

The following an evening darsana, given by His holiness Jayapataka Swami on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1982, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Jayapataka Swami: The people like Mardi Gras. Of course for some, it can be so degraded, but our festivals are not. Why do they have the big parades? They even award prizes for them. Krishna consciousness is so beautiful. We have so many colorful festivities, colorful expressions and art forms. By means of such festivities, even the more materialistic people will appreciate those art forms, if nothing else, on the basis our culture. Then, gradually, because everything in Krishna consciousness is centered around Krishna, they become more and more purified.

Krishna consciousness is a continuous adventure. In our preaching, we go out and meet people. Everything which is connected with Krishna, actually connected, is always an adventure, at every moment. It's always new. One name for Krishna is nava-yauvana, always new. There is always a new form, always new activities, always a new quality He's manifesting.

In the material world they're always looking for something new. Say you're at a grocery store, they always say, "New!". It's like everyone wants to get something new, but after a little while, the novelty wears off. Why doesn't the novelty wear off with Krishna? Once we get in touch with Krishna consciousness, on any level, in reality, Krishna's always new. He's new at every moment.

The gopis, great devotees of Krishna, never became tired of looking at Krishna, in fact, they were cursing the creator, Lord Brahma, for creating eyes that were so defective that they had eyelids that blinked because that blinking would stop them from seeing Krishna, momentarily. For that moment in which they couldn't see Krishna because of their blinking, they were cursing that moment. That's how much appetite they had to see Krishna, so Krishna's qualities are always new. We can go on chanting and chanting and it's always a new taste, always a new experience.

I remember when I first joined Krishna consciousness. At that time, Srila Prabhupada was in Montreal. He didn't have a Visa for America. I was up there during an emergency period where we didn't have sankirtana or other means of collection. Although I had jobs in America and other things, when I went to Canada, I naturally didn't have any connection. We had to, by any means, get money, so we all tried to get jobs. Either by Manpower or independently, we went out to get any kind of job we could.

It so happened that the only job I could find was sweeping the floor in an A & W Coffee Shop from 5:00 until 10:00 at night, the afternoon shift. The devotees asked Srila Prabhupada if that job was alright because they served hamburgers there. He said, "Well, does he have to serve the hamburgers out?" They explained, "All he has to do is clean up after they've eaten." So he said, "Well, from the person that grows the cow and sells it, to the person that ships it, to the person that butchers it, to the person

that cooks it up, and serves it, then the person that eats it, there's karma, but once it's already eaten, then the karma's already gone." (Laughter)

Of course, it was a terrible job. A very menial, hellish kind of a condition, but every morning, I was hearing Prabhupada's class. I'd come back and hear his evening class on the tape. I would see Prabhupada in the morning, give him a rose, sometimes I'd stand guard outside of his room. Then I'd go to this hellish condition at night, but I'd be completely absorbed in serving my spiritual master and chanting Hare Krishna.

I'd be mopping the floor, and chanting Hare Krishna. I'd be smiling, and if somebody'd come in there with a hangover to take a cup of coffee, maybe holding a big wad of money, he would think, "Here's a bum, some guy sweeping the floor. This guy is singing and he's happy." And sometimes people would get angry at me and they'd say "Why you are happy?! Don't you know that you're a bum? You've a lousy job, what do you have to be happy about?" (Laughter)

"I've got money, a job, this and that, I've got a car, but I'm not happy. So, why are you happy?" Then I would try to tell them, and of course, they couldn't relate to it, at all. The owner of the shop became so angry because during coffee break, I'd sit and chant japa.

He asked me, "What are you doing?"

To which I replied, "This is my coffee break."

"No, what are you doing?"

I said, "I'm chanting the names of God."

So, he shouted, "You can't do this in my establishment!" He started yelling and swearing at me. "We don't allow this stuff, here!"

I countered, "Well if the other people drink coffee, that's their intoxication, this is mine. This is my thing."

The guy was such a demon, he couldn't tolerate it. So, it happened that on Janmastami he wouldn't give me a day off, and I couldn't come, so he fired me, then I got a job in a printing press. There were so many other jobs I got, just trying to pay Prabhupada's rent, at that time.

