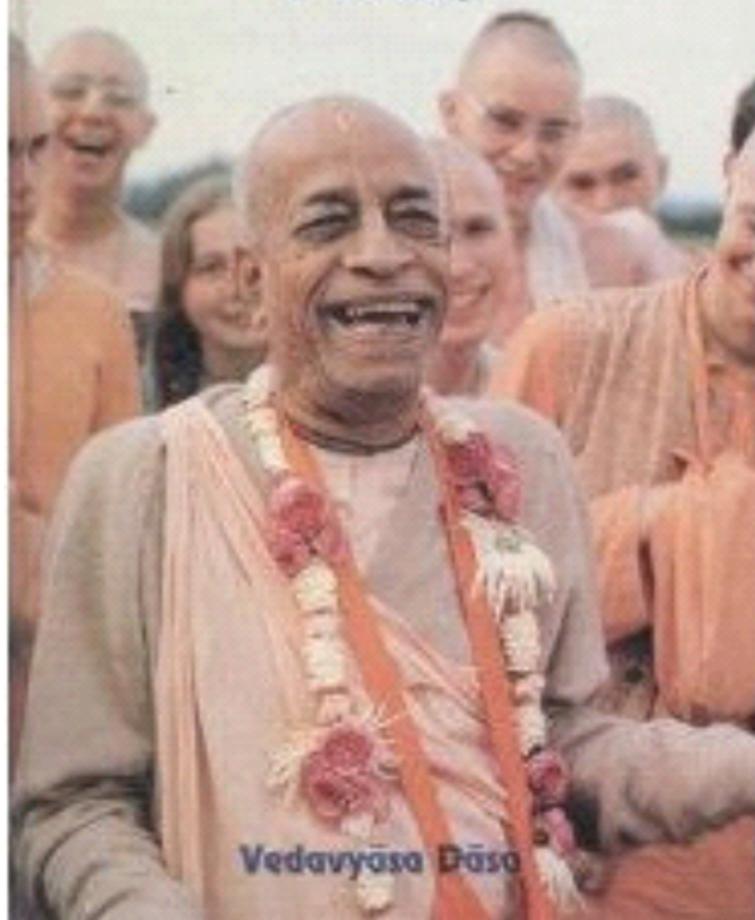


Śrīla
Prabhupāda
and His Disciples
in Germany



Vedavyāsa Dāsa

Title:

Srila Prabhupada and His Disciples in Germany

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Preface

This book would not exist had it not been for the dedicated efforts of my dear godbrother Vaidyanātha Prabhu. The force behind Project Unity in Germany, he assumed the task of collecting the reminiscences of most of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples who contributed to this volume. For more than a year, he visited them, met them at reunions or festivals, contacted them by letter or phone or e-mail, and thus gathered interviews, memoirs, photographs, and answers to my questions that came up in the course of writing.

He also lined up an editor: Tattvavit Prabhu, to whom go my heartfelt thanks for making the text easy to read. (Tattvavit, who is an American, traveled in Europe during the summer of 1972 and visited the Heidelberg Hare Kṛṣṇa center then, shortly after it opened. That was the first time he chanted with devotees and heard a talk on Kṛṣṇa consciousness—which Śivānanda gave.)

Śivānanda Prabhu, the pioneer of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Germany, laid the foundation for the second and third chapters with his extensive

memories of the early days, and he visited the Bhaktivedanta Archives to select photographs of Prabhupāda's visits in 1969 and 1974.

Govinda Mādhava Prabhu, who is with the North European Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, provided valuable archive material on ISKCON's history in Germany from 1969 to 1977.

Govindamohinī Dāsī, who has her art studio in Jalón (Spain), made the beautiful pencil drawing of Śrīla Prabhupāda for the dedication page.

I am especially grateful to my wife, Rasāmṛta Dāsī, and our children, who for many months patiently tolerated my absences from home; I spent the hours reserved for them at the office-computer. Without their support, I would not have completed this book within the given time frame.

I also want to thank His Holiness Lokanātha Swami and the other devotees at the Centennial House for giving me all facilities during my stay in Delhi to get the book ready for the printer.

Finally, I would like to thank all my godbrothers and godsisters who contributed their memories and photographs and who encouraged me on the way. What would I have accomplished without you?

Introduction

In the spring of 1994, as the 20th anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's visit to Germany (in June, 1974) drew near, I toyed with the thought of compiling the reminiscences of those of us who were there with Prabhupāda into a booklet for his Centennial in 1996. I wrote an open letter to my godbrothers and godsisters proposing the idea and sent it to Vaidyanātha Prabhu, who had taken up the work of reuniting Śrīla Prabhupāda's family in Germany. I asked him to consult the leading devotees in Germany and see whether they felt a positive reaction. They did, and so he published my letter in his Project Unity Forum, a publication sent periodically to the German Prabhupāda disciples around the world.

Then, during the 1994 Vyāsa-pūjā celebration at Niyāda-nṛsimha-kṣetra in Germany, Vaidyanātha proposed that my idea become an official project for Śrīla Prabhupāda's Centennial. And new ideas began to spring up. Devotees wanted to include Prabhupāda's first visit to Germany in 1969 in the

booklet, and some said that the history of our movement's pioneering years was essential. I had also proposed compiling in one book Śrīla Prabhupāda's lectures and conversations that took place in Germany. Before I knew it, my initial, seedlike ideas sprouted and grew into flowering plants.

I thought of a three-part book: (1) a collection of anecdotes; (2) lectures, morning walks, and room conversations; and (3) ISKCON-Germany's history from 1968 to 1977. I planned to publish it in German as a limited, deluxe edition for a select audience of devotees and congregational members.

As I began working on the recollections of Śivānanda Prabhu, who was Śrīla Prabhupāda's servant in Hamburg in 1969, I realized that it would be much more natural to weave the anecdotes, letters, lectures, and historical events into one narrative.

After completing one hundred pages, I sent the English manuscript to Vaidyanātha and his brother, Śacīnandana Swami. In their enthusiastic response, they suggested that I continue to write the book in English so that devotees all over the world could share the nectar.

And nectar there was plenty. As more and more

interviews came in, I found out that the hearts of the devotees were Prabhupāda-nectar storehouses. And their memories—some weighty, others light—all added up like pieces of a puzzle to form a big picture of that unique transcendental messenger of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who directly or indirectly transformed the lives of many people—Śrīla Prabhupāda.

We wanted to gather the remembrances of all Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples connected with ISKCON Germany (there were about 170), but we heard from only a fifth of them. I hope the others will write to me and send more remembrances.

I felt that, besides contributing memories of direct experiences with Śrīla Prabhupāda, devotees should also tell how they came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Their stories show another glory of Śrīla Prabhupāda's—that you didn't have to meet him in person; he worked through his books and disciples.

To think deeply about a spiritual being such as Śrīla Prabhupāda is an intense and purifying experience. Undoubtedly, it is also blissful, simply because of the transcendental nature of the subject matter. It is a sobering experience to be reminded of the high ideals

Śrīla Prabhupāda stood for and to consider how we measure up to his expectations. And it is an instructive experience to witness Prabhupāda's actions and reactions in various situations, especially difficult ones.

The hard times described in this book presented a major challenge. How was I to deal with them responsibly? To spread a spiritual movement in the material world is a daunting task, and to err in the process is practically unavoidable. ISKCON in Germany went through a few traumas, and I did my best to present the facts objectively.

Hari-śauri Prabhu, who faced a similar problem, wrote in his introduction to *A Transcendental Diary*: "It is certainly not my intention to cast anyone in an embarrassing light. Nevertheless, things did happen, which, due to our immaturity in devotional service or our lack of comprehension created problems that only His Divine Grace could resolve.

"We can take these incidents in the same spirit that Śrīla Prabhupāda himself did: he didn't condemn anyone because of his or her sometimes negative behavior. Rather he worked to improve both the situation and the person involved, to the benefit of

all. He was corrective and supportive in every situation, and these incidents should be viewed from that perspective."

Despite its dark spots, the bright full moon is glorious, and despite its shortcomings, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in Germany—and all over the world—is a glorious enterprise. In the soothing rays of the full moon, no one pays undue attention to the few dark spots.

If, after reading this book, only one person feels that his or her appreciation of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his disciples has increased even to the slightest degree, I shall consider my effort successful.

Vedavyāsa dāsa

Jalón, Spain

October 27, 1995

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Disappearance Day

Chapter 1

A Transcendental Desire

The world we are living in is—according to the Vedic point of view—the prison of the kingdom of God. And just as an ordinary prison exists only because of the misconduct of a few citizens of a state, the material world exists only because some rebellious souls turned away from the supreme authority, Kṛṣṇa. But a prison isn't simply a place of punishment; its underlying purpose is to educate and rectify the inmates and make them law-abiding citizens again. Similarly, the ultimate purpose of the creation is to reform its inhabitants and elevate them back to their original, constitutional position as the eternal loving servants of the Supreme Lord.

Fortunately, Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He descends into this world from time to time to explain the process of rectification. He comes in His original form or in various incarnations, and He sends His pure devotees to represent Him and canvass on His behalf.

A little more than five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa

appeared as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the role of a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. One reason He did this was to inaugurate harināma-saṅkīrtana, the congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord, as the most effective method for self-realization for this age. He predicted:

*pr̥thivīte āche jata nagarādi-grāma
sarvatra sañcāra hiobek mora nāma*

"My name will be praised and chanted in every town and village throughout the world."
(Caitanya-bhāgavata)

But within two hundred years after Lord Caitanya's disappearance, His following began to deteriorate, and cultural and religious intolerance, nurtured by the Mogul and British rules, helped obscure His sublime teachings. Not until the 19th century, by the effort of the great Vaiṣṇava ācārya Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, was the timeless mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's saṅkīrtana movement finally revived, culminating in the discovery of Lord Caitanya's birthsite at Mayapur, West Bengal, in 1888. Fervently desiring the fulfillment of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's

prediction, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura prayed: "When will that day come when all greatly fortunate souls in countries such as England, France, Russia, Prussia [Germany] and America will take up banners, kettle drums, mṛdaṅgas and karatālas and thus cause the ecstatic waves of harināma-kīrtana and the singing of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's holy name to rise in the streets of their towns and cities?"

In 1891, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda published Śrī Godruma Kalpatavi, a description of his Nāma-hatta program, and there he wrote under the section Vartta (Announcements): "Our preachers of the holy name carry the banner of the Lord from village to village in a selfless, dedicated manner, preaching and fulfilling the order of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This type of preaching of eternal religious principles will spread in a short time, not only all over India, but throughout the whole world."

In fact, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had prayed to the Lord for a "ray of Viṣṇu," a competent son to assist him in his mission. In 1874, with the birth of Bimala Prasāda, Kṛṣṇa fulfilled his desire. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura instilled his own preaching spirit in Bimala Prasāda, who later became known as Śrīla

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta quite faithfully continued the work of his father by preaching all over India and establishing sixty-four temples. He even sent some of his disciples to foreign countries: Burma, Great Britain, France and Germany. As a result of their preaching in Berlin, one German seeker, Ernst Schulze, became attracted and traveled to India in 1934, where he received harināma initiation from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta. After accepting the renounced order of life he became known as Sadānanda Swami. In London, one English lady, D. C. Bowtell, received harināma initiation from one of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta's disciples and was given the name Vinoda Vāṇi Dāsī. But when there was no indication that their preaching would become more effective, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura called his missionaries back to India. He was disappointed. He had been most desirous to fulfill the vision of his father, and he repeatedly urged his disciples to take up the important task of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness beyond the borders of India.

When Abhay Charan De, who later became known as A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, met Śrīla

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī for the first time in 1922, he was requested to dedicate his life to preaching the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in English to the Westerners. Although family obligations prevented Abhay Charan from taking up the order of his spiritual master immediately, he nevertheless always kept the words of his guru in his heart, determined to fulfill the transcendental order in due course of time. In preparation for this great task he began writing a commentary on Bhagavad—gītā and, in 1944, began publishing a monthly magazine called Back to Godhead.

After taking sannyāsa in 1959 and completing an English translation of the First Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (with his own extensive commentary) in 1964, Abhay Charan, now known as A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, arranged to go to the U.S.A. to carry out the order of his Guru Mahārāja. Taking with him two hundred sets of his three-volume edition of the First Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, he sailed to America. Both the crossing and the first months after his arrival in September of 1965 were very difficult, and while subsisting by selling his books to bookstores, Swami

Bhaktivedanta sent letters to his godbrothers and other religiously minded people in India asking for support.

In January of 1966, Sri Padampat Singhania, a wealthy businessman and devotee, offered his cooperation in constructing a Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple in New York City. Bhaktivedanta Swami was delighted and expressed his heartfelt feelings of gratitude. And, amazingly, although still struggling alone, he urged the supporter to take part in converting his vision of a society of devotees into reality, a society not limited to America, but spanning the entire globe:

... I am very glad to learn it that you wish to construct a Temple of Sri Sri Radha Krishna with nice architecture and the idea is quite appropriate for a personality of your position. You are a great devotee of Lord Dvarakadhisa traditionally.

It is the duty of every Indian to preach the cult of Bhagavatam in every part of the world and your cooperation in this attempt will be highly appreciated by Lord Dvarakadhisa. Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-gita has said that one

who helps in the matter of preaching the principles of Bhagavad—gita is the most favorite of the Lord. So this knowledge should be distributed systematically and we Indians specially the Hindus and more specially the Vaisnavites must abide the instruction of Lord Krishna to distribute the knowledge all over the world.

America is just in the middle. On one side of America is Europe and on the other side is Asia. So we can expand the Bhagavatam mission bothwise. On one side towards England, Germany, Italy etc. and on the other side towards China, Japan etc. If we sincerely do this work Lord Krishna will help us in so many ways and because you are a sincere devotee of the Lord, you have very kindly responded to my humble call.

In the beginning of 1966, Swami Bhaktivedanta had neither disciples nor temples, but, as is apparent from this letter, his isolation in no way deterred his determination to fulfill the transcendental desire of his Guru Mahārāja, which was also the desire of Śrīla

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and the desire of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

To obtain financial support from Sri Padampat, unfortunately, turned out to be more difficult than he expected. The government of India had placed restrictions on foreign exchange. Therefore, in May, Swami Bhaktivedanta wrote to Tīrtha Mahārāja, one of his god-brothers, asking him to use his contacts with government officials to obtain the required permission, and again he expressed his firm conviction that the preaching of Lord Caitanya's message all over the world would be successful:

I am enclosing herewith the letter of Sri Padampat Singhania of the J.K. Organizations, Kamla Tower, Kanpur dated 14th January 1966 which will speak for itself. I think you may also know the gentleman and he is competent to spend any amount for a nice temple of Sri Sri Radha Krishna in New York. The Singhania family is traditionally devotees of Dvarakadhisa and therefore they are the right persons to take up this transcendental service of the Lord. Srila Prabhupada [Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati] wanted

such temples in cities of foreign countries, such as New York, London, Tokyo, etc., and I had personal talks with him when I first met him at Ultadanga in 1922.

If we can open one center in New York, there is great potency for opening other centers also, not only in America, but also in Europe, Japan, China and many other places, just to fulfill the desire of Srila Prabhupada and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Unfortunately, his godbrother did not meet his expectations, and the construction of a temple in New York never materialized. Against all odds Swami Bhaktivedanta continued his preaching efforts and gradually attracted a small number of followers.

By September, he had established his first preaching center and accepted his first Western disciples, and in January of 1967 he went to San Francisco, where one of his students, Mukunda Dāsa, had opened a temple. After his return to New York City in May, his health deteriorated, and he decided to return to India to recuperate—or to die peacefully in Vṛndāvana if that was Kṛṣṇa's desire.

Still, in spite of all difficulties, Swami Bhaktivedanta was constantly meditating on how to fulfill the order of the predecessor ācāryas to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, as suggested by an incident that took place just before his departure to India on August 23rd. Brahmānanda recalls this in his article, "Swamiji's Departure," which was published in one of the early Back to Godhead magazines:

Some devotees ride with Swamiji in the taxi. Brahmānanda sits in the front crying, and Swamiji reaches over and slaps him on the back—a father giving his loving son support, a pat, and Rāyarāma only rivets his eyes to Swami, ever-attentive.

Swamiji says: "There is no question of separation. The sound vibration fixes us up together, even though the material body may not be there. What do we care for this material body? Just go on chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, and we will be packed up together. You will be chanting here, and I will be chanting there, and this vibration will circulate around this planet. I may be going, but my Guru Mahārāja and Bhaktivinoda are there. I have asked them to kindly take care of all of you, my transcendental children. The grandfather always takes care of the children

much better than the father. Do not fear."

And Swamiji says: "I think this is what Kṛṣṇa desires. I have come to you, but now in this old age I may be going to Vṛndāvana, and you may be coming there to me and be trained up, and we will spread this movement all over the world. Rāyarāma, you will go to England. Brahmānanda, you want to go to Japan or Russia? That's all right."

Once in India, it did not take long for Swami Bhaktivedanta to recover his strength and health. Immediately he resumed his plans to spread the saṅkīrtana movement. On September 23rd, he wrote to Rāyarāma, reminding him of their agreement to start a temple in London:

Yesterday morning I sent Kīrtanānanda to London with a letter of introduction to Miss D. C. Bowtell ... I hope this lady who is supposed to be a Gaudiya Vaisnava will receive him well and there is possibility to start a center. You were to start for London by the beginning of November. If Miss Bowtell gives us her cooperation and Kīrtanānanda is successful in his mission, you hopefully will reach there timely, and on receipt

of a favorable report, myself and Achyutananda may also go.

But Kīrtanānanda did not stop in London; he decided to return directly to the United States. His spiritual master was disappointed, but remained undaunted. On November 11th, he wrote to Brahmānanda:

If there is one sincere soul, that is sufficient to start a new center. With this expectation I wanted to send Kīrtanānanda to London, but he has proven himself unworthy. When I arrive in the States, I may ask Rayarama to go to London and your good self to Russia and Gargamuni to Holland.

On November 30th, Brahmānanda suggested in a letter to Swamiji that he would tour Europe and then proceed to India to purchase devotional paraphernalia. Because Swami Bhaktivedanta planned to stop over in Bangkok, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Hawaii on his way to San Francisco, he replied:

... I duly appreciate your program for European tour, as well as coming to India for doing business... While I shall try to open some branches in the Pacific, you can also try to open branches in parts of Europe.

To the uninitiated observer Śrīla Prabhupāda's visions of opening temples anywhere and everywhere without much previous planning or organization may seem like the ideas of a utopian. Prabhupāda's plans and activities were simply based on his absolute faith in the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He was determined to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. He had incorporated his society of devotees as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, not as the American Society for Krishna Consciousness. Knowing that he was trying to fulfill the desire of the Supreme Lord Himself and that ultimately everything depended on Him, he wrote to Rāyarāma on December 14th:

... we may all go together to London and start a branch there in grand scale, so also in

Amsterdam and in Berlin or Moscow. We have to save the world-people from the misconception of voidism and impersonalism. "The absolute is sentient Thou hast proved, all impersonal calamity Thou hast removed." These lines were presented by me to my spiritual master and He was highly pleased with me. Let me follow the same principle and my Guru Maharaja will bless me.

One week later, Prabhupāda wrote to Brahmānanda:

In Europe, wherever you go, you must arrange for opening a center. May Kṛṣṇa give you more and more strength, my dear child. I am poor, but Kṛṣṇa is very rich. I can simply pray to Kṛṣṇa. But Kṛṣṇa is very great and magnanimous; He can do everything for you and for us all.

Full of enthusiasm for preaching, Prabhupāda sent him another letter five days later.

We should not only publish in English, but also in other important languages such as French

and German.

I have also noted down your program for European tour. I am very glad that you are preparing the ground work for starting our centers on London, Amsterdam and Berlin. It may be that we can add another in Tokyo. Yes, we must have hundreds of such branches for preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Upon arriving in San Francisco in December, Śrīla Prabhupāda revealed to the devotees another vision he had always cherished: to form a saṅkīrtana party of a dozen or so expert devotee musicians and travel with them all over the world. Again he wrote to Brahmānanda:

I am very much ambitious for leading a Kirtan party, especially all over your country and Europe. Hansadutta is trying to organize this party. If you can move with this Kirtan party, say a batch of 12 to 15 heads, all over the States, as well as Europe, I am sure we will be more popular than the so-called yogi Maharishi Mahesh.

Actually this was not a new idea. Before coming to the West for the first time, Śrīla Prabhupāda had been visiting a Vaiṣṇava friend in Bombay, Harikrīṣṇadas Agarwal, who had expressed his desire to help organize a saṅkīrtana party. Because Prabhupāda had recently received an appreciative letter from Harikrīṣṇadas, he reminded him of their past plans and indicated that now the time had come to combine their efforts.

I think a very nice Sankirtana party can be organized to travel all over the world. I have tested it definitely that melodious vibration of Sankirtana, if performed by serious devotees, can attract people on the very spiritual platform, and it at once makes the spiritual background very smooth; then the spiritual instruction from the Bhagavad—gita can be implemented very nicely. So my first concrete program is that if you agree to organize such a Sankirtana party, a batch of American students may join, and I can combine these American and Indian devotees together under discipline. The American boys are being trained up strictly on spiritual line,

which I have already explained to you in my last letter. Similarly, the Indian boys or girls must be spiritually trained; it is only by spiritually trained persons that the vibration can implement spiritual seeds in the heart of the audience, not otherwise. So, if you agree to cooperate with me in this direction, then I wish to go with a batch of American students to your care and stay in Bombay for some time, and try to open a branch in Bombay of our society. Here we have got six temples already, and they are nicely being managed by the American Vaisnavas under strict discipline, without their being born in any Hindu family.

I have begun this movement in this country America, and I think I am successful. I have many hundreds of Krishna Bhaktas in this country, and they are increasing in number daily. And why not in India and in Pakistan? We are trying to get admission in the U.N. as non—governmental organization. And when successful, we shall introduce this cultural movement in all countries, including Russia and China.

Govinda Dāsī: "Prabhupāda was often spinning a globe around, and he would say 'Brahmānanda will go here, Gargamuni will go there.' He would just be turning the globe and pointing at all the different countries. It was amazing because after all, here we were, a handful of teenagers, unable even to brush our teeth properly, but Śrīla Prabhupāda had it all planned out in his mind—that he would send us all over the world and open temples in all kinds of places. And he was extremely interested in Russia. He always talked about Russia and how Russia should receive the mercy of Lord Caitanya."

By mid-May of 1968, Hamsadūta informed Prabhupāda of difficulties in organizing the kīrtana party in Montreal, where he was in charge of the temple, and Śrīla Prabhupāda suggested the alternative that he go to Germany and open a center there, an idea he repeated a few weeks later in a letter to Śyāmasundara.

... Kṛṣṇa wants me traveling throughout the whole Western part of the world, and therefore I think it is Kṛṣṇa's desire that now I shall shift my activities, at least for some time, to the

European countries. As far as I remember, you know German as well as Dutch, so after we have started our London branch, you shall have to go to Germany, and I think Haṁsadūta can help you there, because he also knows some broken German.

Nevertheless, Prabhupāda continued meditating on how to convert his dream of a World Sankirtan Party into reality, and thus he wrote to Mukunda a couple of weeks later:

I wish to form a nice Kirtana party, consisting of 12 heads: 2 mridanga players, 1 harmonium player in melody, 1 tambura player, and at least 6 cymbal players. In this way 12 heads shall perform Kirtana very rhythmically and melodiously. The harmonium should be practiced just to follow the song; not simply for tuning. I think you can very well organize this Sankirtana party, and if we have a successful Sankirtana party, with me, backed by our books and literature, we can make a nice propaganda of this sublime movement in all the European

cities. And if we are successful in Europe, then we may go to other countries also in Asia. In India also, if we go with this Sankirtana party, we shall be very much welcome and there is great possibility of cooperation of the richer section of India. So, I am thinking of organizing this nice Sankirtana party very seriously, and you may also think in that way.

Prabhupāda wrote this letter from Montreal, where he had gone in early June. He would stay there for three months and carefully plan how to introduce Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Europe, as he had indicated in an earlier letter:

I shall remain in Montreal for June and July, then we shall go to England and possibly from England, we may go to Amsterdam, Paris, Berlin, etc. Now, man proposes, God disposes. I do not know what is Krishna's desire, but I have chalked out my program like this. Pray to Krishna that He may give me strength to render some service to you and to the humanity at large.

Chapter 2

"Try Your Best and Kṛṣṇa Will Give You All Help"

The Montreal temple had been established by Janārdana, a French-Canadian devotee whom Prabhupāda sent to Montreal from New York in October, 1966, to prepare an exhibit of Kṛṣṇa conscious literature for the World Expo in the spring of 1967. Śrīla Prabhupāda also wanted a center there; he once said in a letter that he would consider his mission successful if he could have temples in New York, San Francisco, Montreal, and London.

In the winter of 1966 a draft dodger from America named Samuel Greer arrived in Montreal. One year earlier Sam had traveled by boat from Canada to Europe. He had visited Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Florence and spent most of the summer and autumn of 1966 hitchhiking across Europe and parts of North Africa. But because he had not been allowed to enter Great Britain, where he wanted to

settle down, he had decided to return to Canada.

Śivānanda Dāsa (Samuel Greer): "Back in Montreal, I rented an apartment near McGill University in a cheap student area. One evening in the student union I met Janārdana, who had come to hang up posters announcing a Mantra Rock Dance at the Montreal Hare Kṛṣṇa temple. I spoke to him, and he invited me to come. I didn't go to the Mantra Rock Dance, but eventually I visited the temple. In the beginning I felt a special attraction for prasādam and the spiritual atmosphere of the temple, so I came more often."

A few weeks later, after regularly attending classes on Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Sam moved into the temple to become a devotee. Six months later, in July, 1967, he received initiation from Śrīla Prabhupāda by letter and the name Śivānanda Dāsa Brahmācārī.

In the summer of 1968, Śivānanda finally met his spiritual master in person. He had been anxiously awaiting Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival.

Śivānanda Dāsa: "During Śrīla Prabhupāda's visit to Montreal, we devotees would often accompany him on his morning walks. On one walk I told Prabhupāda

about the different places in Europe that I had visited. After listening with great interest, he said, 'Oh, you should go and open temples in all those places.'

"I was not aware of the fact that Śrīla Prabhupāda had been planning for a long time to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness beyond North America. Therefore, when I got word that he wanted someone to go to London to open a temple, I became very excited. London was famous for being the center of the European countercultural scene, led by the Beatles, and for its large Indian community. So I volunteered to go there and start a temple.

"But Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed to feel that I was not the right person, and replied, 'That's all right, but I think for the time being you had better stay here in Montreal.' The reason, as far as I can judge in retrospect, was that Śrīla Prabhupāda understood I was still somewhat immature and not quite able to handle myself very well in the world.

"But then the subject came up again. I think I was probably as much eager to have an adventure as I was to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness and please my spiritual master. Because I hitchhiked around Europe before and never had difficulty finding a place to stay, I felt

that I could handle the situation. Consequently I asked Śrīla Prabhupāda again about going to London. Finally he relented and said, 'Okay.' But then he added, 'You know, I was a Calcutta boy. I never got cheated when I came to New York.' He was intimating to me that I wasn't very experienced. But because he saw my eagerness to go, he let me go.

"Full of enthusiasm, I immediately contacted my mother and asked her to donate the money I would need to fly to Europe and get started. She agreed, but only on the condition that I agreed to go back to college. Not quite sure what to do, I asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, 'If I go back to college, what should I study?' He was a little hesitant, but eventually he said, 'Well, you should study English.' Of course, I never went back to college, but my mother got the benefit of helping the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

"It did not take me long to make arrangements for the journey. Actually, I felt quite confident that it would be successful, because this was Lord Caitanya's movement, and it was bona fide. Nevertheless, while boarding the bus to the airport, I turned to Hamsadūta and asked, 'Once I get there, what do you think will be the best way to start?' His reply was

simple: 'As soon as you get off the plane, sit down where there are some people and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, accompanying yourself with hand cymbals, just as Śrīla Prabhupāda did in New York two years ago. When a crowd has gathered, give a short explanation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and ask for a small donation to spread the mission. This is sure to be successful.'

"A few hours later I was airborne and on my way to the other side of the Atlantic. Before becoming a devotee, I had tried to go to London twice (first as a draft dodger coming from the U.S. and later returning from a trip to North Africa), and both times I was refused. Now, as a devotee, I arrived in England with a shaved head and śikhā, tilaka on my forehead, and dressed in a dhotī. Besides that, I carried a little statue of Lord Jagannātha in my suitcase. The customs officers cut the Deity's cloth looking for drugs, but of course didn't find any. Still, being highly suspicious about my intentions, they flatly refused to let me into the country. Thus I had to go somewhere else, and I decided to take the next flight to the nearest destination, which happened to be Amsterdam, the capital of the Netherlands.

"Holland had been one of the more liberal countries

in Europe, and Amsterdam in particular had become a kind of Mecca for the blossoming hippie culture. I had no trouble going through customs, and I soon found myself chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa on Dam Square, the meeting point of the youth. My out-of-this-world appearance was causing quite a stir, and soon a reporter took photographs and asked questions. The next day, one of the major newspapers in Amsterdam carried an article about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and my preaching activity, and I happily sent it to Śrīla Prabhupāda. In my report I mentioned that a boy from Finland had shown interest in our philosophy and was helping me in some ways and that from conversations with him I had gotten the impression the people here were not too well off and it would be difficult to find a permanent place for a temple; therefore I had thought about other places I could go and finally decided that West Berlin would be a good place. I also mentioned to Śrīla Prabhupāda that I really missed both his and my godbrothers' association. He immediately replied on August 27th:

I am so glad to receive your letter dated August 21, 1968, and I declare herewith that Krishna

desired you to go to Amsterdam, and therefore, you are not admitted in England. I have seen also the description of your little activities in Amsterdam, but I could not understand the language. But one thing I observed in that article, there is publication of my name, Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta. So this indicates that your tour in Europe is going to be very successful. I am glad that you are going to West Berlin, and I hope you will duly receive this letter, and be courageous and always chant Hare Krishna. You will be successful. Similarly, I came in New York, in 1965, in the same position, and gradually many students like you have come to me. So don't be disappointed. Do and try your best and Krishna will give you all help.

"The assuring words of my spiritual master gave me a lot of encouragement, and with renewed faith and determination I boarded the train to West Berlin. After arriving there, I stayed for the first few weeks at a youth hostel. Afterward I started to move around, staying at different places, once even at a monastery, but I knew I had to get a fixed place. Sometimes I

would sit down and have kīrtana on Ku'damm, Berlin's famous shopping street. In Montreal, Hamsadūta Prabhu had given me a begging bowl and some cards that read 'Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and your life will be sublime!' I put the bowl and cards in front of me and began to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and naturally people would throw some coins into the bowl. When a big enough crowd gathered, I would stop chanting and preach. Because I did not know any German, I had to find somebody in the crowd who understood both English and German and could translate. West Berlin has a big university, and there were always some students around who volunteered, so I rarely had a problem."

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Shortly after Śivānanda's departure, Śrīla Prabhupāda had received a letter from one of his disciples in San Francisco, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, who expressed a desire to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Prabhupāda immediately suggested that he join Śivānanda in Germany. During Prabhupāda's next visit to San Francisco, in mid-September, he discussed the details with Kṛṣṇa Dāsa and another new disciple, Uttamaśloka, a German-born young man who had lived in America

for the last fifteen years and wanted to accompany Kṛṣṇa Dāsa and translate Śrīla Prabhupāda's books into German. Prabhupāda felt enlivened by their preaching spirit and immediately informed Śivānanda about the encouraging developments.

... I have just talked with Krishnadas and the German boy, Uttama Sloka das, and they are prepared to join you by the end of this month. Sriman Uttama Sloka is already initiated, and he is a German scholar also. He has shown me his translation work on my essays in English, and it appears that he will be a great help in the Berlin center. I am trying to inject in him the basic ideals of Krishna Consciousness philosophy and this morning we had one nice discussion.

So the Berlin temple will be one of the most important centers in Europe, and I hope that in the future we will be able to train many Germans who are very intelligent personalities in the European countries. You know that I have got already one German godbrother [Sadananda Swami], and he has influenced

another German scholar, Vamana dasa [Walter Eidlitz], who has written a very nice book on Lord Caitanya, in German.

So in that great country, people are very much interested with India's original spiritual and cultural life, and Krishna Consciousness is the most perfect order of such cultural understanding in India. Lord Caitanya is the symbol of India's original culture, and perfect Scholar for exposition of India's philosophical thoughts, based on the Vedic knowledge. I hope our books, Bhagavad—gita As It Is; Teachings of Lord Caitanya, and Srimad—Bhagavatam will in the near future be translated into German language and distributed to the noble nation of Germany.

You may not think for the time being of any other branch, at least for the coming one year. And as soon as Krishna das and Uttama Sloka go there, please make combined effort to popularize this Krishna Consciousness movement in that country. They will take with them a mridanga drum. And I understand that in Germany they make very nice harmoniums.

Please take information of them and let me know immediately, otherwise, Krishna das will take a harmonium from here, along with mridanga.

This Krishna Consciousness movement through music, philosophy, spiritual culture, and personal behavior culminating in ideal character of the devotees—all these heavenly contributions combined together—will certainly bring about a major change in the life of Western people.

Śivānanda Dāsa: "Prabhupāda's letter was of course very encouraging, but to be all on my own was not easy and I had become somewhat restless. Thus I started to think that maybe I should travel again and go on to Switzerland. When I consulted Śrīla Prabhupāda about that, he wrote to me: 'You can earn \$12 by traveling, but you can earn \$13 by sitting, provided you know how to sit in a place. Certainly you can preach well by traveling, as I also came to your country, but since I sat at 26 Second Avenue, in July 1966, the society has developed to its present shape.' Taking his advice to heart, I again began to

look for a place.

"In the last week of September, I found a little storefront in Kreuzberg, on Manteuffelstraße. It was not a prestigious neighborhood. The buildings still had big holes in them from the artillery fire of World War II. Nevertheless, I moved in and started to hold kīrtanas regularly. From time to time, I would also go and sit down and chant near the Gedachtniskirche, the famous bombed-out church that stands as a war memorial in the center of Berlin.

"After a week or so, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa and Uttamaśloka arrived. After analyzing the situation and considering that more and more young people were leaving West Berlin, which was a closed city at that time, we came to the conclusion that moving to West Germany would be more effective for preaching. Consequently we decided to go to Hamburg, the nearest important city.

"After arriving in Hamburg, we had the same problems as before: We did not know anybody and we had very little money. Fortunately, we were allowed to stay for some time at the Deutsch-Dänische Akademie. Although we had not found a suitable place for opening a temple, Prabhupāda encouraged

our efforts. On October 21st, he wrote:

In London also they have not opened a branch yet, but they are doing kirtana performances daily, twice or thrice, in parks, schools, colleges, clubs, societies and private houses; so our propaganda is not stopped. So, even you have not found out any place at Hamburg, you three together you can chant Hare Krishna kirtana in the same way as they are doing in London and other cities. We are more or less concerned for preaching. It does not matter even whether we have got a temple or not, but if the preaching work goes on, that is a great satisfaction.

"After a month or so, we found a place we could afford, a storefront on Eppendorfer Weg. Because it was a rather small place, we had to put up a partition. On one side was the temple room, and on the other side we had our kitchen, which consisted of a sink and a hotplate on a radiator.

"At that time we did not have any literature in German, and thus there was no question of collecting funds by distributing books on harināma. Prabhupāda

advised us to get jobs to maintain the temple. Kṛṣṇa Dāsa became the apprentice of a goldsmith, while Uttamaśloka and I found work in the Botanical Garden. Whenever we had time, we went out to chant in the streets and in this way continued our humble preaching efforts.

"Knowing that without any literature our preaching would be ineffective, we thought of getting a mimeograph machine. When Śrīla Prabhupāda heard about our plans, he sent us an encouraging letter:

I have noted with much pleasure that you are planning to mimeograph our essays in the German language. This is good news and please do it nicely. These literatures must be made available to all peoples so they may take interest in Krishna and seek to learn more. This will attract many people to begin chanting and learning this philosophy.

So try in this way, it is very important endeavor. In the United States we have now published Bhagavad-gita As It Is and by next month we should receive Teachings of Lord Caitanya. So if you can also present our literatures in the

German language, it will be very successful.

"Eventually, we found a mimeograph machine at a bargain price, and we soon were printing leaflets translated into German by Uttamaśloka."

But after a few months, Uttamaśloka became restless and eventually gave up the translation work and left the temple. Being aware of the difficult situation of his disciples in Hamburg, Prabhupāda arranged for another devotee to join them. Jaya Govinda had been staying in India with Acyutānanda, but after hearing about the preaching in Germany, he had written to Śrīla Prabhupāda: 'I think of the printing press lying idle (as far as I know) in Germany, and as printing and the graphic arts field is what I have the greatest amount of experience and training in, that seems to be the place for me to go.' Upon Prabhupāda's request, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa arranged for Jaya Govinda's passage, and by the beginning of May in 1969 he reached Hamburg.

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Meanwhile, as Śrīla Prabhupāda had assured them, Kṛṣṇa made more arrangements to help spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Germany. Since early 1968, Śrīla

Prabhupāda had corresponded with Mario Windisch, a German living in Sweden, who had met Vāmana Dāsa, one of Sadānanda Swami's disciples. Mario showed strong interest in Lord Caitanya's philosophy and eventually joined Śrīla Prabhupāda in Montreal, just after Śivānanda left for Europe. On April 3rd, Prabhupāda wrote to Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, who had become discouraged after Uttamaśloka left and was thinking of going back to America:

Last night one German boy was initiated by me; [his name is Mandali Bhadra] and he will be entrusted for rendering all of my books into the German language. From now on, therefore, there will be no difficulty to publish the German edition of Back to Godhead on your newly purchased press. You should take the indication given by Lord Krishna: The press is already there, the press worker, Jaya Govinda, is coming, and the German scholar [Mandali Bhadra] has joined our institution. Don't you see the indication by Krishna that we must make propaganda in the German language in that part of the world? So, you have to adjust

things by the indication of Lord Krishna. Don't do anything whimsically. The direction comes through the spiritual master, and any one who abides by the order of the spiritual master to give shape to the wish of the Lord, he is a perfectly surrendered soul.

By the beginning of June, Śivānanda had wonderful news for Śrīla Prabhupāda: the first fruit of their preaching activities. A young artist named Oliver had decided to live in the temple and become a devotee. Prabhupāda was extremely pleased and impressed upon Śivānanda the incalculable value of such a rare soul:

I am so much encouraged to learn that one very nice German boy has come to live in your temple. This is clear evidence that you are all working sincerely to serve Krishna, and now one sincere soul has been so attracted by this, that he is also coming to join you. Actually, if one true Vaisnava goes to any place in the world, then the spiritual instincts of the more advanced souls he comes into contact with will

be awakened, and they will automatically be attracted.

... Please take nice care of Oliver, and help him in whatever way you can. In Krishna Consciousness every man is so important because all of the activities of a devotee of Lord Krishna are beneficial to all living entities. So, if there are any questions that he would like me to help him with, I am always at your service to help in any way I can.

* * *

Vāsudeva Dāsa (Oliver): "When I was about seventeen or eighteen, I felt deeply dissatisfied with the concepts of reality, morality, and ethics presented by society. I intuitively knew that there must be another reality beyond the phantasmagoria of mundane existence, and I hoped to come in contact with this reality by experimenting with art, mainly through painting, music, and happenings. In the course of these artistic experiments I became more and more convinced that this other reality was not a fanciful imagination but a tangible truth.

"In the spring of 1969, a friend of mine gave me an invitation card to a feast at the Rādhā—Kṛṣṇa

temple. On Sunday I went to the storefront on Eppendorfer Weg, where Śivānanda and Kṛṣṇa Dāsa received me. After we had exchanged some introductory words, they explained to me that, before the feast, they would chant the holy names of God—an embroidered cloth with the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra hung on the wall—and that I was welcome to take part.

"To sing together with the devotees in kīrtana was a special, ecstatic experience. From the very beginning, I abandoned myself to the chanting, and I felt like I was elevated to a different level of existence, a level beyond the burdensome routine of material life. I only regretted that the kīrtana didn't go on forever.

"Then the feast was served. The smell and taste of prasādam was another unique and wonderful experience. During the meal, the devotees played Śrīla Prabhupāda's first record album, Govinda, and Prabhupāda's voice left a deep impression on me.

"I liked everything about the temple—the music, the food, the devotees—the only drawback was communication. Neither Śivānanda nor Kṛṣṇa Dāsa spoke German well enough to explain the philosophy to me, and my knowledge of English was too limited

to hold a conversation. Nor were there any books or magazines in German. But all these limitations were not so important to me. By Kṛṣṇa's mercy, I had acquired a little taste for chanting His holy name, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.

"A couple of weeks later, the deep significance of the holy name dawned on me, and I got a glimpse of its absolute and transcendental nature. I had tried to express spiritual emotions in a painting titled Absolute Immediate Spontaneity, and I became acutely aware of the difficulty of transmitting spirituality through a material medium. But the vibration of Kṛṣṇa's holy name was different: I had no doubt that chanting with the devotees had been a pure, spiritual experience.

"Thus I decided to go to the temple again. This is what I was looking for. I wrapped my painting in a cloth and went to Eppendorfer Weg to share my realization with one of the devotees. Śivānanda received me and listened patiently to my clumsy attempt, in broken English, to explain the meaning of Absolute Immediate Spontaneity. I doubt he understood a word of what I was saying, but he made me feel at ease and simply encouraged me to continue

my spiritual quest, especially by chanting God's holy names and visiting the temple.

"By the end of May, my desire to live with the devotees had become so strong that I decided to move into the temple. The determining factor was actually the holy name. Since my first visit, Kṛṣṇa's name had captivated me, and I felt that to be near the name and serve the name was most possible in the temple in the association of other devotees.

"During the first Sunday feast, as a member of the temple community, I had great difficulty speaking about Kṛṣṇa. Being inexperienced, I felt unqualified to preach, and thus I was terribly afraid to talk to the guests. I became so desperate that I just left the temple room and escaped down to the cellar. I broke out in tears and prayed to Kṛṣṇa: 'What is the use of my existence, if I cannot even speak about You, about my experience with You?' That very moment, an inner transformation took place, and my heart became filled with a feeling of blissful joy. Enlivened, I went upstairs and simply began to speak about my own experience with the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. It was amazing how my relationship with the guests turned into a warm and loving exchange.

"On Saturday and Sunday mornings we went out with a rug to chant the holy name in public. Often Śivānanda and I went alone, and while one of us played mṛdaṅga and sang, the other distributed invitation cards. But generally, once I began to chant, I found it difficult to stop. I used to become so absorbed in the holy name that I felt the transcendental vibration engulf everything, and I had the desire to sing louder and clearer and let the holy name resonate even more and penetrate the walls, the trees, the whole universe. Thus I just went on and on singing. Poor Śivānanda was always frustrated when I didn't stop after some time, because to hand out invitations was not such a nectarean engagement; it involved tolerating the insults from nasty people who didn't like to be approached by a devotee.

"Later I went out almost daily, generally in the afternoons, and all by myself. I took a small handcart to transport the rug, the straw basket, and the mṛdaṅga and karatālas, and sat down on the sidewalk where the Reeperbahn begins. There I chanted the mahā—mantra for five or six hours, and I became so much used to doing this that I practically couldn't live without going out daily and chanting the holy

name.

"Sometimes, in the evenings, I would also go to the communes, where most people were under the influence of marijuana and LSD. I felt it was my special mission to try to purify the depressive atmosphere there with the holy name, because I had lived in communes for almost two years and now I wanted to share my good fortune with my former friends. Generally, they tolerated me, and I was free to speak about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and hold kīrtana. It was a special joy to see some of them become enlivened by the chanting and take part in it."

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At the end of June, the devotees in Hamburg presented Śrīla Prabhupāda with more wonderful news. With the help of Jaya Govinda they had finally printed the first German issue of Back to Godhead: Zurück zur Gottheit.

Deeply grateful, Prabhupāda wrote to Jaya Govinda:

Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated June 23, 1969, sent along with your German language Back to Godhead.

It is very, very nice. You have achieved a great blessing from my Guru Maharaja. My Guru Maharaja had an ambition to publish the message of Lord Caitanya in all the languages of the world, and when He was present in India, He published six magazines in five languages; one in Hindi, one in Assami, one in Bengali, one in English, and one in Oriya. Your Zuruck zur Gottheit is certainly a unique gift to me, and I shall ever remember it.

Śivānanda Dāsa: "After we got the magazines, we could finally do harināma and book distribution more effectively. We would go out, put down a rug, sit down and chant, and put out a stack of magazines."

In the beginning of August, another boy decided to move into the small storefront at Eppendorfer Weg. Stefan, a friend of Oliver, had seen the devotees since their arrival in Hamburg and had gradually been incorporating Kṛṣṇa consciousness into his life.

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami (Stefan): "Like many of my contemporaries in the late sixties, I experimented with LSD and mescaline—not with the idea of inducing a state of forgetfulness, but with the aim of

gaining insights into a higher reality.

"I was working in a graphics company. Although the job paid well, within I felt empty and dissatisfied. I knew that life was meant for something else. In my frustration, I even contemplated that I wouldn't want to become older than thirty; old age looked bleak and purposeless.

"In my quest for meaning I read books about mystical and spiritual subjects. I delved into the lives of Jesus and Ramakrishna, imagining myself to be them. After studying a book about Zen, I took a long walk with my friend Oliver. We walked all night—waiting for some realization.

"When the flower-power movement began to spread in Europe in late 1967, London became the center, and I went there in the summer of 1968 to get firsthand experience. But soon I returned to Hamburg frustrated. It must have been around that time that I first heard the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, because I remember a television show featuring Allen Ginsberg chanting the mahā-mantra on a small harmonium during a happening in London.

"Some time in autumn, 1968, I saw a devotee for the first time. I was about to cross a square near

Reeperbahn when I heard the faint ringing of a pair of karatālas. Then I saw a bald figure dressed in a dark suit and white shirt, sitting on a straw mat on the sidewalk, with a small basket in front of him. He had his eyes closed, and he looked absorbed in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. It was Śivānanda. As soon as the sound of the cymbals entered my ears, I sensed a certain familiarity with it, as if I had heard this before. I simply watched from a distance, then kept walking. But it made a deep impression on me.

"Shortly after that I saw Śivānanda again. He and Kṛṣṇa Dāsa were flanking the entrance to a rock concert and handing out a German translation of 'The Peace Formula.' One was wrapped in a harināma chādar, a popular symbol among the hippies, and the impression I had was that amid all the hypocrisy these two persons dressed like monks were real. They had a mystical air about them, but they were not fake. They were genuine.

"A few months later, in early 1969, Kṛṣṇa gave me another opportunity. I used to hang out in Hamburg's most famous hippie club, the Grünspan, which featured a number of displays on each side of the entrance hall, where bands and other publicity and

news would be announced. I noticed that one of the windows was different from the usual displays: the devotees were using it to advertise Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the Sunday feast. There was a small picture of Kṛṣṇa in the center and lines going out in all directions like an effulgence, and then there were statements by famous personalities about chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa: Allen Ginsberg, Timothy Leary, and Prabhupāda. Of course, I didn't know about Prabhupāda. I had a hard time figuring it out, but because the ad for the Sunday feast mentioned free food, I figured they were talking about a restaurant.

"Then I began living in various communes, and one day a young man joined us who believed in Jesus. This person turned out to be Uttamaśloka, whom Prabhupāda had sent to Germany to help Śivānanda. But owing to some difference of opinion regarding Jesus Christ's role or position, Uttamaśloka had disassociated himself from the devotees and became a member of our commune.

"We had a big altar at one end of the main room, where everyone could place the picture of his worshipful object. There were photos of all kinds of so-called yogīs and saints; there were mystic symbols,

lights, and so on; and there was also a picture of Prabhupāda. Amid all the hodgepodge, I felt a special attraction for Uttamaśloka because I sensed he was different. He wasn't an ordinary hippie, but was into something really serious. He was a strict vegetarian, wasn't frivolous with the opposite sex, and rose early in the morning. To me, he was a fascinating person.

"One spring day in 1969, he took me to the temple at Eppendorfer Weg for the Sunday feast. Tasting prasādam for the first time was an exciting experience, especially because sweet and salty preparations were served on the same plate. That, mixed with the smell of incense, made everything unusual and exotic. Śivānanda gave a lecture, but because he knew hardly any German, it was a real mishmash, and I guess very few visitors could make heads or tail of it. But we all were somehow attracted by the spiritual atmosphere. During the lecture some of us sat in yoga postures, with our eyes closed, concentrating on the words of wisdom being spoken, and also during the kīrtana we sat like that and imbibed the flow of transcendental vibrations. Weeks later I began to visit the temple regularly for the Sunday feast, but I wasn't thinking of joining. I was

not yet ready to give up my own ways.

"One Saturday night in spring as I was about to enter the Grünspan, I heard the familiar sound of kīrtana. I turned around, and there were the devotees across the street, seated on the sidewalk, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Besides Śivānanda and Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, now there was also my friend Oliver, who had become a devotee recently. Although this group of devotees acted like a magnet upon me and I felt an almost irresistible attraction for the chanting, I preferred not to get entangled. Thus I walked a bit down the street and sat on a parked car and watched them from a distance.

"Then Śivānanda recognized me. He immediately waved his hand and indicated to me to come over. So I had no other choice than to cross the street. I sat down beside Śivānanda, and then a most surprising thing happened. He handed me a pair of karatālas and asked me to chant. After we had finished, he said, 'You see? Your little lotus is already growing.' Today I can understand that he meant the creeper of devotional service, but at that time I couldn't figure it out, though I liked it—it sounded so mystical.

"Actually, Śivānanda helped me the most in the

beginning; he acted as my vartma-pradarśaka-guru. He had a sweet personality and was merciful. The others were more reserved, not prepared to give themselves so easily, whereas he was kind and easily approachable.

"The next step was that I got a beadbag and a pair of karatālas, and I started to chant a couple of rounds regularly. The devotees had no German literature at that time, but I got some American BTGs that had wonderful drawings of Kṛṣṇa, with a psychedelic touch that naturally appealed to me. Once, I went to a forest to meditate, away from the bustle of the city, and there I spent hours just contemplating the drawings of Kṛṣṇa and chanting His holy name. I kind of tried to penetrate into Kṛṣṇa consciousness on my own strength without surrendering. In fact, I felt more attracted to the personality of Uttamaśloka than to the life in the temple. I thought that maybe I could be like him—learn the practices and do them myself.

"Nevertheless, I was coming to the temple more often, especially at prasādam time, and consequently the devotees asked me at one point for a donation to help meet the expenses for my eating. So I ended up in the

kitchen helping Maṇḍalibhadra with the capātīs. That was my first engagement in devotional service. For hours I rolled capātīs. They were the main staple in those days. In fact, the devotees used to eat huge stacks of delicious buttered capātīs. It was a real science to make them, and for me it was a nectarean occupation.

"I was still living in the commune, and Śivānanda, dressed in a dhotī, used to visit me sometimes with the hope that I would become a devotee. In fact, he used to cook prasādam for us and chant. The commune was located in one of the sleaziest parts of town, St. Pauli, on the first floor of an old apartment building. Prostitutes who lived below and above us would often line the sidewalks at night.

"In the early summer when the weather was quite pleasant, after I had bought a pair of tiny karatālas, I used to open the window and sit there and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. As soon as the holy name began vibrating, I noticed its effect on my surroundings: the birds became quiet and the whole atmosphere became peaceful.

"Having gained some confidence, I sometimes went to Gänsemarkt or some other place and chanted Hare

Kṛṣṇa among all the people. I also went to the Alster where people would sit and relax in the sun, and alone, or sometimes with some friends from the commune, I would chant the holy name there. For us it was a mystical sound vibration, and we would observe how others reacted to the sound—the swans and ducks and the people.

"Once, I chanted all by myself on Gänsemarkt, which is a little square with a fountain, with office buildings on all sides. Although I was chanting alone, the sound of the karatālas was so penetrating that people began opening the windows to look down to see what was going on. These were my first experiences of doing harināma—all by myself, as a hippie.

"Then July came, and because Uttamaśloka had gone to Copenhagen, I decided to go there also, accompanied by a couple who had some interest in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and had become vegetarians. The hippies in Copenhagen had taken over an abandoned military base and converted it into an enclave, an imagined world of harmony—Kristiania—and there were thousands of people living together, each one on his own trip, doing his own thing. So I just sat down in the middle

of Kristiania, as I had seen Śivānanda do in Hamburg, closed my eyes and chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa. I felt a strong attraction for the chanting, and for me there was nothing more important than chanting these mystical sounds.

"But then my friends went somewhere else, and I was all by myself again. I couldn't talk to anybody about Kṛṣṇa, because everybody was spaced, out in their own world, and thus I decided to return to Hamburg. I went straight to the temple. And there something really special happened, something that affected me deeply. When I knocked on the temple door, Śivānanda opened it, and as soon as he saw me, he exclaimed, 'There he is!' as if they had been waiting for me all this time. And by this small gesture he really won me over.

"But I still had things to settle, and later I went home. As soon as I entered the house, I got into a heavy argument with my father. He was complaining that I was useless and was taking advantage of their home just for eating and sleeping; so he told me to go and live somewhere else. I couldn't believe it. It was something I never expected, but the funny thing is that I immediately accepted it. So I grabbed the few

things I had and left. I went to the street and called a taxi. Then my mother came out crying, and my father, shocked that I had taken his words so seriously, begged me to stay, but I simply got into the taxi and left.

"Life in the temple was extremely austere. The devotees were so poor that for breakfast we had only oatmeal with some sugar and water most of the time, and occasionally we added some milk, but rarely. But whatever it was, it tasted like nectar to me.

"After moving into the temple I gave up my job and donated all my savings, which I had thought of using for going to India and finding a guru. That idea had been part of my spiritual quest, but now I just turned over everything I had. I gave up trying to find enlightenment on my own. But I still had my attachments. I was keeping my long hair, and I didn't wear a dhotī, though I was living in the temple.

"After a short time, to my surprise, I was asked to get a job again, because the temple was in financial difficulty. The income from donations was small and insufficient to meet the daily expenditures. I was not happy to go to work again and associate with nondevotees, but I accepted it as a necessary austerity

to maintain Kṛṣṇa's temple and improve it as much as possible for a long—awaited event: the visit of His representative, Śrīla Prabhupāda."

Chapter 3

The First Visit

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, Śivānanda, and Jaya Govinda had sufficiently arranged and decorated their temple by June to feel confident that they could invite Śrīla Prabhupāda for a visit. But Prabhupāda informed them he preferred to come in August, when the devotees in London, who still had not found a place suitable for a temple, might also be ready to receive him.

Finally on August 21st a telegram arrived at Eppendorfer Weg 11 with the long-awaited message:

ARRIVING HAMBURG FLIGHT 409
LUFTHANSA AUGUST 25TH AT 6:10 A.M.
BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI.

Śivānanda Dāsa: "We didn't know very well how to receive Śrīla Prabhupāda, so we put down a rug in the airport's arrival hall, sat down, and held kīrtana."

Vāsudeva Dāsa: "The role of the spiritual master

wasn't clear to me. Jaya Govinda had brought a painting of Prabhupāda from India, but there he looked so thin and sick that I had difficulty appreciating his transcendental qualities.

"My mundane concept of Prabhupāda's external features dissolved when I saw him at the airport. As soon as he came through customs, everything seemed to become illuminated by the golden hue of his shining face and by his saffron-colored robes. As Prabhupāda approached us, he didn't seem to walk but almost dance, giving the impression that he was floating over the ground. We offered obeisances and continued to chant, and his smile indicated that he was pleased with our effort to give him a befitting reception by just chanting the holy name."

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami: "When Śrīla Prabhupāda came, we all remained sitting and continued chanting. I was impressed to see him dressed in beautiful saffron silk, looking effulgent and aristocratic. One Indian gentleman had accompanied us, and after Prabhupāda exchanged a few words with him, Prabhupāda, Puruṣottama (his secretary) and Maṇḍalibhadra, who had a taxi waiting, began walking toward the exit. As Prabhupāda passed us, we

didn't know whether to continue chanting, offer our obeisances, or get up and follow him. Then Jaya Govinda jumped up, ran to Prabhupāda, and threw himself at his feet. Śrīla Prabhupāda, visibly moved by his disciple's loving feelings, affectionately rubbed his head. Afterward he got into the taxi, and we quickly gathered our things and took a bus to the temple."

During the taxi ride Prabhupāda said little. He remarked that the nicely constructed buildings reminded him of the houses the Westerners built in Calcutta. It was early Sunday morning, and the streets of Hamburg were almost empty. After half an hour, the taxi reached Fruchtallee, where the devotees had rented an apartment. It was on the fifteenth floor of a high—rise, only a five—minute walk from the store-front, which was too small to accommodate guests.

Prabhupāda liked the arrangements, and soon he, Puruṣottama, and Śivānanda, who would be his personal servant during the visit, had made themselves quite comfortable. Śivānanda told Prabhupāda he had invited an Indology professor from Hamburg University for the next day but that he had no other preaching engagements arranged

and was afraid that not many people would attend Prabhupāda's evening lectures on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Prabhupāda was not disturbed; he had come primarily to encourage his disciples and help them advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Preaching to the public was important, but to maintain and increase the devotees' spiritual awareness was his main concern. He even brought with him small brass Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities he had thought of installing in Hamburg.

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami: "After we went to Prabhupāda's apartment, I heard that his dictaphone was broken and that he needed a tape recorder. I volunteered to help. My father had a reel—to—reel machine. So I rushed home, convinced my father, took the machine, and went back to the apartment. Then I was led into Prabhupāda's room, because I had to explain how to use it. When I was about to leave, I asked him whether I could be initiated, and he simply moved his head in agreement.

"In the evening, around seven o'clock, we all assembled again in Prabhupāda's apartment. As I stepped out of the elevator, I perceived the fragrance of incense and the sound of a harmonium. The

instrument had been donated by a Mr. Samantha, a Calcutta businessman who had immigrated. He appreciated the devotees, and in his shop he sold Prabhupāda's first record album, Govinda.

"We had to kind of cram into Prabhupāda's small room. Śrīla Prabhupāda was sitting on his bed with the harmonium and singing 'Kibā jaya,' while Puruṣottama was offering āratī to the Rādhā—Kṛṣṇa Deities. The ghee lamp got passed around, and I learned how to touch the fire of the lamp to my forehead. I sat right in front of Prabhupāda and observed his fingers playing. In such a unique and intimate situation I felt completely in another world.

"After āratī, Prabhupāda stopped playing. We could hear somebody working with an electrical circular saw nearby, and the penetrating scream of the saw abruptly reminded us again of the material world. Anyway, Prabhupāda addressed the devotees briefly. Maṅḍalibhadra's mother had also come, and when Prabhupāda told her that a good son comes from a good mother, she looked moved. She appreciated Prabhupāda. In fact, she later offered to help us in Berlin, where she lived.

* * *

Vāsudeva Dāsa: "Once it was confirmed that Śrīla Prabhupāda would come, we needed a vyāsāsana for him. I wanted to do something special for Prabhupāda, so I volunteered to build one. But when I asked for money to buy wood and cloth, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, who was in charge of the petty cash, told me that the financial situation didn't allow for such a heavy expenditure and that I should go out and beg for the materials.

"So I went to Hamburg's biggest department stores—Karstadt, C&A, and Penndorf—and asked for wooden bars, ply-boards and fabrics. A Hare Kṛṣṇa monk with a shaved head and dhotī was still an unusual sight, and people thought I was a foreigner and readily helped me. Soon I had everything I needed, and after a couple of days the seat was ready. Because it was a little shaky, Śivānanda had to sit down on it to make sure it would hold the weight of a man and not collapse. As a final touch, I added a light blue canopy.

"When Śrīla Prabhupāda saw the seat, he gave it a skeptical look. My heart almost stopped when he climbed the three small steps, touched the canopy to see whether it was secure, and finally, with some difficulty, managed to get through the wooden bars

and sit down. He looked again at the canopy over him, not trusting whether it would really hold, and then turned to the small group of disciples and guests in front of him."

* * *

Śrīla Prabhupāda's first lecture took place the evening after his arrival. Pleased to see the two new boys, Oliver and Stefan, seriously following Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he warmly welcomed them and a few guests, including Dr. Franz Bernhard, the Indology professor. Prabhupāda began with a soft kīrtana. He had been told that the neighbors complained when the chanting got too loud and that they had even presented their case to the authorities. Sitting in the tiny Hamburg temple, Prabhupāda had his doubts whether the place was adequate for installing the Deities.

After the lecture Śrīla Prabhupāda had a long meeting with Professor Bernhard. The Indologist politely and respectfully asked Prabhupāda to teach him the difference between the philosophies of advaita-vāda and Kṛṣṇa consciousness. During the discussion he said he thought of the devotees as hippies because Allen Ginsberg seemed to be

affiliated with them. The next day Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed concern about this in a letter to Brahmānanda, who helped oversee the publication of Back to Godhead magazine:

I am pleased to inform you that our journey from New York to Hamburg was very comfortable, and we safely arrived at the scheduled time. The boys were present to receive us, and the apartment they have selected is very nice. I am sending herewith a letter addressed to Hayagriva. The second part of the Ginsberg conversation article should not be published, and our policy should be to only publish our Krishna Consciousness articles in various forms. We are not concerned with any other movement save and except Krishna Consciousness in its pure form. In India it is said that a little bit of a pure thing is much better than huge volumes of impure, adulterated things. So please try to follow this policy and publish in BTG only pure Krishna Conscious articles.

I think establishment of the Deities here will

not be possible because the place is not very settled up. There is objection by the health department for performing kirtana. Anyway, they are doing very nicely, and in Monday's meeting one Dr. Franz Bernhard, a learned scholar in Indology, was there, and he is very interested in our movement. Yesterday I had discussion with him for about two hours and he is impressed, as you will find I have explained to Hayagriva in his letter.

Śivānanda Dāsa: "Dr. Bernhard had studied Vaiṣṇavism, but didn't agree with many philosophical concepts. When he asked a question regarding 'cosmopolitan consciousness,' Śrīla Prabhupāda cut in: 'Where is your cosmopolitan consciousness? You are killing animals out there,' referring to a slaughterhouse not far from our temple. He explained that real cosmopolitan consciousness means Kṛṣṇa consciousness, because the devotee sees all living entities equally. After all, the animals are also part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

* * *

Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed two and a half weeks in Hamburg, from August 25th until September 11th, and although the sky was usually overcast and it was rather cool for the summer, he regularly went out for a morning walk.

Śivānanda Dāsa: "Except for a few occasions I was his only companion because Śrīla Prabhupāda's secretary had the idea that if only one person accompanied Prabhupāda on his walk, then Prabhupāda would be able to relax. When I asked Prabhupāda about this, he didn't really approve of the idea: 'What is this? How can you relax, when you are taking a walk?' Anyway, the idea prevailed that generally only one person should go with him—and that was me. But from time to time, the others devotees came along with us.

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami: "One morning we went up to Śrīla Prabhupāda's apartment, and he was still getting ready for his walk. Śivānanda was just helping him put on long underwear.

"Usually he would wear his dark coat and a hat made of artificial fur. But this time he wrapped an orange shawl around his head. When Kṛṣṇa Dāsa chuckled at the way he put on the shawl, Prabhupāda remarked, 'Oh, you don't dress like this here!'

"On our way back from the walks, I had to quit at one point because I had to go to work. So I'd offer my obeisances right there on the street. One morning I became so absorbed in offering prayers that when I got up, Prabhupāda and the other devotees were already gone and people were staring at me and wondering what I was doing on the ground."

Vāsudeva Dāsa: "When we accompanied Śrīla Prabhupāda on his morning walks, I usually went a little ahead to clear the path, remove obstacles like fallen twigs, or indicate puddles of water. Once, we sat down on a park bench, and because it was still wet, I spread my jacket for Prabhupāda to sit on. When he actually accepted my humble offering, I was overjoyed and later wore the jacket until it was almost in shreds.

Śivānanda Dāsa: "On one walk, I think it was on the last day of August, Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed a desire to see the harbor. So we took the S-Bahn, the city train, and got off at Landungsbrücken; there is a photograph that shows all of us standing there.

"While walking along the waterfront, we saw an oceanliner being pulled along by a tugboat. When the big ships enter the harbor, they have to turn off

their engines and get parked. Observing this, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, 'Just see: this ship is very, very big, but it is pulled by a little boat. Similarly, when we turn off our Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we get pulled away by māyā.'

"Generally after coming back from the walks, I would go into the kitchen and start cooking. To be honest, I was not a good cook. I had hardly any experience, but somehow or other it worked out that way.

"For breakfast I usually prepared cut—up fruits and fried nuts. Down the street was a fruit shop, and the owner was very favorable. When he learned that Śrīla Prabhupāda had come, he offered to get first—class fruits at the wholesale market, which we then bought from him at a very reasonable price.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda brought small Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities, and once while I was in the kitchen preparing lunch, Prabhupāda came to the door and said, 'Come with me.' So I followed him into his room, where he opened a little closet that had been converted into a temporary altar for Their Lordships. 'You are in the kitchen,' he said, 'but you should know that you are actually cooking for Them, not for me.' Well, at that time, there were only a few installed Deities in the

movement, and I had practically no idea what Deity worship meant. Looking back, I can only appreciate Śrīla Prabhupāda's kindness in trying to make me aware of the meaning of serving the Lord in His Deity form during his visit. But I have to admit that I didn't understand much of what he tried to tell me.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda ate frugally, so usually there were enough remnants left on his plate to serve as breakfast for me. I have to confess that I was rather selfish at that time; so I used to eat all those remnants myself.

"But one morning there were hardly any remnants left, and I was still hungry. So I made some cereal by cooking farina in water with some sugar. I bowed down and offered it with the standard prayers, and when I got up, there was Śrīla Prabhupāda in the doorway.

"'What was that?,' he asked. I explained to him that I made some cereal. 'You are not getting enough to eat?' he asked. 'Well,' I replied, 'I was a little hungry this morning.' So he said, 'All right, come here.' He went to the stove and told me that he would show me how to make halavā. And he made it real fast. I think it didn't take him longer than five minutes. He put

some ghee and farina in a pot and turned the flame all the way up. Usually when you make halavā, you toast the farina slowly, and you mix the sugar with the water and keep that separate until the end. But Prabhupāda didn't do that. He cooked the farina with the ghee very quickly, then added some sugar, poured water over it, and pshhh! That was it. When it was finished, he said, 'When you want to eat something, you make this.'

