

# OCEAN OF NECTAR

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## Contents:

1. How I came to Krishna Consciousness;
  2. Srila Prabhupada Appreciation; and
  3. Guru Maharaja's Instructions.
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### 1. How I came to Krishna Consciousness

Hare Krishna. I am Bhakti Charu Swami, one of the sanyasis and GBC members of ISKCON, International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Today I have been asked to speak on how I came to Krishna Consciousness. I was in Europe, Germany supposedly studying and the exposure to the West did me a lot of good and broadened my perspective. I made many friends there and many of my friends especially the Americans had a gross misconception that India was a very poor country and that used to hurt my pride. Although when I was in India I used to think that West was best but after going to the West I started to develop some attachments, appreciation and love for my motherland. When people would say things like, "India is so backward and people starve to death." I used to protest quite strongly. I then began to realize that I am trying to uphold the glories of my country but how little I knew about my motherland and that actually made me read books about India. As I started to read those books I started to develop a deep appreciation for Indian culture and philosophy which eventually led to India's spiritualism, India profound spiritual wisdom and that let me to decide to come back to India.

I began to see the futility of material existence and the materialistic way of life and the need for spiritual pursuit and so I decided to come back to India mainly to find a Guru because I decided to take to spiritual life. I wanted to just come back to India and go to the Himalayas and practice spiritual culture which would lead to liberation. Although I was quite fixed on that objective I was also quite well aware that in order to do that I needed a Guru who would guide me and take me by the hand and lead me onto that path. In this way I came back to India and thought as soon as I come back I would I would find a Guru and he would lead me to my spiritual life and with that objective I landed in Delhi and went straight to Hrishikesh and of course I stopped in Haridwar for a few days and then went to Hrishikesh. Then I began to become disappointed because I

saw how shallow those so called sadhus or spiritualists were with their spiritual understanding. Although I did not know what to expect out of them but at least one thing I became quite aware of that this is not what I wanted. Most of them were just smoking ganja and having a free time sitting on the bank of Ganges just smoking and wasting their time. I also went to some of the ashrams and also met other sadhus but it made me feel all their pursuits were materialistic. They were not really leading to any spiritual objective. Their goal was not really set and they themselves did not know what they wanted. For example, when it came to yoga practice I went to some of the yoga ashrams and when I started to speak to them, I even spent some time staying with them.

My understanding of the objective of yoga is that yoga has different objectives but I was seeing they were stuck at very basic pranayama. The objective pranayama of holding one's breath for hours together maybe a long, long time. The purpose of pranayama what I understood already was to free the mind from the influence of the objects of the mind. The material world around us is dragging our consciousness externally and in order to project our consciousness internally there is a need to stop the mind from taking the consciousness from the external reality. I didn't see that pursuit in their yoga practices and what to speak of dhyana and Samadhi? This disappointed me because by reading books already had some understanding which I found that they were not aware of or they were not trying to achieve and that kind of disappointed me.

Anyway, I travelled around that area for quite some time and I was planning to go to Badrinath but I could not go as winter was starting and the road was blocked and Badrinath came down to Yoshinath. I spent some time in Yoshinath and met some interesting people and then I also stayed at different ashrams like Anandamayi's ashram. At one point I was quite decided sort of to join there because I found some nice people and that's what attracted me.

Eventually I gave up my search and it was around that time I came back to Calcutta at my father's place. Quite disillusioned about my spiritual life and quite unqualified to pursue a materialistic way of life when I was in a dilemma, complete confusion and disappointment I got a book. It was by His Divine Grace A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The book was *The Nectar of Devotion*, an English translation of Rupa Goswami's *Bhaktirasamritasindhu*. Srila Prabhupada translated that into English. When I started to read that then everything became so clear, everything became crystal clear. Practically from the first page I had two amazing realizations because they came with such profound clarity. Those two things was that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, God is a person. Prior to that I did not have a clear understanding of God. I was pursuing an impersonalistic spiritual search that ultimately it is Brahman. The goal of life is to merge into Brahman and by doing that one becomes free from the material bondage and becomes elevated to the spiritual platform. Prabhupada made it so clear in just a few words that God is a person and that person is Krishna. From my childhood I was attracted to Krishna but nobody ever told me that Krishna is God. I did not have any understanding of God so there was no consideration that Krishna was God but Srila

Prabhupada made this point so clear that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. God is a person, He is the Supreme person, Supreme creator, Supreme maintainer and He is taking care of all of us. So He is a person, an intelligent being and He is an individual with an inconceivable ability and that is how He could do things like create something just by His wish. Just like we are familiar with the concept like God said let there be light and there was light. Now that Supreme Personality of Godhead He just says let there be and it is there!