Now, it's nice. We have book distribution, we have so much sankirtan, we don't have to work for these karmis. It's very difficult when you have to work under karmis, but the main point was that I could see so many people, so totally miserable, and they couldn't understand why a person would be happy, no matter what condition he's in. One who's Krishna conscious, just by chanting Hare Krishna, regardless externally of what situation's one in, can actually be always happy, always be transcendently situated. Every day, from that time, up to today has always been a new festival, a new experience, as everything is in the association and service of Krishna.

We go preaching in the villages, or in the cities, wherever it may be, and always meet so many people with different questions, and different amounts of interest. It's amazing how many people. I was flying from Geneva to Zurich and right next to me, a man pulls out a letter from his daughter who happens to be in Nepal. He's a director of the big conglomerate that owns the Piper Airplane Company, a multimillionaire. He was reading this letter from his daughter. I saw that the letterhead was in Sanskrit.

He started talking, and gave me his card, saying "Come by next time you're in Geneva." (Chuckles) I'll stop by and see him. So, like that Krishna always brings one to different people. I don't know how many times I've sat next to people that know about Krishna consciousness. It's amazing just to see how Krishna is always arranging to bring people together. In this way, there's unlimited scope for helping people just by working as Krishna's agent.

People are always looking for something new, but in this material world, that newness is very superficial, yet in spiritual life, that quality of newness is so eternal, and so real because it's in connection with Krishna. At every moment there's expanding service, expanding consciousness, and expanding freshness, if one serves. Of course, one can appreciate this if one gets up to the level of ruci, or having a taste for devotional service. In the beginning, one has to become freed from the contamination of bad habits, of materialistic attachments, which is called anartha-nivrtti.

Anarthas are different contaminations in the heart. These contaminations are cleansed away by chanting, and serving. It's natural that we be attached to Krishna, and to Krishna's devotees, but in material life, we don't have that association. Because we don't have that association in the initial stage, our attachment is spread over so many things.

We're attached mainly to being number 1 in our class, or getting an athletic letter, or so many different things, such as having different kinds of friends and social environments. Family, friendship, love, and different types of attachments which are in the heart present us an immediate offer of happiness, but then subsequently, they always give us misery.

The Buddhists experience this misery, so they say, "Renounce everything. Just achieve nirvana." They go between a bhoga-tyaga, enjoying and renunciation cycle. The Buddhist monks' system is that you can be a Buddhist monk for three days, three weeks, three years, thirty years. When you're a monk you have to follow along the path of renunciation, all those strict things, but then at any moment, you can take off your robe, put on a karmi dress and become a layman, again. So, what they do is sometimes be an ordinary person and after three months they'll become a monk, then they'll become agitated again, and become an ordinary fellow. For them it's not considered blooping, and whatever you do, in tyaga they consider, "Well, that's a little bit better for him." Some of them stick to it, but Krishna consciousness is not like that. Their gurus understand that material life offers happiness, but then ultimately ends in suffering, so then they want to renounce, but then, they don't have any positive spiritual understanding, no spiritual realization. It's just renunciation. "Just, be free from misery.", and that realization they got when their enjoyment became frustrated.

In America, people just become alcoholics or mental cases or something like that. Just like Marilyn Monroe committed suicide, by taking sleeping pills. There's so many people like that. They reach some kind of material prosperity, fame, prestige, but there just frustrated in so many ways that then they don't know where else to go. At least the Buddhist, he would then shave his head, become a monk, or a nun. Other's would just take sleeping pills and kill themselves.

But Krishna consciousness is neither of these. Krishna consciousness means there's a positive alternative. We actually understand our real, spiritual happiness, our spiritual relation with Krishna, and in that, we get positive experience of nitya-mahotsava, a festival every day.