"After breakfast Śrīla Prabhupāda would chant on his beads and answer his mail as I prepared his lunch. Because of my very basic knowledge about cooking, I thought that the best kind of vegetable I could prepare for Śrīla Prabhupāda was eggplant. Every day I made a different eggplant dish. Then one morning Śrīla Prabhupāda called me into his room. 'What are you cooking for lunch today?' he asked. 'I hope it's not eggplant.' 'Oh no!' I thought, 'now I'm in trouble.' And I humbly submitted, 'Well, Śrīla Prabhupāda, what would you like?'

"He said, 'Do they have cabbage here?' In America the Germans are known as Krauts because of their great liking for sauerkraut, so I replied, 'Oh, yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda, they have lots of cabbage here; that's no

problem.' So after I got the cabbage, I went into the kitchen and started to prepare it. Suddenly Prabhupāda appeared at the door and asked, 'Do you know how to make cabbage?' My assuring reply didn't convince him, so he explained: 'You take the cabbage and cut it into very small pieces, then you put it into a pot with butter, salt, and pepper, and cover it. No water. The cabbage will cook in its own juice.' So I did that, and he actually liked it very much.

"Once, we tried to get some mangoes for Prabhupāda, but the only type we could find were green mangoes. We knew that Prabhupāda liked a mango along with his noon meal, because it had some medicinal quality, but the green mangoes were rather hard, and I wasn't sure how to prepare them. That day Prabhupāda came again to the kitchen to see how I was doing and what I was making. When he saw the green mangoes and learned that I wasn't sure what to do with them, he said, 'Here is how you prepare them. You peel the mangoes, cut them up, then you melt some sugar, mix the pieces with it, cook it for a while, and afterwards you put it all into a container and let it soak.' So I did that. What happens is that after about a week the juice of the mangoes amalgamates with the sugar and

the whole thing turns a purple color. I guess it's some sort of mango chutney. So Śrīla Prabhupāda would take that every day with his lunch.

"Now, just prior to this incident, Śrīla Prabhupāda had come to the kitchen door and told me right out of the blue, 'You shouldn't waste anything.' So after I prepared the mango chutney, there were the mango skins on the table. I thought, 'Gee, I have to be careful not to waste anything.' So I went to Prabhupāda and asked him, 'Well, what shall we do with these?' He sort of smiled, because obviously you throw the peels away, but then he said, 'Oh, if you want to do something with them, add some mustard oil and salt, and eat them like that.' So I took some of the mustard oil that I was using for Śrīla Prabhupāda's massage, added a little to the peels, put on some salt, and tried to eat them, but they really tasted awful. Later I took that preparation to the temple, and some devotees tried it, but nobody liked it except for Maṅḍalibhadra—who ate it all."

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami: "The first time Śivānanda brought us the remnants from Prabhupāda's prasādam, we all immediately crowded around him and stretched out our hands. He had some cuddy sauce,

which he had put into a crystal tube. It was a very small quantity, and he gave each devotee only a few drops. The taste was indescribable. To us it tasted like pure nectar.

"Apparently Śivānanda had problems making the chaunces, because after Prabhupāda left, the owner of the apartment complained about the kitchen. There were stains and splashes all over the walls, and the cupboard was sooty. The whole place smelled of ghee and incense. We had to paint the entire kitchen to bring it back to its former state."

Śivānanda Dāsa: "Prabhupāda took massage at 11:30 a.m., just before lunch at 1:00 p.m. After a short afternoon nap he would receive devotees and guests in the temple, and in the evening he drank hot milk and went to bed around 10:00 p.m. I don't know what time he got up, because I was always fast asleep. He translated during the night, working on *The Nectar of Devotion*. An hour after sunrise he would go out for his morning walk.

"So around 11:30 a.m. I would finish cooking and Śrīla Prabhupāda would take his massage. Giving Prabhupāda a massage was special, because it's such an intimate bodily service. But, as with cooking, I

didn't know much about massage either. So Śrīla Prabhupāda had to show me by giving me a massage first and simultaneously explaining its purpose. He said, 'When the body becomes old, the stomach begins to produce bad airs, and if these airs are not distributed throughout the body by massage, then sickness will come.' He liked to receive a real hard massage, and he wanted me to push as hard as I could, but I was trying to be careful. I was always thinking, 'Well, this is the body of my spiritual master.' Consequently Śrīla Prabhupāda would mildly rebuke me by saying, 'These are love pats.'

"Serving Prabhupāda as nicely as you could was kind of intense, so I was a little bit nervous in my service. I experienced it as rather demanding, because I had a pretty tight schedule. As a result, I sometimes felt really tired on the morning walks. I think Prabhupāda noticed it. One day we came out of the house, went along the road, and then strolled through a little park. We went around a lake and came to a few park benches. Suddenly Prabhupāda stopped and said, 'All right, let's sit down for a while.'

"When Prabhupāda sat down, he was very poised, his back perfectly straight; it didn't even touch the

backrest. But I was so pooped out that as soon as I sat down, I sort of slumped into the park bench.

"After a while I glanced over at Śrīla Prabhupāda and saw that he was sitting like an aristocrat. Then Prabhupāda turned his head and looked at me, and I looked at him, and I thought, 'Oh no, I can't sit like this when Śrīla Prabhupāda is sitting like that,' so I pulled myself up and sat straight just like him. Prabhupāda looked over again and simply nodded in approval, as if to say, 'Yes, that's the proper way to sit.'

"After returning to the temple, I told everybody about this humorous incident. The next morning a whole bunch of devotees came with us on the walk. We went to a different park, but Prabhupāda again sat down on a bench, just as he had the day before. All the devotees, being prepared, sat down just the way Śrīla Prabhupāda did, very poised and with their backs nicely straight. When Prabhupāda saw all the devotees sitting like this, he smiled and nodded in approval.

"One Sunday, because of my intense schedule as Śrīla Prabhupāda's servant and because I had also cooked the feast at the temple, I didn't finish my rounds. I had maybe four rounds left. The next morning my

mind was really agitated, and I was bordering on being offensive. Of course, I tried to control myself, but during the morning walk I asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, 'What should we do if we don't finish our rounds in one day?' His answer was: 'You should lose sleep!' I thought about that and felt, 'Yesterday I think that wouldn't have been possible for me.' So I spoke up again: 'Well, what if that's not possible?' Prabhupāda replied, 'Then you should make them up the next day.' I guess because of my not having finished my rounds, I was in sort of a challenging mood, so I said, 'Well, what if that's not possible?' Prabhupāda stopped and looked sternly at me. 'Then you should work for Kṛṣṇa!' I immediately grabbed my beads and began to chant, 'Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa! ...'

"Another time we were sitting on a park bench with Maṇḍalibhadra. He used to take notes on everything Śrīla Prabhupāda said, because we had no portable tape recorder.

"A lady came by with her dog. Although it was a public park and we were sitting there peacefully, all of a sudden the dog started barking at us. Prabhupāda commented, 'Just see! This is the doggish mentality.

We are not doing anything; we are not even on your property, and you come along and bark at us."

* * *

One evening, Prabhupāda selected for his lecture a verse from the Viṣṇu Purāṇa:

*viṣṇu-śakti parā prokta kṣetrajñākhyā tathā parā
avidyā-karma-samjñānyā tṛtīyā śaktir iṣyate*

"The potency of Lord Viṣṇu is summarized in three categories—namely the spiritual potency, the living entities and ignorance. The spiritual potency is full of knowledge; the living entities, although belonging to the spiritual potency, are subject to bewilderment; and the third energy, which is full of ignorance, is always visible in fruitive activities."

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that energy and its source are nondifferent, just as sunshine and the sun globe are essentially the same in quality, though they manifest differently. Similarly, the Lord's energy is spiritual, but it manifests in different ways.

"So everything is simultaneously one with and different from the Supreme Lord. There are two classes of philosophers. One class says that God and

the living entities are different, and another class, the monist philosophers, say that God and the living entities are one. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's acintya-bhedābheda philosophy says that God and the living creatures are simultaneously one and different. They are one in quality, just like the energy and the energetic, the sunshine and the sun globe. Qualitatively, in sunshine there is heat, there is illumination, light. In the sun globe there is also heat, there is illumination, but the degrees are quite different. You can bear the heat and illumination of the sunshine, but you cannot go to the sun globe or bear the heat and temperature there."

Next Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that although Kṛṣṇa and we living entities are qualitatively one, we were quantitatively minute, in fact, smaller than the atom. Then he said that even if by our scientific research we could count all the atoms in the cosmic manifestation, still we would be unable to perceive the Supreme Personality of Godhead with our material senses. He quoted Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.234):

*ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*

"Because Kṛṣṇa's form, qualities, and pastimes are all on the absolute platform, material senses cannot appreciate them. But when a conditioned soul is awakened to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and renders service by using his tongue to chant the Lord's holy name and taste the remnants of the Lord's food, the tongue is purified, and one gradually comes to understand who Kṛṣṇa really is."

As his young audience listened with rapt attention, Śrīla Prabhupāda described the importance of engaging the tongue in the Lord's service. In this way all the other senses can also gradually be controlled. Citing the prasādam prayers by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Prabhupāda compared our present conditioned state with that of a fish caught in a net and said that our imprisonment within this network of ignorance is being prolonged only on account of the dangerous senses.

"This human form of life is a great boon to the living entity, who is traveling through the cycle of birth and death, perpetually changing his body. Here is the opportunity—the human form of life. We can utilize the tongue properly and get out of this cycle. Sevomukhe hi jihvādau. Seva means 'service,' and

jihva adau, 'beginning from the tongue.' So if we can keep our tongue engaged always chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, then we can keep ourselves always in contact with Kṛṣṇa, because Kṛṣṇa, the sound, is not different from Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is absolute. Therefore, as soon as my tongue touches the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, that means it immediately associates with Kṛṣṇa. So if you constantly keep yourself associated with Kṛṣṇa by chanting this mantra, Hare Kṛṣṇa, then just imagine how you are being easily purified.

"And your tongue wants very palatable dishes to taste, so Kṛṣṇa is very kind; He has given you hundreds and thousands of palatable dishes, remnants of foodstuff eaten by Him. You eat. In this way, if you simply make it a determination that 'I shall not allow my tongue to taste anything not offered to Kṛṣṇa, and I shall engage my tongue always in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa,' then all perfection is within your grasp. All perfection."

Prabhupāda said that purified chanting will eventually lead to experiencing transcendental bliss and therefore Rūpa Gosvāmī expressed the desire to have millions of tongues and ears to relish the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. But he also warned the

devotees not to imitate such an advanced stage by trying to understand Kṛṣṇa with their present, impure senses. This would invariably lead to mistaking the loving affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa for ordinary dealings. To rise above the material platform was possible when the mirror of the heart was cleansed by offenseless chanting.

* * *

On September 3rd, Śrīla Prabhupāda and his followers observed Janmāṣṭamī, the anniversary of the advent of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Devotees customarily fast, chant, and read throughout the day and night on Janmāṣṭamī, but Prabhupāda selected the morning of this auspicious occasion to give initiations.

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami: "When Śrīla Prabhupāda saw me sitting there with my long hair, he asked the older students why I hadn't shaved-up, and they in turn asked me. But we were all so inexperienced that we couldn't give a satisfactory explanation. With the ceremony about to begin, it was too late to do anything about it. At one point in the conversation, Prabhupāda referred to a picture of the Pañca-tattva and said something like, 'You either shave your head

or never cut your hair.' I got initiated as I was, and being attached, I didn't shave-up even afterwards. Only gradually I began reducing the length of my hair, by cutting it a little shorter from time to time.

"When I was supposed to hand my beads to Prabhupāda so he could chant on them, they were tangled, and I was unable to unknot them. He looked at me gravely and said, 'This is māyā.'"

The requirements for being accepted as a disciple were minimal. Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed to accept Oliver and Stefan as his disciples, though they had lived in the temple only a few weeks, and he even accepted a young couple who had just begun visiting. As the initiation ceremony began, Prabhupāda showed the initiates how to purify their hands and explained the meaning of a mantra they had just repeated after him:

*apavitraḥ pavitro va sarvāvasthaṁ gato 'pi va
yaḥ smaret pundarikākṣamsa bahyābhyantaram śuciḥ
śrī viṣṇu śrī viṣṇu śrī viṣṇu*

"One may be impure or pure; in any condition, if he remembers the Lord, whose eyes are like lotus petals, he becomes externally and internally purified. Śrī Viṣṇu! Śrī Viṣṇu! Śrī Viṣṇu!"

"The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant to purify people of the contaminated condition of material existence. A living entity is pure because he is part and parcel of the supreme pure, God. But due to his impure condition, he has forgotten his eternal relationship with God. So this initiation means that one is being accepted as a student by the spiritual master to promote him gradually to the purified state where he can realize himself and God.

"In the contaminated state we cannot approach. Just like if you want to enter a certain place, then you must adjust to the conditions. People are going to the moon. There it is supposed to be very cold. So people go with a certain type of suit. Similarly, if you want to enter into the spiritual kingdom—the planet where Kṛṣṇa lives, you must be purified."

Śrīla Prabhupāda added that the attempt to go to the moon is bound to fail because people cannot adjust to that planet. But Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he said, is so powerful that it enables us to adjust our condition in such a way that after leaving this body we can enter

Kṛṣṇa's planet. If we always keep ourselves in touch with the vibration of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare /Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—, then it is guaranteed we can keep ourselves pure and free from all material contamination. He concluded his talk by saying:

"So on behalf of Kṛṣṇa, we are trying to distribute this knowledge at least in this part of the world. Now, those who are fortunate, will take it and be benefited. It is up to you. Every individual soul is independent. He may accept or may not accept. But if he accepts, it is good for him.

"God never interferes with your independence. No. He will never do that; otherwise, what is the meaning of the living being? Dull matter has no independence. Even a big mountain has no independence. It stands still. But a small ant, even a microbe, has independence, because it is a living creature. So God has given you a little independence.

"That independence does not mean you shall

misuse it. You shall use it properly. And what is that proper use? To be engaged in His loving service. Just like you citizens of this German state, what you are meant for? You are meant for rendering service to the state. This is a small state. But there is a huge state called the cosmic manifestation. That state belongs to Kṛṣṇa, or God. So naturally, you have to render service to the supreme state, the supreme will. So long as you are rendering service to the state properly, your independence as a citizen is there. But as soon as you rebel against the state, your independence is gone. Similarly, this conditional life is due to our rebellious condition toward God. As soon as we agree to surrender and be one with Him by transcendental loving service, the whole thing becomes adjusted. So the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant to teach people, to give them this practical suggestion, and to help them elevate themselves to that platform."

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami: "I had a hard time following what Śrīla Prabhupāda said in his lecture, because of

his heavy accent. But I still listened attentively because he was serious and a unique personality. While simply looking at him all the time, I accepted whatever he said."

Śivānanda Dāsa: "After Prabhupāda finished chanting on each candidate's beads, he called the prospective disciples forward one by one and asked them to state the four regulative principles. Then he handed over their beads and gave them new names. Oliver became Vāsudeva Dāsa; Stefan, Sucandra Dāsa; and the couple received the names Viśvanātha Dāsa and Kuntī-devī Dāsī. The fact that Śrīla Prabhupāda initiated the couple surprised all of us. It was only his causeless mercy and his intense desire to fan even the smallest spark of interest in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They hadn't shown any qualification other than a little attraction. And sadly, a few weeks later, they left and never returned. When we informed Prabhupāda by letter, he indirectly indicated in his reply that part of the reason for their leaving might have been our inexperience in dealing with them."

I am sorry to learn that Viśvanātha and Kuntī

Devi did not take this very seriously. What can be done? They will have to wait to the next life, or if Krishna's Mercy is there, they will come back surely. I am pleased to learn however that the nice girl who was at the Vyasa Puja ceremony is now coming more often. Any person who becomes interested, try to educate him or her rightly. Everything depends on preaching.

Prabhupāda had instructed his older disciples to arrange for the necessary ingredients to performed the fire sacrifice. After the grains, the ghee, and some firewood (the pieces of an old wooden box) were assembled, Prabhupāda prepared a small sacrificial arena in the temple room and, with Kṛṣṇa Dāsa assisting him, lit the fire and performed the ceremony.

Vāsudeva Dāsa: "After the initiation ceremony, Śrīla Prabhupāda distributed flowers to everyone, and then the feast was served. Later we were allowed to go to his room. I took advantage of the opportunity and gave him a painting of Kṛṣṇa that I had prepared for him. I was a little anxious at the prospect of being

alone with my spiritual master, but as soon as I came into Prabhupāda's presence my anxiety disappeared. He was like a father. When I showed him the painting, he looked at me with a smile, and pointing his finger at Kṛṣṇa, he said, 'This is Vāsudeva, and you are Vāsudeva Dāsa, the servant of Vāsudeva.' I simply nodded in agreement. I didn't really understand the profound meaning of Prabhupāda's words. I had only a vague idea of what it meant to be a servant, what to speak of being Kṛṣṇa's servant."

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami: "In the late afternoon on Janmāṣṭamī, we assembled in the temple room, and Hayagrīva, who had arrived from the U.S.A. the day before, read from the manuscript of the Kṛṣṇa book. Prabhupāda, sitting on his vyāsāsana, was simply absorbed in listening to Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. This Janmāṣṭamī was the first time I ever fasted, and I was gradually becoming weak and spaced—out. We sat for hours listening to Kṛṣṇa book.

"In the evening, Prabhupāda decided to have his head shaved—something he usually did only every Ekādaśī—and Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, who regarded this as his favorite service, carefully shaved Śrīla Prabhupāda's head while we others watched.

"Shortly before midnight Mr. Samantha and another Bengali businessman visited us. After midnight, when Prabhupāda was about to break the fast, they offered him a plate of fruits they had prepared for him. He had a short conversation with them in Bengali. I met one of them many years later in Hamburg, and he told me that Prabhupāda had asked them to help us."

* * *

The next day, the devotees observed another auspicious event: Vyāsa-pūjā, the celebration of their spiritual master's appearance anniversary.

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami: "I remember this day vividly because of the tremendous anxiety I went through. I had just been initiated the day before, and now I was supposed to deliver a homage in front of Prabhupāda. He sat on this weird vyāsāsana that Vāsudeva had built according to Jaya Govinda's design, a kind of wooden box with four pillars and a canopy. Prabhupāda had difficulty getting in and out of it. But when I saw him there, I had a strong realization that Prabhupāda is beyond any designations like man and woman. I saw him as a truly transcendental personality.

"Speaking in front of the spiritual master is difficult.

Because I knew so little English, I spoke in German. Halfway through my brief offering I became emotionally overwhelmed and began to cry. What I said was sentimental, because we were all real greenhorns as far as philosophical realizations were concerned, but the emotional content was intense.

"After the offerings, we held a kīrtana, and I remember this as the first time we ever got up and danced. Until then we had been accustomed to sitting down during kīrtana, but Jaya Govinda began to dance with raised arms in front of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and we followed suit."

Śivānanda Dāsa: "Two days later, we observed ekādaśī. After breakfast Śrīla Prabhupāda sat in his chair by the window with a chādar over his head, completely absorbed in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. He chanted like this all morning long, something he usually didn't do. When the time came for his massage, he got up and came over to me and said, 'You should pray to Kṛṣṇa for me.' I was taken aback. I sort of stammered, 'Well, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I don't think it will work.' But Prabhupāda calmly replied, 'Why not? You are a devotee of Kṛṣṇa.' So I left it at that. I felt deeply touched by Śrīla Prabhupāda's humility, the

inconceivable humility of a pure devotee."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was not only preoccupied with the spiritual growth of his disciples, but he also showed concern for their material well-being.

Śivānanda Dāsa: "During Prabhupāda's visit, the sun came out for maybe two days, not more. So it was pretty chilly in the mornings. One morning, after returning from our walk, we were waiting for the elevator, and I was rubbing my hands together trying to alleviate their numbness. 'Are you cold?' Prabhupāda asked me, and he touched my hands. 'Feel my hand.' I was surprised how warm it was. Then he put his hands on his chest and said, 'If you keep this part of the body warm, then the rest will be automatically warm.' Prabhupāda was so kind and affectionate.

"But as soft as Prabhupāda could be, he could also be as hard as a thunderbolt. He took great care about his mail. The first few days, while taking his morning walks, he would look at the mailboxes to see what time they were emptied. One morning, he handed me some letters and asked me to take them to the mailbox, and he wanted me to do it right away. But I brought the letters to the temple, and I gave them to

another devotee, and he gave them to another devotee. Eventually those letters got mailed, but somehow Śrīla Prabhupāda found out about it and got very upset. He reprimanded me: 'You are irresponsible!' I didn't dare to say anything in response. I simply nodded and resolved to become more responsible.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda was practical and never wasted anything. For example, he opened the envelopes he received, then sliced open the sides and used the blank sides for notes.

"One morning we saw a lot of junk in front of the houses. It was Sperrmülltag, the day of the month people can put oversized junk like furniture out on the street to be picked up. As we were out walking, Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed with his cane at something he considered useful, like a chair or cabinet, and said, 'Why don't you get one of these?' We explained to him that we already had enough things, because we would also go out on Sperrmülltag and look for stuff we could use. But after walking further, Prabhupāda pointed at another object and said, 'Oh, why don't you get that?' And someone responded, 'I think we have that already.' But again he would point out

something else, and we would explain to him that there was no need for it. We had almost made it back to the temple when Śrīla Prabhupāda spotted a rug that looked like a Persian carpet and said, 'You don't have one of those!' We actually didn't, so we picked up the rug and brought it to the temple. One devotee cleaned it, and we put it down on the temple floor, and Prabhupāda liked it a lot. It can be seen on the picture that was taken on Janmāṣṭamī."

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami: "The elderly lady who owned our flat lived on the third floor of the building. She was almost blind, and she was happy to have the devotees with her because she was all by herself and we energetic young men could be helpful in many ways.

"Hearing the devotees enthusiastically praise Śrīla Prabhupāda all the time, she became excited to meet him, but during Prabhupāda's evening lectures she would sit behind a curtain that separated the temple room from the staircase. She felt too shy to come into the temple. One evening Prabhupāda went to the bathroom, which was located in the hallway. As he opened the curtain, he was suddenly standing in front of this lady. She was taken by surprise—her

eyes and mouth were wide open. And Śivānanda introduced her to him: 'Śrīla Prabhupāda, this is the landlady.' Seeing that she had been sitting there all the while, Prabhupāda asked, 'Oh, she's a devotee, too?'"

Śivānanda Dāsa: "Śrīla Prabhupāda told me that he wanted to open a bank account. I took him to the nearest branch of the Hamburger Sparkasse, on Eimsbutteiler Chaussee. A young woman attended us, and while she filled out the forms, I tried to get a glimpse of the checks that Prabhupāda wanted to deposit. But he held his hand over them the whole time. When he signed, I curiously watched, and it struck me how he moved the pen deliberately and conscientiously, writing his name slowly, one letter after another.

"A few days later, during our walk, we saw the same girl, the bank clerk. Being a brahmacārī, I thought that the proper thing to do was to avoid looking at her, especially while walking with my spiritual master. So I ignored her and turned my face to the ground. But Prabhupāda cordially nodded to her and greeted her. Then he turned to me and said, 'That was the lady from the bank.'

"Once, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked me why the German people are so fat. So I thought, 'It's probably because they eat a lot of meat,' but I didn't feel right saying something about eating meat to Prabhupāda. So I replied, 'Well, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I think they eat a lot of potatoes.' Now, I am not sure whether or not he could read my mind, or whether he simply knew the reason, but he immediately countered, 'No, they eat a lot of meat.'

"Another incident gave me the feeling that Śrīla Prabhupāda actually could read my mind. One day we walked near the Christuskirche, a church, and I was thinking about why we become sick. I was meditating on disease and its origins. Maybe it comes because we are in māyā or maybe for some other reason. Somehow I couldn't formulate a question properly, but Śrīla Prabhupāda suddenly stopped walking and said to me right out of the blue, 'Ninety percent of all sickness is caused by the mind.'

"As his visit came to a close, I sort of apologized to Prabhupāda for what I felt had not been a nice experience for him: the inadequate storefront temple, the lack of preaching programs, the cold weather, the few guests and mere handful of inexperienced

devotees. But Prabhupāda didn't seem to mind. He simply said, "We are doing our preaching work whether there are a lot of devotees or not."

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On one of his last evenings in Hamburg, Śrīla Prabhupāda lectured on the need to inquire about solving the problems of material existence. Such inquisitiveness, he said, differentiates human and animal consciousness. After giving some examples of how an advanced civilization finds solutions to problems, he asked his audience, "So what is the ultimate problem? The ultimate problem is we do not want to suffer. That's all. We want a comfortable, peaceful life. This is the ultimate problem. Is it not? Just think it over. In Sanskrit it is called *atyāntika-duhkha-nivṛttiḥ*: to solve the problem of miseries. We don't want any kind of misery. We don't want to suffer. We want a very peaceful and joyful life. But that is not possible within this material world. That is the problem."

He gave one of his favorite examples to illustrate the fleeting nature of material happiness—John F. Kennedy: "He had a very nice wife, children, honor, prestige, everything. He was riding in procession,

people were honoring him, and within a second—finished."

After enumerating more problems that people face, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked his audience, "Then what is the solution? That solution is there in Bhagavad-gītā, in the seventh chapter, fourteenth verse: 'This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.' Yes. The solution is we have to surrender unto the Supreme. Just like if you are arrested by the police, then it is very difficult to get out of their clutches. But if you are a good citizen, a soul surrendered to the state, there is no problem. The police have nothing to do with you. Is it very difficult to understand?"

Prabhupāda impressed upon his listeners the urgency to perfect their lives: "So before death overcomes you, you make a solution to the problem. Those who have come in touch with Kṛṣṇa consciousness and have been initiated should be very determined that 'In this life we shall make a solution. No more coming back again to the cycle of birth and death.' That should be our determination. We should be determined to make

a solution and go back home, back to Godhead, where we get an eternal, blissful life of knowledge. This is the sum and substance of our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement."

When Śrīla Prabhupāda asked for questions, one devotee asked if it was possible to become Kṛṣṇa conscious in this very lifetime. "It is possible in one second, provided you are serious," Prabhupāda said. "It is not difficult. Bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate: 'After many, many births, when one is intelligent, wise, fully grown in wisdom, he surrenders unto Me,' Kṛṣṇa says. So if I am intelligent, then I will see: 'If that is the goal of life, that after many, many births one has to surrender to Kṛṣṇa, why not surrender myself immediately?' This is intelligence. Why shall I wait for many, many births if this is a fact? So that requires a little intelligence. It does not require many, many births. It requires a little intelligence. Take to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness seriously; then your problems are solved. Now, if you don't believe in it, then come to argument, come to philosophy, come to reason. Go on arguing. There are volumes of books. You can be convinced. You can learn it. Every answer is there in the Bhagavad—gītā.

You can try to understand it with your reason, with your arguments."

Śrīla Prabhupāda then added a fascinating explanation about relativity: "So it requires relative intelligence. This world is relative. One can become immediately Kṛṣṇa conscious, within a second, or one may not become Kṛṣṇa conscious even after many, many births. So it is relative. If you have got sufficient intelligence, you can accept it immediately. If there is less intelligence, then it will take time. You cannot say that 'It will be possible after so many years.' That cannot be said. It is relative. Everything is relative. For a human being, from here to here, one step; and for a small microbe, it is ten miles from here to here, ten miles for him. So everything is relative. This world is a relative world. There is no such formula that 'One can be Kṛṣṇa conscious after so many years.' No. There is no such formula. One may not become Kṛṣṇa conscious even after millions of births, and one can become Kṛṣṇa conscious within a second. But within this life we can become perfect in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, if we take it seriously. Especially you are all young boys. We expect you'll live at least fifty more years. Oh, that is sufficient time. Sufficient.

More than sufficient. More than sufficient. If for fifty years one chants simply 'Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,' he is sure to become perfect. There is no doubt about it. Simply if you chant this mantra, Hare Kṛṣṇa—oh, there is no doubt about it."

Next, a question was asked why some people accept Kṛṣṇa consciousness and some do not. Prabhupāda repeated that the choice is ours. If something stopped us, it was māyā, and the only remedy was to take shelter of Kṛṣṇa more strongly by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. He appealed to his listeners to induce people to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa; they would receive the real thing and become happy.

"Don't be misled that, 'There are no problems in life. We are very happy—eating, sleeping, mating.' This is animal life. There are so many great problems. Very great problems: birth, death, old age, disease—and repeatedly. Bhūtva bhūtva praliyate: the universe is manifested, again nonmanifested, again manifested, again nonmanifested. So stop this problem. Yad gatvā na nivartante tad dhāma paramaṁ mama: go to Kṛṣṇa's abode. And what is the difficulty? You do your own work and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. We don't say that you stop your business, stop your occupation.

You remain. Just like he is a teacher [pointing to Hayagrīva]—all right, he is a teacher. He [referring to Kṛṣṇa Dāsa] is a jeweler—remain a jeweler. He's something. He's something. That doesn't matter. But be Kṛṣṇa conscious. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Think of Kṛṣṇa. Take Kṛṣṇa prasādam. Everything is there. And be happy. That is our propaganda. You learn yourself and preach this cult. People will be happy. Simple method."

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On September 11th, around noon, Śrīla Prabhupāda boarded a Lufthansa flight to London. In his hand baggage he carried the Deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa he had hoped to install. In anticipation of worshiping Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the devotees had painted ornate letters on the plate-glass window of their storefront: "Radha Krishna Tempel." But Prabhupāda had instructed his disciples to look for a better place.

Chapter 4

The Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temple

Immediately after Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa began looking for a bigger place. Within a week he found a vacant office on the third floor of an old warehouse on Bartelsstraße, a small street in the industrial section of Hamburg. Compared to the storefront, the six-room office seemed spacious, and the location was not bad because it was not far from the S-Bahn station Sternschanze, only a few minutes from downtown by train. In other respects the location and the office were far from ideal: the entrance could not be seen from the street, because the building stood in the back of a yard, and there was no bathroom or shower. But the devotees' report to Prabhupāda conveyed enthusiasm, and in response Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to Śivānanda on September 26th:

... I am so pleased to learn you have found out a very nice place. My suggestion is that you take a first class temple site; never mind if the rent is

little higher. Kṛṣṇa will give you strength. But try to find out first class place for Kṛṣṇa, and make the throne very nicely as per sample I have given. Then I shall go again and install the Deity. The sooner you do it is better, because when it will be cold, I must leave Europe.

I always remember you for your kind personal service and walking with me on the street. So you are so kind upon me, Kṛṣṇa will bless you with advanced Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and you will be spiritually very happy. Thank you very much.

After the devotees moved into the Bartelsstraße place in the beginning of November, they did their best to convert the old warehouse into a temple, and soon the walls and window frames shone bright yellow, the old wooden floor dark brown, and a sign downstairs told visitors they had come to a temple of the "Internationale Gesellschaft fur Krischna Bewußtsein e.V."

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The devotees in London meanwhile had also found a place for a temple, a seven-storey building near the

British Museum. An Indian man donated a set of beautiful, marble Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities, and Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to install Them as soon as possible. Thus he focused his attention on preparations for inaugurating the temple in London. Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, eager for Prabhupāda to return to Hamburg and install Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa at the new place, asked his spiritual master about an auspicious day for the installation and for details concerning the ceremony. Prabhupāda replied on November 7th:

To celebrate the Rasa Lila Ceremony decorate the Deities very nicely with flowers; as many as possible, ornaments, garlands, nice light demonstration, and much distribution of Prasadam. That will be a very nice day for opening the Radha-Krishna Temple. So if by chance I do not go, then Tamal Krishna, who is arriving in London this Monday, will go. He and Yamuna are both expert in the matter of Deity decoration, so there will be no difficulty for the opening ceremony. So arrange for this ceremony without fail, and let me know immediately if you have got a pair of Radha-Krishna Deities in

the new consignment [from India]. If not, the Deities with me will go back there.

In late August the devotees in England had released a recording of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra with the help of George Harrison. "The Radha-Krishna Temple," as the group was called, began conquering the charts in Europe. In Germany the hit single, "Hare Krishna Mantra," had made it to the third position on the pop charts. When the group received an invitation to tour Germany for a week in late November, Śrīla Prabhupāda sent along Tamal Krishna, one of his experienced managers, who had recently come from Los Angeles to help organize the preaching in London. Prabhupāda asked him to perform the ceremony on his behalf.

Tamal Krishna Goswami: "Śrīla Prabhupāda reminded me of the installation of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa which I had observed him perform in Los Angeles and said that everything should be done exactly in the same manner.

"In the middle of our busy concert schedule, one day was set aside for performing the installation of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities. Were it not for Prabhupāda's

order, I would not have been considered qualified to undertake such a serious responsibility. Perhaps this was the first time in the history of the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya that the Deity form of the Lord was being installed and a fire sacrifice performed by someone born outside India. Of course, birth in India was not in itself a qualification nor a guarantee of being Kṛṣṇa conscious. The ācāryas in our disciplic succession were all greatly exalted, pure personalities, transcendental to such bodily designations. But factually, I was not qualified. I had little personal experience of Deity worship. In Los Angeles, as in all of our temples, the standards were still simple enough that all of the worship could be handled by a single pūjārī. I had never even offered an āratī. And as for the intricacies of performing an abhiṣeka ceremony, I had observed it only once before. But all of my insufficiencies were more than covered by the intense desire of Śrīla Prabhupāda. It was he who was actually installing the Deity, and I was simply the officiating priest. By Śrīla Prabhupāda's request, Kṛṣṇa was agreeing to descend and accept the form of the Deity as nondifferent from Himself. Prabhupāda was

actually an unseen participant, for without his presence that day, Kṛṣṇa would certainly not have manifested.

"As I went through the motions of ācamana, vibrating the sacred mantras, bathing and dressing the Deities, and finally igniting the sacrificial fire, Prabhupāda was the guide directing every action. With each successive 'svāhā,' the devotees threw grains mixed with clarified butter, and the fire blazed brightly. Kṛṣṇa was pleased; it was a successful sacrifice. At the end, with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa installed upon Their throne, we offered āratī and danced and sang ecstatically to celebrate the auspicious occasion of the Supreme Lord's appearance.

"Much more than before, the temple room had become a place of reverential worship. There was a feeling of security and shelter due to the presence of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. All of this had taken place by the mercy of the spiritual master. By his blessings we were now experiencing the blessings of the Supreme Lord."

Thus, on November 23, 1969, on the auspicious full-moon day commemorating Śrī Kṛṣṇa's rasa-līlā pastime, the first Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple in Europe was

inaugurated.

Simultaneously, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, in Their sound incarnation—the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra—were making Their impact felt in the lives of thousands of conditioned souls.

Mukunda Goswami: "Due to the success of the song "Hare Krishna Mantra," our group, "The Radha-Krishna Temple," became famous all over Europe. Upon arriving in Hamburg, the first thing we did, despite the cold, was go out in the street with all the devotees and perform a tremendous kīrtana in front of a record shop. The owner was very happy, because he was selling our record. Soon hundreds of people curiously surrounded us. Obviously they had never seen anything like it. They simply stood and stared. But it seemed that they appreciated the chanting.

"In the evening we were scheduled to play at the famous Star Club, where the Beatles began their career. It was a rundown place on the Reeperbahn, Hamburg's infamous red-light district, and everything was dirty and uninviting. We had expected something better. The whole place was dark; even the lighting was dim.

Tamal Krishna Goswami: "It was doubtful that the club-goers that evening considered us anything more than a musical group. They were unaware that the 'performance' was actually an eternal ceremony conducted for the pleasure of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They had come to be entertained, to dance, and to get drunk, and they greeted us enthusiastically with applause, expecting us to turn them on to an evening of sense gratification.

"Our intention, of course, was totally different. We had only Kṛṣṇa's pleasure in mind. We began by singing the praṇāma-mantras to Śrīla Prabhupāda, then The Prayers to the Six Gosvāmīs; next came the Pañca-tattva mantra. Finally we hit them with Hare Kṛṣṇa. As the rhythm began to pick up, couples rose to their feet, moving away from their tables onto the dance floor. As they gyrated about, moving in time to the mṛdaṅga and karatālas, they never suspected that they were taking part in the yuga-dharma, the great chanting for deliverance in the Kali-yuga."

"The next day we were on national TV performing kīrtana in the marketplace of Kiel. The cameras photographed us in our dhotīs and sārīs as we

marched along the sidewalks and passed out the German edition of Back to Godhead, entitled Zurück zur Gottheit."

Mukunda Goswami: "Our concert in Kiel turned out to be one of the most amazing events I ever experienced. Until then, the whole music business didn't seem too promising. We had mainly encountered degenerated, unintelligent people, interested only in drugs and alcohol. Except for George Harrison, we hadn't met anyone with spiritual inclinations. After the disappointing experience in the Star Club we thought, 'Well, that's what Germany is like,' so we didn't expect anything different in Kiel.

"We had been booked at the Krüger Club, a former cinema or theater that had been transformed into a dance hall. All the seats had been taken out, so there was only a stage and a gigantic ballroom. The building was in bad shape. There was no running water, no toilets, and to our dismay there weren't even microphones on stage. We had been announced as the only group for the evening, and the thousand or more teenagers who would come expected a two-to-three hour concert. But we knew only two or

three songs except for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. So as more and more people poured into the hall, many of them intoxicated and boisterous, our anxiety grew more and more; maybe they would become violent. Probably they were expecting rock'n'roll, but here we were—eight Hare Kṛṣṇas—and not even a microphone.

"Fortunately, Sucandra had come with us, so we asked him to address the crowd and explain the situation. After everyone calmed down he said: 'Hare Kṛṣṇa! Good evening, everybody! We are sorry that there is no microphone. And to be honest, we don't have a repertoire of many songs. Actually, we are not here to present a show. We have something to share with you. Therefore it is very important that you all participate. Please repeat after me: Hare!' In the beginning they were a little shy, but soon more and more people joined in, and after some time, when he said 'Kṛṣṇa,' the whole crowd responded enthusiastically in unison: 'Kṛṣṇa!' In this way, Sucandra taught them the mantra. We had a banner with the mantra on it. Then he asked them to sing along with us, and we rehearsed a simple melody until they got used to it.

"There must have been two thousand teenagers, and

as we led them in the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa they became more and more ecstatic. Then we began to dance, and they also began to dance. We even taught them to dance with their arms raised like Prabhupāda had shown us. We told them, 'This is the Swami Step,' and they all danced with raised arms, just like seasoned devotees. Soon the kīrtana picked up speed and volume, and after twenty minutes we stopped and said the praṇāma prayers. Naturally, all the devotees bowed down and exclaimed, 'Jaya!' And to our amazement all these kids also bowed down and repeated, 'Jaya!'

"When we got up, they suddenly started to shout rhythmically, 'Zu-ga-be! Zu-ga-be! Zu-ga-be!' We were perplexed; they seemed to have enjoyed the chanting, but maybe they had become upset for some reason. But then Sucandra informed us that they were asking for an encore; they wanted to chant more. Relieved, we continued kīrtana for another thirty minutes, but as soon as we stopped they again began to shout, 'Zugabe! Zugabe!' We didn't know what to do. So then we just got down from the stage and held a resounding kīrtana on the dance floor amid all those young people. We were in the middle, and everybody

was dancing around us. Then we made two rows and started to jump and dance up and down the aisle. Then we danced in a circle and everyone followed us. Once in a while somebody came forward to play on one of the mṛdaṅgas. The crowd went wild. Some caught the devotees by their arms and shoulders and jumped up and down like mad. It was almost hysterical. We felt that the situation had gotten out of hand. The only thing that calmed them down to some degree was more kīrtana. We had to play louder and faster; otherwise, who knows what they were going to do?

"We beat the drums so heavily that our hands bled. Splashes of blood were all over the place: on the mṛdaṅgas, our dhotīs, the floor, people's clothes. But they didn't care, and it seemed they really liked it that we didn't care either. We were all carried away by the ecstasy of chanting, and time stood still. The kīrtana continued for almost three hours, and although we were completely exhausted, we didn't know how to stop.

"Then one devotee spotted a turntable and an amplifier onstage. So we stopped the kīrtana and put on our record of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. We turned

the volume all the way up—it was deafening—and apparently the audience liked it. They were satisfied that the kīrtana somehow or other continued. We watched from backstage as everybody chanted and danced, although we weren't there anymore. And when the record was over, all of them bowed down as they had done during the live kīrtana.

"When we returned to the stage, the crowd applauded for several minutes. Sucandra thanked them, but when we were about to leave the stage, they began to shout again: 'Zugabe! Zugabe!' We simply put the record on. There was no question of holding another kīrtana in our condition. After they chanted happily for the last time, many of them came onstage and asked us for autographs. Some even asked us to open a temple in Kiel. Everyone was very nice. I am sure that they remembered this wonderful experience for the rest of their lives.

"Our next engagement in Bremen took place in a small club near a lake. It was attended mostly by people in their fifties and sixties, more concerned with their dinners than with our presence.

"The last two concerts in Herford and Munden were both attended again by young people. There weren't

many of them, but those who came all chanted, and after the performance many of them came to the stage to ask lots of questions about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We felt that the prospects for spreading Lord Caitanya's movement in Germany were very bright indeed."

After returning to London, Mukunda and Tamal Krishna gave Śrīla Prabhupāda an enthusiastic report about their tour of northern Germany, but they also said that the devotees there could be much more successful if the saṅkīrtana activities were better organized. Thus when Prabhupāda received a letter from Kṛṣṇa Dāsa indicating he would appreciate more association of older godbrothers, Prabhupāda replied:

I have heard from Tamala and Mukunda that there is good chance of preaching our movement in Germany, provided our Sankirtana Party is well organized. For this purpose I have asked Tamala Krishna to stay in Europe for some time, and whenever you will require his assistance in Germany he will go there and stay for some time.

* * *

In London, Śrīla Prabhupāda received a parcel from Vāsudeva. It contained a small oil painting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and a letter. During his visit to Hamburg, Prabhupāda had encouraged Vāsudeva to devote as much time as possible to painting. A picture is worth a thousand words, he had said, and Kṛṣṇa conscious paintings act like windows to the spiritual world. Śrīla Prabhupāda needed paintings for his new temples, because as long as no Deities were installed, the devotees' objects of worship were pictures of the guru-paramparā, Lord Caitanya and His associates, the Pañca-tattva, and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Vāsudeva happily concentrated on this direct instruction from his spiritual master, but although enthusiastic to focus all his attention on Kṛṣṇa, he still felt the strong pull of material allurements. In his letter he explained his predicament, and Prabhupāda replied without delay:

I thank you very much for your nice letter and the beautiful picture of Radha-Krishna which you have sent to me. Immediately upon receipt of this picture, I have hung it on the wall

directly above my Deities, and it is appearing very nice there. Thank you very much. I always remember you that you are such a sincere and good boy, and I am sure that Lord Krishna will help you more and more to advance in Krishna Consciousness.

Krishna is very merciful to His sincere devotees, but also we have to remember that maya is very strong. Therefore, we have to always be engaged in serving Krishna. At every moment we should be doing this or that service for Krishna's transcendental pleasure. If we do not remember this, then maya is right there to grab us. It all depends upon our leaning towards Krishna or towards maya. If you lean towards Krishna, you will be in Krishna consciousness; and if you lean towards maya, then you will be captivated by material nature. Krishna and maya are just like light and shadow which are directly next to one another. If you move a little this way, you are in light and there is no question of shadow. But if you move a little the other way, you are in darkness. So if we remember to always be engaged in Krishna's service, then there will be

no maya and everything will be all right. Please always remember this great secret of advancement in Krishna consciousness.

So as you are showing promise to be a nice artist, I think you may next paint some pictures of the spiritual masters in the line of disciplic succession. Also, continue to fix up the new temple nicely and promote the sankirtana movement as far as possible. These, along with promoting our literatures will give you sufficient engagement to fill your time. Also, continue to chant all of your rounds daily, and read our magazines and books as much as possible. In this way your future will be very bright, and surely you will be able to do great service to this movement within your lifetime.

Vāsudeva Dāsa: "At the end of 1969, Śrīla Prabhupāda returned to the United States. A few months later, while he stayed in Los Angeles, I sent him a photograph of my first painting of him. A week later, I sent him another gift, an oil painting of his spiritual master, for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's appearance day. When I inquired about how long an

express parcel to L.A. would take, I found out that I had only one day to do the painting. It was already late in the afternoon, and I had to hurry out and beg for the necessary materials before the shops closed. The next day, because the painting was still wet, I had to secure it inside a large box in such a way that it could dry during transport. The parcel looked as unusual from the outside as its transcendental contents. After Prabhupāda received the painting, he wrote to me:

Please accept my blessings. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 20. February, 1970, along with an enclosed photograph of one painting of the spiritual master [Śrīla Prabhupāda] rendered by you. In the meantime, I have received also one painting of my Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. Both these paintings are very, very good, and I am therefore requesting that you be able to devote yourself full time in developing this great talent of yours. There are many paintings required not only for our temples, but for illustrating our books also. So I think this

work will be more than ample and you will be happy in this work.

While still in Los Angeles Śrīla Prabhupāda also received a letter from Kṛṣṇa Dāsa that explained his vision for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Germany:

If it is your desire, Prabhupada, with the organization of Germany's Sankirtana Party we would like to make a tour of Germany during the summer and, if it is with your blessings, to open a second temple at least by the end of 1970, either in Berlin or Munich.

Germany (West) has a population of over 50 million, and that is not including East Germany. In England there are over 60 million, but the difference lies in the concentration. In England there are a few large cities (London, Birmingham, Liverpool, etc.) whereas in Germany the folk are spread in hundreds of towns all over Germany, and these towns are situated only short distances apart.

Another hint of Germany's importance is that

the German Mark (currency) is one of the most stable monetary systems in the whole world. As you have said many times previously, the Germans are a very intelligent people. Now the only problem is to reach the people in large numbers, and this will be through SKP and new temples. Especially in main cities (Berlin, Frankfurt, Cologne, Munich, Stuttgart, etc.) all of which have a population of half a million to a million (except Berlin which has three million). All these cities are centers of industry, trade, art and travel, and all have universities.

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa also suggested to Prabhupāda that Hamsadūta Dāsa and his wife Himavatī could visit Germany. He knew Hamsadūta from Berkeley and admired his enthusiasm for taking devotees out on saṅkīrtana. Himavatī, an excellent cook, would also be an asset in taking care of the new girls.

Maṅḍalibhadra was the only householder in the Hamburg temple, but his wife was not much inclined to take part in the temple's activities. And naturally the brahmacārīs found it difficult to deal with new female devotees. Because Hamsadūta had experience

in managing temples and preaching, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa hoped that he might help spark a Kṛṣṇa conscious revolution in Germany.

Chapter 5

A Field with Great Potential

The year 1970 promised to be a great year of preaching in England. The London devotees felt happy to have Tamal Krishna staying with them. Besides being an expert manager, he had talent for dealing with nondevotees and arranged many engagements, including a six-month contract for The Radha-Krishna Temple group's concerts in halls, colleges, and clubs (for £250 per week). The devotees began dreaming of using their unexpected success to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness not only in England but all over the world. Maybe this was Lord Caitanya's way of fulfilling Prabhupāda's desire for a World Sankirtana Party.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda received letters from Mukunda, Gurudāsa, Śyāmasundara, and Tamal Krishna describing the preaching in London, he sensed the danger of their being carried away by the external features of their success. And he felt that the importance of some of his instructions to them

before returning to America had not been properly understood. Thus he reminded Mukunda:

The purpose of World Sankirtana Party will be to establish a center in each and every city and village of the world. This idea is taking practical shape in various centers. Just like you started for London Yatra and now after one year it has taken a shape, similarly in Germany also it has taken a shape, but in Paris it has not taken as yet. Therefore World Sankirtana Party means to establish a center everywhere we go.

I do not mean a concert party or musical party that may go to a city, have some performances and collect some money without any permanent effect. For this reason the World Sankirtana Party should consist of members who can impress spiritual ecstasy in the hearts of the people, so that some of them may come forward and agree to establish a center where the Sankirtana may go on continually.

And to Tamal Krishna he wrote:

You have written to say that you cannot go to Hamburg or Paris to organize their activities, but actually you were left in London for the purpose of organizing these three centers. If you stick only to London Temple then our former scheme will not be executed. I think, it is proper that you should devote your time for all these three centers and train the local management for being self-supporting. As you are helping London Temple, similarly you should help the Hamburg and Paris Temples also. I think that was our original plan, and you should not change the same.

Seeing the great potential for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Germany, Prabhupāda advised Śyāmasundara:

I have seen the list of "Hare Krishna Mantra" record distribution and I am surprised to see that Germany alone has taken 57,000 records. Therefore we should open more branches in Germany immediately. So Krishna das has also written me about this prospect and I have asked

Hansadutta to go to Germany via London immediately for this purpose and I have written to Tamal about this.

Prabhupāda also asked Kulaśekhara and his wife, Viśakhā, Suridāsa and his wife, Jaṭilā, and Trivikrama to go to Hamburg. As soon as Haṁsadūta and his wife arrived in London at the end of February, they teamed up with Tamal Krishna. On March 1st, the three preachers boarded a train to Folkstone, where they took a ferry across the Channel. The next morning they arrived at Hamburg's central train station.

Tamal Krishna Goswami: "Our arrival meant a change. Prabhupāda had now sent two of his trained leaders, and it was expected that they would reorganize things. As Prabhupāda had directed, Haṁsadūta, as the seniormost, was made president. And Himavatī equally established herself in the kitchen, easily winning the hearts of the German devotees with her spiced kḥīcarī and invigorating vegetable stews. Like a father and mother, they began tending to everyone's needs, and the devotees responded appreciatively. Between them they solved

all problems—from mending socks, to organizing saṅkīrtana, to ending petty quarrels. Their presence made the temple a home, a place in which to feel sheltered.

"The morning after our arrival, Hamsadūta and I had the same inspiration: 'Let's go on saṅkīrtana!' Our enthusiasm was contagious, and soon we had a small group of devotees as eager as us to give Lord Caitanya's mercy to the conditioned souls. As we had done in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and London, we now reenacted the drama of chanting the holy names of the Lord on the streets of Hamburg. And like a well-rehearsed actress, waiting in the wings for her cue, māyā suddenly entered.

"Snow! If the London bobbies had been a nuisance, this act of māyā threatened to drop the final curtain on our fledgling saṅkīrtana activities. But Hamsadūta and I were soon to gain great respect for the German devotees. The colder it got, the more determined they became. It became so cold that the streets were nearly empty, but still they insisted that we should go out. Hamsadūta and I had no choice but to comply with their enthusiasm.

"There was no need to coax the devotees to dance.

The icy polar wind blew through the streets, accelerating the speed of the kīrtana. At least in such hellish circumstances it was easy to remember Kṛṣṇa, and perhaps appreciating our austerities, some of the passersby willingly contributed small donations."

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami: "When Hamsadūta came to Hamburg, things really began to happen. He soon dominated the scene with his charisma. His energetic and enthusiastic kīrtanas carried people away, right onto the spiritual platform. He obviously had a vision, and his potent, direct preaching, simple and to the point, proved most convincing. Soon, a number of new devotees joined—Smita Kṛṣṇa, Jaya Gaura, Avināścandra—and later Uthāla, Cakravartī, Śacīnandana, and quite a few more.

"He led the devotees out on harināma almost daily. Because there was no book distribution, we chanted on the streets for hours while distributing invitations to the Sunday feast and collecting contributions in a basket. We soon figured out that leaving big coins in the basket worked best, because people would look and give according to what they saw others had given. But finally we left in only a few coins, because greedy people had tipped the basket, quickly grabbed the

coins that fell to the sidewalk, and run away."

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Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleased to receive encouraging reports from his disciples in Hamburg and replied to each one individually. He expressed his hope that Kṛṣṇa consciousness would spread like wildfire everywhere if the devotees faithfully followed his instructions and worked cooperatively. To Tamal Krishna he wrote:

I am glad that you have gone to Germany along with Hansadutta and his wife, and I am pleased to learn that things are being arranged nicely—that is my satisfaction.

Organization of the European centers and the World Sankirtan Party later on—for these two reasons I called you to London. Now Mukunda, Hansadutta, yourself, Krishna das, Umapati, Janardan, Suridas, etc., all of you are tested devotees, now do everything nicely in full cooperation.

Hamsadūta received the following letter:

I am so glad to learn that both of you have safely reached your destination.

Now work with great enthusiasm and ask Himavati to take care of the Deities very, very nicely. Both of you have seen in L.A. how much they are careful about Deity worship. We have to make our steady progress, keeping both sides in balance; namely the Pancaratrici-vidhi and Bhagavata-vidhi. The Pancaratrici-vidhi is arcana or temple worship, and the Bhagavata-vidhi is to preach by chanting and distributing literature. Although chanting is quite sufficient to cover all the vidhis, still to keep ourselves pure and sanctified, we must observe the rules and regulations of Pancaratrici-vidhi.

Our London Deities are certainly very, very nice; and everyone is captivated by seeing the smiling face of the Lord. It is very enchanting. Now everything is there and you are also experienced, therefore go on opening branches as many as possible and preach Sankirtana movement to your best capacity. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura entrusted the

responsibility to my Guru Maharaja, and He also in His turn empowered us to do the work. Similarly, I am requesting you, all my European and American students, to spread this movement city to city and village to village and make all people of the world happy. Actually they are missing the central point—Kṛṣṇa—therefore they are unhappy. Let us inform them about this missing point, and certainly they will be happy.

And to Kṛṣṇa Dāsa he wrote:

Yes, I am very glad to learn that Hansadutta and Himavati have arrived with Tamal Krishna, and they have in such short order set up a good program of activities. So now your Deities are being cared for under Himavati's direction, and Sankirtana Party is more successful led by Hansadutta and Tamal. Now with this good organization please continue to work combinedly for spreading our Krishna Consciousness movement throughout Germany. You have said that there is such great scope for

preaching there, so I am very hopeful that you will be very eager to carry out this preaching work, starting many new centers.

Desirous to please their spiritual master, the devotees made plans where and how to open more temples, though they had hardly established a solid foundation in Hamburg. Himavatī, accustomed to assisting her husband wherever he went, had to be cautioned by Śrīla Prabhupāda:

I am very glad to learn of your eagerness to help open new centers in Munich, Amsterdam, and Berlin. But unless some responsible devotee takes charge of the Deities, you should remain in Hamburg. Hansadutta may alone go for preaching work with the others. I think there are enough brahmanas there, so if one cannot be engaged full time, they should divide the duties amongst themselves: one takes the morning, another one at noon, and another in the evening, or like that. So unless they are trained up, you should not go. Deity worship is for old and experienced students; it is not good

for new students to be given sacred thread. This Deity worship is exclusively for advanced students.

Regarding taking Lord Jagannatha to your next center, that will not be very good because you already do not have enough devotees to engage in arcana. Unless there is a Deity worshipper available, we may worship Panca-tattva and Guru. That can be done by all initiated students whether they are once or twice initiated. Before an altar with pictures of Lord Caitanya, Panca-tattva and Acaryas, everyone can offer Aratrik and Bhoga.

The order of worshipping is first Spiritual Master, and then Lord Caitanya, then Radha Kṛṣṇa (as in the mantras or Vande 'ham prayer).

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Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami: "On weekend evenings we used to go to Hamburg's red-light district, St. Pauli, to chant on the Reeperbahn, because it was the only place where there were still many people out on the street. St. Pauli, besides being notorious for bars and nightclubs, was where all the dropouts and weirdos hung out. There were many communes like the one I

lived in.

"People reacted to our chanting in various ways. Some loved us and some hated us. Once in a while a flowerpot would be sent to crash on the sidewalk right next to a devotee, or someone would flip a cigarette stump at you or pour a bottle of beer over your head. But the devotees' determination couldn't be swerved. They simply followed in the footsteps of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who had introduced Kṛṣṇa consciousness amid the dropouts on the Lower East Side.

"One night we were chanting in front of a furniture store when suddenly a huge guy, a drunken sailor, came along and became so agitated that he tried to push us through the shop window. We didn't know what to do, but an even bigger guy appeared on the scene and punched him in the nose. We took it as Kṛṣṇa's arrangement and quickly walked away."

Tamal Krishna Goswami: "It is hard to imagine a more degraded, godless place than Hamburg's ill-reputed Reeperbahn. The area abounds in nightclubs, bars, prostitutes, pimps, thugs, and every other type of illicit professional who makes his livelihood catering to the degraded, lusty tastes of the

population. By daytime the area seems almost normal, but at night it undergoes a nearly total transformation. Then the Reeperbahn becomes a jungle, full of ferocious, blood-sucking animals.

"Into all of this madness, amid the decadence and depravity, we dared intrude—not as hired musicians under the cover of the name Radha-Krishna Temple, but as representatives of God, presenting the naked truth, the holy name of the Lord. We were sādhus, requiring no invitation. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's order was our calling card.

"It was as if the sun's movements had suddenly been reversed, and night had become day without prior warning. Our unexpected presence was an unwanted intrusion to the hellish denizens. And these lifetimers of the Reeperbahn were ready to let us know how they felt. From out of the bars came bouncers, bare-chested and strong-armed, kicking at us as we danced down the street, like maddened dogs attacking a trespasser. From overhead we were assailed by missiles—rocks and flowerpots—hurled down upon us by loud-swearing prostitutes. We were sneered at, ridiculed, harassed. The young couples, fun-seeking businessmen, and old lecherous

pensioners who had come to spend their money were equally degraded, if not as aggressively hostile. When we approached them for contributions, their breath reeked from schnitzel and liquor.

"It was without a doubt the worst place I had yet encountered, the most difficult of circumstances under which to perform saṅkīrtana. It was a test of our sincerity. No one would have blamed us for leaving that place and not ever returning. But that would not have reflected the compassion of Lord Caitanya's mercy, nor the mood of Śrīla Prabhupāda when he had entered alone the equally hellish jungle of New York City. We had to stay, and to come back the following night. Kṛṣṇa was watching, and so was Śrīla Prabhupāda. If we took such risks, they would give us all protection."

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After having helped organize the Hamburg temple, Tamal Krishna felt that it was time to move on. He consulted with Hamsadūta. Then one evening in April, he boarded the train to Paris, where a few devotees were struggling to find a place for a temple. Umāpati was in Paris trying to publish a French edition of BTG, but his facilities were minimal.

Tamal Krishna suggested that he go to Hamburg, where he could join the devotees who were organizing a translation department for European languages. The project was called ISKCON Press Europa. Soon Umāpati and his wife, Ilāvātī, were on their way to Hamburg.

By the end of the summer, another French-speaking couple joined them, Yogeśvara and Jyotirmayī, who had begun translating Kṛṣṇa conscious literature into French at the London temple.

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Smita Kṛṣṇa Swami: "In the winter of 1968, when I was sixteen, I came across a book called Message from Space that talked about karma, the soul, reincarnation, and elevation of one's consciousness by prayer. Although written in simple language, this book left a deep impression on me. The author recommended studying the words of Jesus, and thus I began reading one chapter of the Bible every day.

"I felt that my life became more meaningful, but at the same time I was torn between the desire to lead a pure life and the desire to associate with the fair sex. In fact, in late spring 1969, I met some girls from Hamburg, and after they returned to Germany, I

decided to visit them during summer vacation.

"Thus, in early July, I hitchhiked from Sweden to Hamburg, and during my stay I made friends with a boy who showed me around town and helped me in various ways. One evening, he took me to a psychedelic club called Grünspan, near Große Freiheit. When we came back out on the street, I noticed not far away from us a group of people standing on the sidewalk and watching something. My curiosity awakened, I went up to them, and there I saw two monks, Śivānanda and Maṇḍalibhadra, sitting on a rug, with a straw basket and a stack of pamphlets in front of them. For a second, I thought they might be dressed-up students, but I quickly discarded that idea; they looked too serious, more like Buddhist monks. I was intrigued and wanted to find out more, but before I knew it, my friend dragged me away, and off we went to the Reeperbahn.

"Soon afterward I returned to Sweden, but in late August, just before the end of vacation, I again went to Hamburg, this time for the specific purpose of finding out more about the monks. But no matter where I looked, I couldn't find them. My desire for spiritual life had increased, but the inner conflict

between the desire for purity and the desire to enjoy material pleasures raged on. At one point I became so desperate that I rejected God. But then I read *A Pilgrim's Progress*, and that book touched me so deeply that I decided, 'All right, forget about sex. Dedicate yourself to God.' Shortly afterward I came across a Swedish translation of *Bhagavad-gītā*, and for the first time I read about Kṛṣṇa. I liked the philosophy, but I didn't really understand what it was all about.

"The following months were tough because I realized that materialistic life was not for me, but at the same time I still felt the pull of the material energy.

"When the next summer vacations came, in July 1970, I decided to hitchhike again to Hamburg. I was determined to find the monks I had met the year before, and I had made up my mind that if they were genuine, I would stay with them. So for several days I looked around town—at Reeperbahn, at Grosse Freiheit—but I couldn't find them.

"Then I asked a few of the hippies hanging around on Spitalerstrasse, and one of them gave me a magazine—*Zurück zur Gottheit*. Inside I found the address and an invitation to the Sunday feast. I was

determined to visit, but at the same time I felt kind of weary and thought, 'After this visit, I'll go back to my parents' house; at least there, I have a nice bed.'

"On Sunday I went to Bartelsstraße. Maṇḍalibhadra gave a lecture, and when I heard him talk about yoga, karma, and reincarnation, I thought, somewhat proudly, 'Sounds familiar.' I wasn't that impressed. But then he mentioned that one needed a guru and had to be sincere in order to take up spiritual life and that God was nondifferent from His holy name. His words were like a revelation to me.

"After the lecture, during prasādam, Maṇḍalibhadra sat next to me and asked, 'Do you have any questions?' I thought for a second and said, 'How do I become sincere?' 'Well,' he replied, 'you just stay in the association of those who are sincere.' His words struck me, because I was seriously looking for answers, and I thought, 'Then I shall have to stay here.' At that very moment, all kinds of thoughts about things dear to me came into my mind, and I felt so sad at the prospect of giving them up that tears came to my eyes. I felt devastated.

"Meanwhile the devotees began to hold a kīrtana in the temple room, and I thought, 'Why not join them?'

And as I chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa along with them, my sadness gradually disappeared and an unknown feeling of happiness surged forth from within. I thought, 'How nice! This is the real thing—to sing the names of God.' When I learned that there was an early-morning program, I decided to return the next morning before going back to Sweden.

"On my way to the underground, I loudly repeated the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, and I continued to do so even inside the train. There was a couple sitting opposite me, and they observed me with mixed feelings, alternating between suspicion and curiosity. Although I was only eighteen, I was already balding and looked much older. So when they heard me chant, the man remarked to his wife, 'Young people do this; but such an old man?'

"The next morning, after prasādam, the devotees invited me to come with them on harināma. We went to Jungfernstieg, and for a couple of hours I immersed myself in the chanting of the holy name. Back in the temple, we took lunch prasādam, and afterward I was given my first service, washing the pots. I spent most of the afternoon cleaning pots, and at the end of the day I had given up the idea of returning to Sweden. I

stayed in the temple."

A. C. Bhaktivaibhava Swami (Avināścandra Dāsa):
"By the end of the sixties, I had started on a definite spiritual quest. I lived in intellectual and artist communes and tried to express my inner thoughts and feelings through music while experimenting with psychedelics. Our aim was to provoke a change in the thinking of society.

"Later I began to dabble in Eastern philosophy, and I remember having lively discussions with students in Hamburg's Philosophenturm (philosopher's tower). At the beginning of 1970, I made up my mind to go to Tibet on pilgrimage and adopt the life of a Buddhist monk. Somehow or other I felt a strong urge to purify my existence.

"Just prior to my departure I went to a concert by Quintessence, one of the more spiritual bands, who dressed in Indian clothes and chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. During the show I felt a strong attraction for the chanting, and after the concert I got to meet the band members. I asked Shakti, the band leader, about India and the mantra, because I had never seen any devotees, and he told me about the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple on Bartelsstraße.

"On the next Sunday I went to the temple, but once in the courtyard I hesitated to go in. It was raining heavily, and I was standing outside in the yard, not sure what to do. I went inside, but I hesitated to climb the stairs. Just when I was about to leave, Maṅḍalibhadra looked down from the second floor and said jovially, 'Oh, you are here for the first time? Why don't you come up?' Now it was too late to back out, so I made my way up to the temple.

"I felt very nervous. I wasn't sure how to act, so I tried to adapt to my surroundings. I sat in a lotus posture and closed my eyes. Somebody said something to me, but I kept my eyes shut and didn't react. When devotees served the feast, I pretended I had already eaten and wasn't hungry. But somehow they convinced me to take a little prasādam.

Then Vāsudeva put tilaka on everyone's forehead, and I actually felt proud to have that big tilaka mark. On my way home in the S-Bahn, people stared at me in disbelief. I bought chanting beads, and in order to chant on my way home I got down from the train a few stations early.

"The next day I decided to move into the temple. I didn't know anything about the philosophy, but I

figured, 'Why take the trouble to go to a Buddhist monastery in Tibet when there is something similar here in Hamburg?' When I came to the temple and told the devotees that I wanted to stay with them, they asked me to visit every day for a week before coming to a final decision. I agreed externally, but within I was determined to become a monk then and there. So the next day I returned with all my belongings, and I was allowed to stay.

"Life at Bartelsstraße was austere. It was winter, and there was no hot running water. For weeks we had no heat because we could not afford it. Maṇḍalibhadra used to offer maṅgala āratī wearing gloves and a wool hat. Smita Kṛṣṇa and I used to go to the market in St. Pauli early in the morning to beg for partially rotten fruits and vegetables.

"Our main engagement was daily harināma for at least six hours. Generally we went to the busy commercial section around Jungfernstieg, Große Bleichen or Mönckebergstraße. While most of us chanted, one devotee passed out magazines and asked for donations."

