

# Sign Says Matchless Gift

**Sign says matchless gift**

**Venue: Den Haag, Netherland**

**Dated: April 26, 2016**

You all are welcome. I see some old faces, lot of new faces also. And some faces I don't see them here, maybe they are on their way. It's a very special year, this year. You know what is so special about this year? There will be a Bhumi Puja. **ISKCON** Den Haag will have their own Vedic style designed temple. Of course it will not be completed this year. It has been announced that the bhumi puja is next month. Please be there. I was in Germany and there is a big **Radha Madanmohan** temple and **Radhadesh** has a landmark, some historic location. I was traveling around and every other place has their own big temple, except Den Haag. This year you will have your own temple.

There are so many temples so what is the need of yet another temple? Someone asked **Srila Prabhupada** that question "Swami, there are so many temples in India. Why are you building some new temples"? **Prabhupada** asked that gentleman who was there with his good wife. "Is that sitting next to you your wife?"

"Yes, yes she is my wife."

"And that boy is that your son?"

"Yes, he is my son."

**Prabhupada** said, "There are so many children already what was the need of one more?"

"No, but this is my son. There might be other children but this is my son.?"

**Prabhupada** said, " There are so any temples but this will be my temple, my **Krishna's** temple." So that's one reason why this is a special year.

Yet there is another reason why 2016 is very important year for the **International Society for Krishna Consciousness**. You can say this is fiftieth birth anniversary of **ISKCON**. **ISKCON** was founded in 1966 when **Prabhupada** went to the West. Last year was **Jaladuta 50**. **Prabhupada** was a devaduta, messenger of **Krishna**. He sat in the **Jaladuta** and went to the West as instructed by his spiritual master to fulfil the wishes of his spiritual master. This **Krishna** consciousness is so essential for everybody. Every soul in the world, especially in the Western world. They know very little about how God is great. Yes, they know 'God is great', but they don't know how God is great. "Love thy Lord with all thy heart and all thy strength" says the bible. But not knowing who the Lord is? And not knowing who you actually are? It is very difficult to love the Lord with all thy heart and all thy strength. One **ISKCON** devotee had come to India and one Indian Hindu gentleman had asked why he had become Hindu? "You gave up your Christianity, and have you become Hindu?" He said, "No, no no now I have become a better Christian. Before all I was told "Thou shall not kill". This is also one of the 10 commandments "Thou shall not kill." But that is what we did all day. Well, we did not kill personally. Someone else slaughtered the animals and then we ate for breakfast for lunch, dinner but "Thou shall not kill."

But now no more killing for me. My menu is menu that is given by God.

**patram pushpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktya prayacchati**

No more **muttonam chikanam biryanim fisham**. So before I had heard some priests were talking "Thou shall not kill" but they killed. Someone killed animals for us and then we ate them. We gobbled them up, but now I don't do that anymore. So I am a better Christian, now I am practising Christianity. **Srila Prabhupada** was asked by his spiritual master go to the West and propagate this **Krishna consciousness** in the Western world in English. That's why we are speaking in English here. Not

that we don't speak in local or regional languages, but **Prabhupada** was asked to preach in the English language.

So that was in 1965 when **Prabhupada** reached America under so many unfavourable conditions. **Prabhupada** had to go through so much struggle. Then he managed to get. I am saying all this in this hall here and in New York 26 Second avenue that was the address where **ISKCON** started. It was a store front. What **Prabhupada** managed to rent out was the store front a store. That store was shifted elsewhere and then **Prabhupada** took over and at some point **Prabhupada's** followers found out there was a sign at the top. Should we take that down **Swamiji**? **Prabhupada** wanted to know what the sign said? Sign says matchless gift. **Prabhupada** said, "Don't take it down. It's a good sign. What I am distributing here is a matchless gift. **Krishna consciousness** is a matchless gift. Krishna is matchless and everything about Krishna is a matchless. The message of **Bhagavat Gita** is matchless. The philosophy is matchless. The culture is matchless. The holy name is matchless, matchless prasada. Is there anything like Krishna prasada in this world?"

So that matchless gift is where Krishna consciousness started. So '65 was arrival and '66 **Prabhupada** started **International Society for Krishna Consciousness** with the help of a bunch of American boys and girls. **Prabhupada** was trying to start this movement in India and he was trying to get some followers, some youths to join. He was asking Indians how many children they had? "5, good give me 1." We picked up the right one the other day. I asked how many children he has? He said I have none. In those days they were having 5 children or ashtaputra saubhagyavati. These were the blessings – I bless you . May you have 8 children. Sages or brahmins would bless like that. But now that is a thing of the past.