Initially, we have these attachments, but our attachment to Krishna is actually the underlying factor. Our attachment to other things is actually a perverted type of attachment to Krishna. What we're looking for in all these other things is actually Krishna. That's why, whatever we think that a thing is, when we get it, it's never up to our expectation. What we're actually expecting is Krishna. What we're actually wanting is Krishna, but we don't have the words or concepts, or the understanding to know that. We just know that whenever we get the thing that we wanted, it wasn't enough, it wasn't really what we wanted. There's something more, something missing. We go out looking for that. Actually, what we're looking for is Krishna, because Krishna is complete. Krishna is everything. He is the ultimate satisfaction of all of our desires.

Krish-na. The word na comes from ananda. It means the reservoir of all pleasure. Krish means the all-attractive. What we're always being attracted to in different people is actually, just part of Krishna. So, initially, we have all of these superficial attachments and therefore, our consciousness is splayed over so many desires. These are called anarthas. These are unwanted. They agitate our mind and disturb us, so we chant Hare Krishna, serve, surrender to the spiritual master, and these anarthas are cleared away. When they're cleared away, then we become fixed in devotional service, and from the fixed platform, we can develop an actual nectarean taste of devotional service.

Some people may immediately get some taste, even in the beginning stages because Lord Caitanya is all-merciful, but when one gets up to the stage of ruci, or full taste, at that time, the anarthas are cleared away. One no longer has strong attachment to these material distractions, and one is steady in devotional service. The mind is not agitating in so many ways, and one develops a taste, and that taste is natural. It's not that we're imposing, or teaching ourselves something. We already have a taste, we're already desiring Krishna, but we have diverted that in so many ways. The attachment is already there, it's just been misdirected. When we cleanse away the reactions of all the karma, good and bad, automatically, our attachment to Krishna becomes established.

It is already there in the heart. It's just been covered up by so much dirt, like a mirror, covered with dust. When we wipe the dust off, then we can see things, as they are. So therefore, we encourage people to chant Hare Krishna, and especially if one chants, following the regulative principles, then the cleansing process is very fast. If one chants but still breaks regulative principles, it's described as hati-snana, or gaja-snana.

If you've ever seen the elephants, they go in the water and scrub themselves very clean, sometimes the bull elephant will scrub all the cow elephants, and then they'll climb up on the shore, place their trunks in the dust, take a big scoop and they'll throw it all over themselves. They just took a big bath, and after they go out, the first thing they do is throw dust all over themselves. So, that's called like a hati-snana.

We tell that to Indians a lot of times. You come and chant. We do 24 hour sankirtanas, but after it's over sometimes, you'd light up a cigarette, so this is hati-snana. You're purifying your heart. You're chanting, but then you're not concentrating on avoiding these bad habits, so you're taking your bath, and you're throwing the dirt on yourself, so we try and encourage them be a little more austere, so they can get rid of these attachments.

It's like a progression. There are 8 levels. As you're more attached to material life, then you're less attached to Krishna. Automatically, as your Krishna attachment increases, your material attachment decreases. Eventually, when you get up to bhava, you only have one percent attachment to the material world and 99% attachment to Krishna. Then when you finally reach prema, then there's no attachment to the material world, at all. That's considered to be a completely liberated state. Even bhava is a 99% liberated state. This is the basic process.

If we want to engage the people in the festivities, in Krishna consciousness, even if they say, "This is very nice. Oh this is a nice thing." Even if they appreciate like that, immediately they get so much benefit. You find in the Bhagavatam that it says if a person appreciates what someone does, if a person supports approves, he also gets the same result as the person doing it. Like last time we went here for the rathayatra on Bourbon Street, one man in a book store was mentioning to a devotee as we were giving out books, that, "These people are always smiling, the Hare Krishnas." Just that approval, immediately he gets so much sukrti for that. Of course, he'll get the same spiritual benefit, just by approving, but according to his approval, or his involvement, the quantity would be different than a devotee.

If he gives ten dollars, he gives ten cents, or just gives a good word, depending on how much that is for him, of course he'll still get a benefit from that. In this way, people who appreciate Krishna consciousness, they benefit, more and more. Similarly, those people who criticize or try to stop it, then of course, they're pulled down unless they get a special mercy of some devotee, but basically, this is a very simple process.