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami: "For some time we went to the same spot every day, the corner of Junfernstieg

and Große Bleichen, and chanted in front of a bank. Either sitting down or standing up, we were there every day, and after a while the people working at the bank became annoyed and called the police. The police told us that we couldn't use our instruments. So we put them down but continued chanting and clapping our hands. When they said, 'You cannot clap your hands,' we stopped clapping, but went on chanting. Then they said, 'You cannot sing.' So we took out our japa beads, formed a line, and began chanting on our beads: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare. Then they said, 'You are not allowed to stand in one place.' So we began to walk up and down the street. Finally the police arrested us and took us to the station. They tried to stop us in so many ways, but there were no laws that prohibited saṅkīrtana. We didn't fit in any category."

A. C. Bhaktivaibhava Swami: "Every fortnight Hamsadūta and Maṅḍalibhadra received a letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda, which they read aloud to all the devotees. It was a special occasion, of course, because most of us had not yet met Prabhupāda. But for me it was always a frustrating experience because I did not speak English and it was rare that somebody took the

time to translate the letter for me. Finally I wrote a letter to Śrīla Prabhupāda, which one of my godbrothers kindly translated, in which I asked how I could understand his books and letters without knowing English. Prabhupāda mercifully gave me simple and commonsense advice: "Simply try to read all of my books. Kṛṣṇa will help you." Prabhupāda underlined 'all.' So I got a dictionary and tried to understand Prabhupāda's books word by word. And it worked. Kṛṣṇa actually helped me. This is how I learned English."

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In the spring of 1970, Acyutānanda informed Śrīla Prabhupāda by letter that he had drawn the attention of India's news media. Several magazines and newspapers wrote about Prabhupāda's intention to return to India with his Western disciples. The official date given was January 1971. But when Śrīla Prabhupāda heard that the influence of communism in Bengal was increasing day by day and that acts of violence were causing widespread turmoil, he decided to go earlier and preach to his countrymen. He would tell them that even communism, without Kṛṣṇa in the center, was void, and that all animosity between

capitalists and communists would cease completely if everybody agreed to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Prabhupāda wrote letters to several of his older disciples to inform them of his plans and invite them to join him in India. Hamsadūta and Himavatī were called, and by the middle of September they arrived in Calcutta.

Chapter 6

Preaching Again in Berlin

Soon after Hamsadūta left for India, Śivānanda, Sucandra, and Gunnar went to Berlin to start a temple, and after some weeks Vāsudeva, who had become married, joined them with his wife. Prabhupāda became pleased to learn that his disciples were preaching again in the largest city of central Europe. He wrote to Śivānanda:

I'm very happy to hear that you are once again in Berlin. When you first went to Germany by yourself, I was praying that Krishna would help you in every way to establish a center there in Berlin. Now you have done it by the grace of Krishna. Berlin is one of the most important cities in Europe and is one of the gateways to the communist world, and since your temple has a central location with good room space, everything is set for our preaching program. It is a good sign that the Berlin people are receiving

our Sankirtana so well that with only one other devotee you have distributed 100 magazines in an afternoon. Yes, on Sankirtana we want everyone we meet to go away with a magazine and having heard and chanted Hare Krishna Mantra. That will be the sign of success.

A. C. Bhaktivaibhava Swami (Gunnar): "When we came to Berlin, we couldn't afford to rent a place right away, and we stayed in one of the many communes. But our daily program remained the same as in Hamburg: going out on harināma and asking for contributions. Sometimes the three of us went, sometimes only Śivānanda and I, and occasionally I went by myself. We went out under any condition. We tolerated the burning-hot sun and the rain and snow.

"One winter day I was standing alone in the snow for hours, chanting and distributing invitations. A big, strong drunk stood in front of me and stared for a while. Then he pulled at my dhotī; he wanted to disrobe me. I just closed my eyes and concentrated on taking shelter of the holy name. Suddenly a disabled man came along. He had an injured leg and walked

with a crutch. Even taller than this other huge guy, he grabbed him by his collar and pants and heaved him aside and sent him gliding over the icy sidewalk.

"When the time for initiation came, I sent my beads to Śrīla Prabhupāda and included a postcard of the Gedächtniskirche that I had marked with some crosses to indicate the spots where we were doing harināma. Later Prabhupāda sent the postcard back, and he had put a big cross over the church and written ISKCON on top. In a note he asked us to acquire it."

Śivānanda: "We tried actually. We got in touch with the Kirchenamt (the church office) and presented our case, but they refused our request.

"When we informed Śrīla Prabhupāda, he said, 'Tell them that we will rebuild the church if they let us use it.' We did not know how this would be possible; we didn't have any money. But we approached the authorities again, and again they said, 'No.' At any rate, Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't think small."

A. C. Bhaktivaibhava Swami: "In my initiation letter, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, 'Your name is Avināścandra, which means, 'Kṛṣṇa, the moon who never dies.' He added that I should read all his books, go on

harināma regularly, and eat only Kṛṣṇa prasādam. As guru-dakṣiṇa I sent him a framed photograph of his spiritual master and some Simply Wonderfals, for which he thanked me in another letter."

Śivānanda Dāsa: "We eventually rented a place in an office building near Kurfürstendamm. Because it was in a nonresidential area, you were not allowed to stay there overnight. The office next door belonged to a publishing house, and the people were really envious. So they called the police and told them we lived in a nonresidential building. When the police investigated, they looked in all the rooms, but didn't see any beds. We all used sleeping bags, and those were put away during the day. So they assumed that nobody stayed there overnight, and they said, 'No problem,' and left. We laughed, but our neighbors fumed."

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Akrūra Dāsa: "I had been studying art in Berlin, but found it difficult to get established. I already had a family—my wife and two children—but I traveled a lot all over Europe, looking for a situation that would fulfill our material and spiritual needs.

"Since the late sixties, I had been searching for

meaning in my life. I gave up drugs and alcohol, became a vegetarian, often visited the Buddhist center in Berlin, read esoteric literature, and had been in touch with Swami Devamurti, who taught meditation on the sacred syllable om.

"One day in September 1970, after having just returned from Paris, I visited a friend. He was a writer, an author of some books. At his home I met a Chinese woman who practiced I-Ching. I threw the sticks, and she told me they said that some extraordinary events were about to occur that would give my life a new direction.

"My author friend began to fill me in on the latest news. He mentioned the people who could be seen lately on the streets dressed in long robes and chanting and dancing. I decided to look for them the next day to find out more.

"The next morning I went to Kurfürstendamm and saw three men in long robes, singing on the sidewalk. I used to carry a harmonica, so I wanted to join in their singing and playing, just as I had done many times with guitar-playing hippies. I looked wild, with my long beard and hair, but they tolerated me and laughed. When they had to return to the temple, they

let me go with them.

"I became convinced that I had found something genuine, that this wasn't the same as the sidewalk artists and street-theater groups, or the freaks and hippies. I decided to stay overnight.

"The temple was only a transformed office, but I appreciated its simplicity. Everything was simple, clean, and clear, and that had a soothing effect on me. In those days I was as confused as could be; actually, I was on the border of total confusion. If someone had been a little more confused, he probably would have ended up in a madhouse. The sublime temple atmosphere was just what I needed, so I happily stayed overnight."

Kaṇḍabhāsī Dāsī: "When my husband didn't come home that night, I began to worry. I was used to his traveling at certain times, but whenever he was in Berlin, he never stayed overnight out of the house. We had no telephone, so once the children were asleep I took a bus and visited our friends to find him. But I didn't.

"On the morning of the third day of his absence, the doorbell rang, and there was my husband, accompanied by a monk. The monk introduced

himself as Śivānanda. I wasn't too surprised, even though he was dressed in a dhotī and had a shaved head. Akrūra used to bring weird people all the time, people from Asia, America and France, actors, artists. Actually, I had seen the devotees earlier, while my husband had been traveling. I had not dared to approach them. I felt kind of afraid. I could sense that this was something powerful, and I didn't feel ready to encounter it. But now there was no escape. My husband had decided to become one of them.

"Fortunately, Kṛṣṇa didn't make things too difficult for me. When I visited the temple the next day, I met Vṛndā-devī, a bright-faced girl dressed in a colorful sārī. I immediately liked her, and we soon became friends. She appeared to me like an angel, and the peaceful, spiritually surcharged atmosphere of the temple seemed like heaven. The kīrtanas were especially attractive, no complex melodies, but simple, meditative tunes that you could take part in effortlessly. The chanting of the holy name transported me somewhere else, to a timeless environment, and let me forget that I was sitting in the middle of a bustling city."

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Harernāmānanda Dāsa: "In 1971 I worked for the U.S. Army in Berlin as a photography teacher. I lived with artists in a commune, and a friend of mine received copies of *Zurück zur Gottheit*, the German magazine that the devotees distributed. He always left the magazines on my desk, and I read them cover to cover, over and over again.

"It was a year of inner searching. I was fed up with the so-called bourgeois life. I wanted to find God, and I knew that I needed the help of like-minded people. My friends and I dabbled in philosophies, yoga and the counterculture.

"Early in 1972 one friend visited the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple. He told us about offering food and Lord Caitanya. He showed us the English edition of *The Teachings of Lord Caitanya*. And he had some hairs from Śrīla Prabhupāda's head, which had been given to him. But we were not too impressed. To me, it sounded like just one more philosophical and spiritual group among the many I had read about.

"A few months later, one spring evening, I was sitting in a cafe with a friend on Ku'damm. It was the first balmy weekend following a long winter, and the sidewalk was packed with people. As we were sipping

our tea, we heard a faint bell-like rhythm accompanying the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. My friend and I once tried to chant the mahā-mantra printed in the magazine, but we always got the names mixed up. Now as I listened closer, the sound of the karatālas and the chanting grew louder. The ring of the cymbals defied the heavy noise of traffic and the sounds of people strolling by.

"Finally, a lone chanter came into view: Akrūra Dāsa, his forehead veins bulging as he chanted with utmost intensity. Navigating his way through the ocean of pedestrians and giving one and all the mercy of the holy name, he appeared like a being from another world. When I saw him like this—angelic and alone, 'one against everybody else' so to speak, unfazed by people's reactions and fully absorbed in chanting—I could only admire his courage, devotion, and conviction. I knew this guy was for real.

"That's what I had been looking for, genuine people advanced on the spiritual path. I could see that Akrūra was here but also not here. Walking down Ku'damm, he had nothing to do with all of it. And yet he wasn't chanting for himself, but for all of us.

"The next time that my friend who visited the temple

invited us to come along, we readily agreed. The temple on Nordbahnstraße, near the Wall, was in a run-down apartment, and the only devotees there that day were a householder named Vāsudeva, his wife and son, and Akrūra. Despite its material shortcomings, I appreciated the unusual atmosphere of love, peace, and tolerance. I felt that these people could probably tolerate even me. I decided to move into the temple.

"When I dumped into the garbage the hundreds of photographs and negatives that I had taken during my twelve-year career, it was a definite break with my past. I took only a few belongings with me. And I didn't mind that my first services—cleaning the floor and cooking cereal with honey for breakfast—were a lot less sophisticated than my previous occupation."

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Śrīla Prabhupāda felt pleased with Śivānanda's efforts to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in "the divided city," and when informed that he planned to take German citizenship and become more involved in organizing the preaching, Prabhupāda wrote him a long, encouraging letter:

If you can recruit many members there and get German language books published, that is the very best idea. The German people are very intelligent and advanced in philosophy. Lately we have been discussing some of their philosophers like Kant, Hegel, Marx, and so on, so I can understand that there are many intellectual people in Germany who will appreciate our Krishna philosophy. They have got good respect for India's philosophy, so now we must take advantage and present it purely. Therefore the printing of so many books in German language is very necessary.

I have heard that you may be going to Heidelberg, Germany, where there is a very large and important university. That is our best field. Become yourself very convinced and learned in our Krishna philosophy and take it into such university and contaminate everything with it. We are not afraid to challenge every mundane philosopher and defeat them, because they are simply operating on the mental platform which is constantly changing, so they cannot have any real

authority. But because we are hearing from the Source of all knowledge, Krishna, through His representatives, the saints and acaryas in disciplic succession, we have got solid basis for understanding. If we are very much convinced to preach in this way, the intelligent class of men will respect and join us, and this will be your success in Germany. If a Marx can change so many men's minds to follow his imperfect philosophy, what can Krishna, the Supreme Perfect, accomplish! If we remain pure and teach others purely, then we will achieve all success and the whole world will listen to us and be delivered from their very dangerous condition.

Thank you very much for assisting me in this great endeavor, I think you are convinced that it is the highest and most exalted activity of all.

Chapter 7

Changing Winds

By the end of July 1971, Hamsadūta and Himavatī were back in Hamburg. The temple was in difficulty. Debts had accumulated, and Kṛṣṇa Dāsa and Yogeśvara and his wife had gone back to the States. Maṇḍalibhadra tried to organize the temple, but that interfered with his translation work and slowed it down considerably. Nevertheless, a magazine was being published regularly, and just a few month before, the German edition of Śrī Īsopaniṣad went to New York to be printed at ISKCON Press. The devotees eagerly expected the first shipment of books to arrive any day.

Hamsadūta informed Śrīla Prabhupāda about the delicate situation and said that the devotees needed to take jobs to alleviate the financial pressure. Prabhupāda himself had once suggested work as a legitimate method of fund-raising, but by this time experience in America and England had shown that the temples could be maintained by the distribution

of books and magazines. In a series of letters written only a few days apart, Prabhupāda conveyed his analysis and instructions to Hamsadūta:

I am glad to learn that you have now come back to Hamburg. Originally you were there for organizing our movement in central Europe. Now, due to your absence so many things have happened. Krishna Das has left. Your duty is here in Europe. Whatever is done is done. You organize there nicely, and stick to that place.

For the time being this measure of taking outside work may be taken up but the principle is that everyone should engage full time for various propaganda work of the Krishna Consciousness Movement and maintain themselves by the little profit made by book selling and literature distribution. Now we have got Isopanisad in German language. The devotees can better be engaged in distributing these books.

In your last letter to me you tried to impress me that everyone should go to work. That is not our principle. Our principle is not to work like the

karmi or under a karmi. We are not sudras. Sudras are meant for working under somebody, not brahmanas. If you do not know this principle, you should know it now. All our men living in the temple are basically brahmanas. Otherwise, why they are offered sacred thread? We should live on the paltry income, whatever we receive, by selling our magazines, but in dire necessity when there is no other way we may accept some service temporarily. But on principle we should go on Sankirtana, not work, and whatever Krishna gives us we should accept on that principle.

Stress on Sankirtana performance and distribution of BTG. Our program is simple. You are a senior member of our society. So if you strictly follow our rules and regulations, chanting regularly 16 rounds, going for Sankirtana on the street and distributing prasadam, automatically our movement will advance. So far work is concerned, when it is absolutely necessary it can be done. But as far as possible we should work in our own field and on the basis of our principles.

I have received the German magazine and it appears very nice. Of course, I could not read a single letter, but it doesn't matter. It was looking very nice.

To get out of the hole was not easy. Paying the rent was a burden, and devotees were inexperienced at distributing books and magazines. Haṁsadūta worked as a dishwasher, and he asked Śivānanda in Berlin for support. Another possibility, he thought, was performing in clubs like the Radha-Krishna Temple group had done. But Haṁsadūta wasn't sure whether all these plans would work. Maybe the solution was to close the temple. Or maybe he should leave the management in the hands of somebody else and take sannyāsa, as some of his godbrothers had done, and just travel and preach, free of the encumbrances of temple management. He again consulted Śrīla Prabhupāda, who advised him:

I am in due receipt of your two letters dated 27th and 28th August, 1971 respectively and have noted the contents. In one letter you decide to close Hamburg center and in the next

letter you change your decision. So my decision is that, at any cost, Hamburg center must be maintained, and you cannot go to nightclubs. Going to nightclubs will deteriorate the quality of our transcendental chanting. Please do not do this. Stick to Hamburg temple and maintain it somehow or other. Of course, touring from city to city is nice program, but not in the clubs. Our only program should be having Sankirtana on the streets, and if somebody calls, then at the home, and we should distribute our literatures. You say that there is a very good demand for Isopanisad, German edition, so why not stress on selling this book and maintain in that way?

Haṁsadūta accepted Prabhupāda's words with full faith and immediately focused all his energy on saṅkīrtana and book distribution. He went daily with the devotees to the center of Hamburg to hold kīrtana and offer literature to passers-by. As the devotees gained more experience and confidence, their collections gradually increased. After a month, there seemed to be a light at the end of the tunnel, and Haṁsadūta gave Prabhupāda an encouraging

report. Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleased, and he impressed upon Hamsadūta the necessity of depending wholly and solely on transcendental book distribution to achieve all success, spiritually and materially.

I am very glad that you are now getting strength. So now you have got 1,800 books and are getting more. There is good demand. So Krishna has solved all your problems. Print books and sell and get rich; that's all. We have got asset, our books, so where is the question of poverty? So don't be disheartened at any circumstance. Depend on Krishna. After all this is the kingdom of maya. She is always peeping to take the opportunity of attacking us, but if we fix up our attention on the Lotus Feet of Krishna, maya cannot even touch us.

So let Mandali Bhadra be seriously engaged in translating work and recruit some German devotees to help him so that we can print all our books in German language and you can develop the Hamburg center very nicely. You know very well that I went to India this time

empty-handed, but we spent there not less than five lakhs Rupees during my 10 month stay, and all the money was collected simply on the strength of our books and literatures. So when you have got literature and books, there is no question of poverty in our society. Simply we have to organize things nicely and manage carefully. I hope henceforward you will not feel at all discouraged.

All of you there, push on this movement in Germany which is the best country in Europe. The most intelligent class of men are there. Try to convince them about our philosophy. The German scholars are especially inclined toward Indian philosophy. There are many learned scholars well versed in Sanskrit. So our books with diacritic marks and original Sanskrit verses must be very much appreciated by all schools, colleges, libraries and the general public. So develop the press there very nicely. The press already has been declared as the greater mridanga.

The winds were changing. Once the devotees gained

strength and enthusiasm, they began to see a lot of new faces at the temple.

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Aṣṭaratha Dāsa: "In 1967, when I was seventeen years old, I began developing interest in alternative lifestyles. I became a vegetarian and practiced haṭha-yoga, then traveled during the following years to Finland and southern France, where I helped in different communities that tried to implement natural living, and after my return to Munich, I took a job as a gardener. In autumn 1969, when the draft was on, I volunteered to work for an organization similar to the Peace Corps—Aktion Sühnezeichen—which gave me an assignment with an educational project in America.

"Before leaving though, in winter 1969, I traveled to London. One Saturday, I strolled down Portobello Road, the heart of the hippie scene, and because it was market day, all the Bohemians were there: Donovan-type guitar players, mimes, people performing street theater.

"All of a sudden, all activity stopped. The attention focused on a group of exotic-looking men and women who came chanting and dancing down the road. It

was the first time I saw devotees, but I immediately knew, 'This is what I would like to do.' But I didn't pursue it right away, because I had committed myself to going to the U.S.

"In the beginning of 1970, I arrived in Washington, D.C. I worked near Capitol Hill, for a church, and my job was to supervise its kindergarten in the afternoon and the youth center in the evening.

"One Sunday morning during the summer, while I had something to do in Georgetown, I met the devotees again. Dāmodara Dāsa gave me a copy of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness: The Topmost Yoga System and invited me to their Sunday feast. As soon as I got home, I read the book, and in the late afternoon I went to the temple. The big plate of prasādam, with pakorās, samosas, purīs, halavā, and sweet rice, acted like a bomb on my digestive system because I was on a macrobiotic diet. But I loved it.

"There were no Deities in the temple, just pictures of the guru-paramparā and Pañca-tattva, and Dāmodara lectured about the ācāryas and Lord Caitanya. Looking at the pictures of the disciplic succession, I was particularly impressed by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's imposing demeanor. After the talk it was clear to me

that this was what I had been looking for, but I hesitated. I would have to give up everything, my yoga and my macrobiotics, to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So for three months I didn't go back to the temple.

"During vacation, I went to the West Virginia National Park, where I lived for two weeks all by myself in a tent. I used most of my time to study a German translation of Bhagavad-gītā. Although I didn't understand much, I sensed that I was going in the right direction, and thus I decided to go back to the city and visit the temple. On Tuesday and Friday evenings, Bhagavad-gītā classes were held, and I wanted to attend regularly.

"I had heard that one should bring a gift when visiting a temple, so when I arrived there one Tuesday evening, I brought some flowers. To my surprise, one of the ladies gave me a vase and told me to put the flowers on the altar. Although I didn't understand exactly what was going on, I sensed that to put something on the altar was special.

"Then I was told that there was no Bhagavad-gītā class that evening because the devotees were going to a preaching program at Georgetown University. Suddenly I found myself in a van with a whole bunch

of brahmacārīs, and an hour later I was on a stage taking part in kīrtana before a large crowd of students.

"We came back late, and someone suggested: 'Why don't you stay overnight?' So I did. In the morning, I attended maṅgala āratī, chanted japa, and went to class, and after breakfast prasādam, I was told: 'Now we'll go on saṅkīrtana.' So I went with the devotees to chant in front of the White House, and after an hour or so I took a bus to my work-place.

"The experience of a day in the life of the devotees had been ecstatic. From that day on, I began visiting the temple regularly, until, after a few weeks, the devotees asked me, 'Why don't you stay at the temple and go from here to work?' I gladly accepted the offer, although it was not practical at all.

"My apartment was only five minutes from the church, whereas the temple was on the other side of town. Every evening I had to take a bus, and it was late, around eleven o'clock, when I finally arrived at the temple. Everyone was already sleeping. The devotees would leave the door open and put some prasādam aside for me, but to eat so late and then get up with everyone at three a.m. put a great strain on my

physical condition. Sometimes I was so tired that I bumped into a wall while chanting japa. And on my way to work, I usually fell asleep as soon as the bus started moving, and more than once I missed the stop where I had to get down and woke up much later.

"After some time, I shaved my head and went to work with dhotī and tilaka. Fortunately, my superiors didn't mind. They were satisfied with my work, and besides that, I was a foreigner. So they didn't bother me. "

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Śrīla Prabhupāda had not been to New York for more than a year. In 1971, he had returned to America after a ten-month preaching tour in India, and the devotees at the Brooklyn temple were more than eager to receive him. As the news spread of his imminent arrival in mid-July, all the nearby temples—Buffalo, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington—made preparations to visit New York.

Aṣṭaratha Dāsa: "We awaited Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival at the Brooklyn temple, and when he stepped out of the car, he appeared to me like a demigod; it seemed as if he were floating. I was overwhelmed by

his spiritual presence, and any last doubts lingering in my mind were just extinguished. As soon as I saw Prabhupāda, I knew: Here is my spiritual master.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed for two weeks in New York, and during the first week, he performed initiations every morning, for each temple on a different day. In the afternoons, different saṅkīrtana parties went to different parts of downtown, and in the evening they all converged for a mahā-harināma on Broadway. When it rained, we donned bright orange and yellow plastic coats, and the chanting party looked like a flock of exotic birds. We attracted literally hundreds of people. Pañcaratna used to lead kīrtana, and once in a while he stopped to address the crowd. He was in so much ecstasy that he sometimes jumped up and down even while speaking.

"There was a tremendous spirit in those days, but also many devotees had pretty far-out conceptions. Once, being a new devotee, I wanted to know something and approached a Mātājī to ask her. Immediately, one of the brahmacārīs came over and reprimanded me: 'Don't talk with the gopīs!'

"On the third day of Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival, it was our temple's turn for initiations, and I was also

recommended. While Rūpānuga prepared the fire sacrifice, Prabhupāda sat on the vyāsāsana and chanted one round of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra on each candidate's beads. This went on for hours, and it created a special feeling to observe Prabhupāda fingering one's own beads. While chanting on my beads, he suddenly stopped and looked at the mālā for some time. I was sitting on needles, and my mind told me, 'Now Kṛṣṇa will tell Śrīla Prabhupāda that I am not qualified and that he shouldn't initiate me.' But after a minute or two of total anxiety on my part, he simply continued to chant.

"We had been told that Prabhupāda would ask us something when handing us our beads, so I memorized all the rules and regulations listed in Nectar of Devotion—the ten offenses, the sixty-four items of devotional service, etc.—and I went over them until the last minute, just to make sure that I didn't forget anything. Finally, when I sat before Śrīla Prabhupāda, he asked me, 'You know all the regulations?' I replied 'Yes,' and he simply said, 'Just go on like this.'"

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Jaya Gaura Dāsa: "In December 1970, I visited the

temple for the first time, and during the Easter holidays of 1971 I stayed for three weeks to see for myself whether or not I could follow the temple routine. During those weeks it became clear to me that I wanted to stay, but I was underage, and my parents became very upset. One night around midnight two policemen came to the temple and took me to Hamburg's prison for minors. There my beads were taken away from me, and I was given only pea soup with sausage to eat, so I took out the meat and ate just the soup.

"After a day or so, my mother came to get me out of custody. Then, while she did some shopping, I ran away and made it back to the temple. Fortunately, I reached a settlement with my parents: They would let me stay at the temple if I agreed to finish school. So for the next nine months I attended classes after going to our morning program and chanting sixteen rounds, and on my way to school and during the breaks, I chanted another sixteen rounds.

"After some time I shaved my head and went to school dressed in a dhotī. Many teachers thought I had gone crazy. A few years earlier, I had been one of the first boys to sport long hair, and now I was bald.

But some teachers and classmates were curious, and I had many opportunities to preach. Sometimes during German class we exchanged philosophical questions and answers, and it continued for more than two hours, into the break. But some participants, those who were politically active and leaned toward communism, became agitated by so much talk about God and spiritual life. They began to interrupt and challenge my talks, so I adopted a lower profile. I stopped preaching publicly. But when somebody approached me during breaks, I explained Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A few of these persons became devotees: Uthāla, Ātmavidyā, Hṛmātī. And some simply became favorable and still visit the temple today.

"At the beginning of the summer, I heard that all the Hamburg devotees planned to go to London for a Ratha-yātrā festival on July 4th. They invited me to go along. This was before the temple got out of financial trouble. Because income was scarce, the basic expenditures for rent and maintenance had caused debts. Seeing no solution, Yogeśvara, the temple president, wanted to close the temple and bring the Deities to London. We built a palanquin for

Their Lordships, and during our journey by ferry, we conducted all the regular worship until we reached Bury Place.

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Śacīnandana Swami: "Śrīla Prabhupāda says in one purport that it is good to remember what we were before coming to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, because then we will be grateful that we are allowed to take part in this wonderful movement and thankful for the opportunity to engage in devotional service. When we remember how fallen we were in material life and how merciful the Lord was to save us by sending us Śrīla Prabhupāda, we will be able to appreciate Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a better way.

"When I was about sixteen, I felt like I was waking up from a dream composed of unending material desires, protest against society, insecurity about what to do with my life, attraction to the counterculture, artistic pursuits—the list is endless. At that time a friend of mine had an accident and died. When I stood at his grave, looking down at the coffin, I was overcome by deep doubts about the value of material life. It became clear to me that all of us are wandering on thin ice and that sooner or later our bodies will end

up in the grave. Already at that time I realized what Prabhupāda said about death: 'The body is still there, but the person has gone.' My friend had left, and I wanted to find out where he had gone, but my relatives and friends had no answers.

"My next key experience was meeting Ravi Shankar, who gave a sitar concert at the art center at Hamburg University in the summer of 1969. His technique and ability to improvise were breathtaking, and after the concert I talked to him and asked him how I could learn to play like that. I was playing violin and guitar. 'You will have to read our books,' he said. 'Read the Bhagavad-gītā, if you can get hold of one.' So I went to the bookstores, but the only edition I could find was a German translation of just the verses. They were composed poetically, and I was touched by the Gītā's spirit, but I felt that it was not possible to live according to some poetic ideas.

"In the autumn 1969 I saw the devotees for the first time—on a TV show called Beat Club. Just prior to their appearance, the show featured a farewell concert by the Rolling Stones for Brian Jones, their guitarist, who had been found dead in his swimming pool. The TV showed the musicians in Hyde Park,

and then came a cut, and the new guitarist was introduced. I thought: 'How cruel life is. One exits—you think he's very important—and a new person comes in and replaces him. One day I will also exit like this. I will work my whole life, I may even become rich or attain some position in society, but then I will just move out and someone else will take my place. How meaningless this is.'

"While I was still absorbed in thoughts about the ill-fated Brian Jones, the devotees appeared on the screen. Radha-Krishna Temple was the name of the band. Mukunda, Guru Dāsa, Śyāmasundara, Kulaśekhara, Yamunā and Mālatī had just recorded the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra with George Harrison. They were sitting on a lawn, with a harmonium, and were chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. I immediately thought: 'This is the answer! These people are walking on the path of eternity! They are leaving this miserable theater of material existence. They are on their way to a place of no return.'

"In spring 1970 I saw devotees for the first time in Hamburg. They were doing kīrtana on Mönckebergstraße, and I listened to them for quite some time. I even approached one of them and asked

him what they were doing. 'We are singing the names of God,' he told me. When I inquired further—'God? Who is God for you?'—he gave me a short explanation of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental position. Later I had a dream in which this devotee's face appeared like a moon coming into my dark life.

"One day, while again looking at books in my favorite bookstore, I found an edition of Bhagavad-gītā that I hadn't seen before: the abridged version of Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, by Śrīla Prabhupāda. The book was in English. Its purple cover had caught my attention, and as I skimmed through the pages, reading here and there, I became fascinated. I thought, 'I wish I could live according to this book one day,' but I had my doubts whether that would ever be possible. Then, as I lifted my eyes and gazed thoughtfully through the shop window, something incredible happened. Three monks passed by. I took it as a divine sign. They were the proof that it is possible to live according to spiritual teachings. I ran out to the street and looked in the direction that the monks had gone, but they had disappeared.

"In autumn of 1970 I met the devotees again. They were doing harināma on Jungfernstieg, and I felt

immediately attracted yet at the same time afraid. So I bought a newspaper and went to the other side of the street and sat down on a bench with my back to the devotees and pretended to read the paper. I actually just listened to the kīrtana. I listened for as long as it took place, and after the devotees had gone, I continued to sit there absorbed in thoughts: 'One day I will live like this. I know it. But I am afraid. I would have to give up so many things. Actually, I don't want it.'

"This internal struggle went on for more than half a year. I felt attracted to the devotees—and I would often listen to the mahā-mantra at home—but I was afraid to become more involved with them. Whenever I recorded songs from the radio and the mahā-mantra came on, I immediately recorded it. In fact, although I had it already about twenty-five times, I continued to record more and more Hare Kṛṣṇa. Occasionally I would darken my room, lock the door, light a stick of incense, close my eyes, and sing Hare Kṛṣṇa to the recordings. But in spite of a strong attraction to the chanting, I still couldn't give up my independence, and surrender.

"The next important incident took place near

Dammtor. I was in a hurry to get back home, and I had to run to catch my train. So I neither heard nor saw the devotees chanting near the entrance to the S-Bahn station; otherwise, I might have gone out of their way to avoid getting entangled. But I was just running without looking left or right, and thus it happened that I bumped into Haripriyā, Maṇḍalibhadra's wife. I was running so fast that I knocked her down and fell over her. It was embarrassing. I wanted to get up immediately and run away, but when I saw the expression of pain on her face, I felt that I should at least help her get back on her feet. 'I'm so sorry, I didn't see you,' I apologized.

"She looked at me with a bright smile and said, 'I know; otherwise, you would have taken a turn in order to avoid us, isn't it?' I felt even more embarrassed. 'What is she talking about?' I thought. 'She speaks as if she knows me. This is too much.' I became defensive and said, 'You people look so strange, and you are strange; any sensible person would make a turn around you.' But she just smiled. Knowing exactly what was going on, she said, 'Well, I think that you are attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The other day I saw you on the bench pretending to

read a newspaper, but you were actually listening to the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra the whole time.'

"I was flabbergasted. 'Wow,' I said to myself, 'this must be somebody special.' She suggested, 'Why don't you read our magazine and find out what this is all about so that you can form a clear opinion?' She handed me a copy of Zurück zur Gottheit. I hesitated; I had only two Marks, which I needed for my ticket, but I parted with them and took the magazine.

"What a disappointment when I began to read it! I couldn't figure out what they were talking about. I was totally unsettled for the whole week. I wanted to find out what Kṛṣṇa consciousness was all about, but it was not possible for me to grasp the philosophy. I was too covered. For instance, I tried to understand Prabhupāda's article, 'The Peace Formula,' in which he writes that we have to understand three things to have peace in this world:

1. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme owner of everything.
2. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme enjoyer of everything.
3. Kṛṣṇa is the well-wishing friend of everyone.

Being politically oriented, I simply couldn't understand what these things had to do with war and

peace. Again and again I tried to understand them, but I couldn't. So it became clear to me that if I ever wanted to know what these devotees were up to and what Kṛṣṇa consciousness meant, I had to visit them again and see the temple. But this was exactly what I was afraid of.

"Finally, I decided to visit the temple and talk to the devotees. I had to find out what Kṛṣṇa consciousness was all about. But I made up my mind that once I found out their secret, I would also practice it, but not in a temple. I would not join them. I would do my own thing and at the same time practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

"One Sunday afternoon I arrived at Bartelsstraße, but while I stood in front of the yard my fear became so strong that I passed the temple and went into a park. There I sat down on a bench and thought deeply about my life: my friends, my hopes for a bright future, my plans for a revolution to make this planet a better place to live, my girlfriend, money, my violin. I knew that if I went to the temple my material life would be finished, and I wasn't sure whether I wanted to say good bye yet.

"Absorbed in watching a mental river of material

objects float by, all of a sudden I heard a voice: 'Hare Kṛṣṇa!' I turned around. There was Smita Kṛṣṇa, a devotee I remembered from the saṅkīrtana party. He looked at me with a knowing smile, like the Buddha, and said, 'I'm going to the temple. Would you like to come with me?' In theory I had already accepted that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme controller of my life. So I said, 'Yes, I very much would like to go with you.' At the same time I thought, 'Kṛṣṇa got me! My independence is going down the drain.' Anyway, I just went with him, and he was nice and talked pleasantly. I couldn't understand exactly what he said because he talked in a weird mishmash of Swedish, English, and German, quite like I had never heard before, but I knew it was something nice. That was all I needed: some soothing sound vibration. He kept saying to me, 'Verstehen Sie Deutsch? (Do you understand German?)' because I know I just looked happy without understanding anything. So I said, 'Yes, but you don't speak Deutsch.'

"As soon as we arrived at the temple, my sense of smell became captivated by a special fragrant mixture of ghee, spices, sabjī, and incense—heavy, almost intoxicating. The Sunday feast program had already

started. Smita Kṛṣṇa showed me the entrance to the temple room. I went in and sat down at the back, against the wall, and just looked at everything. There were these wonderful monks and a truly divine atmosphere. The front of the room was colorful. I didn't see that there were Deities; I just saw flowers. The devotees were singing, but I must admit that I felt rather uncomfortable because I was so nervous, and yet at the same time everything I saw made a pleasant impression on me.

"When I saw the vyāsāsana, my first reaction was, 'Oh, I saw this pictured in the magazine.' I felt the presence of a strong authority, something I didn't like so much because my attitude was completely anti-authoritarian. The vyāsāsana made me uneasy; you don't have a picture on a special seat if it doesn't mean respect for that personality. Then a devotee gave a strong, philosophical lecture about the spiritual master. I didn't understand much, but I remember that he compared people who climb a mountain and need a guide to those who want to make spiritual advancement; you have to be careful not to step on so-called snow-bridges because they appear to be solid, but they break, and you might fall.

Therefore you need a guide.

"After the lecture and some more chanting, prasādam was served, and this is how Kṛṣṇa really hooked me. When I tasted halavā for the first time, I became totally blissed-out. I had never eaten anything like it. I asked for seconds and thirds. Finally, the devotees told me, 'Sorry, but we have to serve others also.' Then they took the halavā pot out of the room to serve the servers. I just followed the pot and sat down in line with the servers, and they said, 'Sorry, but we've given you three helpings, and everyone else has been given only two.' I said, 'I'm sorry. But it's so good. Please give me a fourth serving.' 'All right,' I was told, 'but not more. Take your halavā and get lost.' I said, 'All right, please give me a lot of halavā, or whatever it is, because then I will get lost faster.'

"After the feast, down in the courtyard, one of the guests suggested to me, 'Let's smoke to digest all this.' I replied, 'I've found something better.' I was totally sure: This is my way. I just knew it, and I had lost my fear. I knew I would never smoke again. I already knew the four rules and regulations from the magazine, and I said, 'I'll follow all these rules now. This is it; this is so good.' Then I went home.

"Two weeks passed before my next visit. It was on a weekday, and the devotees were too busy to meet me. So I waited on the sofa in the reception room. Finally, Maṇḍalibhadra came in and told me, 'Sorry, but we don't have much time today. Please come back on Sunday.' I was disappointed. I said, 'But I've come all the way just to find out what this Kṛṣṇa consciousness is.' He answered, 'Kṛṣṇa consciousness means to be aware that God is everywhere.' Then the telephone rang, and he had to go. I was left on the sofa thinking, 'God is everywhere.' When he came back, he continued, 'Yes, He is Paramātmā, the Supersoul. He has four hands and a crown.' 'Far-out!' I thought. I liked the idea immediately. Then he had to go again because his wife was calling him. I was sitting there thinking, 'God is everywhere.' Then he came back again and said, 'By the way, when I said everywhere, I meant everywhere. He's in every atom and in between every atom.' Then he had to go again after just one or two sentences. I thought, 'Wow, that's amazing!' Next to me there was a metal filing cabinet, and I thought, 'He is in that file cabinet, but not inside. He's in the atoms and in between the atoms of that cabinet.' I had never thought about

such an idea. Then Maṅḍalibhadra came back and said, 'I'm sorry. I hope you don't mind, but there so much going on today. Can't you come back on Sunday? We really have no time.' 'No problem,' I said, 'I have enough to think about.'

'On my way to the S-Bahn station I was thinking: 'God is everywhere! He's in the hearts of all these people. He's in the air. He's in the S-Bahn construction. He's everywhere!' Then I don't know what happened. It was as if from everywhere I heard the sound of the holy name, like a very soft whispering: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. The whole atmosphere seemed to vibrate with the holy name like a cosmic symphony. Ecstasy! My first ecstatic experience in Kṛṣṇa consciousness! I sat down in the train station and even missed my train. I was thinking, 'Kṛṣṇa is everywhere, and I finally found a way to Him.'

"Later, I was working part-time as a gardener, and I supported the temple with donations. One day the devotees told me, 'Prabhupāda is coming to London.' As soon as I heard this, I desired to go. Then, sometime later, one of them asked me directly, 'We

want to go to London, but we don't have the money. Can you help us?' I had my own plans for my savings, but then I thought, 'They want to see Prabhupāda, and I also want to see Prabhupāda,' so I went to the bank, emptied my account, and gave everything to the temple.

"We took our Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities with us. On the ferry we gave Them a cabin of Their own, and we would always hold kīrtana on the deck, even in a storm. We were young people and liked adventures. We were singing, and it was the nicest sea-journey I've ever made.

"On the evening of Prabhupāda's arrival, the devotees all went to the airport, but because his flight from New York was delayed, and it got to be late, most devotees went back to the temple. I decided to stay. The flight landed around midnight.

"The majority of us were resting on seats in the waiting lounge, and suddenly a few devotees standing watch near the customs area began shouting, 'Jaya Prabhupāda!' The magical words immediately brought us to our feet. For me, the sound of Śrīla Prabhupāda's name and his imminent arrival transformed the airport. A mystical light seemed to be illuminating

everything.

"One devotee began to chant, and the kīrtana soon grew more intense. Then Śrīla Prabhupāda appeared. My first reaction was: 'Oh, he is so small!' But then I immediately thought, 'But he is so great in spiritual power.' As he came toward us, I threw myself down (like the other devotees) on the floor of Heathrow airport. Only one day before I had shaved up—just as a present for Prabhupāda—and now, my shaved head offered at his feet, I waited for him to pass by.

"After I thought Prabhupāda had already passed, I lifted my head. To my surprise I saw before me a pair of slippers. I looked up and looked right into Prabhupāda's eyes. He seemed to welcome me into his family. I was over-whelmed, and at that very moment something transpired between Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee and this fallen soul: I could feel his immense potency in attracting souls to Kṛṣṇa. When I saw Śrīla Prabhupāda standing before me, aglow with spiritual mercy, I felt much attraction to his lotus feet. It became clear to me that I should surrender to him. And I knew he recognized me and would accept me.

"On the way back to the temple, I remembered something that I'd read in one of Prabhupāda's books:

'By this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, we are trying to give information of how one can be transferred directly to the Goloka Vṛndāvana planet, Kṛṣṇaloka. That is our mission.' I felt happy and secure under the shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet.

"When Prabhupāda gave a lecture, his eyes would wander over the audience while he explained Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You felt that he was preaching directly to you.

"One incident showed me how a pure devotee can infuse a receptive soul with conviction and spiritual strength. The devotees were going to Oxford Street to chant and distribute magazines. I was standing outside wondering whether I should go with the saṅkīrtana party or stay back and study Prabhupāda's books. I looked up to Prabhupāda's room, and suddenly Śrīla Prabhupāda appeared at the window and looked down at the harināma party. Pleased at the sight, he smiled broadly. Immediately it was clear to me what to do.

"I remember that day well. Prabhupāda's glance and smile had made me so enthusiastic that even after the party returned, I went back out with Vāsudeva, and we just continued to chant and dance through the

streets of London and distribute Back to Godhead magazines. We felt so inspired by Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal presence and spiritual potency that we didn't care for anything else in the world. Just as Lord Caitanya would give people spiritual energy simply by looking at them or embracing them, Śrīla Prabhupāda would empower his followers in similar ways.

Vāsudeva Dāsa: "As soon as I heard that Śrīla Prabhupāda would come to London and we would go there to see him, I painted a miniature of the six Gosvāmīs for him. When I presented my little gift in the presence of a few other devotees, he was so moved that tears began gliding down his cheeks. For many years, Śrīla Prabhupāda lived next to Rūpa Gosvāmī's samādhi tomb in Vṛndāvana, and his spontaneous reaction showed me that he was undoubtedly a very intimate associate of the direct disciples of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

"Shortly after his arrival, Prabhupāda asked me to touch up the Deities at Bury Place, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Londonīśvara. He stood behind me to supervise the work, and he was quite specific about Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's smile. Although it was intense to work under the watchful eye of the spiritual master, I

felt doubly rewarded once the retouching was successfully completed.

"A few days later, Śrīla Prabhupāda called me to his room and explained in detail another project he wanted me to get involved in: the design of the temple in Mayapur. His enthusiasm was fresh and contagious, like that of a child, and I became so inspired that for weeks I slept only a few hours a night. I wanted to spend as much time as possible at the drawing board."

As soon as the first acres of land in Mayapur had been put into ISKCON's name in May, Śrīla Prabhupāda had begun making concrete plans to develop the project. He had asked Acyutānanda Swami, who was in charge of supervising the preliminary work of fencing and building a straw hut, to submit a weekly progress report. Now, as the first sketches of the future temple were being designed, Prabhupāda informed his managers in India of the development. To Girirāja in Bombay he wrote:

I have already engaged Nara Narayana, Vasudeva and Ranchor to prepare a grand scale plan for the Mayapur land, and as soon as it is prepared, Nara Narayana will go there.

Tamal Krishna, who was now the GBC for India, received the following letter:

We are making a very gorgeous plan for Mayapur, and if you all together can give shape to this plan, it will be unique—if not in the whole world, then at least in all of India. I am giving instruction to all the workers here and they are doing nicely, I think when Bhavananda and Nara Narayana go to India, they will carry the plans with them.

Vāsudeva Dāsa: "I used to sleep in front of Prabhupāda's door, and sometimes he came out in the middle of the night just to discuss a new concept. He envisioned exactly where paintings of kṛṣṇa-līlā and caitanya-līlā should be displayed. Again and again he came up with new ideas, changed them back and forth, and even did some drawings himself. It became obvious to me that the construction of a wonderful temple at Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's birthplace was one of Śrīla Prabhupāda most cherished dreams."

Śacīnandana Swami: "I was fortunate enough to take part in some preaching programs that the devotees

arranged. Śrīla Prabhupāda would sit on his vyāsāsana and preach with great concentration. At the end of the talks, he would invite everybody to join in kīrtana. One evening, during kīrtana, he suddenly stepped down from his vyāsāsana with great dignity and began to dance. Naturally, when Prabhupāda began to dance, all the devotees also danced, and the whole audience also danced in ecstasy.

"Some days Śrīla Prabhupāda went to the temple room while everyone else was taking breakfast prasādam. He would stand in front of the Deities for a long time, apparently absorbed in prayer and direct communion with Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Londonīśvara.

"One incident reveals how I came to understand that the pure devotee is in touch with Kṛṣṇa and that Kṛṣṇa tells him everything. I used to wash the Deity plates after the morning offering, and I didn't like this service at all. One day, the temple president came into the kitchen and declared, 'Prabhupāda says that the Deity plates are dirty. Kṛṣṇa has told him. He requests that this be corrected immediately.' I thought, 'Oh, no, this is my fault; I didn't wash them carefully enough.'

"Although I felt blissful in Kṛṣṇa consciousness after Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival, I later found myself tossing in an ocean of doubts. Māyā had come to test me. She confronted me with my attachments: friends, schoolmates, band members, my girl friend—all of them had 'come' to London to get me out of the temple—even my grandfather, on his deathbed in Hamburg, was asking for me. I became weak. I became resistant to Śrīla Prabhupāda. I thought, 'I'll leave this movement. There is simply too much to give up.' To have a reason to leave, I decided to involve Prabhupāda in a contradiction by asking him a question. I foolishly wanted to show him my superiority.

"The next morning, after the lecture, I challenged, 'If Kṛṣṇa is all good, and if He is the creator of everything, why has He made this material world, which is full of troubles for us conditioned souls?' At first, Prabhupāda didn't seem to understand me. I had to ask my question a second time. But again he said, 'What is it?' I felt already a little miserable.

"The third time, Prabhupāda acknowledged my question and replied forcefully: 'Not Kṛṣṇa has created māyā, you have created māyā!' His strong

words blasted my rebellious mind like a bomb. Kṛṣṇa was not at fault. I was at fault!

"In this way Prabhupāda saved me. That was enough. I decided not to leave. I surrendered. I had already packed my things, but I unpacked them again, while thinking to myself, 'I will stay in this movement no matter what. I may make it in this lifetime, or it may take me many lives.' Prabhupāda had blessed me with his mercy."

* * *

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami: "Kṛṣṇa Dāsa arranged for me to get married in Berlin, and I returned to Hamburg late in the summer of 1971. Soon I had to get a job to maintain myself and help clear the temple's debt. But then everybody stopped working, and I wrote a letter to Śrīla Prabhupāda explaining to him that I was frustrated being employed by nondevotees and would rather go somewhere and preach, leaving my pregnant wife in the care of the temple. But Prabhupāda didn't approve of my idea:

Your duty is to take charge of your wife. So you can stick to your job and maintain your wife and family and give as much as possible to the

Hamburg temple. You cannot be irresponsible to your wife and child. That is not allowed.

If you can go with your wife to Munich to open a center there, certainly I have no objection. That is a different thing. But you cannot leave your wife to go to Munich.

"Then I made friends with a hippie visiting our temple in Hamburg. He was from Munich; he lived in a commune on the outskirts of the city. He invited the devotees to come, and I thought I should go there and live with him. I could take my wife with me. The Hamburg devotees thought it was a great idea, because in this way they would get rid of me—after all, householders were a burden for the temple.

"The Munich commune was in a two-storey house, and I moved in with my friend. I was shaven-headed, with tilaka, and wore a dhotī as usual, and the first thing I did was hold a kīrtana and afterward cut up prasādam apples and pass them out. In the beginning everybody came and took part out of curiosity, but later they began losing interest.

"Every day I went on harināma with my wife. We put down a straw mat on the sidewalk on one of the busy

shopping streets in Munich and just chanted with a small pair of karatālas. I would place a poster of Prabhupāda in front of me and a sign that read: 'I am a disciple of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. I have come to your city to open a Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple. Please help me.' People would throw their coins into a basket, and from time to time I stopped and gave a short explanation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and invited interested people to see me.

"A few persons visited me in the commune, some of them well dressed, in suits and ties, carrying briefcases. The commune members became uneasy having all these visitors come to their place. So they had me shift to the basement, into a dark room painted black, with a red light bulb. I knew it was time for a change.

"Fortunately, I had been introduced to a couple living in the city, and they invited me to their home. There I held programs and distributed prasādam. When I asked them to help me find a place for a temple, the girl said, 'Opposite our house is a storefront for rent.' I moved in. It was an old building, and the part I rented consisted of one long room and a bathroom.

So I partitioned the room with curtains: one part temple room, one part kitchen, one part my wife's room, and so forth. I put a copy of the Īśopaniṣad in the window and displayed another copy open, so people could read a verse and purport, and many people stopped and looked.

"It was an old house, and there was an open exit in the back of my room leading to the staircase. After a short while, our neighbors were beginning to freak out because of the early kīrtanas and the clouds of incense and cough-inducing masala regularly wafting through the house. In fact, every day when one of them came down the stairs to go to work, he mockingly repeated the last line from one of our early-morning chants: 'Jaya jagadīśa hare! Jaya jagadīśa hare!'

"We had received a case of Īśopaniṣads, but we didn't know how to distribute books, so I would sit down on my mat, put the books in front of me with a sign next to them—5 DM—and wait for somebody to pick up a copy from the stack and give the requested donation. But all that changed as soon as Haṁsadūta came to Munich with the Hamburg devotees and showed us how to do saṅkīrtana. He taught us to put a magazine

into a person's hand, show him a picture of the devotees, and say, 'This is us. This is our magazine. This is me. We are doing this and that.' After the devotees had learned the technique, our distribution increased beyond our wildest expectations."

* * *

When Śrīla Prabhupāda received Sucandra's (Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami's) progress report on the preaching in Munich, he assured him of Kṛṣṇa's help if he simply dedicated himself to canvassing on behalf of the Supreme Lord:

I am very glad to know that you are working sincerely to distribute this great science to the people of Germany. Not only the people in Germany, but all over the world, people are suffering due to lack of this knowledge. When the son is suffering, the father is also afflicted. So Krishna, the Supreme Father, does not like to see his parts and parcels suffering in the material world. To deliver the fallen souls, He gives His instruction, He sends His representatives, and sometimes He even comes Himself just for the benefit of all the living

entities. So it is our duty, as His representative, to canvass. "Please take this knowledge and make your life successful." So all of you continue to push on this movement with ever-increasing enthusiasm, and Krishna will help you.

* * *

Aṣṭaratha Dāsa: "In autumn 1971, I returned to Germany. When I arrived at the Frankfurt airport, I called the temple in Hamburg, but no one answered. Later I found out that the devotees couldn't pay the phone bill and the line had been disconnected. I took the overnight train to Hamburg and a taxi from the central station to Bartelsstraße. We drove up and down the street several times, unable to find number 65; there was no sign, no picture, no mahā-mantra, nothing to indicate the existence of a temple. Finally, after asking someone, I found the warehouse in the backyard. That was a sobering experience. The run-down building was a stark contrast to the temples I had known in America.

"The devotees had just received the first printing of Īśopaniṣad, but no one knew how to distribute books. I had a little experience from doing saṅkīrtana in Washington, and when I passed out twelve books in

one day, the devotees couldn't believe it. But as time went on, the others gained experience, and soon my saṅkīrtana results were rather mediocre. So I became the cook, treasurer (for one day), temple commander, saṅkīrtana leader, and finally, pūjārī.

"The standard of Deity worship was extremely simple. We didn't know anything about chanting special mantras. While chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, we simply poured a loṭā of warm water over the Deities. The paraphernalia was kept on one of the shelves of a cupboard in the prasādam room, where the devotees kept their bowls. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa had five outfits and Lord Jagannātha three. Every morning I stood before the little drawer with the Deity clothes and thought, 'My God, which outfit shall I put on today?' In the very beginning, we used the same garlands for several days. In the evening they were put into water to keep them fresh until the next morning.

"The bhoga was simple, but Himavatī was such an expert cook that she always managed to cook tasty preparations even from the most basic ingredients. We never went to a grocer or supermarket to buy anything; instead we went to the wholesale market once a week and begged from the merchants or

picked through the half-rotten produce they had thrown out. Because entrance to the market was restricted to professionals, we had to climb over a barbed-wire fence.

"One Sunday morning, Śacīnandana and I went, and we got only a box of coconuts and a bag of potatoes. Thus during the whole week we had only coconuts and potatoes: fried coconut with mashed potatoes, grated coconut with boiled potatoes, sliced coconut with roasted potatoes, and so on.

"Apart from the toilet, there was only one sink in the whole temple, located in the prasādam room, and it served all purposes. We used it to wash the pots, wash the dishes, clean the āratī paraphernalia, take a shower, and wash clothes. Before taking a shower, you filled the sink with water, cold water, because there was no hot running water, and then you had to climb into a plastic tub in front of the sink and fetch water with a plastic measuring cup. We had no curtains, but later we got a second tub, and while one person soaped himself, another one rinsed himself.

"I arrived just when the winter began, and I remember that Śacīnandana, who suffered from bad circulation, became all blue while taking a shower

because it was so cold. Even hours later his skin color had not returned to normal. But despite all hardship, he was always enthusiastic to preach. Whenever he had the opportunity, he lectured or spoke to guests."

* * *

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "The year that Śivānanda arrived in Germany, 1968, was an extraordinary year for Europe's youth. We'd just experienced the famous Paris Spring. Burning barricades and violent clashes between students and police were still fresh in our memories. To my parent's dismay, I sympathized with the New Left and even marched in protest against the Vietnam War. I chanted 'Ho Ho Ho Chi Minh' and waved a poster of Che Guevara.

"For many of us, 1969 became the year of our first experience with psychedelics. Soon my interest shifted from an external revolution to an internal one. Herbert Marcuse was replaced with Hermann Hesse. In his book Siddharta I encountered the names Kṛṣṇa and Govinda for the first time. Those names sounded beautiful, but I had merely an aesthetic appreciation for them.

"In autumn 1969, a schoolmate played for me a record produced by George Harrison on the Beatles' new

Apple label. The singers were from the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple in London. (I envisioned a temple as described in history books, with carved stone pillars and high ceilings.) George Harrison was known for being an eccentric, but this was really far-out. Because I didn't listen to the radio, I was unaware that the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra was famous all over Europe. The album didn't impress me as something I would want to listen to over and over again. I liked better the more ethereal music of Pink Floyd and Ravi Shankar.

"What my schoolmate and most of the people around me didn't know was that since the spring I had been taking LSD and following Timothy Leary's philosophy. During our trips, my friends and I tried to tear down the walls of so-called reality and attain a continuous state of higher awareness.

"But Kṛṣṇa didn't let go. During 1971, my favorite record was an album by Quintessence. The album inside cover displayed an intriguing collage. One photo showed an altar, with paintings of Jesus, Buddha, Viṣṇu, and others, and another photo showed a banner of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and people chanting. As my interest in everything from

India grew, I eventually bought a sitar and tablas and began reading Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. I was on my way to becoming a full-fledged impersonalist.

"In January 1971, I had been drafted and got stationed at Buxtehude, a small town not far from Hamburg. On weekends I generally visited my family and friends in Düsseldorf, but sometimes I took the train to Hamburg and spent the weekend there.

"Thus it happened that one sunny June morning, as I walked down Hamburg's Mönckebergstrasse, a young man dressed like a monk handed me a leaflet and asked for a donation. I gave him only a few coins, saying I was a poor soldier, but he didn't seem to mind and let me keep the leaflet.

"After a while, approaching Dammtor, I heard music and singing that sounded Eastern. As I drew nearer, I became struck by a peculiar sight. On a small bridge leading to a park, five figures were swaying back and forth, their arms up, and singing to the lively rhythm of hand cymbals and drums. These people, with strange hats covering their bald heads, looked like visitors from another planet. I was intrigued and slowly went nearer. One devotee who was handing out magazines in the crowd approached me. We got

into a conversation. And when he mentioned bhakti-yoga and the names Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, I smiled knowingly. 'Oh, I am also into this,' I said as if I knew exactly what I was talking about. 'My favorite books are Jnāna-yoga and Bhakti-yoga, by Ramakrishna.' We didn't get into an argument, as far as I remember. Rather, the devotee simply handed me a card showing me how to get to their temple near Sternschanze and invited me to come to the feast that same afternoon. I assured him I would drop by.

"In the late afternoon I took the S-Bahn to Sternschanze. It was easy to find Bartelsstraße, but at number 65 there was no building, only a wall with a gate leading to a yard. I was envisioning some majestic, pillared temple. But I entered the yard and crossed it toward the right side where a warehouse stood. Next to an open door was the sign: Internationale Gesellschaft für Krischna Bewußtsein, e.V. Following an arrow, I climbed two flights of stairs and soon was greeted by the typical aromas in any ISKCON temple: the transcendental fragrances of incense and prasādam.

"A young brahmacārī let me in. His bright and smiling face, his radiant clean-shaven head and his

saffron robes seemed to belong to another world. I was engrossed in material consciousness, but somehow I could appreciate that this person was on a higher level, something I would have to endeavor for. Years later I would read in Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead:

During the rainy season, all living entities, in the land, sky and water, become very refreshed, exactly like one who engages in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. We have practical experience of this with our students in the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Before becoming students, they were dirty-looking, although they had naturally beautiful personal features; due to having no information of Kṛṣṇa consciousness they appeared very dirty and wretched. Since they have taken to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, their health has improved, and by their following the rules and regulations, their bodily luster has increased. When they are dressed with saffron-colored cloth, with tilaka on their foreheads and beads in their hands and on their

necks, they look exactly as if they come directly from Vaikuṅṭha.

"After we had exchanged some introductory words, the devotee asked me to wait, he would get me some prasādam, spiritual food. He came back with a plate of wet cauliflower, the only preparation that was left. I had come late. I relished the small yellow pieces, sprinkled with toasted cumin seeds. They tasted exotic, unlike any other food I'd tasted before. How could a simple vegetable be so delicious? After my humble meal, I bought a magazine and a package of Spiritual Sky incense and thought about leaving. Then I was told there would soon be a ceremony in the temple. I sat down against the back wall and skimmed through the pages of Zurück zur Gottheit.

"After some time, one devotee after another entered, bowed down, and offered prayers. That they touched their heads to the floor and remained in that position while murmuring something unintelligible struck me as weird, but stranger things were to come. While āratī was being offered, my attention fell on the young men and women swaying to and fro, their eyes sometimes closed, arms raised, as if in trance. I was

completely oblivious to the altar holding the Deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Lord Jagannātha. Looking at these people in another world made me feel out of place. Philosophy was one thing, but emotional trance? I felt uneasy; this wasn't for me.

"The next weekend I was back with my friends in Düsseldorf again—exploring the universe. I didn't talk much about my experience at the temple, except to say I had found good incense for our sessions. On the back of the incense packet was a picture of the universal form that impressed me. I accepted the impersonal concept, *tat tvam asi*, as the last word of transcendental knowledge: You are That. So I identified with the central figure from whom everything emanated. I was everything, and everything was me. But doubts lingered. I had been told that everything I saw existed only because it was in my mind and it had no separate existence outside my consciousness. But did that mean that when I left a place, the place ceased to exist until I returned? Then how was it that in the meantime changes took place? This was possible only if it had continued to exist during my absence. Something was amiss about impersonalism.

"During the next months, I visited the Hamburg temple occasionally but mainly to purchase incense. One Sunday in autumn, however, everything changed. The devotees presented me with the first book published in German: Śrī Īsopaniṣad. I started to read it that same night, and the Invocation and Prabhupāda's purport shook my impersonal conception at its very foundation:

The complete whole, or the Supreme Absolute Truth, is the complete Personality of Godhead. Realization of impersonal Brahman or of Paramātmā, the Supersoul, is incomplete realization of the Absolute Complete. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha, and impersonal Brahman realization is the realization of His sat feature, or His aspect of eternity, and Paramātmā or Supersoul realization is the realization of His sat and cit features, His two aspects of eternity and knowledge. Realization of the Personality of Godhead, however, is realization of all the transcendental features: sat, cit and ānanda (bliss). When one realizes the

Supreme Person, he realizes these aspects in complete form (vigraha). Thus the complete whole is not formless. If He were formless, or if He were any less than His creation in any way, He could not be complete. The complete whole must contain everything both within and beyond our experience, otherwise He cannot be complete.

"I wasn't absolutely convinced immediately, but I kept reading. An inner voice told me that I was on the right track. Prabhupāda's powerful words chiseled away my stonelike ignorance. Ramakrishna also spoke about bhakti-yoga, but he described the devotee's remaining separate in relation to the Absolute as a matter of choice, and not one he favored. He said it was as if a salt puppet preferred to remain at the shore of the ocean instead of entering into the water, dissolving itself, and becoming one with everything. Śrīla Prabhupāda smashed this conception:

Mental speculators do not know that Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Personality of Godhead, that the impersonal Brahman is the glaring effulgence of

His transcendental body and that Paramātmā, the Supersoul, is His all—pervading representation. Nor do they know that Kṛṣṇa has His eternal form with its transcendental qualities of eternal bliss and knowledge. The dependent demigods and great sages imperfectly consider Him to be a powerful demigod, and they consider the Brahman effulgence to be the Absolute Truth. Kṛṣṇa's devotees who surrender unto Him in unalloyed devotion, however, can know that He is the Absolute Person and that everything emanates from Him. Such devotees continuously render loving service unto Kṛṣṇa, the fountainhead of everything.

"This was the true meaning of bhakti-yoga: the part that emanated from the Absolute Person rendering loving service unto Him. By December it was clear to me I had come to a crossroads. Prabhupāda was calling me, but the voice of attachment seemed to be equally strong. If I accepted Kṛṣṇa consciousness I would have to give up doing my own thing, my hippie friends, my psychedelics, and countless other dear things. I would have to surrender. That night I hardly

slept. In my mind I was debating the issue. When the first light of day appeared, I concluded there was no other choice: I had to surrender. Truth is truth—there was no way around it.

"I still had half a year of military service before me, but I was eager to apply Kṛṣṇa consciousness in my life as far as possible. The Hamburg devotees supplied me with all the necessary paraphernalia to begin spiritual life: a set of japa beads, a beautiful Indian poster of Kṛṣṇa (Murlimanohar), tapes of Śrīla Prabhupāda's lectures, and a service. When Hamsadūta learned that I had graduated with good scores in English and German, he asked me if I would like to translate. I readily agreed and was given a copy of *The First Step in God Realization*, the first chapter of the Second Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which at that time was being published chapter by chapter. In the military I had plenty of time because I usually stayed in a communications tower waiting for Morse code messages. Writing by hand on the backs of the message-pad paper, I began what was to become my main service: translating and producing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books."

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Although Hamsadūta's return to Germany had changed the winds, and book distribution was continuously increasing, Śrī Īsopaniṣad was the only book the devotees had to offer people. The situation in Holland and France was similar, and Śrīla Prabhupāda noted that the slow production of books was hampering the overall effect of his preaching mission. He had had high hopes that ISKCON Press Europa, the multilingual translation department in Hamburg, could produce literature regularly in German, French, and Dutch. But the project had fallen apart.

Back in the States, Yogeśvara had joined ISKCON Press in Brooklyn, and he was trying from there to prepare publications for Europe. When Śrīla Prabhupāda received a copy of a Dutch Back to Godhead at the end of 1971, he thanked his disciple and encouraged him to continue, but he also made it clear that he had expected more:

I am very pleased to see that the foreign literature is being produced nicely under your enthusiastic supervision. Just try to increase more and more our output of such books and

magazines in many languages. Otherwise how will preaching go on in these places? Though we have been settled in European countries for many years now, only now you are printing the first book in French language, and there is only one book done in German language. So the record has not been good, therefore our preaching work in these countries has not been going very well, and I think now things are not going too well in France and Germany centers. So if somehow or other you can produce profuse books for these places, spend your all time translating, organizing, printing and distributing such books in foreign languages, then I think you will be able to improve the situation there. If there are amply books, everything else will succeed. Practically our Society is built on books. One book is not very impressive. Still, a blind uncle is better than no uncle at all, so it is very nice that one book has appeared, and that BTG is appearing at least several issues in other languages. But now try to produce at least four or five new books per year in several languages, plus regularly BTG every

month. That will be your success.

Two weeks later, he again emphasized the same point to Haṁsadūta:

I am always wondering why after so many years nothing can be done to print profusely my books and literatures in European languages. Translators are there, all facilities of German first-class printing machines are there—simply we are not serious to do it. Now you and Krishna das work combinedly to arrange for printing of so many books in Germany, French, and other languages. That will be a great help to me.

In the early summer, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa had left Germany out of frustration with the seemingly hopeless situation. But when he learned that things were improving under Haṁsadūta's leadership, he reconsidered his decision and returned to Hamburg. Śrīla Prabhupāda urged him also to print and distribute more books:

Distributing literatures in German language is the most important task ahead, and it is very good your proposal to print locally—but why it was not done before? Anything locally available is better, if the supply is regular. If you can arrange for that, then do it. I do not know why in Europe nothing has been done to print books. So many years you have been there, and still there is no literature in European languages. Why is it that you cannot find out some formula for printing nicely? I think there is no shortage of translators. Better if you turn your attention to this project immediately.

"Whenever you get money, print books!" Śrīla Prabhupāda had made these words of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī his life and soul, and he was firmly convinced that all success would come if he simply tried to carry out this instruction of his Guru Mahārāja.

Consequently, he pushed his disciples to follow in his footsteps and help him fulfill the order of his spiritual master. Prabhupāda was so keen on getting his message across that he didn't limit his instruction to

Hamsadūta, who had been put in charge of Germany in Kṛṣṇa Dāsa's absence, but also repeated the same idea to all his disciples responsible for pushing forward the preaching—Śivānanda, Maṇḍalibhadra, and Sucandra.

When Maṇḍalibhadra assured Śrīla Prabhupāda that he was dedicated to translating his books into German, Prabhupāda acknowledged his goodwill but stressed again the point of increasing the so-far meager results:

My first concern is that my books shall be published and distributed profusely all over the world. Practically, books are the basis of our Movement. Without our books, our preaching will have no effect. So I am so much englandened that you are enthusiastic to please me in this way, and that you are very determined to continue translating profusely. If you can increase translating more and more, that will advance you more and more in spiritual life. Krishna will give you all help.

Chapter 8

A Time of Expansion

After Sucandra successfully opened a preaching center in Munich in 1971, some of the other experienced devotees also tried to start centers. Within a span of a few months, centers opened in Heidelberg, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, and Düsseldorf.