In **Prabhupada's** days having half a dozen children was common. **Prabhupada** would appeal to "please give me one son. I will train him, I will send him all over the world or make him a

preacher in Krishna consciousness”, but no one was coming forward. One gentleman was traveling in the same train as **Srila Prabhupada**. He was traveling with his son and he kept appealing, begging and bugging **Srila Prabhupada**, “**Swamiji Swamiji**, bless my son, bless my son.” He was not leaving **Prabhupada** alone every now and then, “please bless my son, bless my son.” So **Prabhupada** said ‘Give me your son’. After hearing that this gentleman left the compartment and went far away where **Swamiji** would never find this person and person’s son.

But as he reached America then some American boys and girls were ready. They were already kind of loitering on the streets. They were disgusted, frustrated with so much to enjoy and they were looking for some alternatives. That materialism had not satisfied them and it’s not possible, materialism cannot satisfy us to satisfy our senses, satisfy our mind. There is some entertainment, some body satisfaction, mind satisfaction but soul satisfaction is not possible. Deep within us is our soul. We see something and then there is some happiness. Something we hear, some music, touch, smell gives some temporary pleasure, but that is flickering and just disappears like bubbles. How long do bubbles last? They don’t last very long. That’s why the acaryas have said,

**kamala dala jala jivana tala mala**

Like having a drop of water on kamala dal, lotus petal. With a little wind **tala mala, tala mala kamala dala jala jivana tala mala** is finished. Hence the advice is,

**bhajahu hari pada niti re**

Hari pada – lotus Feet of Hari should be worshiped and that is permanent.

**bhajahu re mana sri-nanda-nandana abhaya-caran?aravinda re**

When **Srila Prabhupada** was in that store front he started

holding programs twice a week. On the street in the park he would hand out some visiting cards, invitation cards to come to the store front, the matchless gift place. He was getting good numbers and this matchless gift place was becoming packed. One of the special attractions was the prasada which Swamiji would cook before the arrival of his guests. 100 to 150 would fit into the hall which was a little bigger than this.

So he would cook and come down and give **pravachan**. Everything was brand new to these American folks. They had not even heard of all this. Hare Krishna what? Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, and **Prabhupada** would sometimes show Radha Krishna photographs. This is the flute player. This is **Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead**. And they would ask what is that girl doing there? Next to God, who is that girl. So much ignorance. **Prabhupada** had to start from scratch. He did not mind. He knew this is what he had to do. He would deliver his talk. They did not know even how to sit down. Like most of you are sitting, this is called **sukhasan** if not **padmasan**. Different lotus position is **padmasan**. But cross-legged is called **sukhasan, sukh-asan** comfortable sitting. They did not know.

They did not know how to sit and **Prabhupada** taught them how to sit. Then he would get them to stand up and he was teaching them the dance. He was chanting and dancing. Not only chanting. Chanting has to be accompanied with dancing. So would get them to stand up and raise their hands and it became universal known as the swami step. That dance became popular as the swami step.

**Prabhupada** taught that. Talk and then **kirtana** and getting them to sit down for prasada. They would all sit down and who would serve? Swamiji had to serve all of them and he did not mind. He was happy. He was 70 years old. He was raising some funds to maintain this establishment, sponsor the prasada. After prasada they would all leave and Swamiji had to clean not only the hall, but the plates and the pots. This is just a little

sampling of what **Prabhupada** was going through. You should study the life or teachings of **Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada**. **Prabhupada lilamrita** is available in Dutch? English ,of course yes and maybe some 100 languages is available. Even Chinese are printing. You should all study the life of **Srila Prabhupada**. It is some additional chapters of **Bhagavatam**. **Prabhupada** was Bhagavat,

**person-bhagavat, maha bhagavat.**

**svayambhur narada? sambhuh kumarah kapilo manuh?prahlado janako bhisma balir vaiyasakir vayam**

Twelve original 12 bhagavats are mentioned in **Srimad-Bhagvatam** and in that parampara, disciplic succession, **Prabhupada** was a living Bhagavat. Studying his life is studying Bhagavatam.

**nityam bhagavata sevaya**

This is the statement from **Bhagavatam** and **Prabhupada** translates that as Studying **Bhagavatam** or serving person bhagavat, reading book bhagavat or serving person bhagavat. That is the meaning of **nityam bhagvata sevaya**.