At the same time, because the philosophy contains everything, so many people can't immediately understand everything. So, if they can just understand that they should chant Hare Krishna, and try to understand the Bhagavad-gita, then those who are more intelligent, more philosophically inclined, more fortunate, by their being Krishna conscious, then that will affect so many other people. Prabhupada said that if one tenth of one percent of the people become Krishna conscious, the whole society will be completely changed.

## Questions and Answers

Question: At what stage does one enter a personal relationship with Krishna?

Jayapataka Swami: Prema. At bhava, there's some exchange, sometimes.

Follow up: When he reaches prema, then he comes to his constitutional position?

Jayapataka Swami: You can't reach prema until you've actually seen Krishna. In bhava you may not see Krishna, but you're absorbed in ecstasy of serving Him, and sometimes Krishna may appear momentarily. When He appears, just momentarily, then at that point prema can come. Prema means you've actually seen Krishna. Sometimes a devotee in bhava, chanting, smells Krishna's bodily aroma, or sometimes Krishna might touch the devotee, and make him mad in ecstasy. Sometimes he's just absorbed in the thought of Krishna.

Devotee: At what point does one begin to follow in the footsteps of a particular resident of Vrndavana?

Jayapataka Swami: Basically, from the bhava stage. That's why people that are still having anarthas, or bad habits, or who are just kanistha-adhikaris, when they immediately try to follow the system of becoming under the shelter of one of these associates, it is so artificial. Until one's attachment for material society, friendship and love is transcended, how can one actually experience his eternal relationship with Krishna? It can start to manifest at the bhava stage, though when one is actually in prema, then it's really revealed and realized.

Devotee: What are the nine forms of material nature, what are their functions in the material world?

Jayapataka Swami: She appears in different places in different forms. It's her personal form, not just as the energy, but a personal form. She was Sati. In the Bhagavatam, it's explained that her father criticized her husband, Lord Siva, so then she felt that her body was contaminated because her father, who gave her the body was an offender. She couldn't convince her father to take back his offensive statements, and she sat in yogic meditation and in an anger, that she had taken birth from such a father who would've been an offender of a pure devotee of Krishna, her husband, she burned herself up in yogic mystic fire and destroyed her body. That's what got Lord Siva so angry that he sent his Virabhadra to the arena and his cohorts killed his father-in-law and made a complete destruction of the whole place.

Then she took birth again as Parvati, the daughter of the Himalayas. Every time she takes birth, she marries Lord Siva again, but then sometimes she leaves her body and then takes birth again, somewhere else. One of her forms is called Kamaksa, and also in the Mahabharata, she directs the daughter of Nakasasura to surrender to Krishna. Also one name is bhakti-pradayini. She can also give devotion to Krishna if someone wants it, but she tests whether someone wants it, and when she tests them, if they fail the test, then she doesn't give it to them.

To some of her devotees, she actually directed them to Krishna, but most of the people worship her in India, just to get a good wife, and to have material opulence. The prayer they make to Durga is dhanam deya, pratista deya, sriyam deya, pujam deya, like that. Deya means give me.

Dhanam, give me money. Dhanam deya. Pratista deya, give me position. Sriyam deya, give me beauty. Pujam deya, give me followers and worship... you know.

It's materialistic. It's worship of the demigods. It says in the Bhagavad-gita, "Those who worship the demigods, who are bewildered by the flowery words of the Vedas, they're attracted to so many material benedictions and are driven by lust." Therefore, devotees don't worship the demigods, independent of Krishna. All they can give is some material benediction. They worship the demigods as devotees. We don't disrespect them. We go to the temple. We bow down to the temple with the right side. Right side is for devotees, left side is for Krishna and straight on is for the guru. This is the system. We worship them with our right side because they're also bowing down to Krishna and we don't ask any material benediction from them. We depend on Krishna. But, here you don't have that problem. There are no demigod temples as there are in India.

We're supposed to respect them as great devotees. One time we were on the boat, preaching up the Ganges, and then, one of the devotees started criticizing as we went by a Kali temple, and just as soon as he said a very offensive statement about mother kali, then out from the clear blue sky, a sudden wind came up and blew the boat right into the water. The huge, forty foot mast went right over into the water. Water went flying into the ship. Devotees flew off into the water. The boat was going down, immediately. The captain had to cut the sail rope, right from the mast, and then the boat went back up. The devotee paid his obeisances.