Prabhupāda meanwhile had established the GBC, the Governing Body Commission, to help him manage his steadily growing movement. Because the first GBC secretaries had acted for years as temple presidents, they had tendencies to continue getting involved in the details of management and to keep a tight control on the initiatives of the new presidents. In a letter to Hamsadūta, Prabhupāda clarified what he had in mind as the duties of the GBC:

So as GBC you must see to it that the highest standards of routine work are maintained throughout all the centers, and that chanting, rising early, cleansing, and all other aspects of

our regular program may not be neglected. That is our first business. GBC men should not dictate very much, simply supervise and see that the standards are maintained. The individual presidents should be more managerial, more individual, and you can supervise, and if some defect is detected, you can make suggestions how to correct it. But if we lose individuality and simply become mechanical, what is the point?

Actually, as far as Germany was concerned, Kṛṣṇa Dāsa was officially the GBC, while Haṁsadūta was in charge of the Mediterranean countries and the Middle East, though he had never gone there. But Kṛṣṇa Dāsa had become unsteady and left Hamburg temporarily. In his absence, Haṁsadūta did all the practical work. He was spearheading the preaching in Germany and getting tangible results.

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa had left Germany out of frustration. He had had a hard time dealing with Haṁsadūta's domineering personality. But when Prabhupāda learned that he had returned to Hamburg, he encouraged him to give it another try and to establish

a working relationship with his godbrother:

I am very much pleased that you are now in Germany and that everything is going very nicely there. You stay there in Hamburg with Hansadutta for some time and make that center very strong, then you may both return as it was, and Hansadutta may go to his zone of Mediterranean countries and Near East, and you as husband and wife can conduct everything there. Mātājī Himavati can train your wife or someone how to worship the Deities nicely, and you both stay there for the time being. You are both men of experience, so work together combinedly to make Germany zone very strong.

But Kṛṣṇa Dāsa soon concluded that it was too demanding to cooperate with Haṁsadūta. In early February, 1972, he left Hamburg for Sweden. Although he had acted without consulting Prabhupāda, his spiritual master tried to encourage him by sending him an appreciative letter:

I am very glad that you are trying something there, I have heard Sweden is a very good field. So I have informed Hansadutta that you may stay there and work for opening a branch if there is good response. And so far money and books, I have informed Karāndhara what is the position and he shall be sending you some money for immediately renting one place for temple, as well as sufficient stock of literatures. Without such books and magazines, our preaching work has no authorized basis, so there must be always books. Now you develop there very nicely, it is Krishna's grace you are there, so just as you practically developed first the Hamburg center, so you will be getting the extra credit for starting Sweden branch.

... I think that if you go on in this way and spend your whole time preaching and engaging others to hear you and become themselves engaged in Krishna's service, that will cure you of all misgivings and miserable conditions.

... And I am also aware that sometimes Hansadutta will be very stubborn, but he is also doing something there, so why not let him go on,

and you take charge of opening branches in those northern European countries like Sweden, and that will be very much appreciated by me. If you require some more help in any way, just inform and I shall do the needful, do not worry.

Haṁsadūta increased the print run of *Zurück zur Gottheit* to 50,000 copies. For Śrīla Prabhupāda, the key to success in any preaching effort was the distribution of transcendental knowledge, and he was extremely pleased when he heard that Haṁsadūta was trying his best to fulfill this desire. *Phalena paricīyate*: he judged a thing by its result. New devotees were coming and new centers being opened. To Śrīla Prabhupāda, Haṁsadūta's success indicated that he was the right person to spread Lord Caitanya's mission in Germany.

I am very much pleased to hear from Mandali Bhadra that so many BTG's in German language are being printed and distributed by you, and also that you have opened so many centers in Germany. You are the right person to control over Germany, so Krishna will give you strength,

and I'm sure you will be successful. Your German blood injected with KC drug will do tremendous good to the German people. So I think that you shall remain in charge of German-speaking centers of Europe, and let us keep Krishna das in charge of Scandinavian zone, for developing Sweden and other places in the far northern part. Now you develop Germany very nicely, perfectly, and turn the whole nation into devotees, that is your task, and later we shall see, but I am thinking to appoint other qualified men to supervise as GBC members for Mediterranean, Near East and African countries, as these areas also need to be developed, but you are so much necessary and important there in Germany, and practically Germany is the most progressive country in Europe, so I cannot think of your being absent from there.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was showering his blessings on Hamsadūta, though he was aware of his disciple's driving, ambitious nature, which caused frequent clashes with his godbrothers. Prabhupāda also wrote

to Mandalibhadra on the same day he wrote to Hamsadūta. He stressed again the importance of making the Vaiṣṇava philosophy available to the German public:

It appears that in Germany we have got very good possibility, and I am glad to hear from Hansadutta that he has expanded more centers, and that all programs are increasing. That is his success and your success. Actually, everyone in the world can accept this Movement very easily. My angle of vision is that throughout the whole world everyone is good and innocent, only they have been misled and corrupted by rascal leaders. If you can organize everything nicely, the Americans and Europeans of the future will come out very nice, that is my opinion.

... As I have told you before, you are the chief editor of German BTG, in charge of its writing, translating, subject matter, content, everything, so I have complete trust in you for this, now do it nicely. When you are finished with Bhagavad-gita, then we shall see what shall be the next book for translating. But I think the

German people are very philosophically-minded, and they will appreciate the higher philosophy of TLC, or the science of NOD. This we can decide later, first finish the work at hand. Actually, these four books: Krishna, TLC, NOD, and Bhagavad-gita, if these four books are translated and distributed widely in German language, alone they are sufficient to give everyone the whole contents of Krishna Consciousness subject matter. So try for all of them, why just one or two.

But Maṇḍalibhadra was feeling increasingly uncomfortable. In the beginning he appreciated Hamsadūta's abilities to get things done and inspire others, but Hamsadūta's free-wheeling and sometimes eccentric personality was at odds with Maṇḍalibhadra's more conservative and structured character. As time went on, he took part less in the temple's activities, and naturally his translation work suffered. Occasionally, he would come by for an evening āratī. As a family man, he was working, and the devotees did not hide their criticism of his often dressing in street clothes and putting on 'water tilaka'

(applying a tilaka mark on the forehead with water instead of clay, so it won't be seen).

But besides disagreeing with Hamsadūta about the management, Maṇḍalibhadra had deeper misgivings. His wife was initiated by Vāmana Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda's godbrother Sadānanda Swami, and Maṇḍalibhadra had been exposed to the views and mood of the Gaudiya Math, which in some ways were at odds with Prabhupāda's preaching spirit.

Thus it came as no surprise that Maṇḍalibhadra gradually drifted further and further away, until he stopped coming to the temple altogether. Hamsadūta didn't mind. Actually, he felt relief. To deal with Maṇḍalibhadra had been a headache; as his peer, he couldn't be pushed around. And Hamsadūta had been completely dependent on Maṇḍalibhadra to get translated material to publish.

In conversations, Hamsadūta had already prepared Śrīla Prabhupāda for the transition. He had pointed out that the book production was being held up because Maṇḍalibhadra had been appointed as the ultimate authority. It was he who had to check all the translations, and this had become more and more of a bottleneck. When Prabhupāda heard this, he

rescinded Maṇḍalibhadra's authority and gave Hamsadūta a free hand to manage the publication of his books.

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "I had met Maṇḍalibhadra a couple of times, but only briefly, and we never developed a working relationship. By the time I moved into the temple to take up the translation work full-time, he had practically given up his affiliation with ISKCON.

"The great task at hand was the translation of Bhagavad-gītā. The unabridged version had not yet been printed in English, but Hamsadūta had received the final layout, and he was eager to publish this most important book as soon as possible. But being a new devotee, I didn't feel qualified to translate the Bible of Kṛṣṇa consciousness all by myself.

"Śacīnandana loved Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. After only a year in the temple he was known to be well-versed in the philosophy, and he used every free minute to study. He wanted to translate, but his German lacked elegance. So we formed a translation team. Later Pṛthu, another high school graduate, joined us and gave the manuscript a final polishing. "

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Pṛthu Dāsa: "The death of my younger brother at age seven figured decisively in my spiritual development. He died of cancer, and I asked our priest, 'How is this possible, because in the Bible it says that everyone reaps what he sows?' But the priest had no answer. I insisted: 'It is clearly said that you reap what you sow, so what has my little brother sown that within seven years he dies in agony of a cancerous brain tumor?' Actually, his head had been opened several times by the medical faculty of a university, but all their efforts were of no avail. So when I received no answer, I turned toward atheism. I thought, 'If there is no justice, there is no God.' I sympathized with Ernest Hemingway's view of existence as 'a trip from nowhere to nowhere, always and forever to nowhere.' This happened in 1960.

"In the mid-sixties I read Hesse's Siddharta, and it became clear to me that the real meaning of 'everyone reaps what he sows' is that we get the results of our activities from past lives. I became convinced of the law of karma and reincarnation. As in the physical world every action has a reaction, so on the human level everyone is suffering and enjoying the results of their deeds in due course of

time. This made sense. And it answered the age-old question of Job: Why do the wicked prosper while the righteous suffer?

"I understood that my brother did not suffer without reason in the hands of brutal fate, which dishes out enjoyment and suffering unconcerned. Fate isn't blind or random. The law of karma, combined with the idea of reincarnation, gave meaning to the sufferings and enjoyments in the world, death being the end of a chapter but not the end of the story. I became attracted to Eastern philosophies and began to read books about Tibetan mysticism, Buddhism, and Zen.

"In 1968, I enrolled at the University of Bonn to study comparative religion. We read various scriptures, including the Bhagavad-gītā, and it became clear to me that the East, particularly India, had all the answers. *Ex oriente lux*: light comes from the East.

"Then I became sidetracked by the student revolution and joined a political commune in Berlin and became a member of the SDS, the German Socialist Student Union. The next step in expanding my consciousness was taking psychedelic drugs, because I realized that

the external circumstances that influence consciousness are not everything, as is thought in Marxist philosophy. There is also an internal dimension.

"But after some time, the hopes for a new generation of 'beautiful people' faded away and the counterculture turned ugly. People hadn't changed a bit in spite of all the talking. Paradise was as far away as ever. In fact, everyone's mind was wearing out, because the higher we flew, the further we fell. Once having seen everything and done everything, I came to the conclusion: Choose worship or suicide. I was convinced it is useless to live without a spiritual purpose.

"During my student days I had heard a record by the Fugs that had the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra on it, and I had listened to it over and over again. And then there was the record by Quintessence which contained the song 'Buddha, Moses, Jesus.' It showed on the cover a hodgepodge altar with pictures of Buddha, Jesus, and other spiritual personalities. So I made a similar altar, where I burned incense and bowed down. And over my bed I hung a huge poster of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa that I'd bought in a head shop in Frankfurt. Some Hindu

gods, I thought. That was in the summer of 1970.

"As the days and weeks passed, I wondered how to make my realizations a reality; what group of people to live with to practice spiritual life together. I began rising early, gave up psychedelic drugs, became a vegetarian, stood on my head and practiced prānāyama. But above all, I was waiting for a sign from heaven, some sort of writing on the wall, to show me the path of perfection.

"In the winter of 1971, a friend of mine confided to me that he was contemplating suicide. We talked for hours, and then it occurred to me to light some incense and play my guitar. While playing, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra came to my mind, and we ended up chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa for hours. Of course, we had no idea what we were doing, but it was a strangely ecstatic experience, and my friend began to feel an unknown happiness deep within. He realized that only his thoughts were driving him mad. We concluded that he should just forget about watching the heavens and hells of his autobiographical drama, throw the film away, and become positive. That helped him out for the time being.

"The next day I met him again, and when I saw him

coming toward me from a distance, I had an intuition that this was a crucial moment in my life. I went straight up to him and said, 'Whatever you have, please give it to me. I have been waiting for this so long.' He looked at me strangely and said, 'I have this book for you.' He pulled out of his pocket an Īsopaniṣad. It was a magical coincidence. His parents had bought the book on the street in Hamburg and given it to him, because they knew he was interested in spiritual things, and now he gave it to me, because he felt grateful that I had prevented him from committing suicide.

"For that evening, I had booked a train to Paris, where my older sister lived, and during the ride I read the Īsopaniṣad from cover to cover. Once I began reading I could not stop. It appeared to me that this ancient scripture contained the conclusion to everything I had thought about and read about. It brought everything into focus. Whatever I had been thinking and wondering about, here it was, expressed to perfection. I came to the end. I closed the book. It was four o' clock in the morning, December 28, 1971. The train was approaching Paris. I knew I had come to the end of a long journey.

"I dumped my things at my sister's and went to the Quartier Latin, the meeting place of the students and hippies. Trying to find out about the Hare Kṛṣṇas, I was directed to a shop whose owner knew the devotees. In his shop window there was a Kṛṣṇa book displayed, opened in such a way that you could see the front and back covers. And there I saw again a picture of the man I read about in Īsopaniṣad: 'Śrīla Prabuddha'—that's what I thought his name was. So when I saw the bright smiling face of the Prabuddha, I thought, 'This is the man I have to meet. I have to know more about him.'

"I got the address of the temple and took a metro to Fontenay-aux-roses, where the devotees rented a small house. When I arrived, Hari-vilāsa Prabhu was standing at the entrance. There were scents of incense and prasādam, and the whole vibration was something foreign and exotic. I walked up to him, just as the devotees were about to leave for saṅkīrtana, and I said, 'I want to join.' He replied, 'Well, that can be done. In the meantime, try one of these,' and he pulled a white sweetball out of his pocket. I popped it into my mouth. He asked me, 'How do you like it?' I said, 'It's simply wonderful!' 'Well, that's what it's

called,' he said as he smiled.

"I went with them on saṅkīrtana. I walked behind them, and with my long hair and beard, I looked like Jesus beating a gong. By the time we came back in the evening, Maṅḍākinī Dāsī had prepared an outstanding feast, and Hari-vilāsa gave an amazing lecture. After it, I walked up to him and said, 'I want to join right away.' 'Are you sure?' he asked me. I said, 'Listen, this is what I have been looking for.' Then he suggested, 'Why don't you go to Hamburg? You are German, so it may be better for you there.' 'All right,' I said. I took the overnight train to Hamburg on January 1, 1972.

"When I came to Bartelsstraße and climbed the stairs, I was again greeted by exotic scents, and the first person I met was Hamsadūta. I did not need much convincing, so after ten minutes I pulled up my hair and asked him, 'What about this?' While shaving me up, he explained that I had to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and someone handed me beads, and I began to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa. After one round I said, 'All right, I'm done.' He replied, 'No, we chant sixteen rounds like that every day.' I thought, 'Sixteen? My God!'

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In May 1972, Śivānanda went to Heidelberg to establish a temple and shortly afterward was joined by Pṛthu, who was eager to help open a new preaching field in Germany's most famous university town. Because it was not easy to find a suitable place for a temple, Śivānanda was staying in the table-tennis room of the student union at Heidelberg University. The big hall of Ping-Pong tables had a stage at the front, and Śivānanda lived behind the stage curtain.

Pṛthu Dāsa: "When I got there, Śivānanda greeted me with a broad smile and said, 'Welcome to the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple.' It was dreadful, because every evening the hall filled up with students who played Ping-Pong for hours.

"After some time we met a hippie couple who had taken prasādam at the temple in San Francisco, and they invited us to stay with them. From their flat near the Main Street we would go out every afternoon for saṅkīrtana. I would stand on one side of the street, chanting the mahā-mantra and om purṇam adaḥ purṇam idam, while Śivānanda stood on the other side and distributed BTGs. Sometimes I would be

surrounded by hundreds of people, because the sight of Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees then was still something unusual in Germany. I always got into huge arguments with the Christians.

"Śivānanda had suggested that I approach Śrīla Prabhupāda for initiation, and one day I came back from saṅkīrtana and saw these big beads hanging out of the mailbox. In the initiation letter, Prabhupāda wrote:

My dear son, I have given you the spiritual name of Prithu das. King Prithu was the ideal ruler of the citizens. So you should also set the example of ideal person and spread this ideal very widely to the citizens of your country.

"One day I saw a newspaper ad that offered a small house with a garden. It rented for only 400 DM, and the owner asked for a presentation. We went there one afternoon. At least forty people had gathered in that little house, and one after another they went into a room to speak with the owner. There were solicitors, real estate agents, students, and housewives, and we provoked some murmurs and giggles. When

our turn came, Śivānanda explained Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the owner, and I said that we wanted this place for preaching, or teaching people about spiritual life, and if he would give us the place, we would convert it into a learning center. Finally, everyone had to gather in the hall and wait. Then the door opened, and the representative of the owner gave the verdict. He coughed nervously and then announced that the house would be let to the Hare Kṛṣṇa group. Of course, that caused a bit of a sensation.

"So we converted the house into a nice little temple. The vibration was upbeat, and we would invite students to visit in the evening. In this way it developed, and before we knew it, the place began to fill up. Then Hamsadūta visited us and realized that we 'had the scene'—in fact, a better scene than the Hamburg temple—and thus he shifted his headquarters to Heidelberg. He used to sit in the hallway and preach all day. I brought people every day to the temple and he just preached nonstop. It was heaven."

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Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa: "In 1969, I enrolled at the

University of California, in Berkeley, to study architecture. Berkeley attracted all kinds of characters: spiritual seekers, political agitators, and so on. I took an interest in spiritual subjects and read books on yoga and mysticism. And occasionally I visited so-called spiritual groups, but I almost immediately became convinced they were bogus.

"Because I was passing daily through the main gate of the campus, I would see the Hare Kṛṣṇas. Generally they would be there about noon, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, distributing BTGs and prasādam. You couldn't avoid going by them. I would see them, and I would think, 'Pretty far out,' but I would never talk to them. Sometimes I would stand at a safe distance and watch, and I would think, 'Well, you gotta hand one thing to these people, they always look happy.' I saw some genuineness to it; it wasn't pasted-on happiness. They were devotees day-in and day-out, so it couldn't be fake. One black-bodied devotee playing mṛdaṅga looked especially blissful. So all this made a strong impression on me.

"A few months later I met the devotees on harināma, and I stopped, listened, stood there a while and sat down, but then they ended their session and moved

on. Nobody talked to me, and I was just left sitting there. The kīrtana had been sweet, and I felt a strong attraction to it.

"A few months later, as I was walking down Telegraph Avenue, I met a tall boy from the temple, which was nearby, who had a bowl of fruit salad that resembled an orange sauce. It was Sunday, and this was probably a leftover from the feast. With a big smile he was going around and daubing it out to everyone. So I took a dollop in my hand and slurped it up, and two strong impressions were there: a special, unique taste, and the devotee's blissfulness, though he was completely unassuming.

"Once in a while, I took a BTG that devotees distributed, but as I skimmed through the pages I felt it was all a fantasy. I didn't take it seriously. I never read one from cover to cover. I sort of felt that it might be interesting to find out more, but, after all, I was a student; I didn't pursue it.

"Some months later, I was walking through what is called the Eucalyptus Grove, an area on the west side of campus, and in that park I was thinking, 'If I want to really understand what's what, I need a teacher.' I hadn't heard the word guru, but I felt a need for

nothing less than a perfect person to guide me.

"Then, at the end of 1971, I decided to take a break from college, because the draft was off. The Vietnam War was on, so going to college was a convenient way to avoid going to Vietnam. But then Nixon started the lottery system, and I got a high enough number that I didn't have to worry about losing my student deferment. So I gave a notice of withdrawal and went to Europe to see the world, in a mood that something significant had to change. I thought that maybe I would never come back. And, if all else failed, I had an address in Germany of an old business partner of my grandfather, where I could get a job.

"So I went to England and then started hitchhiking around Europe: Germany, France, and down to Spain. In Barcelona a con man took me for practically everything I had; he left me just enough money to take a bus to Germany. Once there, I presented myself at the company I had a recommendation for, and they gave me a job as an office boy.

"After five months (now June, 1972), I had saved enough money to venture out on my own again, still in the mood that I wanted to do something different. So one day I pondered, 'What would be really

different?' I thought, 'I know! I should look up the Hare Kṛṣṇas and check them out.' I planned to stay with them three or four weeks and then move on. I knew that they would probably be in places where hippies congregated, either in Berlin or Heidelberg.

"I had been reading a book about Patañjali's yoga system, and the author mentioned several times that this yoga is virtually impossible to practice nowadays, but that bhakti-yoga is feasible.

"When I got to Heidelberg, I walked into the part of town where the big fountain is, and there were Śivānanda and Pṛthu on the steps playing karatālas and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. I introduced myself and said that I had encountered the devotees in California and wanted to learn more. So they took me to the room they stayed in, and there was Bhadravardhana, who kind of preached to me for the first time. But he wasn't presenting the philosophy so well, and I wasn't really inspired by him to stay.

"But I was very much attracted to Śivānanda's nature: quiet, gentle, and level-headed, too, not starry-eyed. I had seen enough starry-eyed spiritualism in Berkeley. So I asked him, 'What is the effect of chanting?' And he just said, 'Oh, it is very powerful!' So I thought,

'Wow, that's what I want.' And then he added, 'You know, this is bhakti-yoga,' and that clinched it for me. He also offered me a little prasādam—a bit of cold rice and a morsel of halavā—not an impressive meal, but I liked it. I asked him about their schedule, and when I heard that they got up at four o'clock in the morning, I immediately thought, 'Yeah, these people are serious.' So I asked him, 'Can I also come at that time?' 'Sure,' he said. So the next morning I joined them for japa. A few weeks later I was on the street in Stuttgart with a shaved head, dressed in a pink dhotī made of synthetic material, and I was selling Zurück zur Gottheit magazines for one Deutsche Mark each. Just a month after I joined, we were on our way to Paris to see Śrīla Prabhupāda."

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Nikhilānanda Dāsa: "I grew up in a small town near Hamburg, and as a child I often accompanied my mother to the city for shopping. One day, in 1969—I was about twelve years old—as we were heading for the small bridge near the Botanical Garden, we saw a huge crowd of people pushing each other to get a look at a few exotically dressed young people playing

drums and singing Hare Kṛṣṇa. I was spontaneously attracted and wanted to go nearer, but my mother pulled me by the hand and forced me to keep walking. "Since my early childhood, I had been pondering religious questions, and my mother, who considered herself an atheist, could not provide any answers. Then I became interested in science and space travel, and I spent hours imagining all the wonderful progress humanity would make within the next few decades. One evening, the thought struck me that some day I would not be here anymore to witness all the scientific advancement. That's how I became aware of death. That night I had a hard time falling asleep, because I was constantly thinking about what would happen at the time of death. Would I continue to exist, dissolve into nothing, be a thought, or be wind or inert matter?

"One day, my older sister's boyfriend told me that people in Asia believe that the soul is eternal and wanders from body to body like a ray of light until it becomes liberated and returns to an endless spiritual effulgence. This idea was fascinating, and I felt that it put me on the right track to find answers to my questions. I began to look for books on different

religions and meditation, but in those days there were only a few books about Zen Buddhism that contained instructions how to meditate, and thus I began to practice Zen.

"When I was thirteen, I adopted the external appearance of the hippies—long hair, flower jackets, and Indian ornaments—and tried to overcome duality and break through the barriers of rational thinking.

"In October 1971, a friend of mine and I were in Hamburg, and in the evening we visited the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple out of curiosity. We had seen an article about the devotees in a magazine and some of our schoolmates had been to the temple. A couple of weeks before I had seen devotees on the street asking people for donations, but I hadn't taken it seriously. I felt it was a sign of dogmatism to run around in bedsheets.

"When we arrived at Bartelsstraße, it took us a while to find the temple, because we were expecting to see an Indian-style structure, not an old warehouse. While climbing the stairs, the fragrance of incense filled me with excitement and expectation. The devotees struck me as mystical and other-worldly. I

was offered a plate of fruit prasādam, but being arrogant, I thought I was already self-satisfied and sort of an incarnation, so I took only one grape. Then we entered the temple room, but when the priest began to offer incense, I thought that I had seen enough, and we left.

"Nevertheless, on our way home, we chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, and in the following months I would chant occasionally when I was by myself and in a peaceful frame of mind. Actually, in the summer I had become a vegetarian and had also tried to practice haṭha-yoga and prāṇayama, and now that I chanted sometimes, I became a bit stricter in following the process. I began to rise early and gave up the association of friends who were party-goers and into smoking dope. But many questions remained unanswered. Was everything only a product of our sense perception and our thoughts, or was there a higher reality? I had read about nirvana and Brahman, and to me these concepts represented an ocean of love, but at times it all seemed abstract.

"I didn't feel inclined to join one of the meditation groups in Hamburg because they seemed to be after monetary gain more than enlightenment. But I felt

the need to find a yogī or guru who could teach me the real thing. I was toying with the thought of going to India, and I even began saving some money and storing food for that purpose, but being only thirteen, I hesitated to undertake such an adventure.

"One sunny spring day in 1972, I was sitting on a park bench in a reflective mood. I felt that I had come to a philosophical dead end. I had tried to reduce everything to passivity by emptying out all thoughts, but I didn't feel happy. Even in dreams I had concentrated on nirvana. I had achieved being able to make mental images lose more and more of their form and color. In the park, I contemplated a tree in front of me. It was just standing there, tolerating heat and cold, in a state of complete passivity. It was near to the ideal of eliminating all activity, nirvana, but that didn't mean the tree was an advanced spiritualist. I concluded that this could not be perfection.

"I felt lonely. I had withdrawn from most of my friends, frustrated by their superficial attitude. And I told myself, 'Actually, I do not have a single real friend. Everyone is my friend only when I give him something. Did I ever meet anyone who loved me for myself, who offered me a single thing without

expecting anything in return?" When I pictured in my mind all the people I knew, I realized that none of them fit my ideal of a real friend.

"But then I remembered my first visit to the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple. The monks had offered me a whole plate of fruits without asking me for anything in return. They were friendly and unconditional in their love. They seemed to be seriously into yoga and maybe even knew a bona fide master, a guru. I wanted to meet them again and ask them questions. But I thought that probably they had returned to India, because I hadn't seen them during the whole winter. So I gave up the idea.

"Some time later, while walking down a street near Hamburg University, I noticed a small poster on a lamp post, with a picture of a dignified-looking man in Indian dress. He had an aura of purity about him and looked absorbed in meditation. With his hands folded in prayer, he looked kind and merciful. It was Śrīla Prabhupāda, and beneath the picture was a message inviting everybody to visit the temple, chant the holy names of God, and go home with an enlivened mind. So it seemed that the temple was still there.

"A few days later I was in Hamburg again to buy some Jasmine tea and incense, and near Sternschanze I saw a group of devotees coming toward me. They were distributing magazines to the passersby and asking for donations. I quickly went to the other side of the street. If one of them approached me, I would not be able to say 'No,' being duty-bound by my identification as a spiritualist. But I had just enough money to buy tea and incense. Then Smita Kṛṣṇa Prabhu, as if inspired by the Supersoul, crossed the street at the same time as me, and when we met, he stretched out his hand and offered me a magazine and an invitation. I gave a small donation and returned home without the tea.

"But I did not regret having bought Zurück zur Gottheit. On the cover was a beautiful picture of Kṛṣṇa, and the centerfold displayed a majestic photo of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who looked very kind and merciful.

"The picture included the first verse of Gurvāṣṭaka: 'The spiritual master is receiving benediction from the ocean of mercy. Just as a cloud pours water on a forest fire to extinguish it, so the spiritual master delivers the materially afflicted world by

extinguishing the blazing fire of material existence. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master, who is an ocean of auspicious qualities.' I instantly knew I had found a bona fide guru. I hung both pictures on the wall of my room and looked at them over and over again. The magazine also had an ad for the newly translated Śrī Īsopaniṣad, and since I had been looking for a translation of the Vedic literature for a long time, I decided to visit the temple the next Sunday and buy a copy.

"At the Sunday feast I was the only guest, and for three hours Cakravartī answered all my questions. Like a sponge, I absorbed his explanations about chanting, prasādam, and the nature of the soul and the spiritual world. Then it was time for āratī, and one devotee smeared a big white tilaka on my forehead. Haṁsadūta led a melodious kīrtana on a harmonium, and during the whole āratī ceremony I floated on a mystical cloud of bliss. I knew that I had found what I was looking for, and I wanted to be part of it.

"When my mother saw the tilaka and learned what it meant—it marks the body as a temple of God—she

flew into a rage. I was only fourteen years old, and there was no chance to join the devotees yet, so I went to the temple daily after school, chanted some rounds, began to study Īsopaniṣad, and practiced the pronunciation of the mantras. Still, for many months, I was convinced that God was ultimately the impersonal Brahman, and I couldn't understand the descriptions of Kṛṣṇa as a person. I thought that maybe the devotees were wrong on this one point and that Kṛṣṇa was just the representation of love and everything beautiful. Yet I was confident that these doubts would be cleared up in time. Although I was not able to live in the temple, the devotees were very kind to me and treated me as one of them. They encouraged me to just practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness at home."

* * *

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "In the early spring of 1972, Jaya Gaura and Uthāla, two devotees from Hamburg, opened a temple in Düsseldorf, my hometown. Thus, during my last few months in the military, I could combine visits to my family with visits to the temple, and I also could show my friends firsthand what Kṛṣṇa consciousness was. But they didn't seem

interested. They resented the fact that the devotee accepts God as a person and surrenders to Him and His representative, the spiritual master. They wanted to follow their own path of enlightenment. One of them asked me, 'How do you know that some guy sitting in an attic somewhere isn't also a guru?' Of course, it was possible, but why search for somebody unknown in an attic, when Śrīla Prabhupāda was already here? Our ways parted like that, but at least my friends had accepted prasādam and had thus made the first step on the path back home, back to Godhead.

"During one weekend in Düsseldorf, Uthāla suggested to me that I shave-up. I had been with the devotees for more than half a year now, so why hide the fact? I thought about it. Within a couple of months I would be discharged from the army, so even if the soldiers harassed me, it wouldn't be for long, and who cared anyway? I had enjoyed shocking people with my long hair, beard, and weird clothing; why not with a bald head and flowing robes?

"My arrival in Buxtehude caused a small stir. I was immediately summoned to the commander's office. After I explained briefly that I had become a monk,

he dismissed me, shaking his head and saying, 'Germany's young men aren't what they used to be.' The main problem I faced was, What to eat? I could not cook for myself, so I saw no other solution than to separate the pieces of meat from the meals provided by the canteen and eat the rest. When Uthāla learned of this, he explained to me that such food was contaminated and unfit to eat. He offered to cook a bucket of halavā that I could take with me. That week my main meal every day was a big plate of cold halavā and some fruit.

"Time passed quickly, and on June 1st, I finally moved into the temple in Düsseldorf for good. The location was not bad—on one of the main arteries of the city and easily accessible by public transport—but the building was a run-down place. It served as a shelter for drug addicts and third-world aliens. The temple was on the top floor and consisted of two small rooms. One served as an office, prasādam room, and bedroom, while the other served as the temple room. Uthāla converted a small space under the roof into a makeshift kitchen. The sink was in the hallway, shared by other residents. There was no bathroom. To take a shower we had to go all the way down to the

yard and use the water hose. But Kṛṣṇa consciousness was beyond material circumstances. I didn't feel that I had lost anything by exchanging my comfortable, spacious room at home for this.

"We regularly went on saṅkīrtana on Düsseldorf's most prestigious avenue, the Königsallee. Sometimes Jaya Gaura and I were all by ourselves, so one of us would walk along the street and chant, while the other distributed magazines and collected donations. Although the response was small, we were confident that by executing the order of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, all success was guaranteed. During those days I felt especially blissful, because in two weeks we were going to drive to Paris to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. For all of us it would be the first time we would meet our spiritual master in person."

Chapter 9

"Sunrise" in Paris

Śrīla Prabhupāda, scheduled to arrive in Paris on July 20, 1972, would not go to Germany, so all the devotees in Germany, except for the pūjārīs, got into their vans and cars and traveled to France.

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "We reached the Fontenay-aux-roses temple on the evening of the 19th. Devotees from France, Holland, England, and Germany had all arrived to be with Śrīla Prabhupāda, and the small temple resembled a beehive. Wherever I went in the building, devotees were painting doors, walls, ceilings, and window sills white and blue, and Bhagavān Dāsa, the GBC for France, was directing the whole show like a military commander. Some of the devotees painted right up to the moment Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived. That morning, after breakfast, some seventy devotees drove to Orly, where Śrīla Prabhupāda's flight from London would land around noon."

Jaya Gaura Dāsa: "When I saw Śrīla Prabhupāda for the first time at the Paris airport I didn't see anything

special right away, but as he approached, I noticed tears in his eyes. And when I bowed down to offer obeisances, tears also welled up in my eyes. I found out that many devotees had a similar experience, so my conclusion is that Prabhupāda displayed spiritual emotions and thereby moved us. He was seeing that we had become devotees only by Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Transmitting a mood of intense humility and gratitude, he was just like the rays of sunshine illuminating darkness."

Bharata Dāsa: "My first encounter with Śrīla Prabhupāda at Orly was a big surprise for me. I had been initiated by mail only two months earlier, and my conception of Prabhupāda was that of a peaceful yogī. But he was so much different from what I had imagined. As soon as Prabhupāda appeared, half of the devotees began to cry. The atmosphere suddenly became surcharged with an intense feeling of love of God and endless mercy toward all the fallen souls—truly overwhelming."

Pṛthu Dāsa: "After arriving at the airport, the devotees began kīrtana. Along with some others, I went ahead to the customs area. As the sliding doors opened and closed and travelers came through one by

one, I peeked through the doors and saw Śrīla Prabhupāda twenty meters away. When he noticed us, he smiled and waved. I was so overwhelmed seeing Prabhupāda in person for the first time that I immediately fell to the ground and offered obeisances. I laughed and cried simultaneously. My body trembled, and within a few seconds I experienced all kinds of contradictory emotions. That was my first experience upon seeing Śrīla Prabhupāda."

Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa: "My first direct sight of Śrīla Prabhupāda was at the airport. The devotees had converged in the arrival hall and were receiving Śrīla Prabhupāda with a roaring kīrtana. At the moment Śrīla Prabhupāda became visible to us, he smiled broadly and waved to the devotees, still yet to clear customs. The feeling from seeing Śrīla Prabhupāda in person after hearing so much about him from devotees, seeing pictures of him, reading his books, and distributing his magazines was, of course, most exhilarating. His greatness seemed accentuated by his small physical stature and soft golden effulgence. Noting that he was even shorter than me inspired in me a particular affection, perhaps blended with protectiveness. One of my first thoughts on seeing

him was, "Yes, here is my eternal father."

"We all threw ourselves on the floor in daṇḍavats in two lines separated by an aisle for Śrīla Prabhupāda. As Śrīla Prabhupāda walked by me, his right lotus foot slightly touched my right thumb. Naturally, I felt especially blessed by the unsolicited, inadvertent touch of the pure devotee.

"After I got up, someone told me to help retrieve Prabhupāda's luggage from the baggage-claim area. Two or three of us dashed gleefully with Śrīla Prabhupāda's servant to the conveyer belt, happy to be able to render a small, practical service to His Divine Grace's tadiya (paraphernalia) . We knew that in his luggage Śrīla Prabhupāda carried his books and translation work. Indeed, one large suitcase was particularly heavy. Another, huskier devotee carried that one, while I carried one of the smaller cases."

Vaidyanātha Dāsa: "When Śrīla Prabhupāda came out of the customs area, he was surrounded by a lot of people. To me those people appeared like a gray mass, but Prabhupāda stood out like a luminous personality. With a huge smile on his face, he waved to the devotees. In contrast to the other passengers, who appeared to me like shadows, Prabhupāda seemed to

be the only real person."

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "To receive Śrīla Prabhupāda, we formed two rows and an aisle from customs all the way through the arrival hall to the VIP lounge. With our heads turned toward the area where Prabhupāda was expected, all of us were absorbed in an ecstatic kīrtana in glorification of Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee. Suddenly, the chanting gained volume, and some devotees began to jump up and down like mad. Prabhupāda's appearance was imminent. Then I saw his head: golden-hued and effulgent, almost like something carved from noble wood. His spirituality was palpable, and distinguished him from everyone else around him. Śrīla Prabhupāda's bright eyes were glancing mercifully over the assembled devotees, and at the same time he emanated a deep humility. As Prabhupāda strode down the aisle, devotees offered their obeisances one after another. Standing further down, I was waiting anxiously for Prabhupāda to pass, and when he finally was so near that I could almost touch him, I fell to the floor. My voice choked reciting the praṇāma-mantras, tears of joy sprang from my eyes, and my body shook. The whole experience lasted only a few seconds, but it left an

indelible impression on my heart.

Perhaps somebody may feel that the experiences related here are the products of sentimental imagination, but later I found that many devotees mentioned in their memories similar experiences.

Furthermore, in the Sri Caitanya-caritamrita, Madhya-lila, Chapter 11, we find a description which shows that the experience of Prabhupada's effulgent countenance conforms to the characteristics of Lord Caitanya's devotees, as observed by Maharaja Prataparudra during the Beḍā-kīrtana pastimes. He says:

“Upon seeing all these devotees, I am very much astonished, for I have never seen such an effulgence. Indeed, their effulgence is like the brilliance of a million suns. Nor have I ever heard the Lord's names chanted so melodiously.”

Prabhupada explains in the purport:

“Such are the symptoms of pure devotees when they are chanting. All the pure devotees are as

bright as sunshine, and their bodily luster is very effulgent. In addition, their performance of saṅkīrtana is unparalleled. If a devotee sticks strictly to the principles governing Vaiṣṇava behavior, his bodily luster will naturally be attractive, and his singing and chanting of the holy names of the Lord will be effective. The students of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness should note these two points and try to apply these principles in their spreading of the Lord's glories.”

Prabhupada was the living example of this phenomena, and he mentioned on several occasions that his disciples were known as “bright-faced”, having developed the same symptoms.

* * *

Bhagavān Dāsa and the other leading devotees of the French yātrā escorted Śrīla Prabhupāda into the VIP lounge, where reporters and guests waited to hear him speak. After a short kīrtana, Prabhupāda began his address by thanking the audience for taking part in the saṅkīrtana movement:

"This saṅkīrtana movement was started by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu five hundred years ago for mitigating the sufferings of the people of the world. He predicted that in every village and every town on the surface of the globe, this saṅkīrtana movement would spread and people would become happy and find peace. . . . Actually this is happening now. So our simple method is, we go everywhere, all over the world, chant this Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, and we attract people, especially the younger generation, boys and girls. Sometimes the newspaper reporters ask me why these young men and young women are very much attracted to this movement. I reply, "That is the success of the movement, because the younger generation—they are the flowers, the future hope of the country, of the world—, if they take this movement seriously, then the whole world will be happy."

Prabhupāda explained that nowadays many Indians came to the West to get an education because, from

the material point of view, Western civilization is highly advanced; but in India we find the treasure of spiritual knowledge, which is meant for the benefit of all human beings regardless of their material position. As he had done many times before, Prabhupāda lamented the fact that no scientific institution or university was studying the imperishable soul, which is the real purpose of human life.

"So it is a movement of the soul, not a political, social or religious movement. Those pertain to the perishable body. But the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement pertains to the imperishable soul. Therefore, simply by chanting this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, your heart will be gradually cleansed so that you can come to the spiritual platform. Just like here in this movement we have got students from all countries of the world, all religions of the world. But they no more think of the particular type of religion or nation or creed or color. No. All of them think of themselves as part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa.

"When we come to that platform and when we

engage ourselves in our spiritual occupation, then we are liberated. So this movement is a very important movement. It is not, of course, possible to give you all details within a few minutes, but if you are interested you can kindly contact us by correspondence or by reading our literature or by personal contact.

"Anyway, your life will be sublime. We have no such distinction, that this is India, this is England, this is France, this is Africa. We think every living entity, not only the human being, even animals, birds, beasts, trees, aquatics, insects, reptiles—all are part and parcel of God. But the lower animals are unable to receive this knowledge. The human being has developed consciousness. He can receive this knowledge of the spirit soul. So our only request is that you come forward and try to understand this philosophy and spread it for the benefit of the whole human society. Thank you very much."

After Śrīla Prabhupāda had finished his talk, he was escorted by a crowd of chanting devotees to a car that would take him to the temple. Then all the devotees

rushed to their vehicles to speed ahead and be at the temple in time for his arrival.

Harernāmānanda Dāsa: "For Prabhupāda's reception at the temple, we formed an aisle from the sidewalk to the entrance of the building. Judging from photographs in *Back to Godhead*, I had imagined Śrīla Prabhupāda to be much taller, but though he was relatively small in stature, in overall appearance he was a noble personality. Especially his hands caught my attention; they were very fine and aristocratic. My photographer's eye made me think immediately that he was someone completely different from any other person I had ever seen.

"Within myself I accepted Śrīla Prabhupāda immediately as a self-realized soul. I knew that he was the right person to take shelter of. Back in Berlin, I had inquired from the devotees whether or not Prabhupāda was self-realized, because I felt that, being conditioned myself, I could be liberated only by someone who was not conditioned. So when I finally saw Śrīla Prabhupāda in person, I was immediately struck by his spiritual potency and was convinced that he was indeed a genuine spiritual master.

"Actually, some months before coming to the temple,

I had skimmed through a copy of Śrī Īsopaniṣad in a health food store. There I had seen a picture of Prabhupāda for the first time and read about how he had gone to New York. Since I had grown up in America and had personally experienced how hellish New York is, I was truly impressed that Prabhupāda, in his advanced age, with hardly any money and support, practically without any preparation, had gone there to preach. For me this was evidence of his genuineness. Only somebody with a genuine mission would have the courage to take such a step and undergo so much hardship."

Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa: "The Paris devotees had rented a hall and some rooms at L'Ecole d'Architecture, a school of architecture, where Śrīla Prabhupāda was scheduled to give a couple of evening programs and where the visiting devotees stayed.

"As was customary on such occasions, we would hold kīrtana until Prabhupāda arrived, sat on the vyāsāsana, and began chanting Jaya Rādhā-Mādhava. It was absorbing just to watch Śrīla Prabhupāda chant; he seemed to become more and more immersed in thought of Kṛṣṇa's form and pastimes in Vṛndāvana with each successive repetition of the short song. His

eyes would generally be tightly closed, but would occasionally open to dart swiftly about the room, glancing at the devotees and guests.

"At the end of the program we held another kīrtana, and as the intensity of the chanting gradually increased, Śrīla Prabhupāda's head shook more and more, back and forth to the rhythm, as he played his karatālas and sang. A small girl—perhaps four or five years old—was dancing in front of Prabhupāda. As he opened his eyes and saw her, his grave demeanor suddenly transformed into a wide smile, and when the devotees saw Śrīla Prabhupāda smile, it was as if the smile infused everyone with renewed energy. Thus the intensity and ecstasy of the kīrtana all of a sudden increased tenfold.

"At the end of one of the lectures Śrīla Prabhupāda asked for questions. One middle-aged man—apparently a Christian—stood up and said: 'I am afraid there is no religiosity present here whatsoever!' Śrīla Prabhupāda responded immediately, with a look of genuine concern. 'Oh, you are afraid?' he wryly asked. His words so clearly cut to the core of the man's ignorance that he was left dumbfounded and simply sat down without a further

word. By this simple, disarming question, Śrīla Prabhupāda communicated volumes. One felt how unfortunate such a fearful, confused, conditioned soul is that he cannot take advantage of pure transcendental teachings, the very essence of all religion, being delivered by a self-realized person full of compassion for the foolish denizens of Kali-yuga."

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Pṛthu Dāsa: "The devotees had planned to have an installation ceremony of a medium-size set of marble Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities, and thus they were putting all their energy into making the preparations. Vāsudeva was painting the altar, and, in fact, practically the whole place was wet from fresh paint. But when Śrīla Prabhupāda assessed the situation, he became doubtful whether the French devotees would be able to provide the necessary standard of worship. He said, 'These Deities need nine brāhmaṇas to worship Them. Do we have these brāhmaṇas?' When the reply was negative, Śrīla Prabhupāda suggested that it was better not to install Them, but wait."

Aṣṭaratha Dāsa: "As soon as Haṁsadūta heard about this, he went up to Śrīla Prabhupāda's room and said:

'Prabhupāda, I want these Deities!' Prabhupāda simply said, 'Then take them.' In this way Rādhā-Madana-mohāna came to Germany. For almost three years, They remained in Their Indian metal trunk, because whenever Hamsadūta asked Prabhupāda for permission to install Them, Prabhupāda's response was the same: 'Wait.'

* * *

Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa: "An outdoor initiation ceremony was scheduled to take place on July 23rd. It was a cloudy and somewhat cool Sunday afternoon. When about fifteen devotees, mostly from Germany, assembled in the Jardin du Luxembourg, a public park in central Paris, to take part in the ceremony that Śrīla Prabhupāda would preside over, a small crowd gathered, curious about the arrangements and strangely dressed people.

"After Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived and sat on the vyāsāsana, he gave a short lecture, which was translated sentence by sentence into French, that addressed the crowd more than the devotees: 'If you want real liberty, equality, and fraternity then you must take to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness.' Hamsadūta,

acting as the priest for the ceremony, began lighting the fire. Normally, the procedure is that the devotees first say their vows and receive new spiritual names and beads, and then the fire sacrifice is performed. This time, however, apparently because of the threat of rain, it was decided to go ahead with the fire sacrifice first. Just as we were concluding the ceremony with the final mantras, throwing the last grains into the fire and offering bananas into the sacrificial flames, it began to rain. I looked over to the vyāsāsana, but Śrīla Prabhupāda had already left. Somewhat surprised, confused, and dismayed, the rest of us got up and prepared to retreat from the quickly increasing rain.

"For me, this was a lesson in not taking the spiritual master's presence for granted. At the same time it was a lesson in preparing for times when Śrīla Prabhupāda would not be physically present, a lesson which he expounded on in his Bhāgavatam lecture the next morning. Prabhupāda first chanted the Ṣaḍ-gosvāmy-āṣṭaka prayer and then lectured on the First Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Chapter One, Text 15, which describes how the association of pure devotees is more purifying than that of the Ganges,

which purifies only after prolonged use: 'O Sūta, those great sages who have completely taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord can at once sanctify those who come in touch with them, whereas the waters of the Ganges can sanctify only after prolonged use.' I remember Śrīla Prabhupāda giving the example of flight training, regarding the necessity of taking full advantage of the spiritual master's instructions in order to be prepared for death: Eventually the trainee must fly solo, in the same way that we all, at the time of death, must leave the world alone, without assistance from others.

"After the lecture, the devotees receiving first initiation were called forward one by one to make their vows before Śrīla Prabhupāda and receive a spiritual name and a set of beads that Śrīla Prabhupāda had chanted on. I remember that before me, one of the devotees called forward was Haryakṣa. Prabhupāda looked at his forehead and noticed that he was without the tilaka mark of a Vaiṣṇava. 'No tilaka?' he asked gravely, to indicate that he should immediately put it on before coming to receive his spiritual name.

"I had been in some anxiety that I might forget one or

another of the four regulative principles when saying my vows, but for some reason, Prabhupāda didn't ask me to say them. Perhaps he saw my anxiety. He simply handed me the beads and said, 'Your name is Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa. It means the servant of the place where Kṛṣṇa appears, or Vṛndāvana.' In my excitement I didn't fully comprehend the meaning, but I understood that my name included the name 'Kṛṣṇa.' This fulfilled a wish I had when I first met Smita Kṛṣṇa Prabhu in Germany: that it would be nice to be given a name that included 'Kṛṣṇa.'"

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "After Bhāgavatam class, Śrīla Prabhupāda had all the beads draped over the side of his vyāsāsana, and his servant, Nanda-kumāra, started to call us one by one to receive the beads and our spiritual names.

"There was one boy who had been a butcher before, and apparently Prabhupāda had been informed about it. After the candidate had repeated the last regulative principle, 'No eating of meat, fish or eggs,' there was a moment of silence. Prabhupāda looked at his prospective disciple gravely and said: 'Please don't kill any more cows.' The boy blushed and simply shook his head in embarrassment, and then

Prabhupāda gave him his name: Mahārathi Dāsa, 'the servant of one who can fight with one thousand enemies at a time.'

"We were all amazed at Śrīla Prabhupāda's extraordinary mercy and compassion. Considering that cow killing is one of the most sinful acts, for which the culprit has to be born in the body of a cow and be slaughtered as many times as there are hairs on the cow's skin, it is remarkable that Prabhupāda never hesitated to accept even such a person as his disciple, provided he agreed to give up his sinful ways. In this way he acted as the perfect representative of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who accepted even sinners like Jagāi and Mādhāi on the condition that they would not commit any more sinful activities."

Vāsudeva Dāsa: "We drove from Berlin to Paris in our Volkswagen bus. On one side of the van, I had painted the spiritual sky with Goloka in the center, and on the other side, the cloud-like Causal Ocean with Mahā-Viṣṇu lying in it, and Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu inside an egg-shaped universe. When Prabhupāda saw the van, he immediately walked around it and inspected the art work.

"However, when he looked at the painting of

Mahā-Viṣṇu more closely, he became angry and chastised me. I didn't have time to finish the painting, and two of Mahā-Viṣṇu's four arms were only drafted. Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't approve of my decision to leave them like that and show something half finished in public. He wanted us to do things as conscientiously and perfectly as possible."

Chapter 10

The Amsterdam Mess

After a week in Paris, Śrīla Prabhupāda visited Amsterdam, where the Dutch devotees received him in their small temple on Bethanienstraat for the first time. Although the center was new and none of the devotees were experienced, they had asked Prabhupāda to install the Deities of Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā.

The devotees from Germany wanted to be with their spiritual master for some days more, and because Amsterdam was only a few hours' drive from Paris, they all got into their vans and headed north.

Cakravartī Dāsa: "We greeted Prabhupāda at the Amsterdam airport with an enthusiastic kīrtana and escorted him to the VIP lounge. After accepting a few pieces of cut fruit from a big plate of prasādam, he settled down behind a huge conference table in front of a crowd of reporters.

"The room had no air conditioning, and it was a very hot August day. The devotees had not brought any

fans. So after I watched the pearls of perspiration running down Śrīla Prabhupāda's face, I finally grabbed a magazine and provided some cooling air. The next day one of the major newspapers published a photo of me standing behind Prabhupāda, and the caption said that one of the Swami's young disciples was serving his spiritual master by fanning him with a magazine."

* * *

For Friday evening and Saturday evening, the devotees had rented a hall in the Krasnapolski Hotel, near the Dam, the central square in Amsterdam.

Pr̥thu Dāsa: "To attract people to Śrīla Prabhupāda's lecture, Haṁsadūta and Revatīnandana Swami led a huge harināma through the center of Amsterdam and around Dam Square, and when they arrived at the hall, an immense crowd of hippies was following them. The kīrtana continued onstage for a good while, until Prabhupāda came and sat on the vyāsāsana. He took his karatālas and chanted Jaya Rādhā-Mādhava, but after the praṇāma prayers he called over Haṁsadūta, exchanged a few words with him, and got up and left. Haṁsadūta told us that Śrīla Prabhupāda had said these people were useless. Best was just to have

kīrtana and give them prasādam; there was no use discussing philosophy, because they were all intoxicated. So we had a festival program with nonstop kīrtana and distributed hundreds of plates of prasādam."

Cakravartī Dāsa: "One of my duties was to keep order. Four or five young men, that nowadays we would call punks, started to smoke. So I had them put out their cigarettes. During Prabhupāda's kīrtana, one of them began to mock the devotees' dancing. We just ignored him, and the rest of the evening passed without incident."

Revatinandana Dāsa: "On Saturday, we had a program in Vondelpark the whole day. Prabhupāda told us, 'Just have kīrtana, because these people are very degraded. Don't speak much, because if you say the wrong thing, they might become agitated and even violent.' I told him that I had experience with these kinds of people and that after ten or fifteen minutes they would often become restless. 'Yes,' Prabhupāda said, 'ten, fifteen minutes maximum, and no questions.'

"In the morning, I began the program with kīrtanas and short talks. Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed in a nearby

apartment and his front window faced the park. His servant later told me that Prabhupāda, hearing our program going on, came out on the balcony and stayed there a good while. He obviously enjoyed hearing us preach by chanting and lecturing.

"One devotee had picked up a chant in India: he kṛṣṇa, govinda, hari, murāri/ he nātha, nārāyaṇa, vāsudeva. When Prabhupāda heard it, he called us into his room and said, 'This is not a Vedic mantra; this is a cinema song. An intelligent disciple just takes whatever his spiritual master provides for him, considering that to be sufficient. There are many names of God you can chant, but it's best to take what comes in disciplic succession and what the spiritual master introduces.'"

Cakravartī Dāsa: "So many hippies lived in that park that there must have been at least four or five thousand people present when Prabhupāda got on the vyāsāsana and began to speak. I was again a member of the security crew, and suddenly the same group of punks approached the stage. When Pradyumna, Prabhupāda's Sanskrit editor, spotted them, he found me and advised me how to deal with the guy who had been mocking our dancing: 'If he

does any nonsense, do something!"

"I had been a devotee less than a year, and the words of one of Prabhupāda's personal staff were like the absolute truth for me. From that moment on I kept an eye on this guy, and I even warned him that if he dared to cause a disturbance, I would take action. Wherever he went, I followed him like a shadow. He ended up right in front of the stage staring at Śrīla Prabhupāda, who was speaking to a huge crowd of young people. Then this fool dared to make a nose at Prabhupāda. I was onstage, so I jumped on him like a tiger, and he lost his balance, and we both fell to the ground. Three or four other devotees rushed to help me, and a crowd of people gathered around us. Angry voices could be heard.

"Suddenly we heard the sound of cymbals. Śrīla Prabhupāda had begun to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. As the transcendental vibration of his voice filled the air, the tension diminished, and somehow or other the situation calmed down.

"After the program, Prabhupāda called us in and reprimanded us for our foolish action. He was disturbed and said that only the chanting of the holy name had prevented a disaster: five thousand hippies

fighting with a hundred of us. He said that it was one of our Western diseases to become easily angered and start a fight over a trifle.

"The next day this guy I had attacked came to the temple and apologized. To my amazement, he admitted being impressed by the decisive action taken against him. And he stayed and became a devotee."

The incident made Śrīla Prabhupāda thoughtful. On several occasions he had mentioned that the hippies were the best candidates for spiritual life because they had voluntarily rejected the materialistic life of their parents to search for a better life. In fact, most of Prabhupāda's disciples came from the counterculture. But its initial ideals were rapidly degrading to hedonism and cynicism, as he witnessed in Amsterdam.

The next day, he wrote to Hṛdayānanda Mahārāja, who was lecturing on American university campuses:

We are observing here in Europe that many, many hippies have become disgusted with material life, but they are also now so much degraded that they will not hear our philosophy,

simply mocking. So our devotees may become very much learned to remove their doubts and become very much fixed up in Krishna Consciousness, but so far preaching to the general public, especially the hippie class, it is better not to preach very much philosophy. Just somehow or other get them to chant Hare Krishna mantra, and if some of them are curious to learn something, they may purchase one of our books. Only if they chant with us, that will help them.

Over the years, Śrīla Prabhupāda sometimes referred back to this experience: "I saw in Amsterdam—simply full of hippies—lying down on the street, lying down in the park; no food, no shelter. It is going on. ... They must be wanting something. They are in need of something. ... You may be in need of food, I may be in need of some woman, he may be in need of some money. ... In this way everyone is needy. Therefore, ultimately one should search after God. Then every need will be fulfilled."

Ṗṛthu Dāsa: "Early one morning, we were strolling with Śrīla Prabhupāda through Vondelpark, where

most of the hippies had spent the summer night in sleeping bags.

"My attention was drawn to a couple lying under a tree who wasn't asleep anymore; they were already pretty busy with each other. I was curious to see how Prabhupāda would react, so I observed him from the corners of my eyes. But Prabhupāda had been observing me, and when our eyes met, he shook his head in disapproval, as if to say, 'No, no, we don't look! A devotee doesn't watch people engaged in lusty affairs.'"

Revatīnandana Dāsa: "When we passed the hippie couple, Śrīla Prabhupāda remarked, 'Just see! In the material world, it doesn't matter whether one is rich or poor, there will always be some facility for sex life.'"

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Aṣṭaratha Dāsa: "We reached Amsterdam in the early morning on the day of Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival. As soon as we entered the temple, an iṣṭa-goṣṭhī was held to explain to everyone what to do. Preparations were still underway. Prabhupāda's reception at the airport had to be organized, the newly-constructed wooden arches in the temple room had to be painted light

blue and pink, and clothes for Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā had to be sewn.

"When the question arose, Who knows how to sew?, one of the Hamburg devotees, for whom I had once made a beadbag, pointed to me and said, 'He knows.' Although I had only a little experience, upon seeing the situation I thought, 'Well, I've never made clothes, but somehow or other I'll manage to come up with something.' So I agreed.

"At noon on that Friday, we all assembled in front of the temple to greet Śrīla Prabhupāda. Kiśorī Dāsī was struggling with her children. Her little daughter had been crying all morning and didn't respond to any attempt to calm her down. And there was no way to tell Kiśorī to take her daughter and leave. She insisted on being there with her kids to receive Prabhupāda. As soon as Prabhupāda stepped out of the car and saw the screaming child in Kiśorī's arms, he went up to Kiśorī, patted her daughter's head, and said: 'Everything is all right.' And immediately the child became quiet. I was amazed.

"The temple consisted of a fairly large temple room, a kitchen, an office, and another small room for the female devotees; the brahmacārīs stayed in the attic.

We divided the women's āśrama with a curtain, and in the front part I sat down with the Deities of Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā—and cloth. The sewing machine was broken, so I had to sew everything by hand. And because the installation was in two days, I had to work throughout the nights. My only companions those two nights were a few mice who ran all over the place.

"I pictured in my mind our Jagannātha Deities in Hamburg and tried to create similar outfits. The turbans were the most difficult part, and it was only by Kṛṣṇa's mercy that I managed to make something that resembled turbans, after numerous unsuccessful attempts at wrapping.

"On Sunday morning I finished the last details, and being completely wiped out, I went to take rest in our VW bus, because the installation was scheduled for the afternoon."

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "On the morning of the installation I was asked to string garlands. Kiśorī Dāsī was in charge of the decorations and flowers, and she provided me with a needle and thread and buckets full of white, pink, and red carnations. This was the first time I had made a garland, and Kiśorī was too

frazzled to give me detailed instructions or supervise my service. Akṣaya Dāsa, the temple president, had dumped all responsibility for the preparations on her head, because he was busy preparing for his sannyāsa initiation, to be held that same afternoon, right after the Deity installation. Kiśorī was sincerely trying to arrange everything, but the task was over her head. Disorder and confusion reigned.

"How do you string a garland of carnations? I didn't know, and it didn't occur to me to do it lengthwise, by opening the flower petals and pushing the hard green part firmly into the previous flower so that at the end only petals would be visible. I pushed the needle through sideways and twisted the flowers so that the petals pointed in different directions. As long as the garlands were lying on a cloth on the floor, they looked all right.

"The awakening came when, as a reward for my efforts, I was allowed to garland Prabhupāda. I felt proud and satisfied that His Divine Grace was wearing one of 'my' garlands, visible to everybody present. Shortly, however, my artistic arrangement of carnations began to disintegrate. Obeying gravity, one flower after another turned its head downward.

Besides being an unpleasant sight, the hard green parts must have pricked Śrīla Prabhupāda, but he seemed undisturbed. He wasn't concerned with his own comfort. He was more concerned with the preparations for the ceremony, because not only wasn't his garland up to standard, but many ingredients were missing."

Aṣṭaratha Dāsa: "I woke up at 3:30 p.m., anxious whether the clothes were still there, and after a quick shower I entered the temple room and made my way to the altar. That was not easy, because the temple was packed with people. There were so many guests that a lot of them had to stand on the sidewalk. There was just no room inside.

"I peeped into the ladies' āśrama and felt relief, the clothes and the Deities were still there. But then I realized that hardly anything was prepared for the installation. Not that I knew exactly what was needed for the ceremony, but I had heard that the Deities were bathed with milk and yogurt and that afterward a fire sacrifice was held. But I didn't see any indication that these things were being prepared. I asked some devotees, but they didn't even pay attention to what I said; they were busy talking to

guests and taking care of the press and the TV crew. So I thought, 'What to do? I have to phone Śrīla Prabhupāda. Something has to be done.'

"Nanda-kumāra, Prabhupāda's servant, answered the phone. 'I am not in charge here,' I said, 'but from what I can see, nothing is being prepared for the installation.' He couldn't believe his ears. Quickly, he gave me several instructions, especially that the Deities had to be wrapped in white cloth and that we needed big containers for the bathing. So we got a bed sheet from the neighbors, which we tore into three parts, and we got some big pots from a nearby hotel. Bit by bit some arrangements came together, but on the whole, they were less than paltry."

Revatīnandana Dāsa: "When we arrived with Śrīla Prabhupāda at the temple, we were greeted by an ecstatic kīrtana, and hundreds of curious onlookers were wondering what was going on. Prabhupāda smiled at the enthusiasm of his disciples, but his demeanor changed after he entered the temple room and looked around. 'What is this? No fruits? No flowers? What are these pots that you want to bathe the Deities in?' The anger in his voice made everyone freeze. 'I cannot bring the Lord of the Universe here.

This is a farce! How can you think that, with so little preparation, Lord Jagannātha will live in this place?' But after deliberating for a few seconds, he relented: 'All right, go ahead. But I don't think this is very nice.'

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "One new bhakta had been living in the temple for a couple of weeks, and whenever he'd gotten disturbed, the devotees had always instructed him to just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. So when he saw Prabhupāda upset, he remarked to him, 'Why don't you just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa?' Without a word, Śrīla Prabhupāda took his beadbag and began chanting japa. He continued on and off until the devotees had gathered the necessary paraphernalia and were ready to begin the ceremony."

Aṣṭaratha Dāsa: "Śrīla Prabhupāda was frightening. When he saw the mess, he turned to his leaders and demanded: 'Who is responsible for this? Who is the pūjārī?' Akṣaya summoned up all his courage and said, 'I told Kiśorī ...' "A woman?" Prabhupāda said, cutting him off and looking at him sternly, incredulousness in his voice. Icy silence. The atmosphere was so tense that you could have cut it with a knife. I felt like disappearing into the earth. Such an embarrassing

situation! My only thought was, 'I hope that at least the outfits will be all right.' Then Śyāmasundara, Prabhupāda's secretary, lowered his head and asked shyly, 'Shall we get some fruits?' 'Don't tell me what to do!' Prabhupāda thundered.

"Eventually, Kiśorī came in with the fruits—a huge plate of fruit salad—and was promptly sent back to the kitchen. Some unbroken fruits were quickly brought, and Nanda-kumāra began bathing the Deities. When he finished, he brought Their Lordships behind the curtains to be dressed. Kiśorī was supposed to do it, but she was a nervous wreck. So the first thing Nanda-kumāra did was to tell her she wasn't needed. I was standing nearby, ready to jump in if necessary, and he called me to help dress the Deities."

Nikuñjavāsiṇī Dāsī: "My eldest brother was living near Bethanienstraat, and he visited the temple regularly to take prasādam. Sometimes he would even accompany the devotees on harināma. He was the first person to put me in touch with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Unfortunately, he later got involved with Guru Maharaji; there he didn't have to follow any principles. But my second brother, Aṅga Dāsa,

became very serious about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

"When Śrīla Prabhupāda came to Amsterdam, Aṅga invited my parents and I to the temple to meet him. My brother told us, 'This is a pure devotee, and even if you don't understand anything, whatever he says is pure sound vibration and has a beneficial effect.' I was impressed, and thought, 'Oh, this is very special. I'm going to see this holy man, a very spiritual person.' So I was really eager to go.

"We went to the installation ceremony. A television crew was there, and it was packed with people. The preparations for the installation were so deficient that Prabhupāda was angry. He was shouting, and the devotees were timidly running around trying to follow his directions. Even before ever seeing Prabhupāda, I was in a respectful mood, but I never expected him to be like this. Because of my oldest brother's involvement with Guru Maharaji, I had a certain concept of a guru. I had always seen pictures of Guru Maharaji with a big smile on his face, which was fatty and glowing, but now I saw Prabhupāda, and he was so angry. I thought, 'Wow, this is serious business; this needs surrender. This is real spiritual life.' I suddenly realized that the other things were all

simply an external show, whereas this was real. 'But,' I thought, 'I am not ready for this.' I had respect for the devotees because they took Prabhupāda's chastisement so seriously. They were in anxiety, trying to rectify the mess. Of course, I didn't understand what it was all about. There were some statues covered with cloth, and there was this area in the middle for fire, and Prabhupāda was yelling, and the devotees were running around, and it was all being filmed while we just stood there watching.

"Another thing that amazed me was that Prabhupāda didn't seem to care at all for the TV cameras or guests. He was doing the needful for a proper installation ceremony, and this really impressed me. He didn't care about making a good impression on the TV people by glossing over the whole affair. His only interest was to make the proper arrangements for Kṛṣṇa's service."

Vaidyanātha Dāsa: "I was surprised that such an elevated person, the leader of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, became angry. In my mind, a transcendentalist always remained equipoised and serene. I didn't know yet that a devotee could even show anger in Kṛṣṇa's service. I had been living with

the devotees for less than a week. During the lecture, I was leaning against the wall, with my knees under my chin and my arms around them—the typical way you're not supposed to sit in front of the Deities. Prabhupāda must have noticed me, because suddenly he pulled his legs up and sat on the vyāsāsana in exactly the same way I was sitting and said, 'It is an offense to sit in front of the Deities like this. Sit properly!' This is the only personal instruction I ever received from Śrīla Prabhupāda, and I have been trying to apply it in its broadest sense: not only to sit properly in the temple but also to be always properly situated in devotional service."

Revatīnandana Dāsa: "Prabhupāda asked me to perform the fire sacrifice. While chanting the mantras, I had difficulty separating the compound words properly, and each time I made a mistake, Prabhupāda corrected me. I became so nervous that at the end I forgot to chant namo mahā-vadānyāya. Prabhupāda interrupted me: 'You don't chant namo mahā-vadānyāya? I will do it!'

"When it was time to light the fire, I picked up the ladle for the ghee with my left hand, being left-handed, and the wood with my right hand. When

I realized what I was doing, I tried to switch the two quickly without anyone noticing it, but Śrīla Prabhupāda had already looked at me disapprovingly, as if to say, 'My disciples—just see!'