Gradually, I got to know that He looked at the material nature and the entire creation became manifest. He was lying in the causal ocean and from His breathing in that causal ocean, the bubbles that generated, these bubbles, each single bubble is a universe. Such inconceivable informations Prabhupada provided.

Then I began to realize that liberation is not just merging into a light and being out of this world of suffering. The liberation is meant to lead us to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and enable us to develop a relationship with Him. Due to that relationship we become elevated beyond this material nature and enter into the spiritual reality. All these informations came with such profound clarity that I began to realize this is what I was looking for. The next night I actually had a dream and I dreamt of Srila Prabhupada, just the sight of Srila Prabhupada. I saw him in an amazing way. I saw him sitting on a throne and there was a brilliant light coming out of his body and just that sight made me realize that finally I found my spiritual master.

Also, I was very fortunate when I met Srila Prabhupada, he allowed me to stay with him. He gave me a service which actually enabled me to be close to him. At our first meeting Srila Prabhupada gave me the service of translating his books in Bengali and at that time Srila Prabhupada had about 10 000 followers. To even get close to Srila Prabhupada was difficult what to speak of being with him. Although I came to his lotus feet quite late but I had the good fortune of being with him all the time. Eventually Srila Prabhupada made me secretary of Indian affairs and in this way I had the good fortune of serving him until he left this planet.

When I decided to join ISKCON Srila Prabhupada was in America so I thought that I would wait until Srila Prabhupada returned to India and I would then surrender myself to him. Thinking that I decided to travel to different places of Krishna's and Caitanya Mahaprabhu's pastimes and the first place I went to was Mayapur. Although Mayapur is our world headquarters but those days Mayapur was very small. There was just 50 or 60 devotees all of them westerners. They were young Americans and Europeans and they were very inviting. When I went there they requested me to stay and be with them; at least try it out. I thought as it is I made up my mind to join Srila Prabhupada's movement ISKCON and now that these devotees were requesting me to stay with them and be part of the movement so I said why not. Without telling anything to anybody I just went to the barber, shaved my head, went to the Ganges and threw away my old clothes and put on the devotee dress, dhoti and kurta. At that time I thought that I would give it a try for 2 months and if I don't like it by that time my hair will grow and I can go

back home. Since then these 2 months did not really end. On the other hand the more I am getting involved the more time I am passing the more I am becoming convinced about this wonderful process.

Why is this so convincing? Because this takes us beyond this material nature not only enables us to usher into the spiritual world but it actually takes us to the highest region of the spiritual sky where one gets an opportunity to develop a loving relationship with the Lord like that of a friend, like that between father and children, lover and beloved so that is the highest relationship that one can ever achieve with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Even higher than that developing a loving relationship with the Lord in friendship, parental and conjugal love even higher than that loving relationship is inviting others to come and develop their relationship with the Lord. Make people understand who God is and what is our relationship with Him is like and how we can develop our relationship with Him by educating them in this way. Then we can bring them to a platform where they can practically develop their relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In simple words it's a very high achievement spiritually to develop a loving relationship with the Lord but even higher is to distribute the love to others enabling them to come close to the Lord. Thank you very much. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

## **2. Srila Prabhupada appreciation**



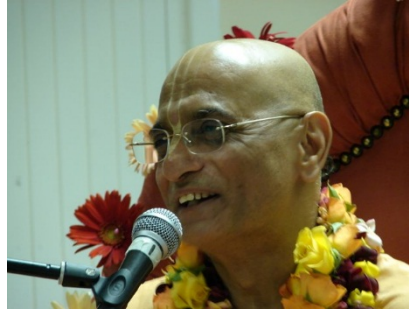
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### **3. Guru Maharaja's Instructions**



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The content of this E-Magazine was based on an Interview with HH Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaja by ISKCON Desiretree on 7 March 2015. (Compilation and editing by Hemavati Radhika dasi)