So, although we don't worship them, we don't also want to get into any criticism. They are devotees, but they have some material desire in most cases, some of them oversee powerful energies and are just doing Krishna's service. She's the material energy. Her job is to keep you in illusion. Those souls who want to forget Krishna, she's the energy that makes one forget Krishna. Otherwise, it's not natural for you to forget Krishna, so Krishna has an energy.

If you want to forget Krishna, then you have to provide an energy to put you in illusion. We want to avoid serving illusion. So, in a sense, we're declaring war on her, but everything's fair in this war. So, sometimes one even prays to her, "You're very powerful, so for me you can give some penalty points."

Devotee: In India, which temple do you consider architecturally to be very sublime? Are there any outstanding temples?

Jayapataka Swami: There are so many nice temples. Jagannatha Puri temple is very nice. I think I like the Jagannatha Puri temple. There are some very nice temples in Vrndavana also, but some of the bigger ones are broken by the Muslims. There's something about the Jagannatha Puri temple. When you're coming up to it, you can see it from about 10 miles away. I would stop to pay my obeisances right there on the side of the road. It has such a presence to it.

Prabhupada told us to build a bigger temple than the Jagannatha Puri temple in Jagannatha Puri, said when we do that, then Jagannatha we leave that temple, and come to our temple. We just have to do kirtana outside the temple, and Jagannatha will come to our temple.

Devotee: Is this the temple that they won't allow the devotees to go in?

Jayapataka Swami: They don't allow the devotees with light skin.

I know black bodied devotees who've gone in there. Some devotees have snuck in, wearing saris and so forth.

Devotee: Bhakti-Tirtha Maharaja, went inside the temple, once.

Jayapataka Swami: That's the last temple in India that doesn't let us in, because there was before a whole political thing that the government tried to force people in there, so they became very defensive about people coming in. During Gandhi's movement, he wanted to have all the street-sweepers go in the temple. So, because of that, they've become so defensive, even though the son of the secretary of the committee for that temple is a bhakta, who wants to be initiated, when I go back to India. He's in the Calcutta temple. Its just because of this whole political thing that they had from before, and because the official saint of that temple is the Sankaracarya of Puri, who is a renegade.

All the other three Sankaracaryas in India also certify Krishna conscious devotees, but this one is a diehard. He doesn't like our movement for some reason. He's a very heavy Mayavadi Sankaracarya, so between the two, there's just enough pressure that no one takes initiative to actually do the red tape, to let us go in the temple. Otherwise, no other temple I can think of they don't let us go in. But, I just send my Indian disciples in and they buy the prasadam when I go there. If they don't let us in by the time we finish our Mayapura temple, we'll build a big temple there, and Jagannatha will come to us.

Well, today they have three thousand pujaris, so if we want to do the puja, we have to have quite a few! Three thousand pujaris. It's a very big complex.

Devotee: That Sankaracarya, if he's a mayavadi, why is he worshipping Lord Jagannatha?

Jayapataka Swami: He doesn't worship Jagannatha. He doesn't live in the temple. He's got a separate asrama, but the brahmanas for the temple are hereditary brahmanas for thousands of years, and when the original, Adi-Sankaracarya preached in India, at one point, he drove out Buddhism from India. He was the topmost preacher for some period of time. At that time, the Sankaracarya in Puri was given some kind of a position as the official sannyasi advisor of the temple, and he has his own separate asrama, so they are very much in tradition there.

For thousands of years, the king of Orissa, Gajapati has always been the president of the mukti-mandapa, or the head of the temple. Although kings have been abolished in India, still, whoever's the hereditary king, even after independence, whenever they have the ceremony, he comes up on his elephant, and gets down with a golden broom. Without him sweeping the road, they won't start the ratha-yatra.

So, they have all these traditions, and all these things. It's not that Sankaracarya worshipped Jagannatha. He worships Radha-Krishna, but he's a complete mayavadi.



