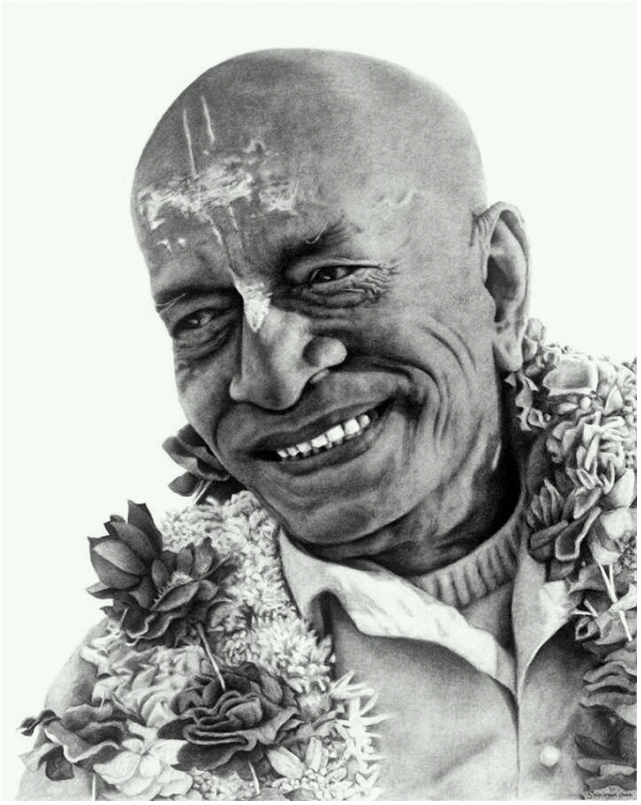

OCEAN OF NECTAR

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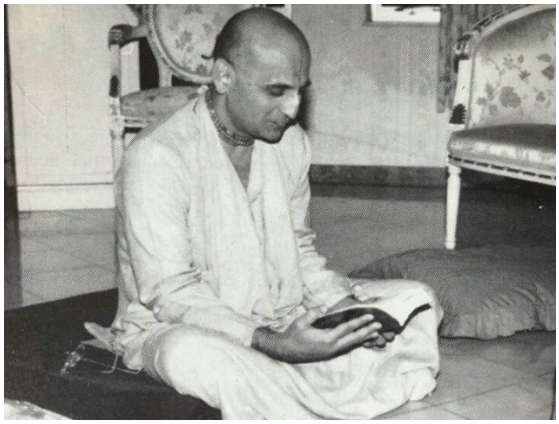

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1. WHAT IS ABHAY CHARAN AND HOW WE DID IT? PART 1

Thank you all very much for coming to our temple. Especially on Sundays we have a special program called Sunday love feast. This was Prabhupada's divine arrangement to distribute love of Godhead, Krishna Prema. When Srila Prabhupada was in America he started this program Sunday love feast. In those days ISKCON didn't even take its shape. Srila Prabhupada went to America and started to preach.

SRILA PRABHUPADA CAME TO NEW YORK CITY

When Srila Prabhupada went to America he first came to Butler, Pennsylvania then Srila Prabhupada came to New York City and there Srila Prabhupada started his preaching mission. It was very difficult for Srila Prabhupada in the beginning because Prabhupada didn't have any following and money. Prabhupada didn't even have a proper place to stay. When he first came to New York he was staying at the apartment of Dr Misra who was a yoga teacher and the Srila Prabhupada moved out and rented a place. Dr Misra actually arranged that but Srila Prabhupada moved out of that place also. Srila Prabhupada started to stay with one young American boy called David Allen. Actually Srila Prabhupada was looking for a place and one of Prabhupada's acquaintances one young American was moving out of New York to San Francisco and he had already given his apartment to David Allen. It was not even an apartment but a studio. Later he found out that Swamiji (that's what Prabhupada was known as at that time) was also looking for a place so he asked David to share the apartment with Swamiji and David agreed. Initially David was a very good boy and responded favorably to Prabhupada's teachings and followed nicely. He was very enthusiastic but then Davis became a victim of Maya and went back to taking drugs and became more and more difficult. Srila Prabhupada had to eventually move out of that place. Actually at the time Srila Prabhupada didn't have anywhere to stay and Prabhupada didn't know where to go. Srila Prabhupada knew some boys who were quite favourable so he called up one of them and that was Michael Grant. One fine morning Michael received a call from Swamiji and Swamiji had explained what had happened. Micheal didn't know what to arrange for Prabhupada. The immediate make shift arrangement was that Prabhupada could stay with one of his friends who was living with his girlfriend and they had cats in their house. Srila Prabhupada stayed with them and tried to adjust himself to that situation.

26 SECOND AVENUE STOREFRONT, PRABHUPADA'S PREACHING CENTER

Then Michael found a place for Srila Prabhupada 26 Second Avenue, a storefront an apartment in the back on the first floor. 26 Second Avenue storefront became Srila Prabhupada's preaching center. Srila Prabhupada started his Bhagavad Gita classes. The young Americans in those days were not interested in Bhagavad Gita but they loved Swamiji's music. Prabhupada used to make music, the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra and they became attracted to this mantra. They used to come and for a long time Prabhupada would sing the maha mantra and then give a lecture on Bhagavad Gita. Most of the lecture used to fly over their heads as they could not understand. For example when Prabhupada mentioned about the battle of Kuruksetra they could not accept it, to them battle was bad, war was bad because they had experience with the Vietnam War. They were being drafted to the Vietnam War so they were proposing peace, love, flower power, counter culture and a positive alternative which eventually all culminated into sex and drugs. Sometimes they would challenge Prabhupada why this war and it's not good and Prabhupada used to explain to them the difference between an ordinary war and a dharma yudha. When we try to establish our authority and fight a battle with our enemies those wars are bad and undesirable but when the Supreme Personality of Godhead arranges a war and we get a chance to side with Him then that war is very wonderful. So the battle of Kuruksetra was something like that a glorious war because it was arranged by Krishna's divine will.