"The only time I saw Prabhupāda smile that afternoon was when he handed Akṣaya his sannyāsa staff and made him Akṣayānanda Swami."

Aṣṭaratha Dāsa: "While all this was going on, Nanda-kumāra and I were busy dressing the Deities behind the curtain of the altar room. When we finally put Their Lordships on the altar, we realized that the canopy was too small, or rather, that the columns supporting it stood just in front of Jagannātha and Baladeva. Nanda-kumāra thought for a second and said, 'We have to take it off.' So we lifted the canopy off the altar. But where to put it? There was no room. We had to take it out, and there was no other way than to carry it through the packed temple room over the heads of everyone. Śrīla Prabhupāda, who was lecturing, looked on with surprise.

"But now the Deity room looked pretty empty. There was only the altar and a bare wall in the back. On one side, a large painting of the Pañca-tattva leaned

against the wall, and while looking at it, I had an idea. 'Why don't we put that behind the altar?' I suggested. 'Great idea,' Nanda-kumāra said. But there was nothing to support the painting, because the altar didn't reach back to the wall. The only solution was to put something on the floor. So Nanda-kumāra stuck his head through the curtains and shouted, 'Bring books!' Heads turned in surprise. Because quite a few books were needed, a human chain had to be formed to pass the books to the altar.

"When the curtains finally opened, the arrangement looked quite acceptable, and Nanda-kumāra performed the first āratī for the Deities.

"The atmosphere was then relaxed and became festive, with a tremendous kīrtana shaking the whole building. After āratī, huge quantities of halavā and Simply Wonderfuls were served to everyone."

Revatīnandana Dāsa: "After the ceremony, Prabhupāda was about to get into the car when he asked his servant, 'You brought some prasādam?' Nanda-kumāra looked at him with surprise. 'I thought you would take your usual, simple meal instead of the feast,' he said. 'No,' Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, 'this is a Deity installation. I want to take mahā-prasādam.

Please go and get me a plate.' So Nanda-kumāra went back into the temple and came back with a big plate of prasādam.

"The Amsterdam traffic made for a rough ride; several times the car stopped abruptly. When the driver had to brake again, the plate of prasādam slipped onto the floor. Nanda-kumāra was in total anxiety. He hoped Prabhupāda would forget about the plate. But as soon as we arrived at the apartment, Prabhupāda asked, 'Where is the prasādam?' His servant explained what had happened, but Prabhupāda told him, 'Bring it.' And he ate everything, just to show us how important prasādam is.

"Prabhupāda's anger had left a deep impression on the Amsterdam devotees, and they really felt sorry that their inexperience had evoked Prabhupāda displeasure. So Akṣayānanda Swami came to apologize, but Śrīla Prabhupāda's mood had already changed. I was surprised that he had shown such anger and now was as cool and calm as a lotus flower. I asked him about it, and Prabhupāda said, 'It's for your education, not for my sake. A devotee does not become angry when offended, but when he sees that

the Lord or another devotee is offended, he shows anger.'

"Then Prabhupāda laid down on a couch to rest for a while. Lying on his back, he clasped his knees with his hands and slowly rocked back and forth while softly chanting, 'Haribol! Haribol!'"

Chapter 11

Festival Time

After two weeks of association with Śrīla Prabhupāda, the German preachers naturally felt enlivened to continue expanding Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout their country, but their manpower was stretched to the limit. It was increasingly difficult to attend to all the necessities, collect funds, and take care of guests. So while Śrīla Prabhupāda welcomed Hamsadūta's enthusiasm for preaching, he also cautioned him not to become over-extended:

Now we have got so many students and so many temples, but I am fearful that if we expand too much in this way that we shall become weakened and gradually the whole thing will become lost. Just like milk. We may thin it more and more with water for cheating the customer, but in the end it will cease to be any longer milk. Better to boil the milk now very vigorously and make it thick and sweet, that is the best process.

So let us concentrate on training our devotees very thoroughly in the knowledge of Krishna Consciousness from our books, from tapes, by discussing always, and in so many ways instruct them in the right propositions.

On this platform you shall be able to carry on the work satisfactorily, but if there is lack of knowledge, or if there is forgetfulness, everything will be spoiled in time. So especially you must encourage the students to read our books throughout the day as much as possible, and give them all good advice how to understand the books, and inspire them to study the things from every point of view. In this way, by constantly engaging our tongues in the service of the Lord, either by discussing His philosophy or by chanting Hare Krishna, the truth is that Krishna Himself will reveal Himself to us and we shall understand how to do everything properly.

With these words of his spiritual master in mind, Hamsadūta met with the leading devotees in the autumn of 1972 and discussed the situation. The

centers in Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, and Stuttgart had the most difficulties; each place had only two or three devotees. They decided to close these three places and concentrate on a more fertile region, a city with lots of young people. Their natural choice was Heidelberg, halfway between Frankfurt and Stuttgart and near other important cities: Karlsruhe, Mannheim, Wiesbaden, and Mainz. The most important feature was Heidelberg's world-famous university.

Another idea they had to attract young people was to organize Hare Kṛṣṇa festivals. Cakravartī and Uthāla went to London, the music capital of the world, and bought a two-thousand-watt sound system, with which they could stage a Kṛṣṇa conscious version of the increasingly popular three-day rock festivals.

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Śilpakāriṇī Dāsī: "In Hamburg in 1969—I was fourteen years old and still in school—I saw the devotees on harināma. Somebody handed me an invitation to the Sunday feast. And when I went to the temple on Bartelsstraße, the first thing that happened was that someone put tilaka on my forehead. Then I was ushered into the temple room

for āratī, and after the lecture I received my first prasādam: Simply Wonderfals, purīs, and other preparations unknown to me.

"During that visit nobody bothered to preach to me. Probably I was considered too young a prospect for becoming a devotee. But I returned a few times, because I really liked chanting and prasādam. Finally, Kulaśekhara talked to me. He told me about the difference between the soul and the body and that after leaving this body, the devotee returns to the spiritual world and things like that. I didn't understand much, and I actually wasn't particularly interested in the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but somehow or other I felt strongly attracted to chanting. During the next couple of years there were a number of situations, especially when I felt a little fearful, when I would chant silently to myself.

"In 1971 I went to America for a year, and there I developed a strong interest in yoga and began to read books on it. After returning to Hamburg, I thought, 'Well, I should visit the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple again. Maybe now I'll understand more about the philosophy.' When I came to Bartelsstraße, I found out that the temple had moved to a new location on

Kapitelbuschweg. I arrived there in the evening, and since it was a weekday, I was the only guest. Vaidyanātha gave me prasādam, and I purchased a copy of Īsopaniṣad, and in the temple room I watched as the devotees got up one by one and, before the Deity, reported on the services they had done during the day. I remember Aṣṭaratha saying, 'My dear Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, I cooked this offering for You, then I cooked that other offering for You and another offering—actually, I have been cooking all day for You.' And I thought, 'What a wonderful life! These people are enjoying all day long.'

"Then Bharata urged me to go up front and also say something. I was completely embarrassed. What was I supposed to speak about? I hadn't done anything for Kṛṣṇa. Afterward, there was a lecture, but I didn't pay much attention. Besides being the only guest, I was the only girl in a crowd of brahmacārīs, which didn't add to my comfort. I actually felt relief as I finally closed the temple door behind me. I didn't want to go back there soon.

"After half year or so, in spring 1973, as I was walking down Mönckebergstrasse, I met the devotees again. Durgama handed me an invitation to a Hare Kṛṣṇa

festival being held in Hamburg's Amerikahaus. I was surprised that the Hare Kṛṣṇas were also doing festivals, so I decided to go and see.

"Admission was free. The program was simple: kīrtana, lecture, prasādam, more kīrtana, another lecture, more prasādam, like that. Mostly Cakravartī lectured, and this time I felt that his explanations were answering a lot of questions that I had always been pondering, but had been unable to formulate. I immediately accepted that we are not the body and that our polluted consciousness is like a dirty mirror that has to be cleansed, and the cleansing method is the chanting of God's holy names.

"After the talk there was a kīrtana, and Ātmavidyā jumped down from the stage and began moving through the rows of the audience—we were all sitting there watching the show like a concert—inviting us, with animated gestures, to take part. I was swept away by his enthusiasm and soon ended up onstage clapping my hands, chanting and dancing. Those kīrtanas were really ecstatic.

"During the break, the devotees served strawberry halavā, and Niṣpāpa offered me a music cassette featuring The Radha-Krishna Temple, which I readily

accepted. After the festival was over, I helped clean up, and when I was just about to leave, the devotees draped me with garlands that had decorated pictures of Prabhupāda and the Pañca-tattva and gave me a huge plate of halavā to take home. It was already late, and I had to hurry to catch the last S-Bahn train. Since it was Saturday night, the car was packed with people, but luckily I found a sitting place. I must have looked pretty strange with those flower garlands around my neck and the big plate of prasādam on my lap, but I couldn't have cared less. I just had experienced a most wonderful event, which would eventually change my life. That night I listened to the Radha-Krishna Temple cassette over and over again, until six in the morning, the music was so attractive.

"From that day on I would visit the temple regularly. I'd arrive each morning by eight and not leave till the evening. The devotees engaged me in polishing the brass āratī plate, cleaning pots, and sewing. From time to time, Jaya Gaura would sit next to me and read from Bhagavad-gītā, or Bharata would show me his collection of photos of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Then one day Jaya Gaura asked me when I would move in. I hadn't thought about that. Actually, I'd had the

impression that I wouldn't be allowed to live there, so I was surprised at first. But then I thought, 'All right.' So I got my sleeping bag and moved into the temple. "A devotee's life is simple. Everything is centered around serving Kṛṣṇa, and for me every aspect of it was blissful. After a while Hamsadūta asked me to go to Heidelberg, where his wife stayed and the temple had better accommodations for women. I soon began to go out and distribute books in downtown Heidelberg."

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Rambhorū Dāsī: "In the early seventies, I was a college student at Gilford in Northern Carolina, studying religion and philosophy. I had become a Quaker, from a Southern Baptist background. I was taking a Bhagavad-gītā course from a Māyāvādī professor teaching Indian Studies, and we had to pick out our own Bhagavad-gītā. So at a hippie bookshop I found Śrīla Prabhupāda's Bhagavad-gītā and bought it. My professor didn't like it. He said that Bhaktivedanta Swami tried to make something devotional out of something purely scientific. But I liked the book; it was picturesque, and I continued to use it. When I read that one should sleep not more

than six hours, I tried to regulate myself by going to bed at midnight and getting up at six, but without the association of devotees, I couldn't really figure it out.

"In the early summer of 1973, I met the devotees for the first time. Some brahmacārīs came to our college dressed in blue workshirts and yellow polyester bedsheets. They really looked horrendous. Being a Quaker, I felt sorry for them, and I actually wanted to preach to them, because that was my duty as a Christian. I was living in a dormitory, and a brahmacārī was going around knocking on doors. So I opened my door, and he fell to the floor, offering obeisances, and then he stood up, pulled out a book, and said, 'Here, take it and give a donation.' I didn't feel at all inclined. The guy looked so weird, but I think I bought a magazine just to get rid of him.

"Then I saw him again at the library, and I thought, 'Well, I really should save this poor fellow; he is obviously brainwashed.' So I sat next to him. I had learned at college that it is important in communication to make eye contact, but little did I know that a brahmacārī isn't supposed to look into a woman's eyes. So there I was, trying very hard to communicate with him, but he avoided looking at me.

I was desperately trying to catch his eye, and he was looking at my shoulder. Then I was lowering my head, and he was also lowering his head while keeping his eyes on my shoulder, and I was thinking, 'These people are really pitiable.' It was about the most absurd attempt at communication I ever experienced. "Later, while staying at my sister's in South Carolina, I saw two devotees. They were on saṅkīrtana and passed me, talking to each other, and I was attracted by their vibration. I thought, 'Oh, this sounds like the Quakers.' As a Quaker I had also become a vegetarian and was into natural living. The sound vibration and mood of these two devotees resembled that of the Christians I hung around with. So that piqued my curiosity.

"Then I went to Heidelberg for an ecumenical year abroad. We students were also supposed to go to Egypt and see places connected with Jesus—a kind of pilgrimage. So I went to a college in Heidelberg. But to the questions I asked, like, 'What happens after death?', the professors said, 'We can't deal with those things now; that is post-graduate material.' So I became a little frustrated. I wasn't taking religion to get a job. I wanted to get my questions answered, but

no one was talking about them. I also tried to find the Quakers, and I found one address. I went to a Sunday gathering they celebrated, but most of them were over fifty years old. I realized that this was not going to be a source of community for me. So I felt very alone.

"Then I met Śilpakāriṇī on the Main Street in Heidelberg, and when I saw that she carried books, I asked her for one. To my surprise, she was not all eager to sell me a book. Her face showed that she was absolutely detached, full of love and peace. It seemed to me that she didn't like to approach people, but that she was just doing her duty. Although she didn't like it, she was doing it, and somehow I was impressed, because in those days the trend was that people like the born-again Christians would come up to you, kiss you or embrace you, and say, 'Jesus loves you,' and I just hated that. But I was impressed that there was an element of sacrifice in her face and that she was not trying to get me. When I asked about the other devotees, because I was desperate to find them, feeling so lonely, she said, 'Better not come to the temple now, hardly anybody speaks English; don't bother to come till next week. Then one person will

come who can talk to you.'

"So I called up the following week, and Hamsadūta was on the phone. When I heard his voice, I could understand that this person would tell me who I am, and I felt so at home with him, much more than with the materialists that I was going to school with. So I immediately went to the temple, and the first thing that happened was somebody offered me a plate of prasādam. There was rice and dāl and everything piled on top; it was stone-cold, but it was absolutely delicious. It was just incredible food. Then they invited me to come every day, and they told me that to eat anything else was like eating poison. So I walked for half an hour every day and got prasādam until I decided to move into the temple."

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Maṇidhara Dāsa: "I was fourteen when my parents emigrated from Prague to Germany in 1968. Having grown up in a communist country, I was disillusioned with social and political issues, and my main interest was in art, which was my way of communicating with the world. Being a foreigner, I had hardly any friends, and thus I spent most of my time at home and painted.

"In 1973, I began to study at the art academy in Karlsruhe, and there I met another artist who had become interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He was walking around with a beadbag, and as soon as we became a little more familiar with each other, he began to preach to me. Later he became initiated as Ajātaśatru Dāsa. I was already fascinated by Indian culture and Buddhist art, with its mandalas, and thus he immediately awakened my curiosity when he spoke about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

"He showed me how to chant, and one Sunday he asked me to accompany him to the temple in Heidelberg. In my mind I imagined a building like a Greek temple, with high columns, so I was surprised when he led me to a small house in the outskirts of the city. The first thing that amazed me was the pile of shoes at the entrance. I thought, 'Why are these people collecting so many shoes?' Then I was told that I had to take off my shoes to go in.

"The first person I met was Haṁsadūta. He had just shaved his head—with bloody cuts all over it—and he immediately sat me down and began to preach to me. During the feast I got to know other devotees, and on the whole I was absolutely fascinated by their

frank and open natures. I am an introvert, and never in my life had I met people who spoke to me in such a direct and friendly way. But I was also frightened; I knew they expected something from me.

"I began visiting the temple regularly for the Sunday feast, and with each visit the preaching strategy of the devotees became less and less subtle. Pṛthu, for example, was quite direct. He told me one day, 'Just stay. There is nothing out there for you to do. Or is there anything you still want to achieve?' I couldn't answer, because I actually didn't have any concrete plans for the future. He went on, 'Where will you go?' 'I still have to think,' I said kind of sheepishly. 'Think about what?' he insisted. 'Do you see anything bad in what we are doing?' 'No,' I replied, 'it's not bad, but I am not sure I am ready yet.' Then, during the feast, in front of everybody, he caught my long hair at the back of my head and held it up like a śikhā. 'This is the right haircut for you!' he said with a broad grin. Although I was shocked at first, I was also taken in by his unusual and personal approach. He was like a big daddy. Devotees were so different.

"In the beginning of 1974 I bought a Bhagavad-gītā, but I have to admit that I understood very little

philosophy. I liked the chanting though, and I was also fascinated by Śrīla Prabhupāda's bhajanas. I had one tape on which he sings the Gurvāṣṭaka and then gives a purport, and his voice made a deep impression on me.

"I shared a flat with an artist friend who was also interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and the only things we had, in an otherwise empty apartment, were Bhagavad-gītā, chanting beads, and sleeping bags. So for some time we followed a strict schedule of rising early, taking cold showers, and chanting sixty rounds on our beads. Once we even fasted for three days. We were thinking of joining the temple, but somehow or other we couldn't bring ourselves to take the final, decisive step.

"But one spring day, everything just fell into place. I took my sleeping bag and a few other belongings and went to the train station. The train to Heidelberg arrived just at that moment, and I was on my way to the temple. I didn't have a single penny and no train ticket. When the inspector came, I simply said, 'I have no money, I am chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.' 'All right,' he said and left me alone. When I arrived at the temple, all the devotees had gone out to preach, except for

Aṣṭaratha, who was the pūjārī. When he opened the door, I asked, 'Can I stay?' 'Of course!' he exclaimed with a huge smile, and I thought to myself, 'Wow, simply for this smile I'll stay.'"

* * *

Nikhilānanda Dāsa: "After the summer of 1972, during which I had seen Śrīla Prabhupāda in Paris and Amsterdam, I had come to the firm conviction that I wanted to get rid of my long hair and become a regular devotee. I told my mother that I was determined to live in the temple but that I would continue to attend school and visit her regularly. In the end she consented, and I joined the temple in Hamburg. Even my teachers and classmates accepted my new way of life, and I had the opportunity to give lectures on the introduction to Īsopaniṣad and distribute prasādam in school.

" In November—I had recently turned fifteen—Cakravartī, the temple president, felt that I was ready for initiation and suggested that I write a letter to Śrīla Prabhupāda. I received the answer in December. Śrīla Prabhupāda was willing to accept me, but he had not yet received Cakravartī's recommendation and thus wanted to wait. He said

that he was pleased that I was engaged in translating his books and editing articles for Zurück zur Gottheit:

This is very important work. I need some men to dedicate their lives for publishing these books in all languages of the world. So if you can do this, that will be very nice.

"I felt much encouraged by his letter, and it helped me to convince the temple managers to free me from other services and give me more time to translate. Thus I soon moved into the translator's office, a makeshift shed we had built on the temple's terrace, where I had the opportunity to work with Vedavyāsa and improve my translation technique.

"In March of 1973, Śrīla Prabhupāda formally accepted me as his disciple, and it wasn't long before māyā put me to the test. My mother had changed her mind, and one morning two policemen came to escort me back home. I set up an altar at home, and every day I went to the temple right after school to continue the translation work. And on Sundays I took the first train in the morning, to arrive in time for maṅgala āratī. It took me a year to convince my mother again to let me live in the temple."

* * *

By the end of 1972, Hamsadūta was sending Prabhupāda samples of the type of paper that he was considering using—fine Bible paper—to print Bhagavad-gītā in German, along with quotations from printers. Always eager to give Prabhupāda results and receive encouragement, he gave the impression that the publishing of Bhagavad—gītā was imminent, though it would take another year to finish the book. But Prabhupāda didn't mind reciprocating.

I know that the German printing and bookmaking is always the first-class, so if you are satisfied then you may go ahead with printing as you have arranged. That is a very great step of progress in spreading this Kṛṣṇa Consciousness to the German people. Kṛṣṇa Consciousness movement rests upon the words of Kṛṣṇa, so if people can read for themselves what Kṛṣṇa is saying, then they shall understand our movement. Otherwise it will be very difficult to convince them. So you have done the right thing, printing Bhagavad-gita in German language, and I very much appreciate that you have done this great service.

Haṁsadūta was ambitious and had a strong desire to distinguish himself and be recognized for his achievements. During the GBC meetings in India in March, he had expressed his desire to leave Germany and take up a position of responsibility in America, but Śrīla Prabhupāda had disapproved of those plans, and he ordered Haṁsadūta to concentrate his efforts permanently on preaching in Germany.

There were other things that disturbed Haṁsadūta's mind. Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement was growing all over the world, Prabhupāda found it a burden to chant on the beads of all his prospective students, and therefore he introduced the system that some older disciples would do it on his behalf, just as they were already performing the fire sacrifices in his absence. But Prabhupāda had so far selected only two sannyāsīs, Kīrtanānanda Swami in America and Revatīnandana Swami in Europe. Now Haṁsadūta was asked to send the beads of new devotees to Revatīnandana, and he was not happy with the arrangement.

Actually, he would have liked to take sannyāsa himself, but his wife was adamantly opposed and had written to Prabhupāda several times about her

concern. In reply, Prabhupāda assured her each time that he would not give sannyāsa to her husband without her sanction. He tried to pacify Hamsadūta by explaining to him the nature of sannyāsa:

Actually, all of you are more than sannyasis. Anyone who has dedicated his life to Krishna, he is sannyasi, yogi, and everything. That is the statement of Bhagavad-gita: one who does not work for his personal benefit is a sannyasi. It doesn't matter what is his dress. So all our devotees are more than sannyasis. We are members of Krishna's family. Our aim is not to become a Mayavadi sannyasi, but to become family members of Krishna's devotees. Krishna maintains 16,000 families, and if you get a chance to serve in one of the families, then your life is a success. Real sannyasa means no more interest in material activities, but simply dedicated to Krishna's service. That is real sannyasa. So you are greater than a sannyasi. You train all these boys to be practical sannyasis in the service of Krishna.

But Hamsadūta was not truly satisfied with this answer. Prabhupāda might see him as greater than a sannyāsī, but he felt that everybody else looked upon him as an ordinary gr̥hastha who could not expect to receive the same honor as a member of the renounced order of life. After all, a sannyāsī was considered the spiritual master of all the other āśramas, and the fact that Śrīla Prabhupāda selected two sannyāsīs to assist him in giving first initiation was proof that Hamsadūta was not really considered equal to them, what to speak of being more.

Now he was stuck in Germany, and although he was the undisputed authority there, it was a small kingdom compared to North America. When he expressed again his underlying dissatisfaction with his engagement and a certain discouragement because of not being able to apply his talents to the fullest, Prabhupāda wrote him a long letter, explaining the difference between mature devotional service and whimsical action born out of the desire to enjoy.

Now you appear little restless. I know that is your nature, you like to do big things and you

are very capable and intelligent young man for executing tremendous tasks on behalf of Kṛṣṇa. But I think that you have got a huge field of endeavor in the German speaking countries and other countries of Scandinavia, Communist countries and other places like that. Now work very vigorously to develop these places, that is your great task at hand.

You needn't look further to find some big challenge. The challenge is very near at hand. That means developing and expanding along the lines as you have begun. Of course, we are not ever very much anxious to repeat the same activity many times, that is the nature of the living entity, that he seeks to enjoy varieties of flavors. But mature understanding of activity means to take it as our occupational duty. That is to say, suppose I am established as a good carpenter, then it will be foolish if after some time I am thinking, "Oh, I have done this cutting of woods so many times, now it is becoming boring and uninteresting, therefore let me become a doctor." No. That is not recommended by Kṛṣṇa, neither is it common

sense.

Occupational duty means to stick with one type of occupation which is just suitable for me, considering that it is my duty, therefore I am throughout my life obligated to perform it to the best of my ability. This is mature understanding of occupation. That means I must not leave it even for so-called good cause, just like Arjuna wanted to stop his fighting activity just to avoid killing so many of his kinsmen, cousin brothers, and other friends.

So we are preachers on behalf of Lord Kṛṣṇa, that is our occupational duty, we haven't got to search any further some new challenge or change our engagement. No, that has been already settled up. Now best thing will be to develop more and more what we have begun. I have built the skeleton of the building, but there is so much more work remaining before us. The GBC men are there, the world is divided into 12 zones for gradual development by these, my chosen right-hand men.

So however you manage it, that you know best, my only point is that I do not like to see you

become discouraged as you are indicating, because there is no actual cause for such discouragement. Rather there are all encouraging prospects ahead. Now you have started something tangible and solid in German-speaking countries, you are printing books, magazines, and distributing them widely, collecting huge funds, now the work is just beginning. So you have got a little facility now, utilize this opportunity to take advantage of Kṛṣṇa's favoring you in this way.

Consider that each day shall be a new challenge for you to push on Kṛṣṇa Consciousness movement within your range of managing. But I think that you are developing things nicely already, you are one of my senior disciples, and you know these things already, only you are little humble so you have said like that. Yes, even the devotee doesn't care a pinch for even Lord Brahma, Lord Siva, like that, because devotees are the most exalted personalities as the servants of Kṛṣṇa, still they think themselves lower than everyone, and that humble attitude is their credit. What credit is

there for someone who is himself actually lower than everyone but claims that he is better than everyone, or even he may claim that he is lower than everyone, still what is his credit? But the devotee, being the topmost grade of living entity, when he gives all credit to others and takes nothing credit for himself, that is his credit.

Thank you, along with your good wife Himavati, for helping me in this way.

Hamsadūta resigned himself to Prabhupāda's will that he stay in Germany and develop it, and he put all his energy into book publishing and organizing festival programs.

Actually, to stage Hare Kṛṣṇa festivals was not a new idea. This was what Prabhupāda had had in mind for the World Sankirtana Party and what he had done with his disciples in India two years ago. Therefore, whenever he received reports from Hamsadūta describing the success of the festival programs in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, and Heidelberg, Prabhupāda gave him all encouragement to continue with this type of preaching. In several letters, written in May and June of 1973, Prabhupāda said:

I am very glad to hear how our festival program is going on so nicely in Germany. These festivals will be successful all over the world. As GBC member it is your duty to carefully make a broad program for implementing Kṛṣṇa Consciousness in every sphere of life, in this way we will become respected as the most important members of human society.

I have carefully studied the contents, including photos of posters from the festival in Heidelberg. Your report is very encouraging to me. The communists by dry philosophy have spread practically all over the world. We are holding festivals, feasting, philosophy and salvation—why shall we not spread our influence and overthrow them? Regarding your plan to travel around the world staging such Hare Kṛṣṇa Festivals—yes, do it, you have my blessings.

Your progress in translating work is very nice. It is actually most important of all that this translating of books is going on at the same time as the festivals. I have seen the photographs of

your festival blocking the traffic and I am very much encouraged. The pictures should appear in all languages and you should write an article for Back to Godhead.

Hamsadūta gladly complied, and in the October issue of the American Back to Godhead magazine, his description of the Heidelberg Hare Kṛṣṇa festival was one of the main articles: "On June 9th and 10th of 1973 the devotees of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement from Germany, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, France and England assembled in Heidelberg, Germany, for the celebration of a massive Hare Kṛṣṇa festival. What is a Hare Kṛṣṇa festival? It is a transcendental event organized for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. Just as in the material world a meeting or event is conducted especially to show respect and honor to a great man, so a Hare Kṛṣṇa festival is especially organized to please the Supreme Person.

"In every community we find scriptures that give us names of God like Allah, Jehovah or Kṛṣṇa. Authorized scriptures like the Bible, Bhagavad-gītā and Koran give hundreds of names for God, and through the mercy of Caitanya Mahāprabhu everyone

can take advantage of the holy name of God by taking part in such Hare Kṛṣṇa festivals as the one conducted recently in Heidelberg.

"Practically the whole city population was in one way or another connected with our Hare Kṛṣṇa Festival. To get the permission to conduct the parade on the Hauptstraße (Main Street) and the fire ceremony on the Marktplatz (town square), we took permission from the director of city planning, and from the chief of the Heidelberg police, who was very happy to give our parade a police escort. We engaged a printer to do our poster, which an advertising company placed all over the city. The television people sent their man to film the festival. Thus at least for the time that our festival was in the planning and execution stages, people from all walks of life focused their attention either knowingly or unknowingly on Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, through their daily work."

The success of the festival program lifted Hamsadūta's spirits. And he printed 100,000 copies of the next issue of the German Back to Godhead. Śrīla Prabhupāda congratulated him on the fine make-up:

The magazine is gorgeous, better than Dai

Nippon [the printer of the American BTG]. Continue the standard, increase the pages, increase the articles, increase the distribution. May Kṛṣṇa bless you more and more.

Things were going well. Because of the festivals and the concentrated preaching in Heidelberg, devotees were joining in droves. The only drawback was that another summer would pass without Prabhupāda visiting Germany. For several years he had regularly gone to London and Paris. But Hamsadūta felt unable to offer Prabhupāda adequate facilities and attractive preaching opportunities. The temples were small and could not accommodate more than thirty devotees at a time. And so far he had not been able to attract the intellectual and scientific community, so there were no prospects of inviting prominent persons and university professors to meet Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Consequently, the German devotees would again drive to Paris, where Śrīla Prabhupāda was expected in August. And a few weeks later, they would go to Stockholm. Two Swedish young men who had emigrated to Australia and gotten initiated there as Vegavān and Ajita, had returned to Stockholm in

May and opened the first temple in Scandinavia.

Chapter 12

Paris Revisited

Paris, 4 rue le Sueur: the devotees had moved from the outskirts, Fontenay-aux-roses, to a prestigious location not far from the Eiffel Tower. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was expanding rapidly in France, and the growing devotee population needed this large, three-storey, corner building. Śrīla Prabhupāda visited for a week in August 1973, and on Bhagavān Dāsa's request, he installed marble Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities.

Mṛdāṇī Dāsī: "I was standing not far from Prabhupāda's vyāsāsana, where he was sitting, when the Deities were brought into the temple room. The devotees put Their Lordships just in front of him. The devotees put Their Lordships just in front of him. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Śrīla Prabhupāda were vis-a-vis, looking at each other, and then Prabhupāda got down from the vyāsāsana and began to rub Rādhārāṇī's face to remove a stain."

Aśoka-kumāra Dāsa: "I was fortunate enough to be right up front while Śrīla Prabhupāda was offering

the first āratī. When he was about to light the camphor lamp, he stopped and called the pūjārī. What had happened was that a devotee had worked the camphor into the ghee wick, instead of sprinkling it on top. Prabhupāda waited until someone brought camphor and put some crystals on the wick, then he continued the ceremony."

Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa: "While offering the āratī, Śrīla Prabhupāda was intent on offering each item with care and devotion, not to make a show, but to please Their Lordships with his humble offering. His method of offering the cloth struck me. He made several slow small circles with his wrist as he moved the cloth in a large clockwise circle around the form of the Lord."

* * *

Nikhilānanda Dāsa: "I was interested in photography, and Harernāmānanda kindly loaned me two cameras and let me accompany him into Prabhupāda's room to take pictures. While Śrīla Prabhupāda preached to guests, I had plenty of opportunities to take pictures from different angles. Sometimes when I was just about to push the button, Prabhupāda would stop talking for a moment and look at me with

penetration. I instantly froze and wasn't able to move my finger to take a shot, and the devotees laughed at my shyness.

"One evening it had become very late, and Prabhupāda's servant, Śrutakīrti, suggested that we leave and let Prabhupāda take rest. But Prabhupāda simply smiled and asked, 'Does anybody want to leave?' We all laughed; it was obvious how much we enjoyed the company of our spiritual master in such an intimate, relaxed atmosphere.

"On another occasion we were sitting in his room while a kīrtana in the temple, on the ground floor, was picking up more and more speed and volume. The whole building seemed to reverberate. One devotee asked whether he should go down and stop it, but Śrīla Prabhupāda remarked, 'Kīrtana is always pleasing.'"

Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa: "During one of the darśanas in Śrīla Prabhupāda's room, several devotees were present, and perhaps some guests, but the room was not crowded. It was in the afternoon. Suddenly a devotee walked in with a large plate of fruit, apparently from the four o'clock offering. Śrīla Prabhupāda at first appeared slightly annoyed at the

interruption. That expression of slight annoyance struck me. It showed how absorbed Śrīla Prabhupāda was in preaching and how detached he was from eating. He took a piece or two of fruit, then gestured for it to be distributed, and continued preaching."

Pṛthu Dāsa: "Arrangements were made for Śrīla Prabhupāda to speak from the balcony of the temple and address the devotees and neighbors. The municipality gave permission on the condition that no sound system be used. When Prabhupāda heard of this, he told the story of Gopal Ban, who had just gotten a new toilet, which he didn't want to have soiled by anybody. When a friend came by and asked him if he could pass stool, Gopal Ban said, 'Yes, but on the condition that you don't pass water at the same time. I'll stand next to you with a stick. If you dare to pass urine while passing stool, I'll hit you over the head.'"

Mṛdāṇī Dāsī: "In those days the relationships between men and women on our saṅkīrtana party were quite relaxed and kind of intimate, and we used to get together and talk, mainly about saṅkīrtana. During Prabhupāda's visit, we happened to do this out in the street, on the corner, right under his balcony. When

he noticed us, he sent somebody down to tell us to stop it immediately—that it was māyā—men and women sitting together and talking."

Nikhilānanda Dāsa: "Harernāmānanda asked Prabhupāda's secretary whether Prabhupāda would grant us twenty minutes in private to take pictures, and to our surprise and delight, Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed. When we entered his room, he was sitting behind his desk and softly chanting japa. Then he stopped and took tilaka from a small silver box and renewed the Vaiṣṇava mark on his forehead. While we were taking photographs, Prabhupāda turned to me and asked why I had two cameras. I was so surprised that I simply looked at him helplessly, but Harernāmānanda quickly explained that one camera was for color photos and the other contained a black-and-white film. Prabhupāda nodded and continued chanting.

"After a few minutes I summoned up my courage and said, 'Śrīla Prabhupāda, may I ask you a question?' When he indicated that I should go ahead, I asked him, 'It is said that one becomes blissful in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but my experience is that I always commit so many mistakes and that I suffer when I

have made a mistake. How is this?' After a short silence, he said softly, 'If one repents, that is very good.' It sounded meaningful, though I wasn't sure whether this answered my question. But I decided to leave it at that and think about it in the future. A few years later, I came across a verse in the Fifth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which says in connection with the story of Jaḍa Bharata: 'Although Bharata Maharaja received the body of a deer, by constant repentance he became completely detached from all material attachment.'"

* * *

Before coming to Paris, Prabhupāda had stayed for over a month in London. He had attended a successful Ratha-yātrā festival and met several important men, including a famous sculptor and George Harrison, the former Beatle, who had donated an estate near London, now renamed Bhaktivedanta Manor. Hamsadūta had asked Harernāmānanda to follow Prabhupāda on his European tour and take photographs.

Harernāmānanda Dāsa: "While I accompanied Śrīla Prabhupāda in London, Paris, and Stockholm, I had opportunities to be with him in many circumstances:

morning walks, lectures, room conversations, and public engagements. One thing that made a strong impression on me was Prabhupāda's ability to adapt himself quickly and perfectly to a particular kind of person or audience. To me it seemed mystical how he knew almost immediately where a person was at. On several occasions he sensed right from the beginning where a conversation was leading and would answer questions even before they had been asked. Thus it happened that some of his guests would naturally stop questioning after a while and just listen, because they could see that Prabhupāda was on their wavelength, addressing exactly the problems on their minds.

"Another thing that impressed me was that Prabhupāda sometimes gave such simple answers that you became completely dumbfounded. You would ask yourself, 'Why didn't I think of that myself? It's so clear!' I actually burst into laughter once, because Prabhupāda's answer was so self—evident.

"One afternoon, Donovan, his girlfriend, and some of their friends came to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. Donovan, a good friend of George Harrison, knew a bit about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but the others had no idea at all. As Prabhupāda answered their questions and

explained basic concepts, Donovan's girlfriend became uneasy. She seemed afraid of Prabhupāda's influence. Probably she sensed the danger of losing her man, because Donovan was actually humble. He listened submissively and showed his willingness to accept what Prabhupāda said. So his girlfriend became increasingly nervous and repeatedly tried to bring the conversation to an end. Finally she succeeded. Although Donovan was genuinely interested, he had to comply with her desire, and he excused himself for not being able to stay longer.

"During Ratha-yātrā festivals Prabhupāda would usually sit on a vyāsāsana on one of the carts, but this time he surprised everyone by walking the whole way from Marble Arch to Trafalgar Square. Of course, for me as a photographer, this was a unique opportunity to take shots of him in front of the Ratha carts.

"As the procession began moving, devotees formed a protective circle around Śrīla Prabhupāda. I was constantly running ahead of them and then quickly turning around to get some good angles. Prabhupāda played karatālas and chanted, and whenever he began to dance, the devotees went wild. At intervals he would stop, raise his arms, and turn around to see

Lord Jagannātha.

"His face didn't express what we would normally describe as ecstasy. His eyes were watery, and he looked rather deeply moved, almost sad, as if feeling intense separation from Kṛṣṇa. He seemed oblivious to his surroundings: the roaring kīrtana, the jumping devotees, the shouting policemen, and the gaping onlookers. Prabhupāda was detached from it all, serene, fully absorbed in Lord Jagannātha. But simultaneously he was feeling compassion for all the people present.

"At Bhaktivedanta Manor, I made it a goal to make a photographic study of just Prabhupāda's head. He would give morning class in what is now the theater room. This part of the building faces north, and the tiny lightbulb high on the ceiling provided very inadequate lighting. There was no question of using a flash, because earlier Prabhupāda had chastised Bhārgava with strong words for tip-toeing in front of him with a camera, clicking and flashing, and disturbing his lecture. So I took a different approach. I put up a tripod at the rear of the room, changed from a normal lens to a zoom, put in a supersensitive film, and attached a remote control for long

exposures. In this way I tried for the next two or three days to capture Prabhupāda's face in its multifarious expressions.

"One morning I was looking again through the camera's viewfinder, and to my great surprise I noticed that everything was much brighter than usual. A quick glance at the ceiling confirmed that the lighting was the same; no additional bulbs had been put in. So I wondered, 'What's the matter? Same film, same lights.' Then I looked at Śrīla Prabhupāda and saw that he was radiant, as if a golden effulgence were emanating from him. I remembered a similar incident that some New York devotees reported. Two policemen came toward Prabhupāda and his disciples on a morning walk. When they passed the group, one of them turned to the other and said, 'Look! That man is glowing.'

"Now, in Bhaktivedanta Manor, I had a similar experience. I think this effulgence, which is sometimes depicted as a halo on old religious paintings, is a phenomenon of saintly persons, great souls, who are like transparent mediums that may at times manifest in this way their spark of the spiritual energy and their divine love."

Chapter 13

A Successful Week in Stockholm

Prabhupāda's visit to Sweden was scheduled for the second week of September, 1973. Ajita and Vegavān, along with their wives, Kṛṣṇa-premī and Padmavātī, had been preaching in and around Stockholm for only half a year, but they had already met the Indian ambassador, a Sanskrit professor, and a psychiatrist. Śrīla Prabhupāda had been invited to speak at the famous Upsalla University. And the devotees from Germany were bringing their sound system, to stage several Hare Kṛṣṇa festivals, each culminating in a lecture by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Prabhupāda arrived in the morning on September 5th. As usual, the devotees invited the media and held a press conference. For most reporters, this was their first encounter with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and Prabhupāda tried to impress on them the difference between matter and spirit.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for your kindly receiving me. This is the first time I am coming to this country, Sweden. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is spreading all over the world gradually.

"It is a little difficult to understand this movement because it is completely on the spiritual platform. Generally, people do not understand what the spiritual platform is. At present we are a combination of spirit and matter. Matter we can understand, but on account of our long association with matter, we cannot understand what spirit is. But we can imagine that there is something which distinguishes a dead body and living body."

Prabhupāda gave the example of a dead father:

"Although he is lying on his bed, his children lament: 'Our father has gone away.' This indicates that they sense there is a difference between the corpse and the person they knew as their father. So that is spirit. The one who has gone away from that body, that is spirit soul;

otherwise, why are they saying, 'Our father is gone?' The body is there. So first of all we have to understand this distinction between the spirit soul and the material body. If we can understand the spirit soul, then we can understand this spiritual movement; otherwise, simply on the basis of material understanding, it is very difficult to understand spiritual life or the spiritual platform."

Śrīla Prabhupāda then summarized his points:

"Spiritual life means eternity, a blissful life of knowledge. And material life means nonpermanence, a miserable life of ignorance. This body will not stay, and it is always in a miserable condition. But on account of our long association with this material life we have become so dull-headed that it is very difficult to understand spiritual life, what spiritual activities are, what the spiritual world is, what God is, what our relationship with Him is. Therefore this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is a kind of training to understand spiritual life

and the spiritual world and God."

Śrīla Prabhupāda urged his listeners to try to understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness by associating with the devotees who had now settled in Sweden, and to adopt the simple process of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā—mantra:

"If we take advantage of this mantra chanting , then gradually our heart will be cleansed, and immediately we shall be able to understand that 'I am not this body, I am spirit soul.' Then real awakening will come."

Prabhupāda gave the example of a man adrift in the ocean, who cannot become happy—no matter how hard he tries—until he is back on the land.

"Similarly, our program is not to become happy by so-called adjustments of our material condition. That is not possible. Better come to the spiritual platform and act in spiritual life. Then there is a possibility of happiness. Tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti māmeti kaunteya. In

the Bhagavad-gītā it is said that those who are cultivating spiritual life, spiritual knowledge, for them, after giving up this body there is promotion to the spiritual world. That is eternal, blissful life, and that will make us happy. So if we become serious, if we actually want to be happy, then we must take to spiritual understanding.

"Of course, in every country or in different parts of the world, there is some religious system to understand spiritual life. But unfortunately nobody is interested in any spiritual or religious system because they have been more and more induced to become addicted to the material and sensuous activities, and so they are going far, far away from spiritual life, and more and more confusion and disappointment is arising all over the world. To mitigate this sort of disappointment and confusion, one has to take to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and attempt to understand the philosophy and act accordingly. Then people will be happy. That is our program. Thank you very much. Hare Kṛṣṇa."

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The next day, Śrīla Prabhupāda lectured at Upsalla University. Before his arrival, the devotees set the mood by holding kīrtanas and bhajanas.

Hṛmātī Dāsī: "Along with Hamsadūta, Avināścandra, Vedavyāsa, and Kṛṣṇa-premī, I formed part of a group onstage. When Prabhupāda arrived, all of us prostrated ourselves to offer daṇḍavats, and somehow or other I was lying right in front of the vyāsāsana. Śrīla Prabhupāda unintentionally stepped on my hands, but it was as if they were touched by rose petals—his feet were so soft. Right afterward, one of the devotees garlanded Prabhupāda, and he also stepped on my hands, but this time I felt pain."

To everybody's surprise Śrīla Prabhupāda did not give an introductory talk, but began the program by chanting verses from Chapter Five of Brahma-saṁhitā, which contain detailed descriptions of Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual world. The devotees were invited to chant the last line of each verse with him: govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi. "I adore Govinda, the primeval Lord."

He began his talk by explaining the verse, advaita acyuta anādi ananta-rūpam. Although both we and

God are eternal living entities, the Lord never falls down from His position, whereas we sometimes fall down. Prabhupāda briefly explained what is described in the verse: Kṛṣṇa is the beginning of everything; He has multiforms, one of which maintains the world; He is ever youthful, though the oldest of all; and He is easily available by approaching a devotee. To convey the meaning of ānanda-cinmaya rasa, Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that in the spiritual world everything is Kṛṣṇa's expansion and is therefore pure spiritual energy.

Hṛmātī Dāsī: "When Prabhupāda described how everything in the spiritual world is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa—the gopīs, His father and mother, His friends, the trees and flowers, His calves and cows—he lifted his hand, and without turning around, pointed to Vāsudeva's painting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa hanging behind the vyāsāsana, as if seeing it, to illustrate his words. He was so conscious of everything around him. I was amazed."

Śrīla Prabhupāda ended his talk with the verse, cintāmaṇi prakāra sadmasu kalpa vṛkṣa lakṣāvṛteṣu surabhīr abhipālayantam: "On Kṛṣṇa's planet, there are many trees, many palaces, but they're all spiritual.

Cintāmaṇi means 'spiritual.' The houses are made of touchstone. And Kṛṣṇa is very fond of tending cows. And what are those cows? Surabhi. Surabhi means you can take as much milk as you like and as many times as you like. Here in this material world, you have cows, but you can take milk only in limited quantity. In this way, if you read Brahma-saṁhitā, you'll get a complete description of the spiritual world, the spiritual entities, the Supreme Lord, His associates, His country, His pastimes —everything— very nicely described. And if we become attached to that place, then we can try, we can prepare ourselves, for going back home, back to Godhead. That is the perfection of life. That is the mission of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement."

* * *

The next afternoon Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke to a student assembly at Upsalla. Aware of their inclination for politics, he selected Text 41 of the eighteenth chapter of Bhagavad-gītā: "Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras are distinguished by the qualities born of their own natures in accordance with the material modes." He then explained:

"Everywhere, even among the plants and beasts, these three guṇas are working. Just like some trees, they're useless; they produce neither any nice fruit nor flower. That is third-class, in ignorance. Cows are first-class animals, in the mode of goodness, supplying such valuable, nutritious food, milk. But the cats and dogs are third-class animals. This is the calculation of the three modes of material nature. Among human beings, or animals or trees or birds—everywhere, Kṛṣṇa says—in the higher planetary system, everywhere, these three modes of material nature are working. Therefore, in the human society, because there are three modes of material nature, the classifications should be made scientifically according to these three modes of material nature. And that is explained by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavad-gītā: catur varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭam, four classes of men."

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained the qualities and duties of the different divisions and denounced the idea of a classless society as utopian. But then he introduced a

new angle of vision: transcending the conditioning of material existence by coming to the spiritual platform.

"In the human form of body, although there are naturally such divisions, one can be raised to a higher position by this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. As far as the material body is concerned, you cannot change the quality. This is already fixed. One has got his particular type of body by nature's arrangement, according to the quality. Now, if you want to change a person to a better quality, then you have to accept Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Because Kṛṣṇa consciousness is on the spiritual platform, it has nothing to do with the material platform. From the material platform, you cannot change anyone's quality."

Prabhupāda pointed to his disciples as living proof and explained that they had easily given up all sinful habits by taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and had even forgotten their bodily designations as Americans, Englishmen, or Germans—black or white—and now

identified themselves only as spirit souls, eternally part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. Then Prabhupāda launched into an analysis of the soul and made the point that even animals and plants are souls, who deserve protection, contrary to the communist idea of caring only for humans. "So this is not an organized society. An organized society means that there are first-class men, brāhmaṇas, who give advice to the second-class men, the administrators. And the administrative class will see that everyone is following the religious principles. And the third-class men, or the mercantile class of men, they should produce food."

Having come back to the original topic of the divisions of society, Śrīla Prabhupāda next explained what it means to be a brāhmaṇa and stressed the need for an educational department to create first-class men.

After Śrīla Prabhupāda concluded his talk, a lively question-and-answer session ensued, with one student in particular taking the initiative. Annoyed by the idea of a society based on what seemed to him to be the detestable caste system, he challenged Prabhupāda: "Why do you have these distinctions?"

"Distinction..." Prabhupāda paused for a second thoughtfully, "exists only as long as you are not a devotee. You must have these distinctions. There is already the distinction."

But the student hadn't grasped the distinctions which Prabhupāda had explained. He insisted: "But why?"

"Why?" Prabhupāda asked with surprise. "Because there are third-class men, fourth-class men, first-class men—there are. How you can say, 'Why?'"

His opponent avoided answering and began another argument, but Prabhupāda interrupted him to correct his stubborn attitude: "Do you think everybody is a first-class man? Do you think?" When the student admitted that he did not, Prabhupāda concluded, "Therefore, a first-class man should be like this, a second-class man should be like this. There is already first-class, second-class, third-class, fourth-class."

Seeing that he was about to lose the debate, the student changed his tactic by focusing the attention on Prabhupāda: "So you are saying that you are a first-class man, yes?" But he was wrong if he thought he had embarrassed or cornered Prabhupāda.

As a humble Vaiṣṇava, Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't have to juggle words to deflect the attack; he simply had to

speaking from personal realization: "I am a fifth-class man," he said matter-of-factly. "I don't claim anything, because I am the servant of everyone. I am a servant of the fourth-class man also."

"But you are a brāhmaṇa; you are a first-class man," his opponent continued to challenge.

Prabhupāda remained unfazed: "Now you may say first-class man, but I think I am a fifth-class man." Still dissatisfied, the student became unintelligible, and Prabhupāda had to interrupt him: "What is your point? I cannot understand."

Now Hamsadūta entered the discussion. Well aware that a pure devotee considers himself lower than the straw in the street and never defends himself against personal attacks, he regarded it as his duty to come to Śrīla Prabhupāda's defense. Why should his spiritual master have to deal with an unreasonable troublemaker? "What is your point?" he pressed the challenger. "You have to come to the point. Organize your question." When the student criticized Prabhupāda for sitting on an elevated seat decorated with flowers, Hamsadūta turned the challenge around: "So you want to sit there?" "No," came the answer. "O.K. Don't be envious. If you can sit there

and give some knowledge ..."

"I don't want to sit there," the student grumped.

"Then what is your objection?" Haṁsadūta asked.

"What about all those flowers that you have killed, so that he could be decorated?" the boy demanded to know. A round of applause from the students indicated that he had touched on a common gripe.

Śrīla Prabhupāda turned to Haṁsadūta: "What is that?"

"His point is that the flowers have been killed to decorate the vyāsāsana," Haṁsadūta explained. And he said to the student, "So you compare this to animal killing? Is this the same thing?" The boy was caught off-guard. Haṁsadūta was quick to drive home his point: "Do you think that plucking a flower is the same as killing a cow in a slaughterhouse?"

"Of course not," the student agreed, and then quickly added, "but who said so?"

Undiverted, Haṁsadūta pursued his own line of reasoning: "So you are not eating any meat, fish or eggs?"

"I do," the boy admitted, not seeing any connection between the two issues.

But Haṁsadūta made the contradiction clear: "O.K.,

you yourself are not practicing what you are saying." But the student turned the tables: "But he preaches that you cannot do this, and he does not practice it." The time had come for some scriptural evidence, and Haṁsadūta quoted Bhagavad-gītā: "About offering flowers, Kṛṣṇa says, 'You offer Me with love a little fruit, a flower and water, and I will accept it.' That's the difference between killing an animal and a flower—Kṛṣṇa accepts fruits, flowers, a little water, but He doesn't accept any cow or slaughterhouse killing."

Far from being convinced by being presented with Kṛṣṇa as the final authority, the student immediately questioned the validity of the words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead: "Why does He make this distinction?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda had been sitting all the while on the vyāsāsana, watching with pleasure his disciple's preaching, but now he again took over the discussion and explained the position of Kṛṣṇa's devotee: "We are practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As Kṛṣṇa is making a distinction, we are making that. We are not manufacturing our own idea. That is the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement."

Prabhupāda explained that the plucking of a flower is not actually killing, but the student interrupted him: "What is it?"

Prabhupāda appealed to his common sense. "Whatever. According to you it is killing. But do you think that killing this flower and killing you is the same thing? If somebody kills you, that killing and this killing is the same? You think like that?"

The boy avoided the obvious and logical answer by turning the attention back on Prabhupāda: "In your opinion ..."

But Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't let him get away with it. "Now, we don't give such opinion," he said.

The student retorted, "You did!"

Instead of getting involved in a heated argument, Prabhupāda tried to appease his opponent by giving him the benefit of the doubt and offering him a way to save face: "No. Then you have misunderstood. You have misunderstood. Our preaching process is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa says: *patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati*. 'Anyone who gives Me a little flower, a little fruit, a little water, like that, I accept that.' So we offer this flower to Kṛṣṇa. We don't use it independently. We take the remnants of

His foodstuff, or anything which is used by Kṛṣṇa. That is our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. We do not take anything directly. That is our principle. That is our philosophy. So if Kṛṣṇa says that He can accept meat, then we can also accept meat. But He does not say that. He says, *patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyāṁ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati*. So we have to follow our principle as it is stated in Bhagavad-gītā. We cannot take any dictation from others. That is not possible."

Realizing that he would get nowhere by arguing against statements that the devotees regard as divine in origin, the student changed his line of attack. He tried to shake the foundation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. "What makes you think that Kṛṣṇa is God?" he challenged.

Again Prabhupāda would not let himself be drawn in. Rather, he exposed the unreasonableness of the questioner. "Yes. If you know what God is, then you will accept God. If you know, 'These are the qualifications of God,' then you will accept God. Do you know what is the qualification of God?" The boy wasn't sure how to handle the question. "Do you know?" Prabhupāda pressed him. "Just as we find out a physician—if I know what the qualification of a

physician is, then I can understand who is a proper physician. Similarly, if you know what the qualification of God is, then you understand that Kṛṣṇa is God. It is not difficult. If you know what gold is, then you can understand what genuine gold is. If you do not know, then you may accept iron as gold."

The student made a last attempt to change the subject again: "Is it by pure logic?" he demanded to know.

But Prabhupāda wouldn't let him off the hook. He asked him clearly and directly: "How do you understand God?"

"I don't," the student admitted.

"Then don't talk of God!" Prabhupāda said emphatically. "If you don't understand God, then why are you talking of God? If you understand God, then you talk. And if you say 'I do not understand God,' then how can you talk of God?"

The speech before the Upsalla students was another demonstration of how difficult it was to convince someone by philosophy and argument. Prabhupāda had seen this many times before, and this was one of his main reasons for stressing the importance of

congregational chanting and prasādam distribution. That's why he really liked the festival program. People might object to philosophical ideas, but they rarely objected to chanting, dancing, and eating a delicious feast. By enjoying themselves, they unknowingly became purified and made spiritual advancement. If somebody wanted to know about the philosophy, he could purchase a book. Therefore, when Prabhupāda was invited to speak that same evening to a group of academics, including the Indology professor that the devotees had met, he told the devotees to accompany him with an array of pots.

Pr̥thu Dāsa: "He wanted us to give out hot prasādam right after the talk. So there we were, in front of scholars and intellectuals, with our steaming pots, which quickly spread the fragrances of tasty purīs and halavā, while Śrīla Prabhupāda lectured on Bhagavad-gītā. It was quite distinct from an academic setting. But prasādam distribution was more important than creating the impression of being academic philosophers."

For his talk that evening Prabhupāda chose Texts 1-2 of the thirteenth chapter of Bhagavad-gītā; therein Arjuna asks about material nature, its enjoyer, the

field of activity, and the knower of the field. Prabhupāda first explained briefly the relationship between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna as spiritual master and disciple and the necessity of a submissive attitude in understanding transcendental knowledge. He had in mind the defiant attitudes of the students that afternoon.

"Submission means I must approach somebody who is actually in a better position or higher position; otherwise, what is the use of approaching? Tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā. And seva means service. You cannot challenge. You approach such a person whose instruction you shall receive; you can inquire submissively, but you cannot challenge. That is not allowed in the Vedic system. Samit-paniḥ śrotriyam brahma-niṣṭham. Therefore, before selecting a teacher, you must decide whether you can submit to him. If you cannot submit, don't approach him; don't waste time."

When Śrīla Prabhupāda began to discuss the verses, he explained the meaning of God. He is the supreme controller, and a controller must be a person with the capacity to give orders. Nirviśeṣa śunyavādī paścātya deśatāriṇe—one of Prabhupāda's main objectives was

to smash the impersonal conception of God so prevalent in modern Western thinking. The professors were familiar with Bhagavad-gītā and the Upaniṣads, but they understood the Absolute Truth to be formless and beyond description.

True to his conviction that we begin to understand God by first understanding ourselves as spirit souls, Śrīla Prabhupāda explained the first lesson of Bhagavad-gītā: "You are not this body." The soul changes from one body to another at the time of death, he said, though no one wants to die. "Why should we accept one type of body, live there for some time, and again change it? That we have experienced. Anyone of us desires that his youthful body may remain. We try to keep that youthfulness by so many medicines, by so many means. But nature will not allow you to keep yourself always youthful. That is not possible. You must change. Therefore one should be inquisitive: 'I don't want this type of body—old body, feeble body—more conditioned, with rheumatic disease and so many other diseases, cough disease. I don't want it, but I'm forced to accept this body.' This is our real problem. 'I don't want to die, but death is forced upon me.' So these questions

should be raised by really advanced human beings." Then Śrīla Prabhupāda commented on the age-old question, Can you show me God? He said that our seeing power depends on certain conditions—we need light. Therefore, if we want to see God, we have to fulfill one condition: applying the ointment of love to our eyes. "Those who are saintly persons," Prabhupāda explained, "those who have trained themselves in the affairs of love of Godhead, they can see God constantly within their heart. That is possible. So here, Arjuna is also a saintly person. He's not an ordinary man, because he's talking with Kṛṣṇa personally. If Arjuna has the chance of making friendship with God and talking with Him personally, everyone has the same capacity, provided we elevate ourselves to that standard of life: bhakti, bhakti-yoga."

When Prabhupāda asked for questions, it became obvious that the professors had not been much interested in his thoughts, but were caught up in their own academic considerations. "What is the difference between Bhagavad-gītā and the Vedas," one asked, which prompted Prabhupāda to answer that there may be many different topics discussed in

the Vedas, but the ultimate goal is to know God. And again he immediately drove home his point that we cannot know God with our present senses. "With these material, blunt, imperfect senses, we cannot understand God. That is not possible. But if we can please God by our service, by our love, He reveals Himself. Revelation, that is the process. So simply by our speculation, research work, we cannot find out God. That is not possible."

Another scholar asked about the differences between Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave the example of a hill that is seen differently from three different angles of vision: From afar it resembles a cloud; nearer, it is seen to be variegated; and close up, one can see that it is populated by trees and animals. He concluded that ultimately the Absolute Truth is Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The word "personality" brought up another question—how he understood personality—and when Prabhupāda quoted Kāṭha Upaniṣad, saying that God is the chief person who supplies the necessities of all other persons, the professor interjected that the Upaniṣads declare that "the Unity is inexpressible." Śrīla

Prabhupāda didn't budge. He gave more quotes indicating that God is a person, though His transcendental body is different from ours. Seeing that their views were irreconcilable, the professor who hosted the devotees politely brought the discussion to an end.

Harernāmānanda Dāsa: "Śrīla Prabhupāda was seated behind the teacher's desk, while the Indology professor and his colleagues and a few devotees took the students' seats. To me it seemed that those professors didn't understand anything. Their questions after the lecture showed that they were overloaded with information from their academic studies and were unable to appreciate straightforward explanations or simple answers.

"After the talk, Bhārgava, another photographer, and I were alone with Śrīla Prabhupāda, because the others were accompanying the professors out. Prabhupāda turned to us and asked, 'What do you think? Was it all right?' Bhārgava expressed his appreciation of Prabhupāda's presentation, but I couldn't bring out a single word. It was as if my mind had gone blank. I thought, 'Why does Prabhupāda ask me? He knows perfectly well where these professors

are at.'

"In Prabhupāda's presence, I was always overcome by awe and reverence. Actually, the longer I was with him, the more I learned to respect him, and I felt rather insignificant around him. Although I regret today that I was not able to speak freely with Prabhupāda, I think it also had its positive side. It was safer. As he used to say: familiarity breeds contempt. So there was no question of my becoming too familiar with Śrīla Prabhupāda.

"To be in Śrīla Prabhupāda's presence was an intense experience, at least for me. I always felt that his eyes were like X-rays. When he looked at me, it was as if he could read my face like an open book, and he made me completely aware of my conditioning."

Maṇimañjarī Dāsī: "Somehow or other, I was fortunate enough to be among the devotees who accompanied Śrīla Prabhupāda to Upsalla that evening. In the classroom where the lecture took place, I was sitting in the second row, maybe three yards from Prabhupāda's seat. I wasn't initiated yet, and I was curious to find out why the devotees were always praising Prabhupāda and speaking of him with such enthusiasm. So, for quite a while, I simply stared

at him, almost in a challenging mood, and I practically didn't listen to what he was saying. I wanted to find out what was so special about him by looking for external symptoms. But then, all of sudden, Prabhupāda looked at me, and when his eyes met mine, I felt I was struck by a thunderbolt. I felt so uncomfortable that I didn't dare look at him the rest of the evening. In fact, for the remaining days of his visit, I looked at him only from a distance.

"On the final day, at the airport, Prabhupāda was surrounded by a few disciples, and Hamsadūta was leading kīrtana. Suddenly something dawned on me. It was as if Prabhupāda spoke to me from within: 'If you want to know me, you have to serve.' I felt great relief. This was the answer. Not that I had read this in a book and was remembering it now. It was more like a revelation, like Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy on me to end my moroseness and confusion: Devotional service would reveal everything."

Nikhilānanda Dāsa: "The next morning we were walking with Śrīla Prabhupāda near the temple. He didn't say much, but was chanting softly on his beads. It being already September, the Swedish dawn was kind of chilly and foggy. When finally the large red

sun rose over the horizon, Prabhupāda remarked thoughtfully: 'Kṛṣṇa surya sāma. Kṛṣṇa is like the sun.' He thus reminded us that it is not difficult to see Kṛṣṇa in all things."

Smita Kṛṣṇa Swami: "Before the public programs, the devotees performed harināma and invited people to come to hear Śrīla Prabhupāda speak. On one occasion, probably with the idea to give mercy to the most fallen, they invited a group of drunkards to come along. Fortunately, these guys were actually quite nice and didn't create any disturbance during the program. As Śrīla Prabhupāda lectured, he probably noticed them, and out of his desire to give anyone the chance to elevate himself to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he began to speak about the verse in Bhagavad-gītā wherein Kṛṣṇa declares that He is the taste of water.

"Kṛṣṇa says, raso 'ham apsu kaunteya: any liquid thing, the taste which attracts you, that I am. Even you are a drunkard and are fond of tasting wine, I recommend that you simply think: "This taste of wine is Kṛṣṇa." That will make you a yogī, the greatest yogī. If you simply think this: "I am tasting wine—oh, a very nice taste—this is Kṛṣṇa." Is there any loss if you think

like that? This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

* * *

The day after Prabhupāda's meeting with the professors was reserved for a Hare Kṛṣṇa festival. Posters had been put up all over Stockholm. Throughout the morning and early afternoon, a big harināma party led by Haṁsadūta brought the chanting of the holy name to the streets of Sweden's capital. The devotees were so absorbed in the chanting that they continued it in the festival hall, where another group of devotees was decorating, setting up the sound system, and preparing prasādam. Mṛdāṅgī Dāsī: "I was helping Himavatī roll purīs, while Haṁsadūta was leading kīrtana in the hall. Prabhupāda was expected any time. I really loved to chant and dance in kīrtana, especially Haṁsadūta's, so I asked Himavatī if I could join in. When I was completely absorbed in chanting and dancing—hands and legs in the air—almost touching the ceiling, I turned around, and there was Prabhupāda. He looked so pleased. He looked right into my eyes, and his look was so deep and endless that it took me a second to realize that I had to offer obeisances. I could see how much he appreciated it

when we enjoyed chanting and dancing in kīrtana." Vibhīṣaṇa Dāsa: "When Śrīla Prabhupāda entered the hall, the audience was waiting for him, and the people rose from their seats and bowed their heads to greet him. It was a spontaneous act, not like something in the TV studios, where a red light goes on to indicate that people should applaud."

The subject of the lecture was "The Guru and Spiritual Life." Hamsadūta had suggested to Prabhupāda that he explain the Gurvaṣṭaka verses. Śrīla Prabhupāda began by talking about the difference between matter and spirit and the material and spiritual worlds. He told his audience that it was up to them to decide where to go next: "The guru can help you transmigrate from this planet directly to the spiritual sky, where there are innumerable spiritual planets." Prabhupāda mentioned the verse in Bhagavad-gītā that says according to one's desires one can go to different planets. "That is called saṁsāra, Prabhupāda said, "rotating within this material world. And that is compared to davanala, a forest fire."

He was steering toward the first verse (saṁsāra-davanala-līdha-loka...), but first he made the meaning of saṁsāra-davanala clear. After all,

without realizing the misery of material life, why would anyone accept a guru to get out of it? Thus Prabhupāda gave several examples of the blazing forest fire of material existence: two World Wars, the Vietnam War, the Pakistan War:

"You may try your best to live very peacefully, but nature will not allow you. There must be war. Especially in European history, there were so many wars: Carthaginian war, Greek War, Roman War, Seven Years' War between France and England, and Hundred Years' War. And the war feeling is going on, not only between nation and nation, but also between man and man, neighbor to neighbor, even between husband and wife, father and son. This war is going on. This is called davanala, forest fire. In the forest nobody goes to set fire, but automatically by the clash or friction of the dried bamboo, there is electricity, and it catches fire. Similarly, although we do not want unhappiness, still by our dealings we create enemies and friends, and there is a fight, there is war. This will continue. This is called saṁsāra-davanala. Just try to

understand. So guru means spiritual master, who can deliver one from this forest fire.

"A forest fire requires water to be extinguished. But where is the water coming from? From your bucket or from your fire brigade? No. It must come from the sky. It must come from the sky. When there will be torrents of rain from the sky, this blazing forest fire will be extinguished. These rains from the sky do not depend on your scientific propaganda or manipulation. They depend on the mercy of the Supreme Lord. So the spiritual master is compared to the cloud. From the cloud there are torrents of rain. Similarly, a spiritual master is considered to be just like the cloud. The cloud takes water from the sea. The cloud hasn't got its own water. Similarly, a spiritual master brings mercy from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Just see the comparison. He has no mercy of his own, but he carries the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That is the qualification of a spiritual master. A spiritual master will never say, 'I am God. I can give you mercy.' No, that is not a spiritual master. That is

a bogus pretender. A spiritual master will say, 'I am a servant of God. I have brought His mercy. Please take it and be satisfied.'

Śrīla Prabhupāda then described the symptom of material existence—*anxiety*—and said that the first test of a genuine spiritual master is whether his disciples become free from anxiety by following his instructions. The second test is his constant engagement in chanting the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead: "In this age of Kali, simply by chanting the holy names of the Lord, you can get all perfection. All perfection. And our movement, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, is meant for that purpose. In India it is very popular. But in the Western countries we have just introduced it five or six years ago, and people are taking to it, and they are feeling happy. So this is the only process. Therefore the guru is always engaged in chanting. Mahāprabho kīrtana-nṛtya-gītā: chanting and dancing. Unless he himself performs chanting and dancing, how can he teach his disciple?"