Prabhupada told me that these mayavadis they're actually bogus in the sense that impersonal philosophy is so dry. One of them personally told Prabhupada that, "My business is I am a mayavadi sannyasi, so I have to preach mayavadi, but actually, I am very attached to worshipping Radha-Krishna."

It's a business for them. They got into the wrong line, but they got all their followers and so on, and they're too attached to go into another line and risk starting all over again. But, some of them are actually attached to Radha-Krishna. I challenged one, saying, "You're worshipping Radha-Krishna." and he said "No. I'm worshipping myself. I am Radha-Krishna." I couldn't help but call him a few names and then leave.

He was too offensive. That's why you we can't listen to mayavadis. They have all this poison philosophy.

Some of them are sincere mayavadis, and some of them are lazy. Some of them are actually doing it out of hypocrisy. They actually know that vaisnavism is better. I heard before that Maharsi told some of his disciples that they should join Bhaktivedanta Swami if they wanted to learn bhakti-yoga. They kept challenging him, and he couldn't satisfy them, so he said "better go to him." Even though they're mayavadis, they appreciate what we're preaching very much, except for that one Sankaracarya.

They believe everything that we do, up to reincarnation, up to the absolute, just, they don't believe in Krishna's personality as spiritual. They don't understand that. They don't know how to explain Krishna. They don't have any definition for Krishna. Compared to the karmis we have much more in common. When we get to the own philosophical discussion, then we have a lot to discuss, and we have a lot of difference.

So, right now there are so many opposing elements. In India, the Muslims are going and converting the tribal people and the Hindus, outcaste into Muslim, and this and that. There are so many common grounds in fact, that the mayavadis are hoping to use us to preach and spread harinam, because they have all these caste traditions which stop them from preaching to the people. It makes them much more rigid, but in Lord Caitanyas mood, we go to the masses. We go to the people, and spread harinam. So they're requesting us to take up the preaching, because when they do it, people don't believe them because they've been so bigoted for so long. They've supported the hereditary caste system for so long, that now, when they're revolting against that system, when they go out, they think it's just some politically motivated thing. They think, "Why are you coming out now, after you've been supporting this system for so long?" They know it must be some political thing.

But all along, we've been embracing everybody, to take up chanting Hare Krishna. There was a magazine, "Who Will Save Hindusim?". I think published in the World Review.

We don't have much to do with them. They're pretty ineffectual, nowadays. Prabhupada called those people who judge a devotee by what skin he has tannists, shoemakers because they're not seeing the soul. They're seeing the skin. The people make shoes are expert at discerning whether the hide is good,

whether it can be made into a bag or a shoe, so he called them cobblers. They're judging a person by what skin he has. They're not seeing the soul inside.

We just did a big program in Jagannatha Puri, outside the temple, and some of the people from the temple came and lectured. I think that with some time, they'll have a change of heart. Last year we had over a million people, and a 9 kilometer, 6 mile long path, lined with the pamphlets.

Devotee: I've heard it said that if you pull on the rope on the Lord's ratha-cart, you go back to Godhead. Is that true?

Jayapataka Swami: Yes.

Devotee: There is a book some devotees were distributing here, about the places of pilgrimage in Vrndavana and stories about that, produced by Krishna-Balarama Mandir. Do you know about that book and if the stories are bona-fide or not?

Jayapataka Swami: I don't know any stories of Vrndavana. Some of the stories may be in the Puranas, some from the Gosvamis, some are what the local pujaris think. It's not an official BBT publication.

Devotee: It would probably be best to go ahead and stick with Prabhupada's books or something you heard him lecture about.

Jayapataka Swami: Yes. I haven't seen the book. Prabhupada said in his purports sometimes that, "Local pujaris say this." "It is said...". You can't take those stories as being authoritative in terms of complete accuracy unless you know the exact source.

Devotee: Even if Prabhupada says, like: "It is said that this deity, this, this." "At a certain time, it is said that these two birds will come every day and take some prasada."

