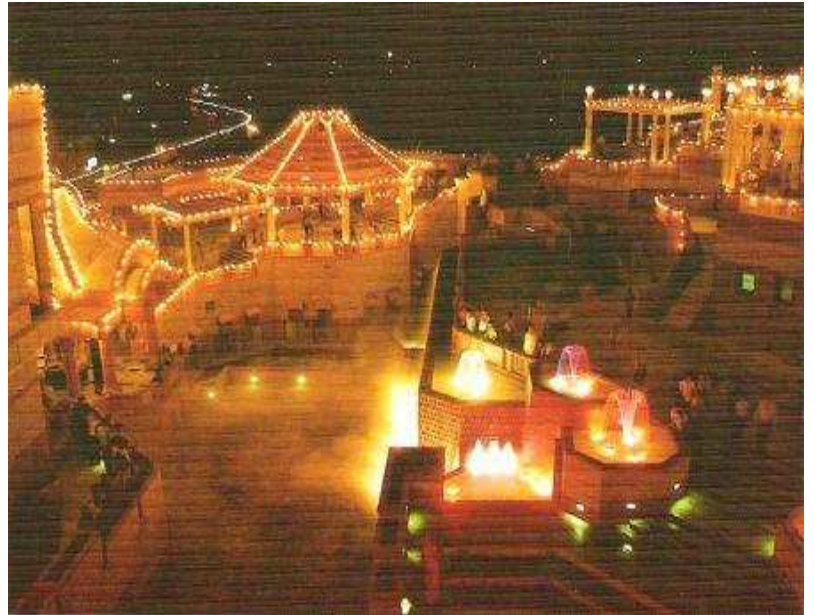
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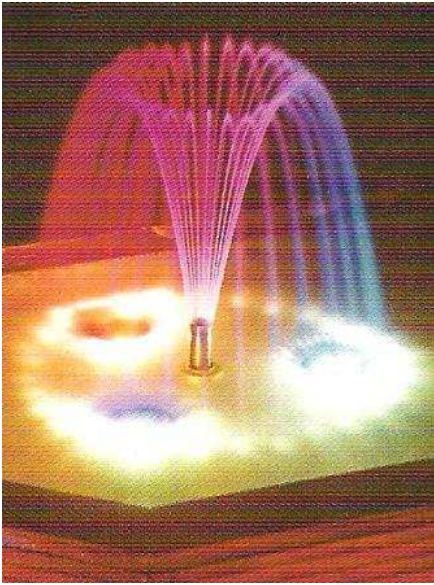
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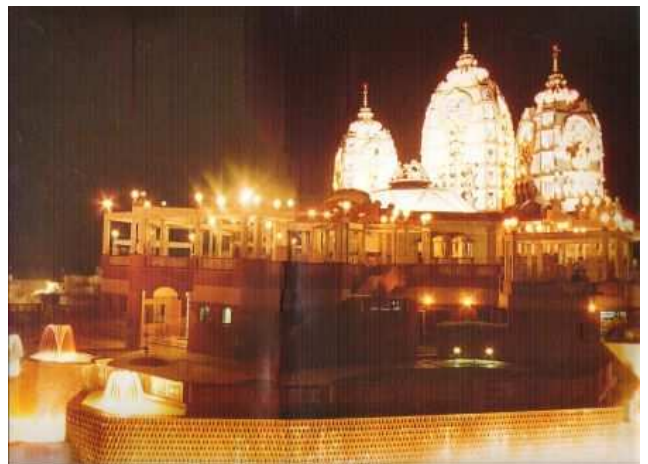
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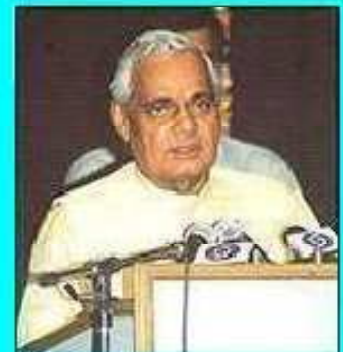
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This book traces the very earliest beginnings of the Hare Krishna Movement in Delhi from 1955, and the epic struggle undertaken by Swami Prabhupada to spread the message of India's Vedic culture to the outside world. This book also details the gradual development of Swami Prabhupada's movement in the capital city of India over a period of 40 years, which culminated in the historic opening of the 'Glory of India Vedic Cultural Centre' by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1998.



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