Knowing **Srila Prabhupada maha bhagavat** and then taking inspiration from his life and then you try to follow the footsteps of **Srila Prabhupada**. Some of those followers were now becoming serious students, serious practitioners. They started chanting,

**Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare**  
**Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare**

Prabhupada gathered that serious group together and asked them if they could assist him in the propagation of Krishna consciousness, but they had to follow the four regulative principles to become his associate members or initiated disciples. For the first time Prabhupada split out in a formal way he spelled out the four regulative principles.

No meat, fish or eggs, no intoxication including tea and coffee, no illicit sex and no gambling. "So are you ready?" You are still thinking but those who were present before **Prabhupada** did not take much time. They said, "Yes Swamiji, we are ready." Everybody present there was ready to follow these four regulative principals. Then with the help of those handful American youths **Srila Prabhupada** found this Hare Krishna movement in 1966 and then **ISKCON's** first temple **Radha Govinda Mandir** in New York opened. After 50 years you are opening here in Den Haag, but the first Radha Govinda temple was opened in New York. Now **ISKCON** has 650 temples around the world in a short span of 50 years. And millions of books have been distributed in over 100 languages. There are over 100 **Govinda's** restaurants around the world. Farm communities around the world. Prasada distribution is big. In India we have something called midday meal served to the school going children at midday. Every day **ISKCON** distributes 1.2 million plates of prasada. Did you hear that? 1.2 million plates daily served at this midday meal scheme.

**ISKCON** holds 10 000 festivals every year. **Janmastami, Gaur Purnima, Ratha yatra**, and many more. The Grand total is over 10 000 festivals. All this in a short span of 50 years, and this is just a beginning. This is **Caitanya Mahaprabhu's** movement. **ISKCON** is **Caitanya Mahaprabhu's** program as per **Caitanya Mahaprabhu's** vision. Krishna's of course **Ramacandra, Krishnacandra**, but specially **Caitanyacandra, Caitanya Mahaprabhu**. Rama appeared in **Treta-yuga** Krishna appeared in **Dvapara yuga** but we are in **Kali-yuga** so,

**dharma-samsthapanarthaya sambhavami sambhavami yuge yuge**

The latest advent of the Lord was 520 years ago in the form of **Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu**. He has given to this world this yuga dharma which is the chanting the holy names of the Lord. Tulasi Das also says,

**kali yuga kevala nama adhara**

Nama is the only adhar, only shelter, only base, only protection in this age of kali. Every time Kali-yuga comes there is the same dharma. How many times does Kali-yuga come? So many times. In Brahma's one day, Brahma Vishnu Mahesh, In Brahma's one day **1000 Kali-yugas** come. **1000 Satya yugas**, **1000 Treta yugas**, **1000 Dvapara yugas** and **1000 Kali-yugas**. Every time, so this is not the first time **Kali-yuga** has appeared. So now what to do? Nothing to worry. Checkout what was done in the previous **Kali-yuga**. What was the process? Same process that would work out this time also.

Every time there is a winter – is this is winter or summer? Climatic changes occur because of our misbehaviour. The way we are treating mother earth, cutting the trees and deforestation. So many factories and chimneys, who's smoke expel CO2 and what not, animal killing. As a result we have increased the temperature of mother earth. Temperature is rising 4 degrees than normal. As a result of all this everything is topsy-turvy. This could be just the beginning of what is in store for us. Man is so greedy wanting to enjoy and exploit mother earth – deforestation, cutting the trees. The nice trees and greenery and flowers everywhere. This is like a sari worn by mother earth. She wears green sari and flowers are like embroidery. But you know what happened when Dushasan attempted to disrobe mother Draupadi. Result was the war and killing because of the way Dushasan dealt with mother Draupadi. He was trying to disrobe her.

This forest and the trees and greenery, this is a sari. This is the clothing of mother earth and we are just chopping, cutting and we are getting reactions. So much enjoying spirit. The survey conducted recently on the consumption of consumers goods said that if the whole world consumed as much as whatever they consume then for the waste we would require five earths. One would not be sufficient. You want go by the American land of enjoyment, land of opportunities. The land the whole world would like to imitate. All Indians like to. So

many attempts to exploit the resources where there is gold deep in the body of mother earth and the small city towns inside the earth. The railway tracks go miles in the depth of the earth. I have seen a gold mine in South Africa. By a lift they took us way down. I don't know how many stories down and we were walking and we had helmets and a guided tour.