Jayapataka Swami: One of our devotees went and saw those two birds in South India. He said they're amazing. They fly right in, and eat right out of the pujari's hand. They look around at the people, and they look amazingly intelligent. They look at the people, take a little food, just to respect the prasada, then they fly off. Those are the two demigods that were cursed, come every day, take the prasada? Thousands of people want to see those birds, every day. Then the pujari gives the bird maha-prasada. Actually, everything we need to know is in Srila Prabhupada's books. These are all very interesting, but actually, the Bhagavad-gita and the Srimad-Bhagavatam are what we need to know.

How was sankirtana today?

Female Devotee: It seemed like Krishna was testing me all day.

Jayapataka Swami: Rainy day?

Reply: Yeah. I don't know if that was the way to get Krishna on my mind. (Laughs) It's raining and everything, so I was thinking, "Should I stay here and get this shelter, or what? I didn't have a program, other than to go on the street. Here in the shelter I have no work so I wanted to do some good, therefore, I left and I thought, "I'll do good." Then, suddenly, the rain came! I was so scared, I ran back to the shelter.

Jayapataka Swami: The Bomb shelter? (laughing)

Reply: (laughing) I saw an overpass. You can stand under there and see a lot of cars coming and I could do sankirtan. At the end of the day, I didn't get much laksmi, but the people were nice. That's how it goes, out there. I see nice people.

I had the books, all wrapped up in plastic in my arms, and looked like I was carrying some newspapers. People were looking at me, "What is all this you have?", and I was trying not to get the books wet. I was saying, "Please give a donation for these books." They were saying, "Alright." They might take one, then I'll be giving somebody help. So, it's nice.

Jayapataka Swami: When we have books wrapped in plastic, does that work, in America? Mainly we put all the books in plastic and just show them one book, rather than, tearing off the plastic.

Devotee: We just distribute books, not with plastic. She just did that today, because of the rain. I sign the books. Goswami Maharaja said it's another way to get people to not run off. If they try to run off with the book, you say, "No. Let me sign it." Then, you sign it, and it keeps them from running away so fast. Also, some people think you wrote it, and you just ask for a donation then. If it's kind of personal, they like it. They get a good impression.

We've been going a lot to the people in the city because the city's big enough. At first we distributed so much around here, really nobody wanted to see us anymore. But, then we did travelling sankirtana, and everybody here's pretty much ready to get a book, now. It's pretty fresh around here, although it's not big. They don't have that much money, they're not really that familiar with us, especially in the black community. New Orleans is mostly black now. They always take our book, and like it very much.

Jayapataka Swami: Do some people comment that the books are hard to understand? Is that still there?

Devotee: Sure. They're not going to understand. They can't concentrate. It's so hard for them to understand, they don't read them. But, some of the books are really nice. Anybody who gets those books, read them. I like to give everybody BTG's. BTG's, you can understand, at least some of the stories.

Most books are hard to understand because they don't want to read them, but everyone who got one of the other books, they always told me, "Oh, I read it." I would ask about the main books, "Did you read it?" and they would say, "Ah, no. But, I'm gonna read it." (Laughter) But they're not going to read it.

But, this other book, I'd ask "Did you read it?" "Yeah, I read it. It was really interesting." Almost every person that got it, read it. So, it's a great book for America, at least, for this country, maybe England.

Jayapataka Swami: Even the Science of Self-Realization, they don't read that?

Devotee: Well, we have trouble selling that because the cover. They see Srila Prabhupada and they just get a little bit afraid. He's such a guru, and they're kind of afraid of guru. We can sell Bhagavad-gita, but selling Science of Self-Realization, you'll cut your sales more than in half. So, we're giving those out for free, and we're probably not going to order any more.

Actually, it's a great book, but only a certain amount of people of relatively elevated consciousness have interest in it. Bhagavad-gita's also very hard for them. I just try to get them all out there, although they usually don't read Bhagavad-gita. It's becoming pretty famous, Bhagavad-gita. We have a paper back. We haven't been distributing hard cover books in a long time.

We have been distributing barely any books for a long time, but we're going to try to start now. It's a big project, but we're trying to distribute a lot of books. We used to distribute a lot. I know they have to be distributed, but as far as the readability of the books, I like to have some basic things to go along with the other ones. At least they'll read the magazine and the other book. That one is actually very readable, but Bhagavad-gita is so dense, their brain is just bewildered. They can't even understand it.