YOU ARE NOT THIS BODY, YOU ARE SPIRIT SOUL

Srila Prabhupada often used to focus just on the point "You are not this body, you are spirit soul." He would go on and on and on, on this topic and sometimes they would wonder why Swamiji was saying the same thing again and again but Prabhupada knew that this was the most important thing to learn. This in fact is the most important thing to consider. We are not this body, we are spirit souls. It is not just a verbal presentation but it is a matter of realization. One

has to understand properly that we are not this body we are spirit souls. Now we are seeing after so many years of involvement in Krishna Consciousness still this is so difficult to understand. Still now we get caught up with the bodily platform. Krishna Consciousness means to transcend the body. We are not this body we are spirit soul so why put so much concern for the body? This is a beautiful body that's an ugly body; this is a healthy body; this is a diseased body; this is a white body; this is a black body; this is a brown body; this is a blue body; this is a green body; this is a yellow body… It's not important! What's important is that we recognize that this body is only an external covering of the soul. Unfortunately, in today's world most of the businesses are based on the body business. Make the body look beautiful; make an old body look young; make a bald head look hairy and people are spending millions of dollars just to beautify the body. What's the point of beautifying the body when the soul is starving?

REAL BEAUTY

On the other hand when you take care of the soul then the body automatically becomes beautiful. Srila Prabhupada was an 80 year old man. Although he was old he was so beautiful and that is the benefit of becoming situated on the spiritual platform. The thing is if you want to look beautiful then become spiritually situated then you will not only look beautiful you will also become beautiful. Beauty is not only skin deep, real beauty is the beauty of the soul. When we love somebody do we care about how they look? Initially looks are important to be attracted materially conditioned in that way but when the real relationship develops you don't really care how that person looks. What's the use of somebody if externally he looks very beautiful skin, bone and flesh is really beautiful but internally his nature is ugly for how long can you tolerate him? When the beauty of the soul develops, actually the soul is most beautiful and the spirit soul's beauty is reflected on the body. There are two types of beauty namely beauty of the subtle body and beauty of the spiritual soul. Someone looks very beautiful we have to understand beauty of the subtle body is due to good karma. Four things are achieved due to good karma or pious activities namely birth in an Aristocratic family; opulence; being learned and being beautiful. Pious activities are carried in the spirit soul which eventually manifests in the external body. The beauty of the spirit soul is the most beautiful thing therefore a pure devotee becomes so attractive. His attraction is not physical his attraction is spiritual. From the material consideration he may not look very beautiful but he becomes very attractive due to the beauty of his spirit soul.

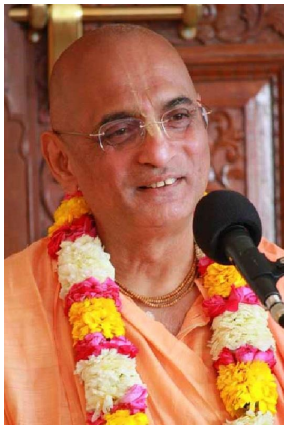
SUNDAY LOVE FEAST

Srila Prabhupada started this evening program with a lot of music just the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra. The young Americans used to be very fond of music. They used to come to Swamiji's pad to make music then Prabhupada used to speak about Bhagavad Gita. Then Prabhupada considered about distributing Prasad so he started to invite them on Sundays. He would cook himself not only cook himself but whatever money Srila Prabhupada collected throughout the week because they used to leave some donations. On Sunday mornings Srila Prabhupada used to go to China Town from the lower east side which was close by. There were many Chinese shops with many vegetables and they were quite cheap even now they are quite cheap. Srila Prabhupada used to go to China town and buy the vegetables and other ingredients and he used to cut the vegetables, cook and offer it to Krishna. In the evening after the music, class and more music they used to have the Prasad. Srila Prabhupada used to call that Sunday love feast. This is how they became attracted to Srila Prabhupada.

2. SRILA PRABHUPADA APPRECIATION

Especially on Sundays we have a special program called Sunday love feast. This was Prabhupada's divine arrangement to distribute love of Godhead, Krishna Prema. The young Americans in those days were not interested in Bhagavad Gita but they loved Swamiji's music. Prabhupada used to make music, the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra and they became attracted to this mantra. Srila Prabhupada was an 80 year old man. Although he was old he was so beautiful. Srila Prabhupada used to go to China town and buy the vegetables and other ingredients and he used to cut the vegetables, cook and offer it to Krishna. In the evening after the music, class and more music they used to have the Prasad. Srila Prabhupada used to call that Sunday love feast. This is how they became attracted to Srila Prabhupada.

3. GURU MAHARAJA'S INSTRUCTIONS



⇓ This in fact is the most important thing to consider. We are not this body, we are spirit souls. It is not just a verbal presentation but it is a matter of realization. One has to understand properly that we are not this body we are spirit; and

⇓ If you want to look beautiful then become spiritually situated then you will not only look beautiful you will also become beautiful. Beauty is not only skin deep, real beauty is the beauty of the soul.

(The content of this E-magazine was based on a lecture given by His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami entitled "What is Abhay Charan and how we did it")
(Compilation & editing by Hemavati Radhika dasi)