Prabhupāda briefly described the third symptom, Deity worship, by mentioning that in Sweden the

Deity had not yet been established, and then went on to the next verse and broadened its original meaning, surcharging it by his dynamic preaching spirit: "The fourth symptom is that a guru, a spiritual master, encourages prasādam distribution to the public. Ours is not dry philosophy; simply we talk and go home. No. We distribute prasādam, very sumptuous prasādam. If you eat bhāgavata-prasādam, then gradually you become spiritualized. It has the potency. Therefore it is said that realization of God can be done by the tongue: sevonmukhe hi jihvādau. If you engage your tongue in the service of the Lord, then you realize God. So what is the tongue's engagement? The tongue's engagements are that you chant the holy name of the Lord and you take the prasādam, remnants of foodstuff given to the Lord. Then you become self-realized, God realized."

The next two verses of Gurvāṣṭaka describe the intimate relationship of the guru to the gopīs, but Śrīla Prabhupāda avoided discussing these confidential topics in public and instead stressed the importance of constantly thinking of Kṛṣṇa. He applied the idea of taking part in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes to all levels of spiritual existence: "So the ultimate goal

of the spiritual master is that he wants to be transferred to the planet of Kṛṣṇa, where he wants to associate with the gopīs to help them to serve Kṛṣṇa. Some spiritual masters are thinking of becoming assistants to the gopīs; some of them are thinking to be assistants to the cowherd boys; some are thinking to be assistants to Mother Yaśodā or Nanda, or to be the servants of God, and some of them are thinking how to become a flower, a fruit tree, or a calf or cow in Vṛndāvana."

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained again the difference between the material world and the spiritual world, but this time focused on the difference in the manifestation of love: "Real love is in the spiritual world between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Real love is between Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs. Real love, friendship, is there between Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd boy friends. Real love between animal and man is there. Kṛṣṇa is loving the cows and calves. Real love between trees, flowers, water. . . The process is that you worship the Deity, you take prasādam, you chant the holy name, you follow the instruction of the spiritual master, in this way you'll be trained up how to understand Kṛṣṇa, and then your life is successful."

* * *

The small temple room in Spanga, a village near Stockholm, was the converted living room of a house the devotees rented, but Uthāla still wanted to set up a sound system to amplify Prabhupāda's morning classes.

However, when Śrīla Prabhupāda began to speak, there was no sound. He tapped the microphone several times and asked Hamsadūta, 'It is not working?' Uthāla frantically tried to find the cause. He checked the connections, changed leads, twiddled knobs, but without any luck. Prabhupāda was annoyed yet amused, and ridiculed the Western mentality of depending on technology, by quoting the last line of a verse by Cāṇakya Paṇḍita: bahvārambhe laghu kriyā. The arrangement is very big, grand style, but the outcome is insignificant. "What is the use of keeping big, big paraphernalia?" Śrīla Prabhupāda asked. "What is the use of keeping a useless machine?" He mentioned the four examples given by Cāṇakya: ajā-yuddhe, a fight between two goats; muni-śraddhe, a festival by sages in the jungle; dampatya kalahe, a fight between husband and wife; and megha garjane, thundering clouds in the morning.

"You have seen goats fighting?" he asked. The devotees laughed as Śrīla Prabhupāda made the unusual sound of fighting goats: "Ongh! Ongh! As if two big, big heroes are fighting. But as soon as somebody comes—'Hut!'—they will go away. And when in the morning, you see big clouds assemble and hear thundering sounds, rest assured, there will be no rain in the morning. So these things are bahvārambhe laghu kriyā. Arambha: the beginning is very gorgeous, but the end is nothing. So that is not good, bahvārambhe laghu kriyā."

Prabhupāda then turned his attention to the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in front of him. He was lecturing from the fifth canto, from the chapter entitled "The Teachings of Lord R̥ṣabhadeva," and the verse described the necessity of using the human form of life properly. For most of the lecture Prabhupāda dwelt on one of his favorite topics: the degraded condition of modern civilization and its polished animal propensities of eating, sleeping, mating, and defending.

Toward the end of class, Śrīla Prabhupāda addressed his young followers directly: "Don't waste your time. Finish your business of Kṛṣṇa consciousness perfectly.

To waste time in not at all good. Why is it not good? Yato ātmano 'yam asann api kleśada āśa dehaḥ: because we have got this miserable condition of life, this body, because of our past action; now if we again create the same action, then we'll have to accept another body. This miserable condition of life will continue. Just finish it. Therefore, whatever time we have, whatever opportunity we have got, we have to prepare ourselves. No more taking a material body. And that is possible only if we are transferred to the spiritual world."

* * *

It had been a busy week in Sweden. Some days, Śrīla Prabhupāda had spoken on two occasions, and he had met important people, such as the Indian ambassador. He was especially pleased with the festival program, which attracted big crowds of people and gave them a direct experience of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Now, as he continued his world tour by leaving for Los Angeles, the German devotees, with renewed enthusiasm and strengthened conviction, returned to their preaching work in Hamburg, Berlin, Heidelberg, and Munich.

Chapter 14

Prabhupāda at Schloss Rettershof

Śrīla Prabhupāda derived obvious satisfaction from Hamsadūta's preaching, especially the traveling saṅkīrtana parties. In Germany alone each week, more than a dozen VW-vans made preaching excursions from the different temples. The book and record distributors did huge, and they returned only briefly on weekends for kīrtanas and sumptuous Sunday feasts.

Prabhupāda also liked the regular public festivals. But in his GBC report, Hamsadūta indicated that it was becoming too expensive to regularly rent a hall, cook food for free distribution, and have a group of devotees chant and dance (who otherwise could be collecting funds). On October 12, 1973, Śrīla Prabhupāda sent a letter telling him to be shrewd in his planning:

Regarding the festival programs, you should not stop because it is not economic. You can earn

from book—selling and then spend for the festivals. The festivals are very good for attracting the people; then you can easily inject the Krishna conscious poison into them.

He reminded Hamsadūta to continue preaching with enthusiasm; then all success was assured:

So your Sankirtana Parties are collecting very nicely, especially Amsterdam. As long as we go on preaching in this way, we will not starve. It is good that the Berlin party is travelling. To be stagnant is not good. Just like I am an old man, but I am always travelling. I am glad that the Hamburg Deity worship is going on nicely. Wherever there is Deities there must be first class care, arati, bhoga, cleanliness, dressing, regular classes. If this is not possible, then better to travel. Your translation process is very good, so do it nicely.

So you are doing excellent preaching, while I am here fighting with Mrs. Nair. I want that when this business is finished to return for Europe or America, perhaps via Africa. You will

be pleased to know that the London devotees that you have trained in Sankirtana and book distribution are doing very nicely.

The German devotees I have seen both in Paris and Stockholm have impressed me by their enthusiasm. It is very encouraging, so train them nicely. The Germans are very intelligent, and they will be the future preachers. So give them nice translations of my books and you will have tremendous success in Germany. Our success is our enthusiasm. So everything we do should be done with enthusiasm, the chanting, reading, and following the rules and regulations. You are experienced, senior member of the society, and Krishna has given you excellent opportunity for organizing Central Europe. I am sure you will be able to do something in Moscow. The young men there, are eager, only the government is a barrier. It is a good field there, you simply have to find the means, but rest assured that you will find many customers there. Your emphasis on book distribution is very good. You have enough centers. Let more devotees come, then consider opening more. The bus

program is successful everywhere, so continue it.

Unbeknownst to most devotees, Hamsadūta also organized preaching behind the Iron Curtain. Since 1971, Śivānanda had been visiting East Berlin. Śrīla Prabhupāda had visited Moscow in the summer of 1971. He met and spoke with Professor Kotovsky (a meeting Kṛṣṇa Dāsa arranged) and accepted a Russian boy as his disciple, Anantaśānti Dāsa. Hamsadūta made a visit to Moscow at the end of October and took a few books with him. Around the same time, a book fair was held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, and Cakravartī and Pṛthu went there to present Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

Pṛthu Dāsa: "When we pulled up at the Yugoslavian border in a van full of books, the customs agents didn't let us through, so we had to turn around. We decided to try another checkpoint. But since it was already noon, we stopped to take prasādam.

"After a while, a huge dog came near our van, and we began feeding it capātīs. Suddenly I had an idea. We invited the dog into the van and drove to the border. As I had hoped, the dog became the focus of a big argument. The border guards were adamantly

opposed to allowing our dog into the country. They said, 'You can't take this dog.' And we insisted: 'We can't live without this dog.' Finally we agreed to let the dog go. They waved us through, and we were on our way to Belgrade with hundreds of books.

"At the book fair we managed to get a booth, and hundreds of Yugoslavians bought our books. We distributed prasādam, and many people took our address and later kept in regular contact."

When Hamsadūta informed Śrīla Prabhupāda about his trip to Russia and the successful preaching in Yugoslavia, Prabhupāda was extremely pleased. He had a special interest in bringing Lord Caitanya's message to countries where conditions for preaching and practicing devotional service were the most adverse. Prabhupāda wrote to Hamsadūta:

It is Krishna's mercy that you were able to take in a copy of Bhagavad-gita to Moscow. It is very encouraging that the boy without any association is maintaining the standard. This is due to his chanting 16 rounds and following the regulative principles. Now he should be in your charge, so you kindly guide him and keep him in

our atmosphere and utilize him properly, but steadily and cautiously; I am also glad to note the work going on in East Germany.

Try to impress upon them to make communism God-centered. God is the father of everyone, and we are all His sons. Everything is His property, and everyone has the right to enjoy it. Without being God-centered, Communism will fail. So we have got good potency to be the leaders of the world if we carefully push on this movement.

I am glad to note the work of Cakravarti and Prithu at the Belgrade Book Fair. This is real progress. So from all the literatures you are distributing, you spend this money for spreading Krishna consciousness in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany, and prepare men. Put all of our books into the local languages.

Yes, I want that you give me the facility to write my books, but I can attend some meetings of important people and elites. You have taken the right view of the importance of my books. Books will always remain. That was the view of my

Guru Mahārāja, and I also have taken it. Therefore I started my movement with my books. And we shall be able to maintain everything with the sales of the books. The temples will be maintained by the book sales, and if there are no more temples, the books shall remain.

Ekā Dāsa: "My first contact with Kṛṣṇa consciousness was seeing a TV program in 1971 on Broadcast Free Berlin, a station banned in the former German Democratic Republic. The show documented new religious movements in West Germany, but mainly featured the Hamburg devotees. Being philosophical, I felt attracted. But I lived in Potsdam, near East Berlin, so there was no way to meet the devotees.

"Then I received a Zurück zur Gottheit magazine. In those days, citizens over sixty were allowed to visit the West, and many of them returned with books and magazines, though that was prohibited. I regularly borrowed Western literature from an acquaintance interested in esoteric philosophy, and he gave me the Hare Kṛṣṇa magazine.

"In spring 1973, the East German government organized an international cultural event, the

Weltfestspiele der Jugend. Young people from all over the world were invited to Alexanderplatz, a famous central square in East Berlin, and allowed to exchange their ideas freely, though no foreign literature was permitted. The government wanted to show the world that life in the German Democratic Republic was as normal as that in any other country."

Pr̥thu Dāsa: "Śivānanda and I went across the border dressed as devotees, something impossible under normal circumstances. Although we couldn't take books, we had many opportunities to preach. Hundreds of thousands of people attended the event, and we preached all day. Wherever we went in the square, large crowds gathered around us within minutes.

"During one talk, I said, 'Wherever there is motion, there must be life. Matter is dead unless it is touched by spirit.' A Communist functionary stepped forward and argued: 'What about the atom? The electron and proton move around the neutron.' I said, 'That's because Kṛṣṇa is inside the atom: aṅḍāntara-stha-paramāṇu-cayāntara-stham.' The guy shut up—the crowd cheered.

"From time to time, we asked everybody to give us

addresses, so we could send them literature, and from those contacts a group gradually developed. One of them became the first East German devotee, Ekā Dāsa."

Ekā Dāsa: "I went to the event on Alexanderplatz to meet some interesting people. When I spotted two men dressed in monks' robes, I remembered having seen this in the Hare Kṛṣṇa magazine. So I went up to them and said, 'Hare Kṛṣṇa!' Śivānanda looked surprised to hear someone in East Germany greet him like that. After talking, we went to buy some food. Śivānanda offered it, and I took my first prasādam.

"From that day on, Śivānanda regularly came to East Berlin, usually on weekends. He also brought the first books in German—one at a time, so he wouldn't have a problem at the checkpoint. He gave me a beadbag and beads. And after a few months, he revealed that he recommended me for initiation. He hadn't asked me, but he felt that I was a fit candidate because I was the only person in the East sincerely practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

"In January 1974, he came with the initiation letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda and gave me a new set of sanctified beads and my name. Before being initiated,

I didn't even know that I was supposed to follow the four rules and chant sixteen rounds every day. I chanted regularly, but sometimes more and sometimes less. I only knew that if you were sincere, you could get initiated and get a spiritual name.

"About a month later, we did harināma in public. It didn't take long for the state security police to arrive and arrest us. They asked Śivānanda to leave the country, and they interrogated me for the rest of the day.

"I soon attempted to escape to West Berlin, but I was arrested again and sentenced to two and a half years in jail. I wasn't allowed to keep any books or japa beads, so I made a mālā from strings, with knots as beads. Because I had no other engagement, I spent most of the time chanting. One day I actually chanted 108 rounds.

"From time to time, someone from the state security department came to see me. He wanted to find out where I got the books. He even offered to release me from jail if I would work for them. I declined. After some months, they felt that I was a hopeless case, and they asked me where I would like to go. I told them that I wanted to stay in East Germany, but the

problem was that they didn't let me do what I wanted to do. Eventually they gave me a form to sign, a petition to be released to the West. The East and West German governments had a treaty concerning unwanted citizens, and in autumn 1974, the West German government bought me free for 40,000 DM. I was allowed to go to West Berlin, where I moved into the temple."

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By the end of December 1973, the German translation of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Bhagavad-gītā As It Is went to the printer. Hamsadūta informed Prabhupāda and also sent him a revised edition of *Jenseits von Zeit und Raum* (Easy Journey to Other Planets). Śrīla Prabhupāda replied from Los Angeles: Previously I have seen a copy of the German Easy Journey to Other Planets. It is very nice. The printing is very good, and I'm quite pleased. Thank you very much for helping me spread this transcendental knowledge to the German people. It is a great credit for you and all the German devotees, and Lord Caitanya will bless you with devotion to His lotus feet. I am very anxious to see our Bhagavad-gita in German, so as soon as it is completed, kindly send

me a copy.

When Bhagavad-gītā Wie Sie Ist finally came off the press, it was almost time to travel to India for the first Gaura Pūrṇimā festival, so Hamsadūta decided not to send a copy by mail but to present the book to Śrīla Prabhupāda in person. Devotees from all over the world would come together in Mayapur for the first time in March 1974. Śrīla Prabhupāda described his plan in a letter to Hamsadūta:

We must meet at least once a year in Mayapur. Not only GBC shall meet, but many devotees from all parts of the world. In Mayapur we now have facilities to accommodate more than a thousand people. We have a four—storey building and enough space so that even on the balcony we can accommodate thousands apart from the rooms. There are all marble floors, and there is always natural ventilation.

So at the end of February, Hamsadūta, Himavatī, and the four temple presidents—Śivānanda, Sucandra, Cakravartī, and Pṛthu—flew to Calcutta. Śrīla Prabhupāda was staying at the Albert Road temple

for a couple of days before going to Mayapur. To receive the German Gītā from the hands of his disciples was for Prabhupāda a dream come true. He had Pṛthu read a few passages from Bhagavad-gītā Wie Sie Ist while he leaned back on his cushions and listened with closed eyes.

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Hamsadūta's wave of success was about to crest. After his return from India, Hamsadūta received a telegram from Śrīla Prabhupāda asking him to look after the temples in England. The GBC, Śyāmasundara, had become sidetracked into a ruby business, and the managers at Bhaktivedanta Manor and Bury Place faced serious problems.

Hamsadūta liked the prospect of overseeing the prestigious British yātrā. Prabhupāda first visited London in 1969, just after he stayed in Hamburg for two weeks, and he had returned every year for several weeks, sometimes even twice. Besides that, London's annual Ratha-yātrā festival was second only to San Francisco's. And a few months earlier, George Harrison had donated a large estate outside London. Hamsadūta wanted a similar place, a temple that would show the world—devotees and nondevotees

alike—that the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in Germany had become respectable and solidly established under his leadership.

Accompanied by Cakravartī, his right-hand man, Hamsadūta looked at various large buildings, one of them a famous castle, Schloss Rheimstein, on the shores of the Rhine river. But the local government became alarmed at the prospect of Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees occupying a historical building, and it took action by offering financial help to another bidder.

A country castle, Schloß Rettershof, was only a twenty-minute drive from Frankfurt, Germany's financial capital. It nestled in the hills near Königstein, a village in the Taunus, where many Frankfurt bankers and entrepreneurs had villas.

Although the rent was high and getting the place meant closing the city temples, Hamsadūta was tempted. Money wasn't a problem. He had a long-term plan to establish a farm community, but for now he wanted to concentrate his forces, form strong saṅkīrtana teams, and overflow the prosperous West German consumer society with Kṛṣṇa conscious books and records. So he rented the place.

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "By the beginning of May, some of us

devotees from Heidelberg moved into Schloß Rettershof. The place had been a boarding school. We translators quickly transformed a sunlit room on the second floor into an office, while the others began renovating the rest of the building. Their deadline was the second week of June, when Śrīla Prabhupāda was expected to visit Germany for the first time since 1969. Within a month and a half, the 11th-century castle was converted into a beautiful temple fit to receive the small Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities presiding in Hamburg and Their pure devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda."

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Śrīla Prabhupāda's flight from Paris arrived in Frankfurt on Sunday, June 16th, around 11 a.m. More than a hundred devotees from Germany, Holland, and England greeted His Divine Grace and escorted him to the VIP lounge, where he sat on a large, bright orange vyāsāsana brought from Amsterdam. In Germany, the only existing vyāsāsana, from Hamburg, was unimpressive, so it had been left at the Schloss in the reception room.

While Haṁsadūta poured a mixture of yogurt and warm water and rose petals over Śrīla Prabhupāda's

lotus feet, Gananātha Dāsa held over him a huge multicolored umbrella. Himavatī and the girls had finished making the umbrella the night before in a veritable sewing marathon.

Nikuñjavāsiṇī Dāsī: "The day that we were driving from Amsterdam to Frankfurt, I was in great anxiety. I had done something to my left eye while putting in a contact lens, and my eye was constantly tearing and impairing my vision. I had also sprained an ankle, and I had difficulty walking, what to speak of dancing in kīrtana.

"My service in Amsterdam was to clean the temple room, and afterward I always used to finish my rounds sitting beside Prabhupāda's vyāsāsana. Often I would lean against it and feel completely sheltered at his feet. It was like being with my father and receiving his protection. Then this same vyāsāsana was sent to Germany.

"We arrived a little late at the airport, and Prabhupāda was already giving an arrival address. When I first looked at Prabhupāda from a distance, I couldn't see him very well, but then as soon as I saw the vyāsāsana and Prabhupāda again, my eyesight returned. There were no more tears, and I could see

clearly. It was as though my picture of Prabhupāda came alive—his picture on the vyāsāsana, where I saw him like my father. What a wonderful experience! My 'picture' started moving and talking, and it was my same Prabhupāda. As soon as I saw him, though he was far away, I felt so close to him that I thought, 'Here is my real father.' And I felt completely at home, like a lost child who found her father."

Rambhorū Dāsī: "I thought a spiritualist had to have long hair and a beard, like Jesus. So I felt a little disappointed when I saw on photographs that Prabhupāda had no hair. Besides that, he was an old man and didn't look at all romantic. I thought, 'When I see Prabhupāda in person, I will be able to understand him.' I thought I was spiritually tuned in and would figure him out just by looking at him.

"When Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived, I was surprised how short he was, but I experienced him as big and important. Because I was puffed-up, I had no access to Prabhupāda. When I couldn't penetrate him, I became embarrassed and thought, 'If he sees me, he will realize I am puffed-up.' So I devised a plan to hide in the crowd and at the same time get a good look at him.

"The vyāsāsana stood on a platform, and right in front of it, about ten meters away, was a couch for the reporters. The devotees had gathered around the couch in a semi-circle. One devotee was fanning Prabhupāda with a whisk, another held a huge umbrella, Haṁsadūta was washing Prabhupāda's feet, and I was hiding behind the couch and peeking over the rim. Śrīla Prabhupāda looked around, recognizing devotees he knew. And every time he looked in my direction, I felt I was erupting inside, like when you pop a boil and all the gunk comes out. It was the first time anybody humiliated me in a way that was really helpful. Śrīla Prabhupāda purified and softened all the garbage in my heart, and I just started sobbing. At the end, I felt thankful."

Cakravartī Dāsa: "After the press conference, we escorted Śrīla Prabhupāda to a rented white Mercedes. Our fleet of vans led the way, their lights on and horns honking. We'd mounted a speaker on one van, and from time to time a devotee announced Prabhupāda's arrival. The rest of the time, a kīrtana tape filled the countryside with transcendental sound. To announce his visit, we had put up posters in the villages en route, and as we drove through them,

people lined the streets or waved from their windows, just like during the visit of a head of state."

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami: "While riding to the castle, Śrīla Prabhupāda felt happy. 'My heart will become englanded when I hear a mṛdaṅga in a German village,' Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had said. He quoted Lord Caitanya's statement that in every town and village the holy name will be heard. He said, 'Our goal is a worldwide movement. Actually, we have communities all over the world, but our movement is still very, very small. It will expand, and the whole world can be united under Kṛṣṇa for peace.' Then he remained silent but said later, 'People's only objection to us is that we are trying to prevent them from going to hell; therefore, they misunderstand us. It's like when a man flies a kite on a roof and you see that he's in great danger, about to walk off the roof. But he becomes angry when you tell him, 'Look out! You're in danger!' Any gentleman will speak out if he sees another plunging into danger. But they object: 'What? You have checked my movement?' One world under Kṛṣṇa. We are not after domination, but we want to free people from death, old age, and disease.'"

Acchedya Dāsa: "I had the good fortune to be Śrīla

Prabhupāda's driver. While the devotees in the airport received him, I waited next to the Mercedes. When Śrīla Prabhupāda came through the exit, his effulgence and powerful spiritual presence overwhelmed me, and as I offered my obeisances, tears came to my eyes.

"During the ride, Śrīla Prabhupāda happened to have his right foot positioned in such a way that I couldn't avoid touching it when I shifted gears. After a while, he withdrew his foot and looked at me with a smile. When we reached the Schloss, I was drenched in sweat and relieved that I delivered him safely."

Śacīnandana Swami: "When Śrīla Prabhupāda came for visits, devotees usually painted until the last minute, and we were no exception. The night before, I worked many hours scraping stains off the steps to the main entrance. I thought, 'Prabhupāda will soon put his feet here, and everything has to be perfectly clean.' When finally all the steps were spotless, I felt really proud of my work. But the next day, my attachment got smashed because Śrīla Prabhupāda entered the castle through the side door. Nevertheless, my disappointment could not decrease the joy of finally having Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee finally

with us.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda immediately went up to his room, and we poured into the central hall to immerse ourselves in a resounding kīrtana. The chanting lasted almost an hour, and the waves of the kīrtana rose higher and higher. Then Prabhupāda's servant leaned over the wooden balustrade and waved us up.

"Although Prabhupāda's quarters were not especially spacious, we all squeezed in. Prabhupāda said that throughout his life he had always given his best to satisfy Kṛṣṇa: 'Even in my old age, I'm pushing on. I was never like the servants in Calcutta, who during the day go into a park and sleep. And when they return and their masters ask them, 'What did you do all day?' they say, 'I was busy. I served you the whole day.' Prabhupāda laughed and added, 'I was never like that.'"

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "After saying this, Śrīla Prabhupāda removed his flower garland and had someone drape it around a painting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. A short silence ensued, while we all sat there and looked at him expectantly. His secretary, Satsvarūpa Mahārāja, entered the room with some luggage. Then he left and came in again with more luggage. Prabhupāda

said, 'You should always be busy like him.' That was the high sign: It was pointless to sit idly. So we all offered obeisances and went back to our duties."

Nikuñjavāsiṇī Dāsī: "That afternoon, Prabhupāda gave initiations on the lawn behind the Schloß. Hoping to be initiated, I took a place among the many devotees who sat down in front of plates with bananas and neckbeads. My situation was a little unclear because we had just changed temple presidents. Pṛthu Prabhu, our new president, called me Nandā; my Western name is Nanya. Maybe he called me Nandā just to flatter me, but I think he had the impression I was already initiated, so he didn't put me on the list. I didn't know that. But when it came time to have somebody tie on my neckbeads, one of the Dutch brahmacārīs put them on, and I thought, 'I'm all right.'

"The devotees were called forward by country, and Prabhupāda was very strict about the procedure. He explained: First, you offer daṇḍavats (even the women), not straight on from the front, but a little from the side; then, you sit up and say the principles and also 'at least sixteen good rounds every day.' Prabhupāda corrected devotees' mistakes. I thought,

'When I go, I don't want to make any mistakes.' I watched attentively, as one devotee after another went forward. I didn't realize it was going by temples, because Amsterdam was first on the list. Soon all the devotees from the other temples were called. Then the initiations came to an end, and I realized I had not been on the list.

"A Dutch devotee, Vidāṅga Prabhu, noticed my predicament and quickly informed Satsvarūpa Mahārāja that they had forgotten me. So I was called, and I offered daṇḍavats and recited the four principles. Then I handed Prabhupāda a beadbag which I had made for him as my guru-dakṣiṇa. He had me hand it to Satsvarūpa Mahārāja. Then he said, 'Your name is Nikuṅjavāsiṇī [which I didn't understand]. This is a very nice name. It's the name of one of the gopīs.' I felt happy and thought, 'Just see! I waited until the end, and I got the best name.' I felt as though Prabhupāda showed me special favor. So I offered daṇḍavats again and returned to my place.

"But for days I didn't know my name. Devotees asked me, 'What's your name?' And I replied, 'I don't know. It's the name of a gopī.' Finally, after three days, a list was posted, and I copied my name on a piece of paper.

"After giving us initiation, Prabhupāda returned to his quarters. Then Hamsadūta gave a talk. He said Prabhupāda had commented that a woman should be so well covered that not even the sun can see her. After his lecture, when we had a kīrtana and the devotees ran in circles around the fire, under the hot afternoon sun, I tried my best to always cover my head. I thought, 'This will please Śrīla Prabhupāda.'"

Śilpakāriṇī Dāśī: "I had received second initiation, and after the fire sacrifice, the second initiates were asked to go up to Śrīla Prabhupāda's quarters and receive the gāyatrī mantra. Nobody told me what to do, and when Satsvarūpa Mahārāja called me in, I was shaking with nervousness.

"After offering obeisances, I sat on my knees next to the door and waited. I was alone with Prabhupāda because Satsvarūpa Mahārāja had gone out. Prabhupāda looked up from behind his desk and said, 'Come closer.' I moved a little bit forward on my knees. 'More,' Prabhupāda said, and I moved another foot or two. 'More!' he patiently insisted, and I moved closer again. After he had beckoned me once more and I was still only half-way to where he sat, he finally patted the floor next to him and said, 'Come

sit here.' So I got up and sat down by his side.

"I thought, 'Oh, how wonderful it is to be so close to Śrīla Prabhupāda.' But I immediately checked myself and considered: 'He is a sannyāsī; you shouldn't think like that.' Prabhupāda soberly showed me a sheet of paper with the mantras, pointed to each word, and had me repeat them after him.

"After he showed me how to count the mantras on my fingers, he asked me whether I could bring him some sandalwood paste for his headache. Because I'd been helping in the kitchen almost every day, I knew we had no sandalwood—not even for the Deities. I told Śrīla Prabhupāda. But he probably thought that I didn't understand English well enough, so he asked me to get Himavatī.

"I thanked him, offered obeisances, and ran out the door to find Himavatī. When I told her what happened, she got upset with me. She was responsible for the standard of Deity worship, and my 'inappropriate talking' had embarrassed her in front of Prabhupāda. But then she became concerned for his welfare. In her room she had a large japa mālā hanging on the wall-carved from first-class sandalwood which was both decoration and a way to

give her room a pleasant scent. She sacrificed those beads. Prabhupāda got some paste to alleviate his headache, and Aṣṭaratha Prabhu, the head pūjārī, got the rest of the wood for the Deities."

* * *

It had been an eventful day, but when Hamsadūta told Śrīla Prabhupāda that the devotees were eager to here him speak, he agreed to give a brief talk on Bhagavad-gītā that evening. He selected the first five verses of the second chapter, wherein Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna discuss the value of fighting the battle. After Satsvarūpa Mahārāja chanted the Sanskrit verses, Prabhupāda began by emphasizing Kṛṣṇa's instruction that everyone must execute some prescribed duty without consideration of personal loss or gain.

"This is the set-up of the Bhagavad-gītā," he continued, "but the real purpose is to instruct Arjuna about spiritual understanding. Spiritual understanding means, first of all, to know what is spirit. If you do not know what spirit is, then where is your spiritual understanding? People are too much engrossed in the body. That is called materialism. But when you understand

spirit and you act accordingly, that is called spiritualism.

"The bodily conception of life is foolishness. No learned man takes the body into serious consideration. Therefore, in the Vedic literature, it is said, 'One who is in the bodily concept of life is nothing more than an animal.' At the present moment, without knowledge of the self, the whole world is going on under the bodily concept of life. The bodily concept of life is there among the animals. The cats and dogs are proud of becoming a big cat or big dog. Similarly, if a man also becomes proud that he is a big American or big German, what is the difference? But that is actually going on, and therefore they are fighting like cats and dogs. So, we shall discuss more tomorrow."

* * *

The next morning, a group of disciples waited at the side entrance to accompany Śrīla Prabhupāda on a walk. The mid-June morning air was fresh, and Prabhupāda wore his hat and chādar during his first morning stroll past the wide cornfields stretching from Schloss Rettershof to the nearby village of

Fischbach. Conversation focused on the theme he'd discussed the night before: the folly of accepting the body as all in all.

"This body, either living or dead, it is not a very important thing," he said. "Now see! And the whole world is after this body. Kṛṣṇa says, 'The body, either dead or alive, is not a subject matter for serious consideration.' And for what is the world going on? Simply for bodily comfort. Body means senses. It is very difficult for the Western people to understand that the body is not an important thing and that the soul is the important thing."

He explained that without understanding the soul, it isn't possible to understand God, because the soul is a minute part of God. Referring to modern scientists, he said, "Simply they are trying to cover it: 'There is no soul. There is no soul. Life is generated from matter.' Although they cannot prove it! A fool's paradise. The fools explain the living force in some way, and other fools are accepting. This is the position of Europe and America. It is a fool's paradise.

It is paradise certainly—very, very big, big buildings and advancement—, but all rascals and fools. Fool's paradise."

The rays of the early-morning sun gradually gained strength and evaporated the blanket of mist over the valley. Contemplating the rolling hills covered with corn, Śrīla Prabhupāda denounced the foolish idea of over-population: "If nature likes, it can produce three times, four times this production. Prakṛteḥ kriyamānāni gunaiḥ karmāni: after all, nature is producing. But we do not know how to deal with nature. Therefore there is some scarcity. And we say over-population. There is no question of over-population. There are so many hundreds and thousands of birds within this forest and other animals. They have no problems of over-population." He encouraged Hamsadūta to develop the Schloss into a showcase of simple living and high thinking: "This should be exemplary, that our community lives in this way and saves time for spiritual advancement. This example should be shown to the whole world. Is it possible?"

To Hamsadūta's positive reply, he said, "The devotees do not do any industry. They do not kill cows. They

do not go to the cinema. They do not have illicit sex. They don't drink. No problems. Simply they are eating very nicely and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Show this example at least in this fool's paradise. They think it is paradise, and the paradise is lost every ten or fifteen years by bombing. Germany bombs France, and France bombs... This is their paradise. So let them understand, 'You are all fools. Yours is a fool's paradise. This is life, what we are doing.' Teach them so that the fools will understand what is life."

Mādhavānanda, who came from England to see Śrīla Prabhupāda, mentioned that in Great Britain and America more and more people supported birth control as a means of curbing over-population. Prabhupāda exposed the real motive: "No, it is not over-population. They don't want to take care of children. This is their problem. It is not a question of over-population. They want to remain free and enjoy life, that's all. No responsibility."

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After breakfast, Hamsadūta took Prabhupāda on a tour of the castle. The four-storey building of more than fifty rooms was filled to capacity during Śrīla Prabhupāda's visit and resembled a beehive early in

the morning and at night. But now the place was quiet, because most devotees had left for saṅkīrtana.

Maṅgimañjarī Dāsī: "I came up the kitchen stairs just as Prabhupāda and Haṁsadūta came down. I didn't notice them until I almost bumped into them. When I suddenly saw Śrīla Prabhupāda, I dove to the floor and offered obeisances. I heard Śrīla Prabhupāda chuckle and say, 'Jaya!' When I got back on my feet, he had already gone to the kitchen."

Śacīnandana Swami: "I was tired from all the work and excitement, and I had to take a nap after breakfast. We translators stayed in a large room and worked at low desks. So I laid down behind my desk and was just about to fall asleep when the door opened and I heard Prabhupāda's voice. The first thing that came to my mind were his words upon his arrival: We should always be busy and not waste time sleeping all day.

"And here I was sleeping like a lazy, irresponsible fool. I felt really bad. I thought that maybe Prabhupāda wouldn't notice me, because I was behind the desk. But then I chastised myself: 'Come on, you can't fool Prabhupāda.' So I sat up, and I saw that Prabhupāda looked amused. I felt relieved. Undoubtedly, he knew

that I felt bad. But when he smiled, I also smiled, and everything was all right."

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "We had just received the galley proofs of The Teachings of Lord Caitanya. I was proofreading them when Prabhupāda and Hamsadūta entered. Hamsadūta introduced us and explained how we did translating, editing, and proofreading. Then Prabhupāda asked me, 'What are you working on?' 'Teachings of Lord Caitanya,' I replied, and showed him the proofs. 'Read,' he said. I was a little surprised, since Prabhupāda surely didn't understand German, but I began to read. I didn't see his reaction, but Hamsadūta told me that Prabhupāda listened with a huge smile. Knowing that a book was ready for publication was his greatest satisfaction. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had ordered him to distribute Lord Caitanya's message in English, but Śrīla Prabhupāda took his instruction even further. Through his disciples, he wanted to print his books in all the major languages of the world."

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Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami: "I had a high fever and a big boil on my leg. The day after our arrival, I was massaging Prabhupāda, and he noticed that my hands

were very hot. When I told him I had a fever, he asked me to stop the massage and get someone else. So I recruited a young brahmacārī just outside the door."

Śacīnandana Swami: "When Satsvarūpa Mahārāja asked, 'Is there someone who can massage Śrīla Prabhupāda?' I said, 'Well, Śivānanda knows how to do it.' I tried to find Śivānanda, but he had just left for town. Mahārāja concluded, 'Then you have to massage Prabhupāda. He has sent me to take rest because I have a fever.'

"I had never massaged anyone. I was really afraid to touch Prabhupāda. When I went into his room, I was red-faced, sweating, and shaky. Prabhupāda looked at me, a heap of misery, and said in a deep voice, 'Just do your service.' He sat on a mat in his gamchā, with a bottle of mustard oil next to him. He told me to begin by moving my hands up his back. In response to my timid squeezes, he demanded, 'Push harder!' I pushed with my whole weight, and Prabhupāda seemed as immovable as a mountain. After a while, he looked at me and asked, 'What is your service?' 'I'm trying to translate your books, Śrīla Prabhupāda,' I replied. 'What are you translating?' he asked. 'Kṛṣṇa book,' I

said. 'Oh!' Prabhupāda said. He seemed pleased and asked, 'How many pages a day?' I immediately told him my best score: 'Twenty pages, Śrīla Prabhupāda, on good days.' Prabhupāda moved his head in satisfaction.

"Then he showed me how to massage his arms, chest, and head. Once, he stopped and looked at me. He said, 'You know, a devotee should be four things: a good disciple, a good master, a water-carrier, and a good cook.' I thought I understood why one should be a good disciple and a good master and a good cook, but why a water-carrier? Later, I learned that in Indian villages, when water is needed, people go to fetch water. In this way, they serve others. Similarly, devotees are meant for the service of others.

"It seemed that the massage continued a long time, and all the while my thoughts focused on one desire: Would Prabhupāda allow me to massage his lotus feet? It is a privilege to touch the feet of a pure devotee, because from them all blessings can be obtained. As if knowing my desire, Prabhupāda put his feet on my lap. I massaged them with the greatest care, but with full enthusiasm.

"While I massaged his hands, Prabhupāda asked me to

crack his knuckles. When I pulled the joints and they made a loud cracking sound, Prabhupāda simply smiled. Because his fingers were so delicate, I was afraid, but he liked having them forcefully pulled. Then he indicated that the massage had come to an end. I offered daṇḍavats and left the room.

"I was elated and grateful that Śrīla Prabhupāda had allowed me to come close to him. I was so happy that, for the rest of the day, I went into the forest and just chanted the holy name."

* * *

In the afternoon, a lady visited Śrīla Prabhupāda. A philosopher, she explained that her goal was to achieve perfect peace after death. When Prabhupāda asked whether everyone would get this peace, she said, "Yes." But she qualified her answer when Śrīla Prabhupāda asked whether the cats and dogs could expect the same destiny. She then said that only the human being's existence has a spiritual dimension, whereas animals live by instinct.

Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed out that modern man lives just like an animal, interested only in eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. But the lady argued that man distinguishes himself by his superior intelligence.

Prabhupāda didn't accept her argument: "When a man eats and the animal eats, either it is done by instinct or by intelligence, where is the difference?"

She suggested that our advanced civilization with its nice buildings was a difference, but Prabhupāda wasn't impressed: "Such a nice building, and his enemy throws a bomb on it. But the dogs do not do that. So who is advanced, the dog or the man?"

When she admitted that man misuses his intelligence for destruction, Prabhupāda cut in: "Then what is the use of getting better intelligence than the dog?"

The lady became uneasy. She found herself on the defensive against Prabhupāda's logic.

She ventured, "Man has gotten his intelligence from God, but he misuses his intelligence."

Prabhupāda asked, "But has God given intelligence for this bad work?"

"No," she agreed, "it is the fault of mankind."

"Therefore," Śrīla Prabhupāda concluded, "misuse of intelligence will cause his suffering. Now suppose a tiger kills an animal, and a man kills thousands of animals a day in the slaughterhouse. Is he not sinful?"

When she accepted his viewpoint and cited evil as a cause, Prabhupāda clinched his point: "Therefore the

conclusion is that the so-called intelligent man is simply misusing his intelligence. And when he misuses his intelligence, he is less than the cats and dogs. Yes. And then, after death, how he'll be in peace?"

Although defeated, the woman again voiced her conviction: "Every man will get this peace, also the bad men."

Śrīla Prabhupāda opened his eyes wide. "Bad men also will get peace?" he asked.

"Yes," she insisted.

Prabhupāda laughed and said to his disciples present, "Just see what nonsense philosophers they are!"

* * *

Maṇimañjarī Dāsī: "The next morning, while we were taking breakfast, Haṁsadūta came to the prasādam room and told us that Śrīla Prabhupāda had asked about the devotees' menu on saṅkīrtana. When told that we bought rolls and bread from the bakeries, Prabhupāda became concerned. He instructed Haṁsadūta to tell us that under no circumstances should we eat grains prepared by nondevotees. Rather, the temple should bake bread or make capātīs that the devotees can take with them.

"We didn't think about using yeast to raise the dough. Our first attempts at baking bread were unsuccessful. Because Germans can't live without their daily ration of fresh baked, crunchy bread, Śrīla Prabhupāda was consulted about our using yeast. When he heard that yeast is the dried form of a single-celled fungus, he said it was all right, but that we shouldn't offer the bread to the Deities."

Nikuñjavāsiṇī Dāsī: "I was helping to make purīs and capātīs while Śrīla Prabhupāda was at Schloss Rettershof. Himavatī and Kauṣalya were cooking for him. One day, they brought him capātīs that hadn't puffed-up. And he chastised them: 'You are my older disciples, and you don't even know how to make a capātī puff up? That means there is no qualification. How can you bring this to your spiritual master?' And he wouldn't eat them."

* * *

Each morning, after Śrīla Prabhupāda's breakfast and nap, he was escorted by Hamsadūta to a small room that had been converted into a recording studio. It was connected by a sliding window to the adjacent room, where Uthāla had installed a mixing console and a pair of two-track Revox tape recorders.

Prabhupāda had readily agreed to Hamsadūta's request to spend half an hour each morning in the studio singing his favorite Vaiṣṇava songs. He played a Laxmi Flute harmonium made in Agra. Hamsadūta accompanied him on mṛdaṅga, and Himavatī, Cakravartī, Purujita, and Vedavyāsa played karatālas. After each session, Prabhupāda entered the control room and heard the recording. With closed eyes, he sat silently and listened in deep meditation. Harernāmānanda came in a few times and took photographs. Two close-ups of Śrīla Prabhupāda listening to the recordings were later used as the cover pictures on the double album, Kṛṣṇa Meditation.

Cakravartī Dāsa: "Prabhupāda selected the songs himself. He had a small Vaiṣṇava songbook in Bengali, and Akrūra turned the pages at his indication, a nod. Before each recording, Prabhupāda spent a few minutes on the harmonium warming up and creating the particular mood for the song he was about to sing."

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "There was no comparison to usual recording sessions. Śrīla Prabhupāda was not at all concerned with rehearsals, to ensure a technically

perfect result. Neither did he care whether extraneous sounds made it onto the tape, such as clearing his throat or his voice cracking. He would simply begin singing, and whatever spontaneously came out—that was it.

"During one song, Śrīla Prabhupāda suddenly stopped. He turned to Haṁsadūta and asked, 'You do not know how to play mṛdaṅga?' With a movement of his hand, he indicated to his flustered disciple that he wanted the drum, and then he showed him how he wanted him to play it. He played the classic combination of the beats that he had taught everyone in the beginning: ta ti, ri-ti-ri-ti ta, ka-ti-ta, ka-ti-ta, ge, dhin dha, dhin ta, ge-ta. 'Like that,' he said, and handed the drum back to his disciple.

"This incident taught me a lesson. Haṁsadūta had not played wrong, technically speaking; he was an expert musician and played mṛdaṅga better than any of us. But when he invented his own beats, Prabhupāda didn't like it. Prabhupāda made it clear that he preferred the standard way, even though it was simple, to flamboyant mṛdaṅga fireworks."

* * *

In the afternoon on the third day of Prabhupāda's

visit, he held a press conference in the castle's reception room. Śrīla Prabhupāda sat on "the German vyāsāsana," a simple wooden dais, painted white, with no backrest, and just wide enough to accommodate him.

Nikunjavāsiṇī Dāsī: "When I heard that Śrīla Prabhupāda would hold a press conference and that we devotees were invited, I went downstairs early. Only two or three reporters were in the room. In one corner stood Prabhupāda's seat, and in front of it were rows of chairs. Feeling kind of shy, I just sat on the floor in the opposite corner and waited, and as the devotees came in, they began occupying the chairs. Then Prabhupāda entered the room. When he saw his disciples sitting on chairs, he indicated that they should sit on the floor, even though most of the chairs were empty because only a few more reporters had come. It was clear to me after this that a disciple should always take a humble position in front of his spiritual master and never sit on the same level. Naturally, I felt good that I was already on the floor and had acted in a way pleasing to Śrīla Prabhupāda."

* * *

In the evening, Śrīla Prabhupāda lectured again on

Bhagavad-gītā. He chose Text 13 of Chapter Two: dehino 'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā. As he started to explain the meaning, a child began to cry. Prabhupāda chuckled. Generally, he became annoyed when interrupted in class. When the devotees saw their spiritual master take the disturbance in stride, they were relieved and also laughed. Prabhupāda used the child's crying to make a point: "So on one side, profit; on one side, loss. On one side, you get a child; and on the other side, you cannot hear. This is the material world. As soon as you get some profit here, on another side, there is loss. As soon as you want to construct a big skyscraper, on another side: digging earth."

Śrīla Prabhupāda derided the foolishness of modern man, who engages in "digging and piling," never questioning the usefulness of his endeavor. He never considers that he will soon have to leave his body against his will, and he shows no interest in the message of Bhagavad-gītā that you are not this body, but the proprietor within.

Prabhupāda next explained that the word "occupier" is more appropriate than the term "proprietor": "If you rent a house, the proprietor is a different man. The

tenant is the occupier; no proprietorship. So I am the spirit soul. I am not the proprietor. I am simply an occupier. The rascal materialists do not know that the proprietor is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that He is giving me a particular apartment according to my capacity for paying rent."

"This is my position; otherwise, why doesn't everyone get a first-class body, a king's body or rich man's body? One child is born, immediately he is a rich man. So there is no arrangement? And another child born at the same moment is a very poor man. Why? Because if I am able to pay more rent, I transfer to another, very luxurious apartment. Or if I cannot pay the present rent, then I have to move to another, less expensive apartment."

Then Śrīla Prabhupāda described how the environment affects our consciousness: "A poor man living in a poor cottage or very unclean apartment, his mentality is one way. Another respectable gentleman living in a very nice house, his mentality is different. So according to the circumstances, the mental changes are there, but both men are human beings. Similarly, there are so many apartments, or different types of bodies, 8,400,000 types of bodies.

The occupier, the living being or the soul, is of the same quality, but according to the apartment or body he has occupied, he has developed a certain consciousness and mentality."

Prabhupāda reminded his young audience that their birth in a developed country such as Germany was testimony of past pious activities and offered them a great opportunity for self-realization: "If you have done nicely to occupy a first-class apartment, then nature will give you a nice body. Therefore I say repeatedly that you Western boys and girls—you are given a very good chance by nature. Once upon a time, the European people were dominating all over the world, because they are very intelligent. They have got good resources, good, nice body, beautiful body. Everything is very good. But don't spoil it; use it for understanding further good."

He said that misidentification with one's land of birth should not let us forget that God is the creator and therefore the actual proprietor of everything: "Why I am falsely identifying myself with the land? 'I am German because I am born in this land of Germany.' That is also false. No land is Germany or France or England. Land is land. You have falsely

named it: 'This is Germany.' What is this Germany? Say two or three hundred years ago, there was no Germany. The land was created by God. So it is God's property. Where is the difficulty to understand? You did not create anything, not even your own body. That proprietor is also Kṛṣṇa. Because as soon as Kṛṣṇa asks you, 'Please vacate,' you must vacate immediately. Can you remain in this body? The proprietor asks you to vacate. So you have to vacate. Or the proprietor does not repair it. Then you voluntarily vacate: 'This is not useful anymore.'"

Returning to the Sanskrit verse, Prabhupāda illustrated another meaning of it, namely, the imperceptible nature of the bodily changes and how the soul, as an observer, is always the same: "So it is to be understood that I existed in the past in a different body. As I existed, say seventy years before in a different body, I was jumping as a boy. Now I cannot jump; now I have to use the cane. This is a different body. If the same body still existed, then I could jump like a boy. I remember that I jumped. But now it is not possible. I have to take the help of three men." Prabhupāda laughed, and the devotees joined in. He was in a jolly mood, pleased to see many young faces.

He hoped that they would take Kṛṣṇa consciousness seriously before their bodies dwindled with old age and the great opportunity to achieve perfection within this lifetime was lost.

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On his next morning walk, Śrīla Prabhupāda further described transmigration: "Transmigration means, the first body you lose; you enter a second body, a third body, fourth. So your childhood body is not existing. Therefore you are in a youthful body or an adult's body." When he asked for possible objections, Satsvarūpa Mahārāja argued that a materialist doesn't see how this applies to taking another body.

He said, "We can't perceive how the change from one body to another takes place. We can perceive that we have changed from children to old men, but we cannot perceive what will happen after death. So who knows?"

Prabhupāda addressed the objection. He talked about dreams: "Some tiger is coming. You are crying, 'Save me! Save me!' It is an illusion—this body is also an illusion—but you are affected. That means you are experiencing. And when in a dream you see your beloved, there is no such thing, but still there is

discharge. Why? How you can say that you are not perceiving. It is perceiving. What is the answer?"

When none of his disciples gave answers, Prabhupāda explained that the materialists tend to discard these subtle experiences as illusory, whereas they accept gross, tangible phenomena as reality. "You are perceiving every night that you leave this body. You accept another body and do something else which you see. If that is an illusion, then this world you see before you is also an illusion, because in the daytime you forget the night's activities, and at night you forget the day's activities. So this is also an illusion. You are thinking: I am American, I am Indian, German. What is that? By one kick of nature you are out: Become a cat or dog! This is also an illusion. What is not illusion?"

Prabhupāda stated the only sensible conclusion: "Therefore the question is, Where is my real life? That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When one understands, 'This is illusion, and that is also illusion, so where is my actual life?'—that is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Hamsadūta began to talk about the experiences of mediums with the dead, but Prabhupāda stopped him and re-focused his attention on the point. "They may

think like that," he said, "but this is a practical thing. Try to understand that in the daytime you are illusioned by this gross body, and at night you are illusioned by the subtle body. So both of them are illusory. Therefore, if you are intelligent, your inquiry should be, What is my real life? That is intelligence."

Mādhavānanda said that transmigration would eventually stop as a result of such inquiry, and Śrīla Prabhupāda elaborated: "Yes. A devotee's understanding is that 'I am the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. So let me surrender to Kṛṣṇa as He wants and serve Him.' This is life. As soon as he is on this platform, then he is out of illusion. And if he is perfect, then just after giving up this body, he goes to Kṛṣṇa. This is the process. If he does not fall from this transcendental service of Kṛṣṇa, then immediately after death he is transferred, just as we are transferred from this gross body to the subtle body. Similarly, after death a devotee is transferred immediately to where Kṛṣṇa is. Then he actually plays with Kṛṣṇa, dances with Kṛṣṇa, and talks with Kṛṣṇa."

Mādhavānanda brought up another point: "Śrīla Prabhupāda, once you said that to stop

transmigration, one has to become completely disgusted with the material world."

When Prabhupāda confirmed it, Satsvarūpa Mahārāja asked, "What about Lord Caitanya's prayer that 'I don't mind coming back again and again?'"

"That is a devotee's sincerity," Prabhupāda clarified, "that he does not go to Kṛṣṇa for some material profit. In any condition, he is Kṛṣṇa conscious. That is his humbleness. An actual devotee does not want it, but it happens; otherwise, how is it that Kṛṣṇa says janma karma ca me divyam? It will take place automatically. But he is not very concerned that 'I must go to Kṛṣṇa and be saved from these material miseries.' A devotee never says like that. He wants that 'Never mind miseries. Let me chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.' That is his position."

Satsvarūpa Mahārāja added that for the devotee, the perfection is to be absorbed in preaching to others, not thinking, 'I want to go and play with Kṛṣṇa.' Prabhupāda agreed and explained unconditional devotional service: "A devotee does not bargain with Kṛṣṇa: 'Kṛṣṇa will give me this benefit; therefore I want to become a pure devotee.' That is a merchant: 'You pay me this price; I will deliver this clothing.'"

That is not devotion. Aśliṣya vā pāda-ratām pinaṣṭu mām marma-hatām karotu vā: In any condition, I am your slave. Whatever You like, you can do with me. That is the sign. Not that 'If it is favorable to my idea, then I accept You.' That is not devotion. Anyābhilāṣita śunyam: no desire. Only 'Please accept me as Your eternal servant again.' Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura sings, mārobhi rākobhi jo icchā tohārā: 'Now, if You like, You can kill me. If You like, You can keep me. Whatever You like, I am prepared.' Mārobhi rākobhi jo icchā tohārā. That is surrender."

Meeting Professor Dürckheim

In the afternoon, Śrīla Prabhupāda received Professor Karlfried Graf Dürckheim, a well-known author, who had studied Zen in Japan after World War II and now headed a following in the Black Forest in south Germany. Catholic bishops sometimes visited him to discuss esoteric subjects.

Pṛthu Dāsa: "In my school days, I read several of his books, and I sent Dürckheim a letter and invited him. When I called him one week later, he showed a lot of interest.

"On the morning of June 19th, I met him at the Frankfurt train station and drove him to Schloss Rettershof. When we passed through the villages, Dürckheim saw the posters we had put up to advertise Prabhupāda's visit. Hamsadūta had had the 'brilliant idea' to borrow a famous Nazi slogan used to announce Hitler's visits. The posters said in huge letters: Der Führer kommt [The leader comes], and in smaller print: der Hare Kṛṣṇa Bewegung [of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement]. When I had seen the layout in his office, I implored Hamsadūta, 'Please don't hang up these posters. This is a great insult.' But he simply laughed at me and said, 'Come on. The Germans like this sort of thing.'

On numerous posters, Prabhupāda's face was disfigured with little Hitler-like mustaches. When Dürckheim noticed the posters everywhere, he expressed disbelief: 'Is this your guru?' I felt cold sweat break out of my pores. 'Yes,' I uttered. 'Are you serious?' he asked. 'Yes,' I repeated. 'It was not my idea. I fought against this poster, but it was not in my power to prevent it.' 'You people don't know what you are doing,' he said, shaking his head in disbelief. 'You really don't know what you are doing. I am almost

thinking of going back, but since I am already here, let us go on." He was real upset and disappointed at our immaturity. But when he met Śrīla Prabhupāda, he quickly appreciated and respected him, and they developed a cordial relationship."

* * *

The meeting began around five o'clock. Fortunately, Graf Dürckheim spoke fluent English. He briefly explained his background and how he tried to help people discover their real self. Śrīla Prabhupāda got right to the point of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He mentioned the three aspects of the Absolute Truth—Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān—and said that we devotees cultivate our relationship with the third aspect, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Then he asked his guest which aspect he cultivated.

The professor said, "You can't help but cultivate all three in the long run," and Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed. Actually, all three were one, and only the angle of vision differed. He gave the example of a mountain seen differently from far away (as a hazy cloud), midway (something green), and nearby (an elevation with animals and houses). Prabhupāda said most

people see the Absolute Truth impersonally, without variegatedness.

Dürckheim said that Zen Buddhists had that conception, but Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed out a distinction between impersonalism and voidism. Buddhists strive to stop all realization and become zero or void.

At this point, the professor presented his understanding of nirvana: "Well, zero from the point of view of the alter ego, but this zero is everything from the outside. From the point of view of the natural ego, it's zero, but once you touch it, it's the plenitude—everything. But it's beyond something and everything, as far as I understand it."

"Yes, it is beyond," Prabhupāda said. "That 'beyond' is realized, as I explained to you, from different angles of vision: impersonal, without any variety; localized Supersoul; and the Supreme Being. As you are sitting and I am sitting and we are talking, so the Absolute Truth is a person, the Supreme Person, and we approach Him, talk with Him, sit with Him, and play with Him. That is Kṛṣṇa realization."

Prabhupāda then analyzed why most philosophers are impersonalists and negate material varieties. He gave

the example of a diseased man who feels pain while eating, sleeping, and evacuating, and therefore wants to nullify all activities. When told that in good health he will again eat, sleep, and evacuate, he thinks it will be as painful as in his diseased condition. He doesn't know that healthy life is different.

"Some philosophers are trying to negate this diseased condition only," Prabhupāda said, "without any realization of healthy life. So I think Buddha's philosophy is negation of this diseased condition of life, pain and pleasure. Am I right or wrong?"

Dürckheim agreed, but added that illness or dying could also serve as a threshold to a different reality. When Dürckheim used the term "dead person," Prabhupāda could understand that his visitor lacked understanding of the difference between matter and spirit.

"Just like this microphone is made of iron," Prabhupāda said, pointing to the microphone on the desk. "It is iron. When it is working, responding, at that time it is also iron. And when it is out of order, it is also iron. Similarly, this body is working on account of the living force within. When the living force is out, the body is called dead. But actually it is

dead always. The living force is the important thing. That is keeping the body alive. Actually, alive or dead, the body is dead matter. But the living force is the active principle. That is the beginning instruction of Bhagavad-gītā."

Professor Dürckheim was intrigued. One of his main concerns was to transmit a similar truth to his followers, but he had achieved only limited success. Now he had an opportunity to get expert advice from an experienced guru. Philosophical conviction was one thing, but realization, something else.

"How do you teach your disciples to become aware of this force which is not matter?" he asked.

"It is a very simple thing," Prabhupāda replied. "Just like one body is moving, and another body is not moving. There is an active principle that makes the body move, and when it is absent, the body is not moving. Now, the question will be, What is that active principle? Let him distinguish the difference between a dead body and living body. If a student is unaware of it, he can at least see that on account of the active principle, the body is changing, the body is moving, and in the absence of the active principle, the body neither changes nor moves. Just like in our

childhood, we used to think that in the gramophone box there is a man, and he is speaking from the box. This is a childish suggestion only, but similarly, anyone can think that within this body there is something making the body move. It is not very big philosophy."

Dürckheim readily agreed, but he was looking for a clue how to make a seeker feel the reality of spiritual truth, not just understand it with his rational mind. He said, "I realize that on the inner way, it becomes more and more important to feel deeper and deeper realities. That's why, in my little work, I make a distinction between the body you have and the body you are. Usually, if you go to a doctor, he sees only the body you have. He tackles it like a machine. If somebody with stooped shoulders comes, he says, 'Well, you must do exercises.' If somebody with shoulders like that comes to me, I say, 'The body you have shows that you have no confidence. So get an attitude of confidence.' So he gets to know the body he is, not only the body he has, which doesn't at all touch on wisdom."

Śrīla Prabhupāda avoided getting drawn in by the professor's jargon. He simply repeated the first lesson

of Bhagavad-gītā, that the real self is the active principle within the body. Then he elaborated: "When one is self-realized, then he is jolly. Prasannātmā: he is never morose; he is jolly. Na śocati na kāṅkṣati: he has no lamentation, no hankering. Samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu—he is equal to everyone: man, animal, and everything. And mad-bhaktim labhate parām: then devotional life begins. So, without self-realization, there is no question of devotional life. Just like these boys, my students, they are trained up how to be always in devotional service. One who is engaged in devotional service is supposed to be already self-realized, because he has understood what he is. Yes. And then he sticks to devotional service; otherwise, he cannot. If one thinks, 'I am this body,' then he cannot be engaged in devotional service, or he cannot stick. If he knows, 'I am part and parcel of God, so my duty is to serve God,' this is self-realization. And then he engages himself in devotional service."

Dürckheim repeated his concern that this knowledge was based only on rational understanding instead of actual experience. Prabhupāda disagreed and asked Satsvarūpa Mahārāja to read Text 26 of the

fourteenth chapter of Bhagavad-gītā: "One who engages in full devotional service, unfailing in all circumstances, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman."

Referring to his disciples in the room, Prabhupāda said: "They are always engaged in devotional service. So unless there is some realization, how they can engage their time in this way?"

Then he gave another example to show how the devotees have both theoretical knowledge and realization. "Why should you kill animals? Why should you give trouble to others? This is self-realization: 'Here is another self; the same active principle is working there. Just the body is different. Why shall I kill him?' So they have realized it. *Samāḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu*: equal vision toward all living entities. The self, the active principle, is working in the fish, in the insect, in the tree, in the plant, within the animals, within the birds, and within me. That active principle is the soul, and the soul is migrating from one body to another, as you are migrating from babyhood to childhood, childhood to boyhood, boyhood to youth. This is self-realization. So the soul

is the same. The body is different. The body is material, and the soul is spiritual. When one comes to this understanding, that is self-realization."

Dürckheim still seemed preoccupied with finding out how to teach and monitor spiritual advancement. He continued: "On the way, there should be progress, inner progress. How to realize that there is progress? I would say one thing is very important. There are three sufferings in the world of mankind: fear of annihilation, despair if you are taken by something which is absurd, and loneliness." He went on to explain how, in his opinion, a person makes progress if he realizes a greater meaning amid the calamities. "I always see with my disciples," he said, "as soon as they learn to go through some kind of death, they awaken on a new level. They realize there is a different principle at work from that which they usually see in their natural mind."

Prabhupāda put the idea immediately into the Kṛṣṇa conscious framework: "So that different principle for a devotee is already realized. Because a devotee never thinks 'I am this body.' He thinks, ahaṁ brahmāsmi: 'I am spirit soul.' Everyone in this world is concerned with this body, dead or alive. When it is alive, they

dress it very nicely, nicely groomed, nicely everything on account of this body, and when dead, they erect a statue, a tomb. That's all. But they are missing the active principle."

Dürckheim told Śrīla Prabhupāda about his experience during World War I, when he fought for four years on the front lines and saw many people die next to him. He said that in these situations he realized something which had nothing to do with death, and this realization marked the beginning of his inner way. Prabhupāda acknowledged that this was indeed self-realization, and he explained that one of the symptoms of a self-realized soul was fearlessness in all circumstances.

The professor returned to his question about self-realization as a sequence of inner experiences, especially painful ones, and gave the example of people who experienced the war and the nights of bombing and suddenly realized the temporary nature of bodily existence.

Śrīla Prabhupāda interjected wryly, "That we can experience every night. At night I forget this body, and in the daytime I forget the dream body, but I am existing. Therefore I am not this body."

Dürckheim then asked a question about the meaning of time and eternity. Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that time is eternal, but that we perceive past, present, and future according to our temporary material existence in a certain type of body. His guest agreed: "Exactly! It is concerned with this body and with this ego, with regard to which there is a before and an after, up and down, and if you take away this ego, what is there? What's left?"

"That is pure ego," Śrīla Prabhupāda said.

Dürckheim responded, "But without this body, you wouldn't become conscious of what is beyond the body."

"I am always conscious," Prabhupāda said. "Now our consciousness is impure on account of contact with this temporary body. So when you come to pure consciousness, that is Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Professor Dürckheim still did not understand. "But the pure consciousness, as an experience, has to have a background which is not pure consciousness; otherwise, it could become ..."

Prabhupāda interrupted him: "No. Pure consciousness is actually what you are. Just like water. Water is pure. When it comes from the sky, it is crystal-clear water.

But as soon as it touches the ground it becomes muddy. Similarly, we spirit souls are pure. As soon as we come in contact with matter, material existence, we become impure." Prabhupāda then gave an unusual example to illustrate the meaning of pure consciousness: "Just like sometimes the artists manufacture some naked statue. In France I saw this. They take it that this naked statue is pure art, not dressed. Similarly, when you come to the nakedness of spirit soul, without the designation of this body—I am American, I am German, I am this, I am that—that is purity."

Dürckheim reasoned like a Zen Buddhist: "But the meaning of the impure is to be the background of the consciousness of the pure, without experiencing the suffering in the impure."

"The consciousness is covered by impurity just like your health is covered by disease," Śrīla Prabhupāda said. "And the symptom is fever. But that is a covering. That is not your healthy state. Similarly, when I think that I am American, I am German, I am this or I am that, that is impurity. And when I think that I am neither German nor American, nor this, nor that, but that I am part and parcel of God, that is

pure consciousness."

Dürckheim was doubtful, "But in order to get there—to feel that one is neither this nor that—one must have suffered by first having thought that one is this or that." Prabhupāda shook his head. He pointed out that suffering on account of the material body was in itself a kind of dream caused by ignorance. He repeated that our real business is to get free from all designations and realize our actual identity as sons of God and serve Him. Again the professor said that for him there was a gulf of difference between believing something and actually feeling or experiencing it. For him, the question of how to prepare a disciple to feel the truth was still unanswered.

Prabhupāda told him that the answer was simple. He gave the example of a child who has not seen his father, but who believes that he has a father because otherwise he would not exist. Quoting a verse from Bhagavad-gītā, Prabhupāda explained that Kṛṣṇa is the seed-giving father of all living entities and material nature is the mother who provides the bodies. Consequently, all sons are spiritually equal, but because they identify with their bodies, they are in difficulty. The only solution was self-realization: "I

am not this body."

The professor still insisted on the need for experience, not just theoretical knowledge. And Śrīla Prabhupāda made it clear that everyone already had the experience, because everyone changed his body many times within one lifespan. Everyone knew that he once had a child's body, but that his body was now different. Only on account of foolishness, this insight was clouded.

Prabhupāda pointed out that the best way to gain experience was to receive higher knowledge: "The more you are highly elevated in knowledge, your experience is perfect."

"I would like to say it's the other way around," Dürckheim said. "The more you advance in experience, the more you have higher knowledge."

"But experience may be slow," Prabhupāda countered. "Higher knowledge you can get immediately. Kṛṣṇa says that you are not this body. So instead of my experiencing for years and years that I am not this body, we take the knowledge from Kṛṣṇa, the Perfect, and my experience is now received."

When Dürckheim nodded in agreement this time, Prabhupāda went on to explain the Vedic process of

receiving knowledge from a spiritual master in disciplic succession and distributing the knowledge unchanged. He reminded the professor that our power of understanding is very minute, but that we can experience things beyond our grasp by hearing a description from a proper source.

He said, "We have to receive knowledge from the Perfect, not through the ascending process—experiencing failure, experiencing failure, experiencing failure—not like that. That will take a long time. But if you actually want to be perfect, just approach the Perfect, take knowledge from Him, and you become perfect."

Graf Dürckheim had no objection, and the matter was settled. Eager to discuss more topics, he described to Śrīla Prabhupāda the condition of Western civilization. People were showing signs of rebellion against their so-called leaders in science and technology, who reduced them to mere objects and ignored their real needs as persons. Prabhupāda agreed with his analysis, and pointed out that the same observation had already been made five thousand years ago in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.31): na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum. Materialistic

people do not know that the aim of life is God realization, because they falsely think they can achieve happiness by enjoying the external features of material nature. And owing to their leaders' blindness, the whole society is misguided. The solution was Kṛṣṇa consciousness, because it treated the root cause of the disease: forgetfulness of God. Dürckheim agreed and noted that separation from the innermost reality is unique to the human being; animals did not suffer from such a disease.

The mention of animals prompted Śrīla Prabhupāda to bring to his guest's attention the degraded condition of a society that indulged in the unnecessary slaughter of animals for food. Prabhupāda explained that wars and abortion were karmic consequences of cruelty to animals, and he reminded his guest that no religion allowed unnecessary animal slaughter.

In response, Dürckheim asked about plants: Didn't they also suffer when taken for food? Śrīla Prabhupāda confirmed that they had sensations, but he said that a devotee takes the fruits of a plant and avoids cutting it unless absolutely necessary, as in the case of vegetables. Even that was the law of nature:

One living being eats another living being. But then he made it clear that a devotee's main concern is whether or not his food has been accepted by Kṛṣṇa and has become prasādam.