Jayapataka Swami: In South America now, in Spanish they're printing these books like Mrgari, "The Hunter and the Saint". Simple.

Devotee: I think we could use more books like that in America. People would read them more. I don't think they're going to read them for years. If they buy them, they can't understand it. I think if we had introductory book like Lilamrta, the people would read other books after they read that one. They need some better introduction-type books. Very basic, because they can't understand even the little books that we have. But some of the books, like Lilamrta are very readable, and I find people read those more. I've been talking to the people on the block, cause I used to sell Lilamrta, too. They'd read that one, also. Not as much as the other book, if we could print some of those, they'd reread all these, after they got the introduction. That's why I always like to give them a magazine, although other distributors don't want to give them a magazine because they don't want them to know that it was a Hare Krishna book. They took them a long time to give the guy a book and some might come back and demand a refund of their money, or something. But, actually, I like to give them a magazine, because they can really get a basic understanding.

Jayapataka Swami: What about that "Who Are We?"

Devotee: I saw that "This is about as the same as a BTG.", according to me. I didn't see the necessity of it in America, although, whatever book that we get, great. I thought it was pretty informative. BTG does a pretty good job, and other books are welcome. I like getting everything. It's more basic than the others out there.

Jayapataka Swami: I'm going to lose an hour of sleep. Anybody bring their drum over?

Devotee: Well, we're having little problem right now. The present person who lives downstairs was a little bit worried about bringing the mrdanga over because there's a petition going around the neighborhood right now about us. We get a lot of devotees coming here now. I think some of the people that really don't like us very much are forming an alliance. Most of them pretty much like us, it's just that, I think a couple of them from down the street want to live downstairs, and they're trying to make some complaints. Probably we should move to a place where all the householders are coming, instead of like taking over the neighborhood. They get kind of afraid.

Jayapataka Swami: Do you vote? When the election comes, do you vote?

Devotee: No. We don't vote, but I told the mayor we vote. We know the Mayor, see him at the airport all the time. We don't actually vote. I tell him we are going to vote for him. Cause he just won. He just was running for election last autumn, and that didn't much help. We meet all people at the airport.

Jayapataka Swami: But, you know they can find out if you vote, or not.

Devotee: I don't think he's going to investigate it.

Jayapataka Swami: No, but when it gets right down to the local party in the neighborhood, they'll know who votes and who doesn't.

Devotee: Well, alright.

Jayapataka Swami: If you vote, then they respect you a lot more. They don't want to lose your vote.

Devotee: I told him we vote. He's pretty soft, because after all, he thinks we're going to vote, we've got a lot of influence, we've got a whole bunch of people living here. We're going to invite him to a rathayatra. So, we're talking. We haven't actually voted though.

Jayapataka Swami: In New Vrindavan they vote, and make a great big action. In their part of the country, they got 250 votes, there's only 500 people, they've got like 55% of the vote, and every Hare Krishna votes. You could never get all the karmis to vote. So, the commissioner's always coming around there.

Devotees: (Laughing)

Jayapataka Swami: He does whatever they want.

Devotee: It's really powerful.

Jayapataka Swami: Yeah, if you have a whole block, you know they all vote one way. (laughter)

Devotee: Yeah, we have to figure it out. Actually Vrkadhara has some friends. He know's a lot of people. I got in trouble the other day, arrested and causing unlawful crowds, and told them I want to see the Chief, because it was an unjust arrest, and they were making a joke. They brought in some old man, and said, "Here's the Chief.", and I go, "That's not the Chief!" Finally, the actual chief was Vrkadhara's cousin, and even though he was a young man, he just got me out. No bail, or anything. Now, instead of causing me all kinds of problems, the chief just let me right out.

And that, the soon to be Mayor of another nearby town was one of Vrkadhara's best friends in school. He also knows a lot of other people who are his friends. Whenever go out, I always meet someone who knows him. A lot of his friends are going into politics. He's actually been working with some of them.

[end of recording]

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Transcribed by Jagannatha dasa

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Sri Mayapura Dhama