"We don't advocate vegetarianism or nonvegetarianism," Prabhupāda said. "We advocate: 'Eat Kṛṣṇa's prasādam, the remnants of foodstuff offered to Kṛṣṇa.' This is our philosophy. And apart from this philosophy, just because one living entity is food for another living entity, it does not mean that I shall eat my children also. There is discretion. Human beings should offer fruits, vegetables, milk—as prescribed in the śāstra—to God, Kṛṣṇa, and take. That is human civilization. Not that, for the satisfaction of the tongue, we have to maintain a big, big slaughterhouse and eat animals. No, that is not human civilization. The main business of the human society is to understand God, and as soon as we understand God, we understand that every living entity is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Then how we can eat? Because Kṛṣṇa eats, Kṛṣṇa allows, then we eat. So the responsibility is Kṛṣṇa's. That is our philosophy."

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The conversation had been going on for almost two hours, but Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't feel tired; he felt enlivened. Preaching was his life and soul, and he appreciated having a thoughtful listener with meaningful questions. While he showed Professor Dürckheim copies of his books in different languages, a devotee brought in more visitors: three professors of theology and philosophy from Frankfurt University and an Indian man who headed the Society for Yoga and Integral Philosophical Studies in Germany. Prabhupāda welcomed them warmly, and after they had made themselves comfortable, he asked a devotee to give each guest some prasādam.

He then informed them about his conversation with Graf Dürckheim—how they had discussed the goal of life—and he told them that there could be only one goal, to understand God. Prabhupāda said that all his writings were focused on this one goal of life, Kṛṣṇa.

When he paused, Dürckheim raised a concern shared by the other professors, the topic he had tried to clarify all evening. "May I come back to my question about the relationship between belief and experience, because this is a great question for us today, especially in religious circles." One of the theologians

confirmed this was a fact.

Encouraged, Dürckheim formulated his observations more concretely than before. He described a crisis of faith that many priests had undergone and their longing for a tangible spiritual experience, not mere formalism and traditional belief. One professor remarked that a religious renewal was under way, and that priests and monks were looking for a new source and a new beginning in their hearts.

Prabhupāda didn't dismiss their concern as speculative or sentimental, but he said that no one could avoid believing. The question was who to believe. "If the person I believe is perfect, then my belief is perfect. And if I believe a person who is not trustworthy, then there is no meaning to that belief. Therefore we have to find out the person or the statement which we are to believe."

Professor Dürckheim pointed out that belief or understanding depended on the mind, whereas he was referring to another, deeper level. "You see, there is a natural way to look at God, which is lost as soon as people go through the rational mind. And then there is no other way out but to have a personally initiated experience. We talk about initiation when

people are capable of going through a certain death to discover another level. The great wisdom that you are talking about, I am sure it also touches people on two levels. There is the ordinary man, and he might believe, but there is a deeper level, where things start to change you, to transform you in deeper experiences."

Prabhupāda didn't get involved in an esoteric discussion. He had Satsvarūpa Mahārāja read Text 13 of Chapter Two of Bhagavad-gītā and said, "This is the basic principle of knowledge: 'I am not this body. I am the active principle within this body.' Then further knowledge can be understood."

At this point Dürckheim voiced a common doubt among Christian thinkers: "It seems to me that there is a difference between Eastern wisdom and Christian thinking in that, in the Eastern way, we have to get rid of our body, be liberated from our body, whereas Christian thinkers feel we have to realize the spirit within the body."

In response, Śrīla Prabhupāda said all our suffering was due to being imprisoned in the material body, and therefore our aim should be to become free from it. One theologian objected. He found this view too

negative and felt that we should accept our human existence even though it is not perfect. When Prabhupāda repeated that we should strive for perfection, the man challenged: "As human beings or spirits?" He added that he was seeing only human beings; therefore, the problem was how to become perfect as human beings. When Prabhupāda asked him what he liked so much about the imperfect human body, the professor said the body is an instrument to communicate with other people. Prabhupāda pointed out that the birds and beast also communicate and that the purpose of human life is to inquire about the Absolute Truth.

Dürckheim tried to reconcile the differences. He said that there are three types of bodily consciousness: one concerned with health, one with beauty, and the third with the Absolute Truth. All three went together. Prabhupāda welcomed his analysis, but noted that the bodily appreciation of beauty, or anything related to the body, was false because actually we are not the body. Quoting Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.10), he said we should not waste our time with the body like the birds and beasts, but use it for inquiring about the Absolute.

The theologian disagreed. "Think of the smiling of a child," he said, "—its first communication with man. Is it a waste of our energy if we try to do good to others, if we smile and be kind?"

"But you cannot do good to others, because you do not know what is good," Prabhupāda argued. "You are thinking of good in terms of your body, but the body is false. It is not you. It is false in the sense that you are accepting this body as your self, but you are not that. Therefore this conception of goodness is also false." A moment of silence ensued.

"But I live my identity with the body," the professor reasoned. In an effort to clarify the man's misunderstanding, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave the example of a person being different from his apartment. But his guest thought the example was inappropriate, because an apartment remained unchanged after one left it, whereas the body did not. Prabhupāda responded that it was a question of hours and years only; after a certain time, it would also be destroyed. He repeated that the soul is different from the body, but the theologian insisted that an intimate connection, a kind of oneness, existed between body and soul.

Then the yoga teacher joined the discussion. He noted that it made a difference whether one thought, "I am spirit, and I have a body," or "I am the body, and I possess a soul."

Prabhupāda appreciated his comment: "Yes, yes! That is his mistake, that he is the body and possesses a soul. But no. He is the soul and is covered by a body." Then Prabhupāda compared a coat covering the body to the body covering the soul.

Dürckheim changed the subject. He asked, "How to realize the ultimate truth, and what do you mean by realizing the eternal truth?"

Before Śrīla Prabhupāda could answer the question, one of the theology professors presented his understanding: "In the Bible it says that our whole life should be dedicated to knowing the Father."

Dürckheim said to Prabhupāda, "That is exactly what you say, that real life—eternal life—means nothing but to recognize the Father in the son."

When asked about the method to realize the Absolute Truth, Prabhupāda replied, "The simplest method is to associate with the Father, or the Absolute Truth." He explained the absolute nature of God and the spiritual world: that by chanting the holy name of

God one could associate with God. Dürckheim suggested that Prabhupāda was referring to the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, but Prabhupāda corrected him: "Holy name of God. If you don't like to chant Kṛṣṇa, you chant in your own way. Chant the name of God. If you know the name of God, chant it. If you do not know, then take it from me."

The devotees laughed. There was no escaping Śrīla Prabhupāda's logic. He explained that God has millions of names, and therefore it is sometimes said that He has no name, because one could not say, "This one name is God's only name." When he mentioned that Jesus also prayed, "Hallowed be Thy name," a theologian objected that Jesus didn't specify a particular name, because actually God had no name.

Prabhupāda looked at him with surprise and said, "How can He have no name? It says, 'Hallowed be Thy name.' He has a name."

The visitor argued that there was no name in the Bible, but Prabhupāda said, "Jesus might not have mentioned, or you have not noted, but when he says, 'Hallowed be Thy name,' there must be the name. Therefore I said, 'If you don't know the name, you

take it from us.' That is intelligence."

Then one of the guests asked Śrīla Prabhupāda to describe the process of chanting. Prabhupāda explained that the first step was to hear. For that reason he was writing so many books, to give people a chance to hear. Only after hearing properly was it possible to chant, then remember, worship the Deity, pray, and so on. One theologian said that prayer was important in Christianity, and Śrīla Prabhupāda acknowledged that it was a form of bhakti. But he noted that people did not like to follow a standard method; everyone formed his own opinion and therefore the result was dissension, a symptom of Kali-yuga. Society needed a class of qualified men who understood the Absolute Truth and could teach the rest of the population.

The discussion then focused on the qualifications needed to pursue the process of self-realization, and Śrīla Prabhupāda had Satsvarūpa Mahārāja read the brahminical qualities from Bhagavad-gītā. He said it made no difference whether one followed Bhagavad-gītā or Jesus Christ, but the problem was that people did not follow either. One professor objected that these were only material qualifications,

but Prabhupāda cut him off: "First of all acquire these material qualifications. Then talk of spiritual. Just like in the university, if someone wants to study law, he must first graduate from a lower college."

The atmosphere had become tense, so Dürckheim struck a positive note. He complimented Śrīla Prabhupāda by saying that in his opinion the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness would be much appreciated by the youth in the West, who were more concerned with realizing their real selves than with dedicating their lives to economic development. But the theology professor, dissatisfied with Prabhupāda's explanation of how to attain self-realization, asked whether it was necessarily a gradual process and an impossibility to become illuminated at once by God's grace.

"Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, that will do," Prabhupāda said. Then he added, "Not that you chant the name of Kṛṣṇa. You have got your name of God. You chant that." But the man remained unsure that a particular name was actually a name of God.

"Why you are doubtful?" Prabhupāda asked. "There is the name. If you do not know, take it from us." He chuckled.

The professor admitted, "I'm not convinced that it is the right name."

"That is your misfortune," Prabhupāda said, and the devotees couldn't hold back their laughter. "That is your misfortune. How can I help? You do not know the name. If somebody is informing you, 'Here is the name,' you still will not take. That is your misfortune. What can be done? An unfortunate man cannot be helped."

The man explained his reasons. He had been in Africa and seen people chant names in a similar fashion, and he felt that it was difficult to know the right thing. Prabhupāda gave him a clue: Judge by the result. His guest acknowledged that this would indeed be a valid criterion for him.

One of his colleagues noted that he had seldom seen so many happy faces as when observing the devotees. Prabhupāda told them that once a priest approached him during a flight from Los Angeles to Hawaii and asked, "How is it that your disciples look so bright?" Prabhupāda gave more examples of how people had appreciated Kṛṣṇa consciousness and how his disciples, though still young, had given up everything in search of God.

"Unless it is something sublime, how are they accepting it?" he asked. Concluding his presentation, he appealed to his visitors: "So I think you are all learned gentlemen. You should give us support and cooperate with this movement. It is a very nice movement. That is my request to you.

Satsvarūpa Mahārāja felt that it was the right moment to end the conversation, because it was already late. "May we take your leave, Śrīla Prabhupāda?" he suggested.

Prabhupāda waved his hand in disapproval. "No. You sit down. I can talk all night." The devotees laughed in appreciation. "Because it is Kṛṣṇa's talk, satataṁ kīrtayanto mām. Why stop? Satatam. Go on. Continuously."

When one guest asked how he could support the movement, Prabhupāda replied, "That is a simple thing. You chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. That's all."

Hamsadūta explained that anyone could become a life member. The yoga teacher said that he could remove prejudices by speaking on behalf of the devotees. Prabhupāda appreciated all their suggestions; whatever a person wanted to offer was welcome and would be for his ultimate spiritual

benefit.

With the atmosphere now relaxed, Śrīla Prabhupāda enjoyed showing his visitors his dictaphone and explaining how he wrote his books at night. In 1973 alone, he said, four million copies were sold worldwide. His guests were amazed to see books in Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Hindi, French, and Italian. Prabhupāda talked about the need for self-sufficient farm communities, Kṛṣṇa conscious education, and the ISKCON Food Relief program in India. While Hamsadūta played a tape of the morning's recording, The Prayers to the Six Goswamis, the yoga teacher asked about yoga exercises while chanting the names of God.

"Yes," Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "but we are exercising by dancing."

Soon after, everyone left, and Prabhupāda retired to his bedroom for a short rest. Within a few hours he would again sit at his desk and continue to preach by dictating his Bhaktivedanta purports.

* * *

Pṛthu Dāsa: "During the walk the next morning, Śrīla Prabhupāda followed-up on the topic of chanting the name of God.

"When Graf Dürckheim presented the Christian concept that the word 'God' is the name of God and that nothing more is needed, Śrīla Prabhupāda shook his head and said, 'This is not a very sensible argument.' But Professor Dürckheim didn't feel offended. In fact, at the end of their conversation the night before, he had bowed down to Śrīla Prabhupāda and said, 'Please accept me as your younger brother.'

"When I brought him to the train station later that morning, he told me, 'I am very impressed. This is the first time I have met a man like this. He is through.' By that he meant that Śrīla Prabhupāda had already 'gone to the other side' and reached the perfectional stage of life."

Teaching His Disciples

One evening, as Śrīla Prabhupāda continued his lectures on the Second Chapter of Bhagavad-gītā, he discussed Text 14. He explained that while birth, death, old age, and disease are common to all, distress and happiness vary according to the body. He described death as the moment when pain is so severe and unbearable that you are forced to leave your body

even though you don't want to. Prabhupāda had had an acquaintance in Allahabad who was only fifty years old when he was on his deathbed. The man had desperately implored the doctor to let him live four more years so he could execute his unfinished plans.

"What can the doctor do?" Prabhupāda asked. "That is not possible, sir. You must get out!"

To the devotees' amusement, he then described the misery a child experiences when he has to go to school.

At least I was like that," Prabhupāda said and laughed. "I never wanted to go to school. And my father was very kind. He said, 'So why are you not going to school?' I would say, 'I will go tomorrow.' He would say, 'All right.' But my mother was very careful. Perhaps, if my mother would not have been a little strict, I would not have gotten any education. My father was very lenient. So she used to force me. One man would take me to school. Actually, children do not want to go to school; they want to play. Against their will, they have to go to school.

"So, you study life. From the beginning of this body, within the womb of the mother, it is simply troublesome. Against my will, so many distresses are

there. Then as you grow, the distresses grow and grow."

He described how miseries disturb us constantly, and he said that a sane man's duty is to stop accepting a material body.

"Now realize that you are changing your condition of distress and happiness, being forced to accept some kind of gross and subtle body. That is the cause of your pains and pleasures. And if you get out of this gross and subtle body and remain in your original, spiritual body, then you are free from these pains and pleasures."

Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa: "When Śrīla Prabhupāda asked for questions, I raised my hand. I really wanted to know how to give up material desires once and for all and how not to accept another body. And here was the perfect opportunity to learn from a person free of all material desires. So, in a tight and nervous voice, I asked, 'Prabhupāda, how does one develop his desire to get out of this body?'

"His response was immediate and clear: 'Simply think of how to push on this movement. Have that desire and no other desire. Anyābhilāṣita-śūnyam: no material desire. Śūnyam: make zero all material

desires. Simply desire: "How shall I push on? How shall I serve Kṛṣṇa? How shall I decorate this?" Therefore we have given so many engagements, to divert the desire. Desires cannot be stopped. That is not possible. Foolish persons say, "Become desireless." That is not possible. "Desireless" means I am dead. No. Purify desire. Purify desire. You have the desire to drive a motorcar. Just drive a motorcar for preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness.'

"The devotees burst out laughing because I was the temple driver. It is unlikely that Śrīla Prabhupāda had been told that this was my service, so it amused us that he mentioned driving as a way to please Kṛṣṇa and overcome material desires. I felt rewarded for my sincere inquiry by Śrīla Prabhupāda's thorough answer."

* * *

The next morning, Śrīla Prabhupāda returned to the topic of transmigration. He left no doubt how important it was to him that his disciples understood the philosophy. While walking gaily toward Fischbach, he tested them the way a professor examines his pupils.

"Explain how transmigration takes place," he asked,

with his cane in hand, his head held high.

Mādhavānanda spoke first. He quoted from Bhagavad-gītā: dehino 'smin yathā dehe...

Prabhupāda dismissed his attempt: "That is a śloka. You explain how it takes place."

Next Satsvarūpa Mahārāja answered. He explained step by step how the soul obtains a body according to his desires and takes another body according to his previous actions. But it wasn't what Prabhupāda wanted to hear.

"That's all right," he said, "but how do you transmigrate?"

"According to the mental condition at the time of leaving this body," Hamsadūta said.

Prabhupāda was still unsatisfied. "But what is the process?"

Satsvarūpa Mahārāja gave it another try: "The subtle body carries the soul."

"Yes," Prabhupāda exclaimed. "That is the main point. The subtle body carries the soul."

Then he repeated some examples he'd used several days before: "Just like in a dream, we are carried by the subtle body and placed in different conditions. But as long as this body is capable of working, then

when my dream is over, I come back to this body. And death means that because this body is useless, I go to another body instead of coming back to this body. That is transmigration. Just like when you vacate an apartment, then you do not come back to that apartment, but you enter another apartment. Is it clear?" He paused. His disciples had time to reflect on what he had said.

"Anybody can understand," he continued. "I am coming and going, but when it is a question of vacating, I go out of the apartment and never come back again. I will enter another apartment."

Śrīla Prabhupāda then said he deplored the pitiable condition of modern civilization, because even Nobel Prize-winning scientists and philosophers were unable to understand such a simple concept as the transmigration of the soul.

Satsvarūpa Mahārāja brought up an argument that people had: "I won't mind transmigration, if I become a cat or a dog, because if I will forget completely; so it doesn't matter. I won't even suffer."

Prabhupāda challenged: "But if I say, 'I will turn you immediately into a dog,' will you agree to become one?"

"No," Satsvarūpa Mahārāja admitted.

"This is a childish, foolish proposal," Śrīla Prabhupāda concluded. "If I say, 'I will turn you immediately into this grass and you will stay here for one hundred years,' will you agree to stand like that for one hundred years?" After a silence, he shook his head and said: "Hare Kṛṣṇa. In the Western countries actually there is no philosophy."

Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa: "Every morning, Śrīla Prabhupāda used to walk from Schloss Rettershof down the hill to the village Fischbach.

"One morning, he hardly spoke; he softly chanted japa. We followed his example. Entering the village and passing a butcher shop, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked for the translation of some signs in the window. Upon hearing of the meat, he gravely walked on.

"Although we anticipated an animated discussion on meat-eating, we were exposed to another side of our spiritual master. It reminded me that we are his servants, not that he is ours. Still, being with Śrīla Prabhupāda, we naturally began to see things through his eyes. When he looked with sadness at the butcher shop, we also felt sad, but we knew our sadness was not as deep as his."

Nikhilānanda Dāsa: "During one morning walk, Śrīla Prabhupāda showed us the jovial side of his personality. In a jolly mood, he told the following story: 'Once, a disciple arranged a grand reception for his guru. He offered him many costly gifts and an opulent feast. Surprised, the guru asked him how he could afford all these arrangements.'

"Prabhupāda stopped, laughed, and imitated the disciple: "'It is all your mercy, Gurujī.'" But he didn't tell his guru that he spent his spiritual master's funds.' The devotees burst into loud laughter."

Meeting Father Emmanuel

On June 21st, Father Emmanuel Jungclaussen, a Greek Orthodox monk, visited Śrīla Prabhupāda. He explained that in his Benedictine monastery both Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox rites were observed. He had been chanting, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me!" on a rosary for many years, which was a Greek Orthodox rite.

It pleased Prabhupāda that a Christian monk was chanting. He told his guest that the original Greek version of the word "Christ"—Christos—is a broken

version of the Sanskrit word "Kṛṣṇa," which is also pronounced "Kṛṣṭa" and means "the all-attractive person who draws everyone near," or God.

Prabhupāda said, "Therefore, God's name is Kṛṣṭa. So when Christ says, 'My Father, the Lord, hallowed be Thy name,' that name is Kṛṣṭa or Kṛṣṇa. What do you think?"

Father Emmanuel said that the name of God had been revealed by Jesus and that God could be called Christ.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned the opinion of one of the theology professors he had spoken with a few nights before, that God has no name, Father Emmanuel put forward the common Christian understanding: "We have a name for God. We say 'Father.'"

Śrīla Prabhupāda shook his head and said, "'God' is the general name, but still He has got a particular name, and that name is Kṛṣṇa. That is accepted by Jesus: 'Jesus, the Christ' or 'Jesus, the son of Christ, or Kṛṣṇa.' He identified himself as the son of God. Therefore, the name of God is Kṛṣṭa or Kṛṣṇa or Christo. It doesn't matter."

Prabhupāda then emphasized that the important

thing is to chant God's name, any genuine name, and thus pray to Him: "Kindly transfer me from the service of the material energy to the service of the spiritual energy." That was the meaning of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, he said. God being absolute, His name is nondifferent from Him. Therefore chanting His name means associating with Him. By associating with God, the devotee becomes godly and eventually qualifies to live with God in loving service in His spiritual realm.

At this point, Father Emmanuel voiced a resentment felt by Christians: "You know that we Christians are also preaching love of God, and we seek to fulfill the love of God and serve God with all our heart and soul. Why then do you send your disciples to the Christian countries to preach love of God, when the gospel of Jesus Christ is also preaching love of God?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda excused himself for having to be blunt; he told the priest that Christians were not obeying the orders of God. When Prabhupāda asked him whether or not he agreed, Father Emmanuel at first said yes, but then he demanded an explanation of which laws were disobeyed.

Prabhupāda mentioned the commandment, Thou

shalt not kill. He pointed out that many innocent animals are killed in slaughterhouses. Father Emmanuel again agreed at first, but then he presented arguments in defense of his Christian brethren. He questioned how important a concern animal killing really was. In reply, Prabhupāda gave the analogy that because of one little mistake in a calculation, the result must be faulty. Next the monk argued that the commandment referred only to the killing of humans. Śrīla Prabhupāda reasoned that this meant Jesus was not intelligent enough to use the proper word, "murder." He insisted that there is no need to interpret the word "kill". That prompted Father Emmanuel to ask the same question. that Graf Dürckheim asked: Don't you kill the plants you eat?

When Prabhupāda asked whether vegetable killing and animal killing are the same, his guest answered, "It's not the same. But human killing and animal killing are also not the same."

Śrīla Prabhupāda took up the challenge with ease and gave the same answer he'd given to Dürckheim and the student at Upsalla University: "We are not killing. Our Vaiṣṇava philosophy is that we do not kill even vegetables, Because Kṛṣṇa says, *patraṁ puṣpaṁ*

phalaṁ toyāṁ: 'Give me this foodstuff,' we offer the foodstuff to Kṛṣṇa, and we take it. Therefore, if for killing this flower or leaf, there is a sin, that is Kṛṣṇa's sin, not my sin." He further explained that Kṛṣṇa is supremely powerful and cannot be touched by sin, just as the sun isn't contaminated by shining on a filthy place and purifying it.

But Śrīla Prabhupāda wasn't interested in winning a debate. He hoped that some influential men would comprehend the immense benefit of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If they agreed to cooperate, his mission would be a success. He therefore wanted to put his guest at ease, and he struck a conciliatory note. "I have not come to teach you but to request you: Your Christian religion prohibits meat-eating and encourages chanting of the name of the Lord, so you kindly do it, that's all. We are also chanting. Christ or Kṛṣṇa, the same thing. So let us join together and chant. If you have any objection to chanting 'Kṛṣṇa,' you chant 'Christ' or 'Christo'."

When Father Emmanuel said that on his part there was no objection, Prabhupāda continued, "I think those who are Christian priests should cooperate with this movement, chant the name of Christ or

Christo, and stop animal killing. This is according to the Bible. This is not according to my philosophy but their Christian philosophy. Simply let them do it and see how the situation becomes nice."

Father Emmanuel assured Śrīla Prabhupāda that he agreed completely, but added that he knew it was difficult to find an open ear in the established Church circles. He thanked Prabhupāda and bowed before him.

* * *

The next morning, Father Emmanuel joined Śrīla Prabhupāda on his walk. Prabhupāda again urged him to propagate the chanting of God's name in Germany. And Prabhupāda explained why he stressed refraining from killing animals: "You at least introduce in your country: 'Chant Christ's name and stop animal killing. This is from the Bible. It is not that I am asking. The Bible says, 'Thou shalt not kill,' and it glorifies the name of God. 'Thou shalt not kill'—that is the beginning of religious life. The animal killers cannot understand God. It is not possible. There is a statement in the Bhāgavatam, vinā paśughnāt: 'Who can remain aloof from the chanting of the holy name of God, unless he is an

animal killer?" Yes, animal killers cannot understand God or God's name. That's not possible."

Lecturing to the public

Cakravartī Dāsa: "For several of Prabhupāda's public engagements we rented a hall in a hotel in Bad Homburg, and as usual we accompanied him with a resounding kīrtana. Not many people came, so there were almost as many devotees present as guests.

Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa: "Śrīla Prabhupāda preached in his usual, determined, dignified way. Despite meager attendance and a noticeable mood of mild hostility against him and his followers, he lectured with all his energy, as though every cell and muscle of his transcendental body were focused on delivering the transcendental message. As on other occasions, I was struck by Śrīla Prabhupāda's timeless character. His face seemed to exhibit ages of seasoned wisdom. To the casual observer, Śrīla Prabhupāda may have looked unhappy or even angry, but I knew that he was beyond displaying superficial moods. He was beyond that because he had an urgent and beneficial message for people. Prabhupāda would simply deliver

his message with full vigor."

Cakravartī Dāsa: "When Prabhupāda asked for questions, one guest said that he felt it was a contradiction that Śrīla Prabhupāda preached renunciation, simple living, and detachment from worldly things, but sat on a throne. So Prabhupāda instructed us to remove the vyāsāsana and provide a simple white cushion the next time he lectured there. He explained that if people get annoyed by such external things, it is better to remove the cause of the annoyance."

A. C. Bhaktivaibhava Swami: "Referring to the sparse attendance, Prabhupāda told us that we should mainly distribute prasādam in Germany, so that people become purified and enabled to understand the philosophy."

Śacīnandana Swami: "My father came all the way from Hamburg to meet Śrīla Prabhupāda and see for himself what his two sons had gotten into. When the time came for questions, he stood up and asked Prabhupāda, 'How can you expect to benefit people by transplanting the foreign Indian culture to Germany? We are Germans. We need the occidental culture. It's just as if you were to take a crocodile from

the Nile and put it into the river Elbe. It will die miserably." Prabhupāda looked at him and simply said, 'No. You can become Kṛṣṇa conscious in tie and suit.' "My father probably expected a more sophisticated and philosophical answer, but Prabhupāda's point was simple. Kṛṣṇa consciousness isn't limited by cultural considerations, because it's universal and absolute. Anyone can become Kṛṣṇa conscious in his own culture.

"The next day, my father talked to several devotees about Prabhupāda's answer. He came to the conclusion that it might be worthwhile to investigate Kṛṣṇa consciousness in more detail. Śrīla Prabhupāda's answer didn't give him a lot of information. But it led to my father experiencing a transformation. It made a lasting impression on him." Another public engagement took place in Königstein. The lecture had been advertised by the title "Life After Death". Śrīla Prabhupāda described how we gradually develop different bodies and different types of consciousness. Our natural tendency to improve our situation and even go to better planets is flawed by the four universal principles of material life: birth, death, old age, and disease. He said the perfection is

to develop God consciousness and go beyond the material world to the spiritual sky.

"At the present moment we are in dress consciousness," Śrīla Prabhupāda said. 'I am a German dress,' 'I am an Englishman dress,' 'I am an Indian dress,' 'I am a male dress,' 'I am a female dress.' This is called conditioned life. So in this conditioned life, we are accepting one type of body, and we are dying. Dying means giving up our present body and being transferred to another body by the laws of material nature. It is not under our control. You cannot say, 'After giving up this German body, I shall again accept another German body.' That is not in your hands, sir. It is under the laws of nature."

About one hundred people had come to hear Prabhupāda. All had paid the entrance fee of 5 DM. The devotees had charged a fee to ensure that only serious persons would come, and the crowd consisted mainly of doctors, lawyers, and other established people.

Prabhupāda continued, "Therefore, if we are actually intelligent, we should try for being awakened, or placed in our original body, the spiritual body. That will stop this constant change of body. So the simple

process, as we are preaching in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, is to try to understand Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa or Christ—the same thing. Then you get your original spiritual body. Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be awakened simply by chanting the mahā-mantra, Hare Kṛṣṇa, the holy name of God. Not only Hare Kṛṣṇa. You can also chant the holy name of Christ. Christ is the same as Kṛṣṇa. So do it. There is no expenditure, but the profit is very, very great. Keep yourself aloof from the four kinds of sinful life and keep always in touch with Kṛṣṇa, or God. Then you go back home, back to Godhead."

* * *

After staying for less than a week, Śrīla Prabhupāda prepared to depart. He gave his last instructions to Hamsadūta. He liked Schloß Rettershof and suggested that the devotees buy the castle and the surrounding land. One of his goals was to establish self-sufficient farm communities and show the world how to depend on the land and cows while cultivating spiritual life.

On the evening of June 23, 1974, a group of devotees accompanied Śrīla Prabhupāda to the Frankfurt airport and saw him off to his next destination,

Australia. Five years had passed since his first visit, and they would have liked him to stay longer. They consoled themselves with the thought that he would surely come back the next summer.

No one foresaw that this was Śrīla Prabhupāda's last visit to Germany.

Chapter 15

"Mit fünf Mark sind Sie dabei!"

By the middle of summer in 1974, the book distribution in Germany reached unprecedented heights. Śrīla Prabhupāda's visit fueled the already fiery preaching spirit of his disciples, and books and records went out by the thousands each week.

In a GBC report to Prabhupāda, Hamsadūta included a blow-up of a photograph of Prabhupāda that he wanted to use on the front cover of the double album recorded at Schloß Rettershof. Prabhupāda, remembering his visit, encouraged Hamsadūta to preach vigorously:

The photo you have sent is a nice picture. I am getting it framed. So in Germany, when I was there, I was very, very hopeful. There is good scope for preaching Krishna consciousness. The people there are very intelligent. They are prepared to accept the real truth. Germany was always famous for its intelligent population. You are also appropriately fit to push on this cult in Germany. It will be a great

success. Get the German people to take this movement seriously. Utilize the money you are collecting there for printing more and more books in German language, and profusely distribute our books in German language.

Hamsadūta also asked Śrīla Prabhupāda for more instructions about establishing a farm community, but Prabhupāda told him just to follow the example of already successful rural projects:

Regarding the farm, the exhibition is there in New Vrindaban. Kīrtanānanda Maharaja has organized very nicely. The same principle you can follow and organize it in Germany. Let the people be happy with self-sufficient food grown in the field, with milk products. When I was in Frankfurt round our place, I was so happy so see the farms and the cows. Unfortunately, they will kill the cows. So if we organize a farm without killing any cows, that will be a great example in that country. Instead of killing cows, if we let them live, we can get so many nutritious foodstuffs filled with vitamins. I have seen in New Vrindaban how happily our devotees are living there with free air, fresh vegetables, and ample milk. Simple living in cottages. What you want more?

We should not neglect the upkeep of the body, and we should save time to chant Hare Krishna. This mission should be propagated. Save time and chant Hare Krishna.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, aware that Hamsadūta collected huge amounts of money, warned him not to act whimsically, as one GBC had done by getting involved in a questionable business:

Now you publish in German language all our books and distribute. Krishna will help you in every respect. The BBT collection should be spent 50% for publishing and 50% for construction of temples. At the present moment the Mayapur-Vrindaban projects are going on, so as soon as there is an excess of money it should be utilized here. Not a single farthing should be invested in any business enterprise. Formally it was so done without any sanction. So be careful.

Prabhupāda also told Hamsadūta not to overemphasize the distribution of records. Now, with the release of Kṛṣṇa Meditation, seven LPs were

being distributed in Germany, but only five books:

Regarding record albums, it is something sentimental. They will purchase and hear for sometime and throw it and purchase another. A book purchased will remain, and once even one line is read, that will benefit the reader.

Regarding the printing, it does not matter where you print our German books. Never mind the cost whether it is a little more or less. Wherever it is convenient. We are not after profit. The important thing is good printing and binding so that the people will be impressed. A book sold rather than a record will be a solid sale.

But it proved difficult for Hamsadūta to cut back record distribution. A major part of the collection came from these sales.

During the annual Mayapur festival in March, however, he had come up with a scheme to multiply the income beyond all expectations. Śrīla Prabhupāda had told the managers of the Mayapur temple that no one within a ten-mile radius should go hungry. Thus,

ISKCON Food Relief was born, and the devotees were now feeding many thousands of people each month. Hamsadūta had had pictures taken of the devotees holding Indian children. And back in Schloss Rettershof, he designed an ad for the German Back to Godhead. People were asked to contribute five or ten Marks, which would feed fifty or a hundred people. Later, the devotees developed the slogan, "Mit fünf Mark sind Sie dabei!" or "With five Marks, you're part of it."

Hamsadūta eventually sent \$ 20,000 to construct the food distribution pavilion in Mayapur, but that was only a drop in the bucket compared to the total collection. Hamsadūta had other plans besides printing books and purchasing the Schloss. He planned to buy a remote farm and develop a self-sufficient community based on varnāśrama principles. He feared a world war and economic chaos in the near future and wanted to be prepared. When Śrīla Prabhupāda sensed that Hamsadūta was diverting too much attention in this direction, he cautioned him:

Yes, we must invest our money in books and

land, but there will be no collapse as you have anticipated. Everything will be adjusted by the grace of Krishna. From my own experience I have seen when first-class rice was selling at 8 np. per kg, and now that is being sold at Rs. 8. That means it is 64 times higher, but still people are eating, and the man who lives in care of the footpath he is also eating. So the man in care of the footpath, and the man on the 30th floor of the skyscraper, they are living, and still the inflation is going on. Man-made laws cannot work any rupture in Krishna's plan. Better let us remain now under Krishna's shelter fully dependent, and we shall remain unaffected by all the man-made difficulties.

Farm opening is not very essential, but if you can do it conveniently, then do it. The varnasrama system is for convenience sake in the material world. It has nothing to do with spiritual life. Acceptance of varnasrama means a little easy progress to spiritual life, otherwise it has no importance to us. For example, all my European and American disciples have no varnasrama position, but spiritually, because

they have followed the rules and regulations and also my instructions, their advancement spiritually is being appreciated by everyone. Always remember that varnasrama life is a good program for material life, and it helps one in spiritual life, but spiritual life is not dependent upon it.

Until this time, Hamsadūta used to consult Śrīla Prabhupāda about all his moves. But his recent streak of success, plus Prabhupāda's expressions of unreserved satisfaction with him, seemed to make him over-confident. He now made a series of dubious moves on his own. Later, when Prabhupāda began to receive letters from several concerned devotees, he chastised his disciple:

Why did you close Edinburgh without asking me? Don't do anything whimsically without consulting me.

I made the GBC to give me relief, but if you do like this, then where is relief? It is anxiety for me. This is the difficulty: as soon as one gets power, he becomes whimsical and spoils

everything.

I am not in favor of closing even a small temple. It is not a plaything to close a temple or to start a temple. When we open a temple, we are inviting Krishna. So you can't say to Krishna, 'Go away.' You have no feeling what are the ideals of a temple.

It is a great offense. Before opening a temple, it must be considered a hundred times, and after opening, it cannot be closed. It must be maintained.

Prabhupāda wrote this letter on September 12, 1974. Two weeks later, he received a report from Hamsadūta, written before Prabhupāda's letter, giving reasons for his actions. Prabhupāda replied immediately:

Regarding the closing of the temples, no temple can be closed for any reason. You have done a great mistake. I am sending you a copy of a letter I have written in this connection. We have to consider very carefully before opening a center, and once opened, it cannot be closed. It

is disastrous. What you have done is not at all allowed. I am very disappointed that you have done this. Even you did not consult me. Why? Now you want to purchase a farm, but can you manage? Why are you closing all the temples and then opening a farm? Do you have sufficient men to maintain a farm? Why are you purchasing a farm?

Three days later, Śrīla Prabhupāda received two apologetic letters from Haṁsadūta. Prabhupāda then instructed him what to do:

Regarding Edinburgh temple, yes it should be re-opened. Worship in the temple means to personally call Krishna, and He personally comes, therefore the arrangement must be there for the temple worship to go on nicely before opening any temple. In Vrindaban there are many dilapidated, important temples started by the Gosvamis, but still they are not closed. They are becoming debtor and debtor, and the temple building is practically falling down, but still the Deity worship is going on somehow or other.

This is the principle.

In Germany you have to follow the same principle. Once opened it cannot be closed. Somehow or other you have to manage to continue the temple worship. That is the devotional cult. If they are closed and it is impossible to re-open, then what can be done? If there is no Deity, then it doesn't matter. If possible, re-open the Hamburg temple and transfer the Deity again and worship. A center without a Deity can be closed, but to close a center with a Deity is a great offense. The Deity is not an idol; it is Krishna. We cannot say to Krishna personally, 'Now go away.'

But no matter how disappointed Śrīla Prabhupāda was, he didn't forget Haṁsadūta's valuable service, and he thanked him for his efforts.

I am glad to hear about the Gita sales and the publishing of the new books. Therefore I have appointed you as BBT Trustee: to publish the German editions of our books as much as possible. I quite appreciate that one main center

may remain there and from there the preaching may go on, but no attempt may be made to open a new center without being confident that it will go on. Strictly this principle should be followed.

The book sales are very encouraging, increasing, increasing. It is very good news. Thank you, I want this. Record selling is temporary. Even George Harrison's record sales do not continue for a long time. But, a book sold becomes a permanent matter for enjoyment. We read the scriptures again and again, and it is still fresh. When there is time, I go on reading my own books.

Śrīla Prabhupāda praised Hamsadūta for expressing feelings of unworthiness and surrender in his letter. And he told him he could remain pure and always protected by Kṛṣṇa if he maintained this attitude. He advised him: "Always follow my instructions and my example. This should be your life and soul."

But another issue had raised the concern of many of Hamsadūta's godbrothers. Especially in Germany, but also in England, Hamsadūta had a band of followers

who regarded him as almost equal to Śrīla Prabhupāda. Many accepted him as their sole link to Prabhupāda. Whenever they came into his presence, and again when they left, they offered obeisances to him, a sign of respect generally reserved for Śrīla Prabhupāda. They did his bidding without question. Once, at Schloß Rettershof, Hamsadūta walked around for days with dark sunglasses just to test the loyalty of the devotees. His confidants reported anyone who questioned his behavior. When Śrīla Prabhupāda received several letters of complaint, he asked Hamsadūta to lower his profile.

I have heard that there is some worship of yourself by the other devotees. Of course, it is proper to offer obeisances to a Vaisnava, but not in the presence of the spiritual master. After the departure of the spiritual master, it will come to that stage, but now wait.

After being corrected by Śrīla Prabhupāda again, Hamsadūta wrote him another letter in the beginning of October. He acknowledged that whatever success he had achieved was due to his

servicing Prabhupāda's lotus feet, and he promised to go on working to the best of his ability. He had just returned from the Frankfurt Book Fair, where the devotees presented Śrīla Prabhupāda's books for the first time.

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "Just in time for the book fair, we printed The Teachings of Lord Caitanya, the first volume of Kṛṣṇa book, and Leben kommt von Leben (Life Comes From Life). Thus, at our booth, we had three hardbound books and four paperbacks.

"Life Comes From Life was special for us, because at the beginning of 1974, when we first heard the tapes of Prabhupāda's conversations with the devotee-scientist Svarūpa Dāmodara about the origin of life, we convinced Hamsadūta to ask Śrīla Prabhupāda whether we could publish those talks in a book entitled Life Comes From Life. Germans are generally scientifically-minded, and we knew it would be great for the preaching."

Śrīla Prabhupāda had kindly agreed:

Yes, by all means you may print my morning walks speaking about "Life comes from Life" into a small book; this argument should be spread, as

any intelligent man will be convinced that our discussion is thoroughly scientific and exposes the so called materialistic scientists as rascals. So go on printing and distributing as many books as possible; this is your real work and your personal success.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda received copies of the new books and the Kṛṣṇa Meditation LP, he expressed unreserved enthusiasm to Hamsadūta:

I am in due receipt of your letter dated October 11, 1974 and also the new German books KRISHNA, TLC, and LIFE COMES FROM LIFE, and also the record Krishna Meditation. I thank you very much. It is all very nice. May Krishna bless you with more and more publishing work. I am always thinking of your Frankfurt Schloss center. The songs which I have recorded there I have heard today on the record, and they are very nice, especially the "Prayers to the Six Goswamis." It has come out very successful on the whole. I hope the German people will like the Bengali tunes.

What is the report of how they are selling?

Whenever you call me for coming there, I shall come. Never quit the Frankfurt palace. It is very nicely situated, in a open place. The landlord is a good gentleman, so keep good relations with him and his wife.

The report that the newly published books are all selling like mad is very, very encouraging. Now publish more books. Make more translations. You have not yet published Bhagavatam and also Krishna Book, Second Part. Is this translated or not? And what about "Leben Kommt Von Leben?" Are they also selling? I have never studied science, but I am challenging them. They may take me as crazy, but I am not crazy. I am right.

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "To speed up the book production, in 1973 we added more translators. Nikhilānanda began work on Kṛṣṇa book and Vaidyanātha on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and The Hare Kṛṣṇa Cookbook. They also prepared articles for the magazine."

Thus, by late autumn 1974, ten or eleven books were in the final stages of production. When Hamsadūta

reported to Śrīla Prabhupāda that he had just sent more titles to the printer, Prabhupāda was as much amazed as pleased.

What six books have you given to the printer? This further publication of books means that you go further to Krishna six steps more. Your news of more publishing after seeing the newly published books is very happy news for me. Thank you. Overflood Europe with German books. I think that the German people are the heart of Europe, and your march will be followed by Bhagavan dasa in French language. So you have [a portion of] Caitanya-caritamṛta almost translated, achah! Thank you. You are pukkha BBT Trustee.

Upon receiving *The Hare Kṛṣṇa Cookbook*, Śrīla Prabhupāda commented:

Das Hare Krishna Kochbuch is very nicely printed, especially the picture of Krishna and His friends eating. It is very glorious. We wish to join His party, but it requires great tapasya. For

many, many lives these boys performed tapasya to join His party and eating with Him. I see that you are charging the equivalent of Dollars 4,00. Yes, they must pay.

So concentrate on publishing books as far as possible, and sell, and spend the money accordingly. On the whole, I am very much pleased with your publishing extensively in the German language. It has given me great pleasure.

For Hamsadūta, the world seemed to be in order again. Śrīla Prabhupāda was pleased, more and more books were being published, money was pouring in, and the lucrative Christmas season was just around the corner. Soon he would have enough funds to turn his plans for a varnāśrama community into a reality. It was in the first week of December that Hamsadūta booked a flight to Los Angeles. A dream of his was about to come true. Because Karāndhara had fallen away, Prabhupāda appointed Hamsadūta to replace him as one of the BBT trustees in North America. As far as book production and distribution were concerned, Hamsadūta was already the undisputed

champion in ISKCON. Now he planned to take some of the best German distributors to the U.S. to train the devotees there. His men had become experts over the last year. Every weekend, they held classes in which the best techniques were vividly demonstrated by the top distributors. The slogan about feeding children in India—"With five Marks, you're part of it!"—had produced especially smashing results. In fact, too smashing.

Chapter 16

The Raid

On a Sunday morning like any other, December 15, 1974, some seventy devotees ate breakfast at Schloss Rettershof. Between spoonfuls of hot halavā and sweet yogurt, stories of the latest saṅkīrtana adventures made the rounds.

Most of the saṅkīrtana devotees had arrived the night before after another successful week of distribution. And after unloading their vans and taking showers, they had joined a tumultuous kīrtana in the castle's main hall and enjoyed many hours of ecstatic chanting and dancing. The next day, they would launch into the last week of book distribution and fund-raising before Christmas, usually the week with the biggest results of the year.

But the next morning, at eight o'clock, a well-dressed man in a dark coat knocked on the front door. He was the state prosecutor, Herr Schomberg, and he was not alone. Accompanied by eighty policemen, he entered the Schloss and presented an order of

investigation. For the next few hours, the police checked everyone's identification and searched the building.

For many months, Schomberg had gathered apparently incriminating evidence of fraud and other illegal activities. An increasing number of citizens, doubtful that their donations were sent to India to feed the hungry, had been going to the police.

Around noon, the devotees were taken to the police headquarters in Frankfurt for interrogation. The officers took their pictures and fingerprints, and a judge accepted the prosecutor's demand to freeze the Society's bank accounts.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was in Bombay when he received the news of the raid by telegram almost a week later. He was informed that bad publicity, not only in Germany but also all over the world, was marring the public image of his movement. Prabhupāda asked Brahmānanda Swami to fly to Frankfurt and give him a detailed report.

The accusations against ISKCON reflected the public's irritation against ISKCON's fund-raising methods, especially in connection to the food relief program in India. When Prabhupāda received a letter

from the Stockholm temple president describing the questionable methods used by the Swedish devotees, who had also been trained by Hamsadūta, he replied on January 6, 1975:

Regarding dishonest means being used, I have never advised or taught anyone like that. That is not my idea. This record distribution has caused havoc. It should be stopped immediately. I have also asked Hamsadūta to stop it. Book distribution is our real business. If we give them a record, they simply hear some magical sound and take it for sense gratification, but if they receive one of our books and read even one page, they get eternally benefitted.

To Brahmānanda Swami, he wrote:

Hamsadūta was giving stress to selling records using all tricks, by any means. The incident in Germany has caused havoc all over the world. It is hampering our reputation everywhere. I do not want this record distribution to continue. So, stop this record distribution immediately

everywhere. And stress book distribution more and more.

As more and more devotees worldwide became aware of the disastrous consequences of dubious fund-raising methods, an internal debate flared up: whether or not the ends really justified the means. Rūpānuga, one of the GBCs for North America who defended a straightforward approach, turned to Śrīla Prabhupāda for guidance and received the following instructions:

Regarding the controversy about book distribution techniques, you are right. Our occupation must be honest. Everyone should adore our members as honest. If we do something which is deteriorating to the popular sentiment of the public in favor of our movement, that is not good. Somehow or other, we should not become unpopular in the public eye. These dishonest methods must be stopped. It is hampering our reputation all over the world.

Money collected for feeding people in India

should be collected under the name ISKCON Food Relief. Not any other name. And every farthing of that money must be sent to India, or better yet, buy food grains there and ship them here and we will distribute.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had also asked Bhagavān Dāsa to visit Schloss Rettershof. On receiving his report, Prabhupāda said:

I am very much depressed by the recent incidences in Germany. It is now evident that some of our top men are very much ambitious, and there have been so many fall-downs. In his last letter, Hamsadūta said as follows: "I am exhausted, my brain is exhausted, I do not know what to do, so you can just tell me what I should do and I shall do that. I cannot understand your mind or actions; I do not know what your Divine Grace wants, or what you want from me. So, at this moment I am just going to sit and chant till I hear from you, because everything till now has come out wrong, so please just instruct me what to do. Sorry to be the bearer of

bad news again. Please forgive me, I am so helpless and spiritually weak. Please save me. What more can I say, please save me. In India you said, 'Every rumor contains a grain of truth.' So the police, the karmis, the newspapers must also bear a grain of truth. I feel discouraged now. All my godbrothers and your Divine Grace are dissatisfied with me, so I have lost my enthusiasm."

Śrīla Prabhupāda asked Hamsadūta to join him soon in Hawaii. He would try to rectify his disciple and encourage him to be more careful and go on with his duties. This wasn't the first time one of his leaders stumbled. But Prabhupāda never rejected them. He had always done everything to save the person. Prabhupāda kept the doors open and welcomed whoever repented his mistakes and willingly resumed the fight against māyā.

Chapter 17

The Aftermath

The media had a feast reporting on monks accused of fraud, kidnapping, and illegal possession of weapons. For weeks and months after the raid, major newspapers and magazines and the national television stations featured stories on the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees. They were generally depicted as criminals cheating housewives and sending immense sums of cash to their guru in America.

Three years would pass until the trial, in which all criminal charges would be dropped and the devotees only fined for violating the collection laws. But the propaganda, fueled by disgruntled parents and church leaders, aimed only at stripping the Kṛṣṇa monks of their apparently harmless and peaceful veneer and painting a dark picture of destructive morons.

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "We felt isolated. Harināma in Frankfurt could be dangerous business. The public's reaction was icy, if not openly hostile, and the police

regularly arrested us and told us to stop the disturbance and go home. Chanting in the streets without written permission violated the law."

Ekā Dāsa: "I stayed at the Berlin center. At 4:30 one morning, three shots rang out and smashed the storefront's right window. I ran to the temple room, where Jaya Gaura lay on the floor—alive. The bullets missed him by inches, because at that very moment he bowed down before the Pañca-tattva."

News of the attempted shooting in Berlin reached Hamsadūta and Śrīla Prabhupāda in Honolulu. Hamsadūta proposed a plan to counteract the propaganda and persecution, and Śrīla Prabhupāda confirmed it in a letter to all temple presidents:

Recently in Germany the government, police and church have started heavy prosecution against our movement by arrests, investigation and blocking our money in the bank. By unfair and slanderous newspaper and television propaganda, they have ruined our reputation and turned the general public against our movement. We cannot sit idle. Even killing of our devotees has been attempted in Berlin by shooting. Hamsadūta Prabhu has formulated a plan for protesting at all German embassies all over

the world. This plan has my sanction. He will be contacting you in this connection. Please cooperate with him fully.

Brahmānanda Swami reached Schloss Rettershof on January 5, 1975. The devotees needed the encouragement and association of one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's leaders.

Book distribution somehow continued, but the collection went down considerably. To convince anyone to give a donation became a major struggle.

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "To counteract the propaganda, Pṛthu and I toured Germany to get the support of respected persons. We visited Graf Dürckheim, Father Jungclaussen, and many other people interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness who were in positions to help. But the tour produced meager results. Although most expressed sympathy, they hesitated to stand up for us in public."

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In early March, Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed his desire that as many devotees as possible from all over the world come to India for the annual Mayapur-Vṛndāvana festival and attend the opening of the Krishna-Balaram Mandir on April 20th. For

the German devotees, to go on pilgrimage and visit the holy places of Lord Caitanya's and Kṛṣṇa's pastimes provided just the medicine they needed to lift their spirits.

Janmānalāya Dāsa: "After the festival, I stayed on as a pūjārī at Krishna-Balaram Mandir. I had been studying art in Vienna before joining the devotees in 1971, but after moving into the temple I had stopped painting. Now I felt the desire to take it up again, but I didn't know how to begin after so many years without practice.

"One morning, I described my background to Śrīla Prabhupāda and my desire to engage my talent in Kṛṣṇa's service. I showed Prabhupāda a drawing of him I had made. He was pleased and even signed it. His instruction to me was simple; he said, 'Just go on painting.' Glad to have his approval, I began painting portraits of Śrīla Prabhupāda while also doing my service as a pūjārī.

"Later I went to Mayapur, where one of my duties was to guard Śrīla Prabhupāda's quarters during his visits. One morning, I was sitting on the veranda, not far from his door, in front of an empty room in which the ceiling fan was going. Someone apparently had

left the room and forgotten to switch off the fan. Śrīla Prabhupāda, chanting japa, came out of his room, and walked up the veranda, turned around, and approached the spot where I sat. When he noticed the swirling fan, he stopped and asked me, 'Why is this ventilator going?' I sheepishly said, 'I don't know. Somebody must have left it on.' 'Then why didn't you switch it off?' he asked. When I gave the silly excuse that I had forgotten about it, Prabhupāda remarked, 'You are good for nothing. Simply wasting Kṛṣṇa's energy!' I lowered my head, and tears welled up in my eyes.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda's obvious displeasure with me made me feel like drowning myself in the Ganges. So I went to the temple president and told him what happened. I asked him what I should do now, whether I should get my bags and leave, or what? But he seemed not to give the incident much importance and encouraged me to continue my service. So I sat down again at Prabhupāda's door.

"After a few minutes, Śrīla Prabhupāda called me into his room and asked me to fetch the water jug from his bedroom and fill the loṭā on his desk. As I set down the jug and replaced its small clay cover, Prabhupāda

put his hand on mine and moved his head in an apologetic way, as if he wanted to say, 'What can I do? It is my duty to correct you.' I immediately felt like embracing him. The very incident that had caused me so much grief miraculously turned into the most wonderful experience. Prabhupāda radiated the warmth and love of a true father and well-wisher.

"There were lots of insects in Mayapur, especially brown, cockroach-like, winged bugs. Each evening, thousands of them swirled around the lamps in the temple room, and in the morning, they all lay dead on the floor. It was my service to sweep the temple room and dispose of the insects. There were bucketsful of them. In one of his lectures, Śrīla Prabhupāda referred to the insects by comparing our situation in this world to theirs. Just as they were attracted by the glaring lamplight, only to die the next morning, we were attracted by the dazzling material energy, only to meet with death."

* * *

Sarvabhāvana Dāsa: "I and a friend of mine, who later became Bhakti-cāru Swami, went from Calcutta to Hamburg in 1970. There we met the devotees for the first time and accepted an invitation for the

Sunday feast. Unfortunately, our visit to the Bartelsstraße temple turned out quite unpleasant. We got into an argument with Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, who made derogatory remarks about Indians coming to the West. After leaving the temple, we didn't want to have anything more to do with the devotees. Our idea of a devotee was an introspective sage living in the mountains. Occasionally I saw devotees chanting in front of Dammtor, but I never approached them.

"I married a German girl, and in 1974, my wife and I moved to Berlin. There on the street I met Śāntimātī Dāsī, who gave me a German Back to Godhead magazine. On the front and back covers were photos of Schloss Rettershof and devotees engaged in various activities. Later I met Indira Dāsī, who gave me Lord Caitanya in Five Features—an excerpt from Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, in English—and an illustrated pamphlet explaining how to make chanting beads. I bought the book mainly because it contained Bengali verses, but once I began reading, what really touched me were Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports.

"My wife and I practiced yoga. We spent an hour every morning doing āsanās. But after reading about

bhakti-yoga and chanting, I suggested we try that. So we chanted for some time while standing on our heads, and we felt that the chanting had a special effect on our consciousness. We continued this practice and even bought wooden beads in a toys' shop to string into japa mālās.

"After reading Lord Caitanya in Five Features, I began visiting the temple. A painting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa on a lotus flower especially attracted me. During āratī, I looked at the painting again and again, and I felt as if Kṛṣṇa were pulling me.

"I also used to visit a tea house in the same building, and one evening I was sitting there sipping tea and munching biscuits when someone put on Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa Meditation album. I liked classical music—especially church music and operas—but when I heard Prabhupāda sing, I felt that he sang with genuine devotional feelings, unlike classical singers, who usually displayed only sentiments in their interpretations.

"When a doctor advised my pregnant wife to have an abortion, I thought, 'What a demonic society. I don't want to be part of it anymore.' I contemplated seriously what I had to offer my child once he was

born. What were my plans for the future? It became clear that I had to make a decision. For the next few days, I thought deeply about what to do, and when the pictures of the devotees I'd seen in the magazine flashed through my mind's eye, I knew: That's what I want to do.

"I called Schloss Rettershof. Ātmavidyā answered the phone, and I said, 'I want to come and join.' He replied, 'You will have to wait. There is nobody here. All the devotees have gone to India for a festival.' I was a little disappointed, but I resigned myself and waited. After a week I called again. I was eager to act on my decision. But I was told that I should wait for some time more, because the devotees hadn't returned yet. I thought, 'That's ridiculous. I want to become a member right away.' So my wife and I packed our bags and took trains to Frankfurt and Königstein. The next evening, we moved into the temple."

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Aṣṭaratha Dāsa: "After the Mayapur festival, Haṁsadūta asked me to remain in India for another week and buy paraphernalia for the marble Deities he had taken from Paris in the summer of 1972. He

wanted to install Them as soon as possible. I was surprised. Whenever Hamsadūta had asked Śrīla Prabhupāda for permission to install Them—in Heidelberg in 1973 and during his visit to Schloss Rettershof in 1974—Prabhupāda had told him to wait.

"In Mayapur, Hamsadūta decided to take matters into his own hands. He told me, 'I am just going to install Them now; otherwise, it will never happen.'

"When I returned to Germany in the beginning of May, the preparations for the installation were in full swing. On Sunday, May 11, 1975, Hamsadūta performed the installation ceremony in the simple style common in ISKCON in those days, and he gave the Deities Their names: Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madanamohāna. He told me he would write to Prabhupāda about the installation."

To install the Deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa without Śrīla Prabhupāda's sanction was undoubtedly presumptuous, and Hamsadūta pondered how to break the news to his spiritual master. Only eight months earlier, Prabhupāda had heavily chastised him for closing a temple without permission. Now he was again at risk of incurring Prabhupāda's anger.

Haṁsadūta thought the best course of action might be to simply obtain Prabhupāda's permission, without telling him that the Deities were already installed. Thus, on May 15th, Haṁsadūta wrote a letter to Prabhupāda requesting his permission. Only ten days later, he received the short, unmistakable answer: "There is no need of establishing a Deity for the time being. Simply make a nice preaching center."

This baffled Haṁsadūta. Why did Prabhupāda react negatively to installing these Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities in Germany? Didn't he trust him? In London and Paris, he had not only sanctioned installations of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities but also presided over them. And in a few weeks, he would install another set of large Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities on the new farm in France. Prabhupāda had always spoken about Germany as one of the most important countries in Europe, if not the most important one. Were these merely words of encouragement? After years of pushing hard to establish Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Haṁsadūta had found a prestigious place, a majestic castle, and Prabhupāda had liked it. Wasn't it obvious that having only small brass Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities on the altar of such a large building was almost out of proportion?

Śrīla Prabhupāda's reply seemed not to chasten Haṁsadūta. And once Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madanamohāna were installed, it became evident that They were rather small—only about fifteen inches high—a far cry from the almost life-size mūrtis worshiped in many other ISKCON temples. Haṁsadūta wasn't satisfied.

Aṣṭaratha Dāsa: "A couple of months after the installation, Haṁsadūta sent Sucandra, Alanātha, and I to Jaipur. He told us, 'Buy the biggest Deities you can find.' We went from one mūrti-wala to the next until we found what we were looking for. Kṛṣṇa measured almost two meters high; He was taller than me. It took twelve men to lift Him and put Him in a wooden box. A few months later, the Deities arrived in Germany. But Haṁsadūta eventually shipped Them to California, where he later installed and worshiped Them."

In the middle of September, Haṁsadūta made another attempt to obtain Śrīla Prabhupāda's permission to install Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities at Schloß Rettershof. He expected the newly purchased Deities to arrive soon from Jaipur, and he thought that if Prabhupāda sanctioned Their installation, the earlier installation of Rādhā-Madanamohāna could be

"officially" included. But Prabhupāda didn't approve of Hamsadūta's plan:

Regarding the Frankfurt temple and the Deity program, unless we have got our own building, this proposal of installing Deity should be postponed. Do not install the large Deities, unless we have got our own building.

* * *

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "The police raid and the subsequent freezing of our bank accounts brought book publishing to a halt. Śacīnandana went out preaching, Vaidyanātha transferred to the Copenhagen temple, and Nikhilānanda, being still underage, was again taken into the custody of his mother. I continued the translation work alone.

"I was in contact with a retired German professor of linguistics living in Los Angeles. He had become a friend of Svarūpa Dāmodara's. On several occasions, this man, Dr. Wolf-Rottkay, met Śrīla Prabhupāda and offered to edit the German translations. Thus, on Prabhupāda's request, we were sending him manuscripts for revision.

"In the course of our correspondence, Dr. Wolf suggested that I come to California. The recently opened BBT offices there offered excellent facilities for book production. And at the same time, we would be able to work together closely and be more efficient.

"The prospect of traveling to ISKCON's Western World Headquarters and leaving the depressing atmosphere of Schloss Rettershof was tempting indeed. But I doubted that Hamsadūta would agree. So I wrote directly to Prabhupāda for advice.

"In the same letter, I requested him to clear up two questions I had about statements in the third chapter of Madhya-līlā. In the purport to Text 70, I had read, '...prasādam is never polluted even if it is touched by the mouth of a caṇḍāla. Indeed, it retains its spiritual value. Therefore by eating or touching such mahā-prasādam, a brāhmaṇa is not degraded. There is no question of being polluted by touching the remnants of such food.' I was confused. Why then did we throw out the prasādam that guests left on their plates? It was surely an offense, and maybe it was better that the devotees took those remnants.

"My other question concerned Text 98. In the

purport, Prabhupāda said: 'Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not encourage sannyāsīs to eat very palatable dishes, for the whole Vaiṣṇava cult is vairāgya-vidyā, as renounced as possible. Caitanya Mahāprabhu also advised Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī not to eat very palatable dishes, wear very nice garments or talk on mundane subjects. These things are all prohibited for those in the renounced order. A devotee does not accept anything to eat that is not first offered to Kṛṣṇa. All the rich foodstuffs offered to Kṛṣṇa are given to the gṛhasthas, the householders.' I wondered why then, in our temples, it was a common practice to offer a sannyāsī a big plate of mahā-prasādam.

"On August 4, 1975, Śrīla Prabhupāda replied:

Regarding your going to Los Angeles, if Dr. Wolf suggests that you come, you should do it. At least you can come as tourist, so there should be no difficulty. So you should consult with Dr. Wolf.

Regarding your questions, you may not be so advanced that you will take the karmi remnants as prasadam. The karmis should not be given so much that there is waste. You can give them a

little, and then, if they like, you can give them more. This system should be introduced everywhere. I have seen myself that so much prasadam is being left. This is not good.

Regarding the attitude for taking prasadam, if you think it is something palatable, so let me take more and more, then that is sense gratification. But still it is prasadam, so it will act. Prasadam is transcendental, but one should not take too much. Sannyasis may take the maha-prasadam, but not to overeat. Caitanya Mahaprabhu was taking, but on principle he was avoiding.

"On September 9th, Aśoka-kumāra and I arrived in Los Angeles. Aśoka-kumāra came along to transcribe and compose the translations, but unfortunately he could not use the BBT typesetting equipment immediately. Special fonts for German, with diacritic marks for the Sanskrit transliteration, had to be ordered, and that took a couple of months.

"Dr. Wolf, a friendly gentleman in his late sixties, was glad to have us there. He was fluent in six languages, and he was eager to help us to bring the translation of

Prabhupāda's books up to a more academically acceptable level. But his involvement turned out to be a double-edged sword. He had many valuable suggestions to improve the style, but his vision was flawed by mundane considerations. He found many of Śrīla Prabhupāda's original English expressions objectionable and wanted to change them in the German edition. For example, he felt it was simply unacceptable to compare Kṛṣṇa's legs to elephant trunks.

"In the following weeks, we had several heated discussions, and when Dr. Wolf saw that I was not prepared to change Prabhupāda's words just because a description didn't fit his conception, he began to question Prabhupāda's position. Having fled Nazi Germany, he felt that our vision of Prabhupāda's authority was dangerously similar to the inflated image of Hitler in the 1930s. Finally he stopped coming. But he sent me a letter explaining his stand on the way our books should be presented. He mailed a copy to Prabhupāda, who replied to him as follows":

I beg to acknowledge receipt of a copy of a letter sent to Srīman Vedavyasa dated January 14, 1976.

Mundane books are written by imperfect persons. Everyone has his own theory, which means he is imperfect. The Srimad-Bhagavatam says if there is a real presentation of spiritual understanding, then, even if it is presented in broken language, it is accepted by high, saintly persons, because it glorifies the Supreme Person. On the other hand, if literature is highly metaphorically composed, if it does not glorify the Lord, it is compared to a place inhabited by the crows.

Actually, if some literature doesn't carry any real knowledge, what is the use of ornamental language? We are not interested in presenting ornamental language.

In India the system is that people go to see the Jagannatha Deity. The Deity is not very beautiful from the artistic point of view, but still people attend by the thousands. That sentiment is required. Similarly with our kirtana we are only using drums and karatalas but people come to the point of ecstasy. It is not the ornamentation, it is the ecstasy. This ecstasy is awakened by sravanam kirtanam by devotees. I

hope this makes everything clear.

* * *

At the end of September 1975, Alanātha Dāsa, one of the top German book distributors, who had taken charge of the Stockholm temple, complained to Śrīla Prabhupāda about Hamsadūta's eccentricities, which had confused the devotees in Sweden.

Prabhupāda took the matter very seriously. He had created the GBC to relieve him from management, and he expected their behavior to be exemplary. The GBC was supposed to inspire the devotees in a concerted effort to fulfill the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Dissension, fueled by personal ambition, was a great danger. Śrīla Prabhupāda's reply to Alanātha on November 10th was unusually candid:

I know that Hamsadūta is very expert in selling books, but books are not only for selling but also for reading. Now has the GBC become more than Guru Mahārāja? As if GBC is simply meant for looking after pounds, shilling, pence. The GBC does not look after spiritual life, that is the defect. All of our students will have to become guru, but they are not qualified. This is

the difficulty.

A year before, devotees had complained about Hamsadūta's behavior, and now he was again the subject of controversy. In an earlier letter written to Prabhupāda, Hamsadūta had sounded depressed and had deprecated himself as useless and guilty of many mistakes. To lift his spirits, Prabhupāda had assured him that he didn't think Hamsadūta had acted wrong. And he reminded him that we living entities are limited and actually unworthy to serve the Unlimited; it was only Kṛṣṇa's kindness that He accepted our insignificant service.

In the same letter, Hamsadūta had also expressed again his desire to take sannyāsa, but Śrīla Prabhupāda had not encouraged him:

Regarding your wanting to leave your family and take sannyasa, what is your family? You live aside from your wife, and you have no children, so you are already sannyasa. Anyway, we can consider later on. First we have to push this movement. That is most important thing. Grihastha or sannyasa, it doesn't matter. First we have to know the science of Krishna

consciousness. Caitanya Mahaprabhu never said that everyone had to take sannyasa. We should just be after becoming the pure servant of Krishna.

Now, at the end of November 1975, Haṁsadūta flew to Delhi to become Śrīla Prabhupāda's secretary for December. It was a welcome break for him from the tension-filled past weeks and months. The quarrels with his godbrothers had left a bad taste in his mouth. He felt himself to be the victim of unfounded rumors. Again he approached Prabhupāda for sannyāsa.

Rambhorū Dāsī: "When Himavatī heard about Haṁsadūta's intentions, she almost had a fit. She immediately made arrangements to fly to India, and she asked me to accompany her. In Vṛndāvana, Haṁsadūta tried to get her to agree to his taking sannyāsa, but she didn't want to hear of it. Every day she went to see Śrīla Prabhupāda to discuss it with him. Prabhupāda would tell her, 'He cannot take sannyāsa unless you agree.' And she would say, 'I don't agree that we are ready for sannyāsa. I certainly don't think that we are advanced enough, but if you give him sannyāsa, I will accept that.' But Śrīla

Prabhupāda would insist, 'No, no, you have to agree.' For days and days, they went on like this, and finally Prabhupāda just dropped the subject."

Hari-śauri Dāsa: "When Śrīla Prabhupāda saw how adamantly opposed Himavatī was to her husband's taking sannyāsa, he didn't encourage Hamsadūta to do so. Hamsadūta was confused about what to do and wanted Prabhupāda to decide his fate, but Prabhupāda didn't want to interfere, and refused to give him a direct instruction. He left it up to Hamsadūta to make the decision. And it seemed that it would be just a matter of time before he decided to do it."

Chapter 18

The Exodus of Devotees

Village to village preaching had been one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's favorite programs ever since he began his mission. As early as 1969, he wrote to Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, "When you distribute BTG in German, by going from village to village, at that time you will make my mission successful." During a tour of India in 1971, Prabhupāda noted with pleasure the overwhelming positive response to his Western "dancing white elephants." When Upendra reported a similar reception by the rural people in Fiji, Prabhupāda wrote to him:

We have recently been preaching and holding saṅkīrtana in some small villages and the result is very good. The simple villagers are very much attracted by this saṅkīrtana process, and they join with us very nicely and listen attentively. So I am glad that you are also preaching in the outlands. That is very nice. Lord Caitanya wanted that His movement should be spread everywhere, to every

village and city, and now by your kind cooperation His holy desire is being fulfilled.

After returning from India in the summer of 1971, Hamsadūta began a similar program in Germany in 1972; Prabhaviṣṇu did the same in England in 1973, and Tamal Krishna Goswami and Viṣṇujana Swami in America in 1974. Śrīla Prabhupāda was so pleased with the success of the traveling saṅkīrtana buses that he often endorsed this type of preaching as more practical and efficient than establishing temples. In August 1973, he advised Jagadīśa:

Hamsadūta in Germany, instead of increasing the temples and Deity worship, has increased the sankirtana parties. He is running on 8 new buses and distributing large quantities of literature; this is more important.

During Śrīla Prabhupāda's stay in Bombay in November 1975, Mahāmsa Swami visited him and informed him about the preaching in Hyderabad. When Prabhupāda heard how enthusiastically the people in the villages responded to saṅkīrtana and prasādam, he became very enlivened and told

Mahāmsa, "Just see how quickly there will be a response. Therefore I was insisting, 'Go village to village, town to town.' It was Caitanya Mahāprabhu's prediction: *ṛthivīte āche yata nāgarādi grāma*. So it will never be foiled. Let us now begin village to village!"

A wealthy Hyderabad businessman had donated land not far from the city, and Haṁsadūta, along with Mahāmsa Swami, became the persons responsible for establishing a farm and introducing Kṛṣṇa consciousness by kīrtana and mass prasādam distribution in the surrounding villages. Haṁsadūta was still the GBC for Northern Europe, but it was expected that he'd also spend some time in India, give financial support to the Hyderabad project, and send men to help develop it.

During his month as secretary, Haṁsadūta was enlivened by Prabhupāda's enthusiasm for village preaching. It kindled his own desire to become involved. He saw village to village preaching as a great opportunity to become spiritually refreshed and as a way to get a break from the abrasive struggles in Germany. When Haṁsadūta approached Śrīla Prabhupāda and offered to organize such a program

in India, Prabhupāda welcomed his proposal.

Hari-śauri Dāsa: "Śrīla Prabhupāda gave Hamsadūta permission to buy a bus and start a traveling saṅkīrtana party in India. He suggested that they carry Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi in a box, and wherever they stop, take Their Lordships out, sit under a tree, and hold kīrtana. Prabhupāda assured him that many people would come. Afterward prasādam could be distributed and a discourse given. 'Do it immediately!' Prabhupāda told him enthusiastically. In mid-December, Yaśomatīnandana Dāsa invited Prabhupāda for a small lecture tour around the city of Ahmedabad. Several village programs had been arranged, and Śrīla Prabhupāda was very enlivened. He stressed the importance of preaching in the villages. He told Hamsadūta, Harikeśa, and me that even prior to coming to the West he had a desire to preach from village to village in India, but had been unable to do it. Now he was getting the opportunity to fulfill his desire.

"Prabhupāda encouraged Hamsadūta to take up this type of program and declared that he would travel with his group. It was such an exciting concept, and Prabhupāda was so enthusiastic, the fact that such a

program would be almost physically impossible for him wasn't even mentioned. For Prabhupāda, preaching meant that there was no consideration other than spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, whatever the cost."

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On his last day as secretary, Haṁsadūta approached Śrīla Prabhupāda to go over with him the plans for implementing the village preaching in India. Haṁsadūta was so excited about his future engagement that he had already looked into prices for vehicles and equipment. However, when he mentioned to Prabhupāda his plan to bring some of his men from Germany to take part in the traveling saṅkīrtana party, Prabhupāda cautioned him.

Hari-śauri Dāsa: "Although Prabhupāda liked the idea, he didn't want Haṁsadūta to abandon his duties in Germany altogether. He told him that despite the enormous difficulties there, the efforts for the long-term establishment of Kṛṣṇa consciousness had to be maintained. Haṁsadūta had been instrumental in the development of the German yātrā, and Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't want to see him leave, lest everything collapse. But he also had no objection at

all to Hamsadūta's preaching in India—at least for the time being while the difficulties persisted."

* * *

Back in Germany, it wasn't difficult for Hamsadūta to find volunteers for the bus program. For a good number of devotees, the prospect of exchanging the sullen atmosphere of their hostile homeland for the sunny skies of Bharatavarṣa was an opportunity they didn't want to miss.

By the end of January, Hamsadūta had purchased four Mercedes buses, each capable of carrying forty-five passengers. Then he began equipping them for their new task. He planned to take two buses to India in time for the annual Mayapur festival. The other two were for a similar village to village preaching program in Germany. Two weeks later, with the buses ready to depart, Hamsadūta informed Śrīla Prabhupāda, who was already in Mayapur.

Hari-śauri Dāsa: "With his letter, Hamsadūta enclosed a flier advertising the new traveling saṅkīrtana program. The flier was intended to persuade devotees to join. It had a picture of the four buses across the top and a few catchy phrases explaining the gist of the program.

PRABHUPADA'S
WORLD SANKIRTANA PARTY

Entangled in temple life?
Burned out on Sankirtana?
Then this new program is for you.

Simply chanting and dancing
and distributing Krishna prasadam

"To further entice the devotees, it mentioned that Prabhupāda had promised to travel with the party. An attractive description of the recent tour of Gujarat was also given.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda was very happy to see the eagerness and enthusiasm with which Hamsadūta had applied himself to establishing the village preaching. In his reply, Prabhupāda confirmed his intention to take part. 'Yes, with great pleasure I will accompany, and we shall go village to village. I have seen the pictures, and the buses look very nice.'"

* * *

Sarvabhāvana Dāsa: "After I received initiation in

the summer of 1975, I had a strong desire to meet Śrīla Prabhupāda in person. I had read his books and was convinced of the philosophy, but he said things like, 'You will be able to see Kṛṣṇa face to face and attain His lotus feet in one lifetime,' which weren't clear to me. I wondered how it was possible. I felt that I had to see Prabhupāda in person—to have living proof—to become convinced that he actually meant what he said. So when I heard about the bus program, I didn't think twice. It was a golden opportunity to go to India and meet my spiritual master.

"After we arrived there in the early spring of 1976, I went to Vṛndāvana. Prabhupāda was expected to come to Krishna-Balaram Mandir on the last day of March. I was full of eagerness to meet him and ask him my questions.

"We assembled in front of the temple to greet him. A brown Ambassador stopped at the gate, and one of the temple leaders rushed to open the door. Then Śrīla Prabhupāda stepped out of the car. As soon as I saw him, all my questions were answered. I just fell flat on the ground to offer him prostrated obeisances. Something overcame me, a spontaneous, overwhelming feeling of complete security. I realized

that I was in the presence of a person far beyond anyone I had met so far in my life. Here was a saintly person whose every word was backed-up by realization. It was as if all that I had read in his books now came alive. I felt fully satisfied and happy.

"Later I was invited to see Śrīla Prabhupāda in his house, and when he heard that I had received a formal education, he said, 'Oh, you should go to Bengal and translate my books.' I replied, 'But Prabhupāda, my Bengali is bad, because I studied in English Medium schools in Calcutta—and I always avoided Bengali.' 'Oh, that's not good,' he said. 'So you should study Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta. In this way you will learn Bengali nicely. My Guru Mahārāja used to say that the whole world will learn Bengali to read Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta.' And that's how I learned Bengali again.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda also instructed me how to translate. He said there are two types of translation: one is word for word, the literal translation; and the other consists of reading the original text, understanding it, and then putting it in your own words. He preferred the latter method. He called it a "summary study." That's how he translated some of his books. And I

understood that this was the way he also wanted me to do it.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda also talked to me about opening a restaurant, because I'm a cook. He said that in the West, restaurants were an effective means to propagate our philosophy. He was obviously proud of the Govinda's restaurants that served first-class prasādam. He wanted the devotees to preach to the people who were regular customers."

* * *

Rambhorū Dāsī: "During the 1976 Mayapur festival, Hamsadūta's dream finally became a reality: Hamsadūta became Hamsadūta Swami. Himavatī, still in Vṛndāvana, flipped. For days, her moods shifted from frenzy to depression. As soon as Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived at Krishna Balaram Mandir, she demanded to see him. 'Since my husband has taken sannyāsa, I hate everyone and everything in this material world,' she declared. Prabhupāda looked at her and simply said, 'Oh, you are making very much advancement.'

"After Himavatī came to grips with the new reality, she went around Vṛndāvana to ask different widows how to act when the husband takes sannyāsa. Told

that it was customary to worship his shoes or other objects of his, she got the idea to worship Hamsadūta in the form of a deity. At Loi Bazar she purchased brass Gaura-Nitāi Deities and gave Gaura to the mūrti-wala to have the deity slimmed down to look more like Hamsadūta. Afterward, she dressed him in sannyāsa clothes, put a daṇḍa in his hand, and placed him on her little altar—without Nitāi, of course—and began worshiping him.

"This all happened while Śrīla Prabhupāda was in Bombay. When he came back, Himavatī wanted to show him how she now faithfully worshiped her husband in separation. She brought the deity to Prabhupāda, and she probably thought that he would figure it out, that this was an image of Hamsadūta. But when Prabhupāda saw the deity, he exclaimed, 'Oh no! You cannot dress Gaura-Nitāi like sannyāsīs; we worship Them like princes.' She didn't have the heart to tell him that this was supposed to be Hamsadūta. But she realized that her idea was bogus and gave it up."

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During the GBC meetings in Mayapur, Śrīla Prabhupāda suggested that some members change

their zones. As a result, more than half of the GBCs got new assignments. Hamsadūta requested his godbrothers to relieve him from of his responsibilities in Europe so that he would be free to preach in India, and they readily accepted his proposal. Jayatīrtha, until then the GBC for California, became responsible for Germany, the British Isles, Ireland, Scandinavia, and the East Bloc.

When Jayatīrtha arrived in Germany, he was shocked to see the devotee population reduced to almost half. Those who had not joined Hamsadūta's buses but had remained at Schloss Rettershof were disheartened. The circumstances had been difficult enough after the raid, but the recent exodus of many godbrothers and godsisters undermined the morale to an all-time low.

Hari-śauri Dāsa: "While we were in Honolulu, in May 1976, Śrīla Prabhupāda received Jayatīrtha's first GBC report from his new zone. His assessment of the situation in Germany was quite gloomy. The devotees were struggling and discouraged, there being only fifty-five left in the country. The German media and government had a campaign going to discredit ISKCON. The government was still presenting its

case against ISKCON and had asked us to pay another \$250,000 on top of the \$300,000 already confiscated. Moreover, he said, the situation had been made worse by Haṁsadūta's mismanagement.

"He thought that our image could be improved in two ways. First, all of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books should be translated into German and widely distributed to the universities and colleges. Culling reviews from respected professors would establish ISKCON as genuine. Second, one new temple per year should be opened and solidly developed, with regular programs of saṅkīrtana, Sunday feasts, and festivals. As the number of devotees grew, a center could be opened in each major city, giving us a steady presence and enabling us to attract solid supporters.

"Finally, Jayatīrtha reported that a new BBT traveling party, under Alanātha Dāsa, would tour Scandinavia, Germany, and Austria, distributing books and holding festivals. This would clear the large stock of books which he said were 'sitting in the basement of the Schloss gathering dust,' and allow the printing of new German books.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda was happy to receive the news. He had been very concerned about the problems in

Germany, and he felt that Jayatīrtha's plans were positive and well thought out. He told Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa and me that Jayatīrtha was the best manager in our society. In his reply, he urged Jayatīrtha on with personal praise and some practical advice. 'It is very encouraging to hear the reports of increased saṅkīrtana. Go on like this more and more. Concerning the situation in Germany: So you are the right man to train them up. It is Kṛṣṇa's desire that Hamsadūta is replaced by you. I have certified that you are our first-class temple manager. A little change is invigorating, so try to serve me to the best of your capacity.'

"Prabhupāda told Jayatīrtha they should print his books in Germany and then present the bill to the bank that is holding our money. By printing locally they could regain lost prestige. 'It will be good publicity, and at the same time we will have books. Whether the money was collected illegally or legally, the money is being spent in Germany. It is not going outside, so why is it being held up illegally? Let it be spent in Germany. That is our money; there is no dispute. It is not the aim of our Society to mislead the public; you can show them our aims. Maybe some

workers have done like that, but we are trying to enlighten the whole world and the people of Germany with good literature.'

"He said we should convince them that our movement is for producing men and women of the best character. 'If some individuals have done wrong, it shouldn't jeopardize our entire community. People accustomed to all nasty habits have joined us and are leading pure, happy lives.'

"After he had dictated his reply and Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa had gone off to type it, I asked Prabhupāda how we distinguish Kṛṣṇa's arrangement from our mismanagement. The bad situation in Germany certainly seemed to me to have been exacerbated by mistakes and foolishness on the part of some of the devotees there. I asked him if Kṛṣṇa arranges for things to go wrong when we mismanage matters. Does Kṛṣṇa punish us to teach us a lesson?

"Prabhupāda told me that Kṛṣṇa has a plan, but if we fail to cooperate with Him, then things go wrong. 'Kṛṣṇa does not punish His devotees,' he said. 'The problems are caused by the demons, not by Kṛṣṇa. But if we mismanage, then the demons gain opportunities to wreak havoc with our mission.' Then

he smiled and added, "But they cannot disturb for long."

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Upon receiving Śrīla Prabhupāda's letter, Jayatīrtha and the devotees at Schloss Rettershof felt encouraged to increase their efforts and take up the challenge to rebuild the yātrā. But an unexpected event soon dampened their regained enthusiasm. In the first week of June, Haṁsadūta Swami returned from India with a few men. He planned to get three more buses, new equipment, and take more men to India.

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Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "I had accompanied Jayatīrtha from Los Angeles to Mayapur and from there to Germany. Shortly after our arrival, I was put in charge of the Schloss. Pṛthu went to Munich to open a temple. We felt that living in the castle was impractical, both in terms of preaching and our public image, and that the future was to return to the cities and open centers. Pṛthu volunteered to be the first to take the plunge. "Two years had already gone by since all the city temples, except for a small center in Berlin, had been closed. Initially, many people visited Schloss

Rettershof out of curiosity, but as time went on, especially after the raid, fewer and fewer visitors came. Most devotees were discouraged, and we felt it was time for a drastic change. We wanted to quit Schloss Rettershof and open several city temples instead. But for that we needed Śrīla Prabhupāda's sanction.

"Prabhupāda visited England in July, and Jayatīrtha advised Pṛthu and me to go and present our case to him. Maybe by hearing our personal testimonies, Prabhupāda would accept our proposal.

"We arrived at Bhaktivedanta Manor on July 23rd, and the next morning we were invited into Śrīla Prabhupāda's room. He sat behind his desk, and although he looked a bit exhausted, he behaved as nobly as ever.

"As soon as I rose from offering obeisances, Prabhupāda asked me, 'What book are you translating now?' I informed him that I had reached the end of the first volume of the Third Canto and was now working on the first volume of the Madhya-līlā and that twelve books were ready for production. Śrīla Prabhupāda moved his head in acknowledgment and asked, 'Which books are selling the most?' There

could be no doubt what Prabhupāda's emphasis was. Although concerned about the situation in Germany, he was convinced that Kṛṣṇa consciousness would ultimately succeed if book production and distribution continued.

"Then Hari-śauri came in with a bar of soap. He had been told that Śrīla Prabhupāda liked this brand, and he was wondering whether it was approved or not. Prabhupāda dismissed his question with a smile. 'Soap is soap,' he said, and we couldn't help but laugh. When Hari-śauri pointed out that the label mentioned menthol and camphor as some of the ingredients, Śrīla Prabhupāda chuckled and said, 'You can advertise in so many ways. It is a combination of oil and soda. That's all.'

"Harikeśa Swami also entered the room. Back in India, he had made a batch of toothpaste according to Śrīla Prabhupāda's direction, from ground mustard seeds, salt, calcium carbonate, glycerin, oil of wintergreen, menthol, camphor, and thymol, and he wondered whether he needed to prepare more. "Prabhupāda said he had enough toothpaste and that it worked wonders. Amid bursts of our laughter, he said, 'All my teeth are giving notice that "I am not

working," but on account of this toothpaste they are obliged to. It is very good. I could give you so many formulas, but I do not wish to divert your attention too much. Our main business is the spreading of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—through books.'

"After Harikeśa Swami and Hari-śauri left the room, Jayatīrtha gave Śrīla Prabhupāda a brief report on the latest developments in Germany. Regarding book orders from professors and libraries, there was no positive review from either because of the make-up of the books. We wanted Prabhupāda's approval to change the format and make the books more compact and distinguished looking. We also wanted to add photographs of historical places such as Kurukṣetra to make the books more authentic looking. Prabhupāda had no objection. When we showed him a dummy, he liked it and said, 'You can print like this.'

"The next topic was thornier. Jayatīrtha pointed out that for the last two years there had been no city temple, because maintaining the Schloss required all the resources and men. But recently, Pṛthu had gone to Munich, and he had immediate results. Each Sunday, more than fifty guests came for the feast, and the devotees were enlivened to again have so much

opportunity to preach.

"Jayatīrtha explained that nobody came to Schloss Rettershof. It was out in the country and could be reached only by car. The next big city, Frankfurt, was the seat of our enemies. He concluded by proposing we close the Schloss and open temples in major cities. "I think the Schloss must be kept,' Śrīla Prabhupāda said, 'just to maintain what we have got.' Jayatīrtha gave it another try. 'But nobody appreciates this place; in fact, they criticize us.' Prabhupāda was unimpressed. 'To my mind, I do not wish to close it,' he said, 'but if you all decide ...' Leaving the sentence unfinished, he looked at us gravely, and we were silent. There was no question of going against Prabhupāda's desire.

"It is a nice place,' he continued, 'and once open, you cannot close. Suppose a child is born deaf and dumb, does it mean that it should be killed? It is useless, but that does not mean I kill it. So even though the Schloss is not giving us any good response, because it is open, you cannot close it. Whimsically, we cannot open and close. Before opening, we can consider a hundred times. But after opening, you cannot close.'

"Jayatīrtha made a last effort: 'The problem in this

case is that things were not well considered before it opened.' 'But it is open,' Prabhupāda replied. It sounded like the final verdict in a courtroom. Jayatīrtha gave Pṛthu and me an apologetic look. He had tried, but Śrīla Prabhupāda did not want to hear of closing the temple.

"After a few moments of silence, Prabhupāda gave some more reasons. 'There is an English proverb,' he said. "A rolling stone gathers no moss." So don't be a rolling stone. That is one of the habits of the Europeans—to become rolling stones—to always change things very quickly. That is not good. After all, we have to live in a place. So that's a nice place. Nobody is coming, but we are there. We have our temple, kīrtana, prasādam. If somebody comes, it is all right. If not, what can be done? It is not that we open a temple because others will come. We also require a place to live.'

"All had been said. With a 'Jaya, Śrīla Prabhupāda!' we offered obeisances and left his room. Prabhupāda's desire was supreme. He was in touch with the Supersoul, and we had the faith that his flawless vision would serve our best interest."

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Vibhīṣaṇa Dāsa: "One morning, after Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke in a lecture about the beauty of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I asked him, 'If Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so wonderful, why don't more people join?' He replied, 'Kṛṣṇa consciousness is nice, but material life is like a dark well.' If you are in darkness, covered by ignorance, it's difficult to appreciate something beyond your realm of experience."

Rambhorū Dāsī: "Every morning, Śrīla Prabhupāda would take his walk along the same route from Bhaktivedanta Manor through the fields and back to Letchmore Heath. One day, one of the German devotees, Āma Dāsa, who wore turbans and used oversized beads, was walking neck to neck with Śrīla Prabhupāda to get his attention, but Śrīla Prabhupāda ignored him. Then Āma addressed him directly, saying: 'I am Āma, I am Āma.' But Prabhupāda didn't even look at him. A few minutes later, the boy said again, 'I am Āma, I am Āma.' But Prabhupāda didn't respond. Then Āma tried for a third time, practically getting in front of Śrīla Prabhupāda: 'I am Āma, I am Āma.' This time Prabhupāda stopped, and the whole group stopped, and he looked at the boy and sternly said, 'Āma

Dāsa!' At that moment, Āma Dāsa seemed to get some realization and offered his obeisances to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

'One afternoon, Prabhupāda gave darṣana in his room. He sat beneath the huge stained-glass window and you could see the grounds of the Manor out back. Suddenly he motioned with his hand to indicate all the bushes in the distance and said how Kṛṣṇa is an incredible artist, because He designs all these colorful flowers and it all looks so beautiful. But then Prabhupāda added, 'Actually, all these plants and flowers are doomed. They are all imprisoned in this material existence. It looks artistic, but it is a condition of suffering.'

"During the darṣana, one devotee came in and offered his obeisances with his beads draped around his neck, and they touched the floor. Prabhupāda looked at him and asked, 'Where is your beadbag?' 'It's in the wash,' the boy explained. 'Go to my closet and get a beadbag,' Prabhupāda said. 'You should never have your beads like this.'"

* * *

Back at Schloss Rettershof, Hamsadūta Swami's men were making the final arrangements. Hamsadūta

Swami had already flown back to India, and his men planned to start the six-week overland journey in the beginning of August. Most of them thought of themselves as leaving Germany for good. Not long ago, they had given their every breath to building up the yātrā, and now they seemed like strangers in their homeland who didn't mind burning their bridges behind them.

Hari-śauri Dāsa: "From London, Śrīla Prabhupāda went to New Mayapur in France. After a few days, he received a complaint from Jayatīrtha that Hamsadūta Swami's men were causing a good deal of trouble in Germany. The devotees at Schloss Rettershof accused them of behaving like gangsters by stripping the temple of vehicles, equipment, men, and money. Hamsadūta Swami himself was said to have taken at least 100,000 DM with him.

"Prabhupāda agreed to a proposal by Jayatīrtha, Bhagavān, and Harikeśa Swami that Hamsadūta's men come to France to see him to resolve the issue. But when they arrived, he decided that his two GBCs, Bhagavān and Jayatīrtha, should try to produce a solution without his direct involvement. Together with Harikeśa Mahārāja, they met with the men and

decided that they should not take the vans. So the vehicles were parked and the keys handed over.

"In the middle of the night, though, Hamsadūta Swami's men took the vans and left without telling anyone. They concluded that Prabhupāda had been used as a ploy to draw them to New Mayapur and prevent them from leaving for India.

"When told, Prabhupāda acknowledged that they would naturally think they had been tricked. He said it was the GBC's job to handle such situations with more expertise.

"But he praised Jayatīrtha for his restraint in not allowing himself to be drawn into a fight over the issue and for being willing to work constructively with the remaining facilities and men."

Yet although Jayatīrtha appeared committed to doing the needful, deep within he wasn't at all enthusiastic about reconstructing Germany. A tremendous effort and selfless dedication were now required, and hardship was not to his taste. He felt comfortable in England, partly because of the language, and he also liked Amsterdam. Thus he suggested to Bhagavān that he would trade Germany for Holland, but Bhagavān wasn't interested.

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Nikuñjavāsiṇī Dāsī: "During his visit to New Mayapur, Śrīla Prabhupāda presided over the installation of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Deities. He seemed fatigued. Balarāma and Prabhupāda were about the same size, and while bathing Kṛṣṇa, Prabhupāda put his left hand on Balarāma's shoulder. Leaning over, he poured yogurt from a conchshell over Kṛṣṇa. To me it was as though three friends were standing together, and we were allowed to watch them.

"That evening, Prabhupāda took a short walk around New Mayapur, and afterward he sat down under a tree and gave a brief talk. When he asked for questions, one devotee said, 'In the Guru-vandana, it says that the spiritual master is our guru life after life. So if we don't make it back to Godhead in this lifetime, does it mean that you will come back to save us?' Śrīla Prabhupāda put down his fist on the little table in front of him and said sternly, 'You make it in this lifetime. Don't make me come back!'"

Chapter 19

A New Beginning

In February 1976, Śrīla Prabhupāda had awarded Harikeśa Dāsa sannyāsa in Mayapur and sent him to America.

On his way, Harikeśa Swami stopped in London. There he met Hamsadūta, still the GBC for northern and eastern Europe. Hamsadūta told him about a preaching program in Hungary, which he had no time for, because he had to attend the GBC meetings. So Harikeśa Mahārāja took his place and teamed up with Alanātha to go to Budapest.

Harikeśa Swami: "We mainly chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa and distributed prasādam, because in a communist country, lecturing was problematic. To begin with, I needed a translator, and it was hard for him to find the right words for many unfamiliar philosophical terms. Besides that, it was risky to speak about God in an officially atheistic country. But chanting and feasting had a tremendous impact. Śrīla Prabhupāda's

reply to my report enlivened and enlightened me:

I have marked how they are attracted to our kirtana and prasadam there in Hungary. If they consider our philosophy too revolutionary, there is no necessity to print books immediately. First, the heart must be cleansed by chanting Hare Krishna and taking Krishna prasadam. To take birth in such place is due to impious past, so it is not easy for them to immediately accept our philosophy. Just give them chanting and prasadam. You must be very tactful to preach in such places. If you like you can print one record there as you have suggested.

If the young people become very serious, if you find it is detrimental to have them wear dhoti and shave head, that is not necessary. Simply introduce the chanting and prasadam distribution and gradually they will be elevated to being Vaisnava. A Vaisnava is aloof from all material conditions of life, so even under such circumstances a Vaisnava will not feel inconvenienced.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda's letter indicated that he wanted me to continue these programs, and thus I decided to go to Germany to have a base for preaching in the East.

"When I arrived at Schloss Rettershof in April, I found out that the GBC had just changed. Previously, I dealt with Hamsadūta, but now Jayatīrtha was in charge, and I wasn't sure who to ask to get what I needed. First of all, I needed a van. So I went to the treasurer's office, and there was Sucandra, who wasn't at all enthusiastic to spend money on a newly-arrived sannyāsī's preaching program.

"But after an hour, I convinced him that the van would eventually be an asset for the temple, and I assured him that I would take care of it. I got a Mercedes, which I customized with a sink, a sleeping place, and everything else needed to travel and preach.

"In the meantime, I helped by giving classes and preaching to the devotees on an individual basis. A lot of tension was in the air. The temple was in bad shape. The devotees were depressed. Sucandra was sitting in his office with his head in his hands, wondering how to handle the situation, and he asked

me what to do. I said, 'It seems to me that this temple is in māyā. Best that you and I just go out preaching.' So a couple of times we went to Hungary, East Germany, and Poland.

Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Swami (Sucandra): "To smuggle books into East Germany, we devised a scheme: Two identical vans would enter the German Democratic Republic, one on a transit visa for West Berlin and the other on a regular entry visa for the country. The van heading for West Berlin would be allowed only on the transit highway, so it would not be inspected. But the other van going into the G.D.R. would be searched. We'd fill the transiting van with books and leave the other van empty. On the highway, the vans would meet at a rest stop, and we'd transfer all the books to the empty van.

"The only problem was that rest stops were tightly patrolled by the East German police. So whenever we saw a police car approaching, one of us got himself ready to urinate in that direction. As good-mannered men, the police naturally turned their heads as they drove by. Then we immediately transferred the books as quickly as possible. It always worked."

Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa: "Once, I drove a van full of books

from West Berlin to East Berlin, not through one of the checkpoints, but by leaving West Berlin on transit to West Germany and then going back to East Berlin by a roundabout way.

"I took the transit highway to Hanover for a few kilometers and then I took a turn—off and got on the road to Poland—completely forbidden. From there, I knew of an off-ramp leading to East Berlin. But just as I took the exit, a police car appeared and stopped me.

"I pulled out my American passport and put on an innocent face. I said, 'I think I'm lost. I want to go to Hanover, but I guess this is the wrong way.' Seeing I was a foreigner, the police officer became helpful and told me how to get back on the main road. I thanked him and took the road to West Germany.

"After five kilometers, I saw a service road going off, and Kṛṣṇa inspired me to take it. On that road, there were no police, and I soon arrived in East Berlin. I went straight to a devotee's house on the outskirts of town and unloaded all the books. The books were in Polish, and the devotees from Poland eventually came by train, filled up suitcases with books, and returned to their country.

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Harikeśa Swami: "In Leipzig, East Germany, lived a nice boy initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda—Haladhara Dāsa adhikārī—and we wanted to supply him with books. Taponidhi and Gaura-kiśora drove the van with the books, and I drove the empty one. At the border, the officer became suspicious, because there was nothing in my van. I just had a little bag of mine. But after I explained that I was staying just one night, he let me through.

"As I entered the parking lot where the other van was waiting, a police car drove in behind me. So we decided we'd better get out of the vans and eat some apples. We sat down at a picnic table and acted like tourists, but the police continued to observe us and probably suspected that something was going on. Finally they left, and we jumped up and transferred the books. Then I drove off with all the books.

"About two minutes later, I saw the police on the roadside, waving me down! I thought, 'Oh no, I'm going to get caught with all these books, and I am an entry!' So I just kept my face forward and pretended not to see them. I jammed my foot on the gas pedal and tore down the road as fast as the van would go.

"They immediately ran to their car to pursue me, but at that moment, Kṛṣṇa sent the heaviest rain I have ever seen in my life—it was like buckets of water pouring down from the sky. It was mid-July, and the road was so hot that the rain became steam, and you practically couldn't see anything anymore. I was driving in this blinding mist as fast as I could, and the police somehow got lost. I took the next exit and then the back roads all the way to Leipzig .

"It was dark by the time I arrived at Haladhara's house around ten o'clock. But I was so revved up that I picked up a box of books, which normally it took two people to carry, and I ran to Haladhara's window and threw it in. Haladhara wasn't aware how heavy the box was, and when it hit him in the chest, he fell backwards—boom!—and the books fell all over the place. But I kept bringing the boxes as fast as I could, because the van was parked under a streetlight and anybody could see what I was doing. After I dumped all the books, I told him, 'See you tomorrow.'

"Then I drove to a campground. I was completely wiped out and took rest around midnight. At five-thirty, I heard a 'Bang! Bang! Bang!' on my window. I thought, 'Now they've got me.' A voice

shouted, 'Herr Campagnola!' And I thought, 'Oh no, they even know my name.' But it was only the manager. And he said, 'Telephone call!' I staggered out of the van, went to the phone, and there was Sucandra on the line, who informed me that he'd received a call from America saying I should immediately go to London and become Prabhupāda's secretary again."

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Hari-śauri Dāsa: "After visiting England and France in the summer of 1976, Śrīla Prabhupāda returned to India. Soon it became more and more clear that Jayatīrtha wasn't as committed to Germany as it had appeared. He spent most of his time at Bhaktivedanta Manor, and his visits to Schloss Rettershof were sporadic and brief. Śrīla Prabhupāda was concerned. He therefore thought that maybe Hamsadūta should go back to Germany and take care of the situation for which, after all, he was responsible for in the first place."

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "Word about Hamsadūta's possible return reached us in the beginning of September. The prospect of his coming back made everyone shudder. Jayatīrtha called a meeting, and the devotees

decided that he should write a letter to Śrīla Prabhupāda, signed by all, saying that Hamsadūta's return would be disastrous. The matter was taken so seriously that Pṛthu and I were asked to take the next flight to India and hand the letter to Śrīla Prabhupāda, so that if clarification was needed, we'd be right there to answer any questions."

Pṛthu Dāsa: "We reached Vṛndāvana around noon. After quickly showering and putting on clean clothes, we went to Śrīla Prabhupāda's house. Harikeśa Swami opened the door. He couldn't believe we had come all the way to India just to deliver a letter. He informed us that Śrīla Prabhupāda was taking his massage and shouldn't be disturbed. So we left the letter with him."

Harikeśa Swami: "I read the letter to Prabhupāda after lunch. Jayatīrtha described the chaos that Hamsadūta and his men had caused, and he went so far as to compare Hamsadūta to the plague. Prabhupāda raised his eyebrows. 'The plague?' he asked. Shocked, he repeated the words over and over—'like the plague'—and agreed that under the circumstances, Hamsadūta should not return to Germany."

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "The next morning, we accompanied Śrīla Prabhupāda on his walk. It was the first time I'd come to India right after the rainy season, and Vṛndāvana appeared much different than it had in late spring. A light veil of mist shrouded the fields, and the air was humid and fragrant. The wind blew massive white clouds across the deep-blue sky.

"Wrapped in a gray woolen chādar, Prabhupāda chanted softly on his beads as we left the Krishna-Balaram Mandir. To be with him in this setting gave me a faint glimpse of what it meant to be in Vaikuṅṭha, an atmosphere free of anxiety. As we strolled through the fresh morning air, all problems and fears vanished."

Pṛthu Dāsa: "We made our way down the dirt road near the Goshalla, and I walked right behind Prabhupāda. Suddenly he turned around and put his cane on my chest. 'So, you are satisfied?' he asked. Taken by surprise, I smiled and said, 'Yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda, very satisfied.' Then he asked, 'When are you going back to Germany?' I told him we planned to return in a couple of days. 'Oh, no!' he said, and his eyes opened wide. 'Just enjoy the spiritual atmosphere. Stay at least three weeks.' We

gladly complied. After all, it was a direct order from our spiritual master."

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While Harikeśa Swami served Śrīla Prabhupāda as his secretary in Vṛndāvana, he received letters from Sucandra, Dvārakeśa, and Prabhujaka that described the latest preaching developments in eastern Europe. In the early summer, they had accompanied him on his tours to East Germany, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Hungary and had promised him to keep him informed. Upon reading the wonderful exploits of his godbrothers, Harikeśa Swami felt sure that Śrīla Prabhupāda would enjoy hearing how the preaching in the East was going. When Prabhupāda learned how enthusiastically people behind the Iron Curtain responded to kīrtana and prasādam, he wrote the preachers letters to encourage them.

I have noted your letter of August 23, 1976 addressed to Harikesa Swami and have noted the contents with pleasure. Please continue your program of preaching in Eastern Europe, for this program is very pleasing to me. You should be supplied all funds for this program by

the local GBC men there in Europe. This program is very important.

Since 1971, devotees had been visiting the East Bloc only sporadically. Nobody had dedicated all his energy to implanting Kṛṣṇa consciousness there. But during only three months of preaching in the East, Harikeśa Swami probably did more than had been accomplished in the previous five years. Now he was Śrīla Prabhupāda's secretary, typing his letters, and Prabhupāda was satisfied with his service—that's why he had agreed to have him come back in July—but to Prabhupāda's mind, Harikeśa was rotting behind the typewriter. He was an energetic, enthusiastic preacher, who could be much better engaged spearheading the preaching in East Europe. Anybody could type.

Another consideration was the precarious situation in Germany. Jayatīrtha was reluctant to take on the work, and Haṁsadūta unwelcome. But the situation called for decisive action. If Harikeśa Mahārāja preached in the East, the natural choice for his base was Schloss Rettershof, and his presence would be helpful. Śrīla Prabhupāda suggested that he go to

Poland, where the response had been especially positive. He was so eager to develop the East program that he gave Harikeśa Swami a loan of \$1,000 for his immediate expenses.

But upon arriving in Delhi, Harikeśa Mahārāja caught malaria and could not fly to Europe. His mind began to waver, and he wrote Prabhupāda a letter expressing doubts about his new assignment. The language barrier in the East European countries was a major obstacle; maybe he should preach in America after all. Śrīla Prabhupāda's reply was unequivocal:

I sent you especially for preaching in that quarter; therefore I gave you money; otherwise in U.S.A. what is need of money. You have experience in that area, therefore I gave money. So I request you not to go to U.S.A., even if it is a little difficult to preach in that quarter. I have written to Guru Dāsa and Sucandra to join you. Combine together and preach. In U.S.A. there are many preachers, but here no preachers. Otherwise, if you must preach in English, then you may preach in England.

Prabhupāda made clear what he wanted, and Harikeśa Swami resigned himself without any further hesitation to Prabhupāda's will. He teamed-up with

Sucandra, and in October, they went to Yugoslavia. The people's response was tremendous; they went wild over kīrtana and prasādam.

Śrīla Prabhupāda became ecstatic when he received Harikeśa Swami's report, and he replied.

I am very pleased to learn of our success in Yugoslavia. When there is a little hope of success in these countries, it encourages me 100 times more than in other places. If they take up this Krishna Consciousness, they'll take it very seriously. This is the perfection of Communist ideology. Everything belongs to God. No private proprietorship.

They have gone on the radio, that means they have purified the whole atmosphere. That is the way to introduce; the transcendental sound vibration will act. Utilize this approach. Gradually try to convince them that this movement is the perfection of Communism.

Go on singing Krishna kirtana. That is our program. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu used to go out chanting. He never spoke philosophy in public, only among higher circles. The chanting is very

effective. Along with tampura and mrdanga played very rhythmically, let them chant. Perform this musical demonstration and sell books as far as possible, and feasting. Then everything will be successful. It is good that they do not like these bogus yogis and they like Hare Krishna mantra. Give them the chance to chant the Hare Krishna maha—mantra somehow or other, then very soon good results will be visible.

* * *

Jayatīrtha was glad to have a sannyāsī at the Schloss, and he encouraged Harikeśa Swami to help manage. Unsure whether to commit himself and thereby maybe neglect preaching, Harikeśa Swami consulted Śrīla Prabhupāda, who simply said: "Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated 24/11/76. Yes, I approve of your helping to rectify the situation in Germany. Hoping this will meet you in good health."

Harikeśa Mahārāja applied himself to the task without delay. The legal situation needed immediate attention. Two weeks later, he was on his way to the Hyderabad farm, where Hamsadūta Swami was

receiving Śrīla Prabhupāda on a visit. He needed Hamsadūta's signatures on legal documents for the court case.

Hari-śauri Dāsa: "In the early morning of December 10th, Śrīla Prabhupāda called in Mahāmsa Swami, along with Hamsadūta Swami and Harikeśa Mahārāja, who had arrived the night before from Germany. The evening before, the devotees had arranged a pāṇḍal program and prasādam distribution, but the program was lethargic and the food sub-standard. Śrīla Prabhupāda was visibly displeased and stressed to his leaders the importance of proper organization, without which everything was doomed to failure.

"Tomorrow I want to see at least five hundred men,' he told them. 'I came here to see that, not to sit down in a room peacefully. Give them nice palatable foodstuff. Make very, very nice prasādam. Whatever money is required, I shall pay. Simply theory will not help. Make such prasādam that people will be mad after it. I made this movement successful simply by the Sunday love feast. They did not come to hear Hare Kṛṣṇa. They came for the love feast. From

the very beginning, when I was at 26 Second Avenue, every Sunday I was giving nice foodstuff, at least for two hundred men. Daily more than fifteen, twenty came. I was cooking myself. That is the beginning of my movement.'

"When Mahāmsa Swami, feeling responsible for last night's disaster, admitted that the prasādam had not been nice, Prabhupāda interrupted him: 'Not nice? It is not eatable even by the dogs! But you are less than the dogs if you prepare such a thing. I was surprised. You allowed a sweeper to cook. I was surprised. We have distribution of prasādam, not dog's food! Palatable foodstuff means, even if someone has no appetite, he'll eat. That is food. Not that even if someone has got appetite, he'll forget. That is not food. Rādhikāra pakka anna vividha byanjana/parama ānande kṛṣṇa koreṇa bhojana. Rādhikā, with Her friends, they are cooking, and they cook so nicely that—parama ānande kṛṣṇa koreṇa bhojana—with great pleasure Kṛṣṇa is eating. And that we have to distribute. Not dog's food.'

"Changing the subject, Śrīla Prabhupāda began to speak to Harikeśa Swami about Germany. Harikeśa

Swami explained that, according to the German judicial system, the court case required some fourteen lawyers, one for each defendant, and he presented his plan for defeating the prosecution and recovering the impounded money. Although public opinion was still decidedly unfavorable, he was confident that we would come out all right in the end.

"Harikeśa Swami's idea was to attempt to stop all the bad press by sending men to distribute leaflets in any country where there is a German embassy. The leaflet would make comparisons between the persecution of the Jews and ourselves, and people would be asked to protest to the German ambassador of their country. In this way, he hoped to raise some political reaction as well. When the Allies gave back the country to the Germans, they had a clause written into the German constitution that guarantees freedom from religious persecution, so Harikeśa Mahārāja intended to call on that also. Śrīla Prabhupāda was visibly pleased with his enthusiasm.

"After the morning walk, we returned to the temple room to celebrate Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disappearance. Prabhupāda gave a wonderful talk about the first four verses of his own Vyāsa—pūjā

offering from 1936: 'Adore, adore ye all... ' As he spoke, he explained that the whole process of spiritual life and being saved from a material life of repeated birth and death depended on pleasing the guru.

"To illustrate his point, he told us how he had sent Harikeśa Swami away from him to preach in eastern Europe. He wanted that preaching to be done, and he saw that Harikeśa was the right man. And his disciple immediately went, though at the time he thought he was being punished. 'However, it was not punishment,' Śrīla Prabhupāda said, 'I wanted that program, and now we can see a glimmer of success. So this is required to give up our self-interest for the pleasure of the spiritual master.'

"The night before, Hamsadūta had come to see Prabhupāda, and he'd suggested that Harikeśa Mahārāja be made GBC for Germany. He really didn't care to go back there anymore, and at the same time he was actually impressed with Harikeśa Swami. A year before, we had spent one month together on Prabhupāda's personal party, and during that period Hamsadūta had gained great respect for Harikeśa's intelligence and his dedication to serving Śrīla Prabhupāda. So he made a strong recommendation,

and Prabhupāda immediately accepted it."

Harikeśa Swami: "During the morning walk, Prabhupāda asked questions about Germany. All of a sudden, he said, 'Now you should be GBC for East Europe.' I was completely flabbergasted. Then Hamsadūta added, 'And for Germany.' Prabhupāda nodded and said, 'Yes, and Germany also. And BBT trustee.' I was stunned. I couldn't believe all this was happening.

"After the lecture I went to his room and said, 'I can't understand all this, but by your mercy something is happening. So I will try my best to do the service as you like.' Then I added, 'And I promise not to spend any money.' But Prabhupāda corrected me: 'No, spend. But do not waste.'

"When I returned to Germany, I went to see Jayatīrtha. I told him: 'I'm really sorry, I had nothing to do with this. It just happened to me. But here is a letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda to you and Bhagavān.'

I am very satisfied with the work Harikesa Swami is doing there in Germany and Eastern Europe, therefore in order to encourage him and give him facility to rectify the situation in Germany, I have appointed him as acting GBC/BBT until the Mayapur

meeting. You GBC men should please help him in his efforts to win the case there as this case will decide the future of our movement there in Europe.

"After reading the letter, Jayatīrtha stammered, 'But ... but ... this is fantastic! I don't want to be GBC for Germany. This is very nice.' So the next day, he left for London."

"I was mainly concerned with two things: the court case and saṅkīrtana. I was overwhelmed by the case. We had a copy of the official accusation, and I spent a lot of time with lawyers, coming up with a strategy. But it turned out that we didn't have to appear in court until a year later.

"Book distribution had been increasing and increasing, mainly be the inspiration of Maṇidhara and Rohinī-sūta. A few weeks earlier, Jayatīrtha had informed Śrīla Prabhupāda about their feats, and Prabhupāda sent them an encouraging letter:

I have received a letter from Jayatirtha saying that you have distributed in one week 522 and 521 big books respectively. This is very wonderful. I thank you so much. Ye yatha mam prapadyante tams tathaiva bhajamy aham.

Krishna becomes more and more pleased by seeing the increment of book distribution. Devotional service is absolute, but Krishna is especially pleased to see someone preaching His glories.

"In the following months, book distribution increased dramatically. By the time of the Mayapur festival in spring 1977, Germany was number one in the world. We were at the top for BBT remittances and at the top for books distributed. Naturally, Prabhupāda was very pleased, and he said, 'Everybody was thinking that Germany is finished, but Kṛṣṇa said, "No! Let it increase!"'

"After the Mayapur festival, book distribution just went through the roof. Pṛthu became one of the best saṅkīrtana leaders we ever had. He inspired everyone. The devotees went berserk under his leadership. We wiped out the whole world. There was nobody even coming close."

Chapter 20

A Flood of Books for Prabhupāda's Pleasure

A great task lay ahead: reviving book production. For more than two years, no new titles had been published. Although under Jayatīrtha, arrangements were made to improve the appearance and quality of the books, the plans for new books never fructified.

Vedavyāsa Dāsa: "As soon as I became involved in temple management, my translation work ground to a halt. Anyway, I was not inspired to continue because we had enough material to publish more than a dozen books. So there seemed to be no rush. But now, with the court case only a year away and Prabhupāda's health deteriorating, printing as many new books as possible became a top priority.

"I informed Harikeśa Mahārāja about our attempt to work in Los Angeles. Working in Germany was impractical. We had no production facilities, and depending on outsiders, as we had done before, was

cumbersome. Nobody had the special fonts to meet our needs, and the Sanskrit diacritics had to be put in by hand with a ruler. To set up our own operation would take time, and time was short. So we contacted the BBT in Los Angeles and learned that the fonts we'd ordered were ready.

"In the beginning of 1977, Harernāmānanda Dāsa, Taponidhi Dāsa, Śilpakāriṇī Dāsī, Revatī Dāsī, and I went to Los Angeles. We were determined to focus on producing as many titles as possible.

"Revatī transcribed, Śilpakāriṇī and Taponidhi took turns working shifts on the Redactron composing machine, Harernāmānanda translated the general index and alphabetized it, and I coordinated everything while also learning layout from Yamarāja Dāsa and designing the covers in consultation with Navadvīpa Dāsa and devotees in the art department.

"The devotees at the American BBT were going out of their way to help us, except for Rādhāvallabha Dāsa, the production manager. He wasn't happy to have us intrude on his domain and upset the routine. And we mostly depended on him to authorize someone's helping us. When Harikeśa Swami made a short visit to L.A. in April, I explained the situation

to him, and he informed Śrīla Prabhupāda. Soon afterward Rādhāvallabha received a letter:

As you probably know, our society is facing a very serious court case in Germany. It is understood that if we have difficulty in this court case, we may not get further chance to print our German books. Whatever German books you have lying with you ready for printing should be immediately printed. This work should be given priority as our society's well-being there depends upon it.

"From that point on, it was as if the floodgates opened. Rādhāvallabha gave us all facilities, and thus we managed to send a set of films to Germany every three or four weeks. As soon as the first new title came off the press at the end of June—the German edition of *The Nectar of Devotion*—we sent a copy to Śrīla Prabhupāda in Vṛndāvana. A few weeks later, we received a letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda's secretary, Tamal Krishna Mahārāja."

I have been instructed by His Divine Grace

Śrīla Prabhupāda to reply your letter dated July 14, 1977, sent along with the German translation of *The Nectar of Devotion*.

When His Divine Grace was handed *Der Nektar der Hingabe*, he immediately held it to his head and offered obeisances. Then Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus-eyes moved over the cover and throughout the book just like a bee attracted to honey.

After looking through the book, Śrīla Prabhupāda declared, "This is a very important translation and it is very nicely made. I am very, very glad to see this. People will immediately purchase it. Such a nice presentation. It is more than first-class. It is undoubtedly better than the English publications. The pictures in the middle are more attractive than putting them at front.

"Jaya Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati—it is his blessings. Oh, he was so anxious to print books. It is his life and soul. He would say, 'I have desire to print some books. I wish to sell the marble. If you get some money, use it to print books.'

"Everything is very nicely done. My heartfelt thanks to all the devotees of German BBT. And

just see, they have given such a nice picture of me, just like a submissive Vaisnava."

To please the Supreme Lord is certainly the perfection of life, but higher than that is to please the Supreme Lord's pure devotee. This you have all done by this first, most important translation of *The Nectar of Devotion*. My obeisances at all of your feet for such outstanding work. Hoping this meets you all well, floating in the ocean of transcendental book printing and distribution.

As soon as Harikeśa Mahārāja began acting as the GBC and BBT trustee for Northern and Eastern Europe, he organized the translation of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books into the major East European languages. This fulfilled a desire Śrīla Prabhupāda had expressed to Hamsadūta as early as 1973.

During the Mayapur festival in February 1977, Harikeśa Swami gave Prabhupāda a detailed zonal report, focused mainly on book production and book distribution. Books were the basis, and if the basis was sound, everything else would come automatically in due course of time.

Harikeśa Swami informed Śrīla Prabhupāda that he had just printed ten thousand books in Hungarian: *The Perfection of Yoga* and *Beyond Birth and Death* in one volume. Recently, the Russian edition of *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, combined with Prabhupāda's talk with Professor Kotovsky, had come off the press. The Polish *Easy Journey* was at the printer, and Śrī *Īsopaniṣad* was being translated into Yugoslavian.

Prabhupāda was all smiles. "If there is a scarcity of money, you ask me," he told Harikeśa Mahārāja. "I shall pay you. You can repay me later. For printing, there should not be any delay for money. Whatever money you require, I shall arrange."

Harikeśa Mahārāja assured him that there was actually no scarcity and added modestly, "By just always printing more books, I'm trying to follow your principle of not keeping a bank account."

Prabhupāda laughed and said, "Yes, yes. That is very nice. I simply ask them, 'Print books.' Whatever money I have in the bank, let me spend.' I am always asking. Instead of keeping in the bank, keep books in stock. That principle let us follow. As soon as there is money, convert it into books."

When Harikeśa Swami mentioned the court case

scheduled for November, Śrīla Prabhupāda told him, "In the meantime, you overflow with books."

Harikeśa laughed in agreement and said, "Yes, an amazing thing is happening now when we distribute books. It used to be that people would say, 'Oh, this is Hare Kṛṣṇa? I want nothing to do with it.' Now they say, 'Hare Kṛṣṇa? Hm. Let me see what is in this book.'"

Prabhupāda smiled and said, "If there is substance, they will take it. They're intelligent persons. Yes. Simply by propaganda, you cannot fool them. I know the German nation. They're intelligent."

Harikeśa Swami then told Prabhupāda about an amazing experience the devotees were having in Austria. Until recently, whenever they attempted to distribute books, they were arrested, fined, and asked to leave the country. But now Cakravartī and his wife were going to the bookstores, and the response was overwhelming. A week before, they'd sold 1,200 DM worth of books in only six hours.

"It is all Kṛṣṇa's grace," Śrīla Prabhupāda said. "Let us try our best sincerely, and Kṛṣṇa will help us: teṣāṁ satata-yuktānāṁ bhajatāṁ prīti-pūrvakam. Otherwise, how is it happening? In foreign

countries—a system of philosophy which is foreign to them—how are they purchasing? In India, if they purchase one Bhāgavatam, it has got meaning. But in Germany, purchasing Bhāgavatam, it is only Kṛṣṇa's grace."

Prabhupāda had expressed his desire to award a certificate each year at Mayapur to those devotees who had excelled in a specific category of devotional service during the year. When Brahmānanda Swami presented Prabhupāda a draft of the certificate's text, Harikeśa Swami remarked, "Rohiṇī-sūta Prabhu, who's probably going to win in the category of book distribution, never wants to come to this festival, because he never wants to stop distributing your books—not even for a day."

Prabhupāda looked pleasantly surprised and said, "Oh, then his certificate should be sent at least. It should be so attractive that he will want to keep it. The devotees should be encouraged. Utsāhā, enthusiasm, is the first item in bhakti. This boy did not come here, because he is so utsāhā. So he should be encouraged.

"The whole basis of the devotional service is utsāhā. Just like unless there was utsāhā, how could a man of seventy years old, without any hope, go from

Vṛndāvana to such a distant place as New York? The only platform was utsāhā. So, utsāhā is so important. Therefore, the devotees should be encouraged."

* * *

Soon after the German BBT devotees departed for Los Angeles, Harikeśa Swami began making plans to bring them back as soon as possible. He wanted to set up a multilingual book production unit at Schloß Rettershof. He was working on producing books not only in German, but also in Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Serbo-Croatian, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Russian, and Arabic. The most practical arrangement was to get equipment and train a dedicated crew to handle the different languages efficiently.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda received Harikeśa Swami's BBT report, with a detailed description of the progress being made translating, producing, printing, and distributing his books, he felt as though a long-cherished dream were coming true. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja informed Harikeśa Swami about Prabhupāda's animated response:

His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada has received

your ecstatic BBT trustee report dated July 13th, 1977, and has instructed me to reply to you.

I could not get very far, only the first two paragraphs, before Srila Prabhupada stopped me by saying, "All the blessings of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Maharaja upon you. You are the most important grandson of Bhaktisiddhanta. Go on doing like this."

When His Divine Grace began to hear the huge quantity of books which you are in the midst of printing, covering thirteen languages, he said, "This is tremendous. Do it very nicely. And scholarly. That will attract more attention. Now the preaching in Germany will be complete. When the court case comes up, present all of these books and say to the judge: "First read all these books and then present your judgment."

Srila Prabhupada wanted to know which Gita is being translated into all of the East European languages, the abridged or the detailed one?

His Divine Grace completely agreed with you that the printing is super first-class in Germany. Bending the book *Der Nektar der Hingabe* backwards, Srila Prabhupada said, "Yes, it is a

fact. This is the special advantage of this binding, it is so nice. Dai Nippon and America cannot do this."

Prabhupāda was pleased to know that you were soon moving the German BBT back to Germany to handle thirteen different languages. He said, "Very good. And the devotees are very enthusiastic. They are first-class devotees in Germany. So sincere.

"The German nation is wonderful. I have seen it. I have got very much appreciation for the German ability. In my business days, the German chemical firms were all first-class. All of the best drugs in the medical market came from Germany.

"And now they are excelling in book distribution. Just see this financial report. There is no scarcity of money."

His Divine Grace concluded his ecstatic appreciation of your efforts by saying, "He is surpassing all BBTs. I want to go to Germany immediately, but I am physically unfit. I like that place, the Schloss. It is a very nice place. Thank you very much.

Harikeśa Swami: "The summer of 1977 was probably one of the busiest periods of my life. I moved constantly from one thing to the next: going to East Europe, working on the court case, giving classes, holding programs, dealing with the printer, and getting the saṅkīrtana together. I spent every weekend in the Schloss with the saṅkīrtana devotees and reorganized the groups. There were so many conflicts between individuals that most of them couldn't stay together for more than a week. But the books were going out like hot cakes."

* * *

In late August, Śrīla Prabhupāda left Vṛndāvana for his final preaching tour. He wanted to be with his disciples in the West, despite severe illness. As soon as he arrived in England, the news spread like wildfire, and devotees from all over Europe rushed to Bhaktivedanta Manor to be with their spiritual master.

Gaṅgādhara Dāsa: "Somehow I was fortunate enough probably thanks to my physical stature, to be selected as one of the men to carry Śrīla Prabhupāda's palanquin from his quarters to the temple room. Prabhupāda

looked frail. He had put himself under our care, and we were responsible for his well-being. While carrying Prabhupāda down the stairs, it was so intense that I constantly prayed to Kṛṣṇa to prevent any mishap.

"Every morning we put the palanquin down before the altar, so he could see Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gokulānanda. As the sun rays shown through the stained-glass roof and bathed the altar in multicolored light, Śrīla Prabhupāda sat there in complete silence, his eyes fixed on the beautiful forms of the Deities.

"Although the temple room was packed with devotees, the only sound to be heard was the chirping of birds outside. Prabhupāda's presence created a spiritual mood that affected all of us and imbued us with similar feelings of devotion. It was Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy that he allowed us to witness him at such intimate moments and have a glimpse of what it is like to be fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa: "Śrīla Prabhupāda wore dark glasses to protect his eyes from glaring light, and his body was shockingly emaciated. Upon seeing his physical condition, I thought, 'He is leaving us.' It was

only out of his infinite kindness and love that Śrīla Prabhupāda sacrificed all comfort to come and see his disciples and followers once more, to give us his last darṣana and shower his blessings on us before departing.

"After being brought before the Deities and imbibing Their presence with intent looks, Prabhupāda was carried to the opposite end of the room. There he remained on the palanquin chair to receive guru-pūjā. While the kīrtana went on, Prabhupāda looked around the room, very slightly nodding his head to the rhythm, tears gliding down his cheeks.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda's mood now was entirely different from what it was before. He no longer acted as the fighting warrior, teaching and training his foot-soldiers by being stern and corrective. Rather, he allowed waves of ecstasy to overflow and drown everyone in his presence.

"Now there seemed to be no need for words. Śrīla Prabhupāda had already given us complete instructions. Now he would simply secure those instructions in our hearts with his pure, uncritical love for us as Kṛṣṇa's parts and parcels. Prabhupāda gave us the feeling that he was already situated in

Goloka Vṛndāvana. And seeing our potential ability to gain that same perfection, he was overlooking our countless faults and inviting us to join him soon in the spiritual world. Those days were filled with the pain of knowing that Śrīla Prabhupāda was leaving us even though we still needed him as much as ever."

Maṇidhara Dāsa: "When I arrived at Bhaktivedanta Manor, what struck me was the absolute silence. I knew that something was different from the usual visits of Śrīla Prabhupāda. When Harikeśa Mahārāja saw me, he immediately took me to Prabhupāda's room.

"After we entered and offered obeisances, Harikeśa Swami said: 'This is Maṇidhara, one of the best book distributors in Germany.' But Prabhupāda didn't react. He sat in a chair, his hands folded, absorbed in deep thought. When I saw him, I knew he was already far beyond this world.

"Tamal Krishna Mahārāja, his secretary, brought in the mail. There was a large envelope from Los Angeles that contained photos of the recent Ratha-yātrā festival. As Prabhupāda looked at the pictures, he said, 'I always wanted to have a cart like this.'

"The package also contained the latest BBT publication, a softbound Spanish Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. As soon as Śrīla Prabhupāda saw the book, his eyes lit up. He took the book on his lap and looked around the room with deep satisfaction. It reminded me of Nanda Mahārāja proudly holding Kṛṣṇa on his lap.

"The next day, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked to see all the German devotees. When we went to his room, we all offered daṇḍavats, and the mood was a bit like, 'Here we are, Prabhupāda, the elite of all the saṅkīrtana devotees in the world!' Then Prabhupāda asked us, 'What is the most important philosophical understanding?' We didn't expect that. We had expected him to ask about the book distribution results or to hear saṅkīrtana stories."

Pṛthu Dāsa: "After a few moments of uncomfortable silence, Hāraka and I said: yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa. Prabhupāda asked us, 'What does it mean, 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa?' I ventured, 'Deśa' means 'land,' so it means 'the land of Kṛṣṇa.' Prabhupāda corrected me, 'No, it means instruction. It is the instruction of Kṛṣṇa. And what is that instruction?' Again, Hāraka and I replied as if we shared one

mouth: sarva dharmān paritjaya.' 'Yes,' Prabhupāda said, 'that is our business.' "

Gaṅgādhara Dāsa: "Śrīla Prabhupāda acknowledged the answer to his original question as all right, but it wasn't really what he wanted to hear. When he saw after a while that no one had a clue, he said: 'Ahaṁ brahmāsmi. We should understand that we are not this body. This should be fully realized.' We all sat there dumbfounded. That was all? We had heard that hundreds of times. We expected Prabhupāda to speak about saṅkīrtana, but he simply made this point."

Maṇidhara Dāsa: "Outside Prabhupāda's quarters, we all wondered about what had just happened. In those days, we book distributors didn't spend much time reading or studying the philosophy. Our main concern was to do big. By this little incident, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us a final, important lesson, something he had said repeatedly: 'These books are not only for selling, but also for reading.'"

* * *

Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa: "Ghanaśyāma Prabhu, who later became Bhaktitīrtha Swami, was invited to Prabhupāda's room to give a report on the BBT Library Party. As his assistant, I was allowed to

accompany him. Ghanaśyāma had already been recognized and appreciated by Śrīla Prabhupāda for his outstanding success in placing standing orders of Prabhupāda's books in American libraries. Now Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to hear how his books were selling in Europe, and particularly East Europe, where we had just come from.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda had his dark glasses off. He sat in a chair, and Upendra, his servant, gently massaged his legs. Ghanaśyāma spoke about the social conditions in East Germany—people could be seen standing in long lines to get the basic necessities of life. When Śrīla Prabhupāda heard this, he became overwhelmed by compassion. Tears came to his eyes. He said that because of the officially atheistic position of the government, material nature would withhold the necessities more and more. 'They will not get even milk, butter, and sugar,' Śrīla Prabhupāda told us sadly. I was moved by his deep concern not only for the spiritual welfare of the conditioned souls but their material well-being as well."

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Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Dāsa: "One morning, Śrīla Prabhupāda went to London to have darṣana of Śrī Śrī

Rādhā-Londonīśvara. This would be a special event to witness, because many devotees felt that these Deities were Śrīla Prabhupāda's favorites and he would probably be seeing Them for the last time.

"So we piled into cars and went ahead of Prabhupāda, to be at the Bury Place temple when he arrived. He was brought before Their Lordships on his palanquin. He sat there silently. After a few moments, he took off his dark glasses. Streams of tears were flowing from his eyes.

"Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Londonīśvara looked particularly pleased to see Their pure devotee. They were smiling at him and revealing increased effulgence and beauty. It was only a few silent minutes that Śrīla Prabhupāda sat there, while a few of us stood toward the back of the room and witnessed a transcendental exchange we could not begin to fathom."

* * *

Harikeśa Swami: "The Yugoslavian Īsopaniṣad had been translated by a theosophist in Zagreb. It was finally finished at the end of September. So I had Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra sit down in front of the guy with the English edition, and he translated his Yugoslavian version back into English. Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra listened to it

all and corrected the whole book so that it would be a proper presentation of the philosophy.

"We had only one week to get this book out in time to take it to India along with all the German books. We drove the manuscript and the translator directly from Zagreb to the Schloss, and then I immediately took it to Mrs. Becker, a lady in Frankfurt with an IBM composing machine who used to typeset our pocket books.

"I told her, 'I don't care what it costs, I don't care what you have to do, you have to finish this book and do nothing else, because I have to give it to Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is going to leave his body.' So she started to type, and in a matter of days, I had the typeset material.

"Next came the layout. I stayed up all night, for almost twenty-four hours, and then, in a completely groggy state, took the waxing machine and some razor blades and went with the translator to Mrs. Becker.

"The translator read the book and told me the corrections, and I had her typeset them. Then I waxed them and put them in. By ten o'clock the next morning we were finally finished. So I gave all the material to Gaura-kiśora, and he drove off like a

madman and gave it to the printer in Bielefeld.

"Earlier, I had met with their top managers, and I'd told them, 'The author of all these books that you print for ISKCON is about to pass away. I want to bring him this book before he leaves his body. Therefore, you have to print it in one day. I am going to give you the layout at two o'clock in the afternoon, and by four-thirty in the morning, I want that book.'

"They agreed. And they did it. They used a huge machine that printed 128 pages at once, 64 on each side. At five o'clock in the morning, they gave Gaura-kiśora two handbound copies, and he drove them back to the Schloss just as I was about to finish packing my bags.

"The German Second Canto was also ready, except for the covers. I had only proofs of the jackets, which I cut to size on our own cutter and put on the books. I also made a dummy of the First Part of the Third Canto, because it wasn't printed yet. Then I took all these books and left for India. It was perfect timing. Everything worked out fine."

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Bhakti-cāru Swami: "During his final days, Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed in his living room. His bedroom

was actually further inside the house, but because Prabhupāda was sick and that room was colder and had less light, he stayed in the front room. He didn't go out anymore, because he was very, very weak. He was bedridden all the time and hardly eating anything. Once in a while, I would request him to take some juice. That's about all he was taking, a little fruit juice, milk diluted with water, or some lemonade with melted rock candy.

"It was early October when Harikeśa Swami arrived in Vṛndāvana. He brought thirteen or fourteen books to give to Śrīla Prabhupāda, and in those days that was really a lot. Prabhupāda's English books were coming out one at a time, and everybody would get all excited whenever a new book came off the press. Prabhupāda himself would immediately open the book and appreciate everything about it—the paintings, the binding, the paper—and for days he would show the new volume to guests.

"When Harikeśa Swami entered Śrīla Prabhupāda's room, Prabhupāda was propped up a little with some pillows. He could not sit up. Actually, he could not even turn from one side to the other without assistance.

"Harikeśa Mahārāja began to show him the books. Initially he showed him the paintings and explained something about each book, but eventually, because there were so many, he just presented one after another, saying what title it was and in which language. Prabhupāda was so pleased.

"He turned to us and said, 'He was rotting here, typewriting. I said, "You go." He thought that I was degrading him. No.' He looked at Harikeśa Mahārāja and said, 'Now you understand?' 'Yes, I understand, Prabhupāda,' Harikeśa said in a choked voice.

"Prabhupāda stated that his own spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and all the previous ācāryas would be so pleased with Harikeśa Swami, and when Prabhupāda spoke on that note, Harikeśa Mahārāja just began to cry. But Prabhupāda kept on speaking, and as Prabhupāda spoke, Harikeśa cried even more.

"It was such a heart-rending sight. Prabhupāda placed his hand on Harikeśa Swami's head and affectionately rubbed his head as Harikeśa Mahārāja sobbed. This moving scene is very vivid in my mind, because at that time I recognized how dear Harikeśa Swami was to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda is not only a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, but he is a very intimate associate of Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. And he can give Kṛṣṇa. When I saw the wonderful loving exchange between Śrīla Prabhupāda and Harikeśa Mahārāja, I could understand that all we have to do is just serve Prabhupāda with all sincerity. And when we do that, we will surely advance, and Kṛṣṇa will use us to do wonderful things."

Om tat sat