There so many are there. Now the scientists were hoping that the they would make this world enjoyable. They did lots of industrial economy and what now? Now the scientists say that this planet is not liveable anymore and that we better look for another planet. Their hands are up, " Sorry folks. We can't deliver our promises."

The sea levels are rising. I don't know what would happen to Mauritius, a small Island in the middle of Indian Ocean. And right on the banks of the ocean and there is no high altitude. There is just a few meters height and all will be drowned in the water.

**Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare  
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare**

So every time Kali-yuga comes you have to chant Hare Krishna.

**harer nama harer nama harer namaiva kevalam?kalau nasty eva  
nasty eva nasty eva gati anyatha**

Kalau means the age of kali. There is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way. Only the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. This is the truth . This is the arrangement of the Lord. It may not be known so much in the West because they follow this culture ,that culture and some new religions, some religion 1500 year old religion or maybe 2500 year old religion. But religion has to be eternal. Religions are not created or born. Anything and everything that has a beginning has and end also. This is a simple law rule here. This religion that religion started on such and such date will also have a beginning and an end.

We are talking of jivas, the living entity dharma has to be eternal. If you want to give a name to dharma then Sanatana dharma is one name. Sanatana means no beginning no end, eternal. And that is the dharma of every living entity regardless of whether they may say, "I am Christian, I am Hindu, I am Muslim". This is the faith, but religion, dharma, the characteristic of the living entity does not change.

Electricity must give a shock or sugar is always sweet, salt is always salty. Being salty is the dharma of salt, being sweet is a dharma of sugar. So every living entity has a dharma and the dharma for all living entities is the same. Brahmas one day has 1000 cycles of this four **yugas Satya-Treta-Dvapara-Kali** put together is **Maha yuga** and 1000 times. Once again to become universal applicable everywhere. **Caitanya Mahaprabhu appearing 500 years ago** established this chanting as a yuga dharma for this age of kali and he predicted that this would spread all over the world. As per His visions and predictions now you see it is spreading all over the world. Chanting is spreading all over the world. Practically every country in the world has the presence of the Hare Krishna movement. In this **Kali-yuga** there is a golden period of **10,000 years**, out of those **10,000 years Caitanya Mahaprabhu** appeared 500 years ago. So 500 years and then 50 years. **ISKCON** is 50 years old. We have **9500 years** to go. This Krishna consciousness movement has already spread in 50 years. We will be spreading Krishna consciousness movement for another almost **9-10000 years in global** phenomena universal.

**Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare**  
**Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare**

God has a name, form, qualities and pastimes. **Prabhupada** always appealed to the audience, Indians to understand this movement. Then he would also repeat what **Caitanya Mahaprabhu** had said or expected specially those who have some Bharat connection, some Indian origin.

**bharata-bhumite haila manusya janma yara?janma sarthaka kari  
kara para-upakara**

These are words of **Caitanya Mahaprabhu**. You are born in India. Of course at one time India was not limited to the present map of India. India was all over the planet. It was Bharat Varsha. We find remnants of India's presence and culture in all the continents. If you have taken birth on this planet in Bharat Varsha then you would like to make your life perfect. How to do this?

**janma sarthaka kari kara para-upakara**

To make your life perfect do **para-upakar**. **Srila Prabhupada** has set that example the world is in need of Krishna. Krishna consciousness is lacking. Everything else is there and what this world is lacking, is Krishna consciousness. The soul needs Krishna. The soul could only be happy when it attains Krishna or Rama He has many names, many forms. He appears again and again in different forms. You accept Krishna consciousness and you practice Krishna consciousness and you propagate. Share this Krishna consciousness with as many people- your family members, your neighbours, your circle of friends. As much bigger circle you could make spread, propagate this. Let the word of God spread.

And it says as **paropkaraya**, '**paropkaraya vahanti nadya**' that comes at the end. For the benefit of others rivers flow and distribute water.

**paropakaraya vahanthi nadhyaha**  
**paropakaraya dhuhanthi gavaha**

The cows give milk for others, **paropakaraya phalanthi vrkshaha** – for the benefit of others trees give fruits. **paropakartham idham shariram** – specially this human form of life is for paropkaraya. This **Krishna consciousness** is the topmost welfare programme for humanity at large. Debt, disease and fire must be dealt with urgently, you hear that. Something is on fire,

“Oh! I will take my breakfast”. No! The world is on fire, davagni.

### **samsara-davanala-lidha-loka**

What could extinguish the fire? Mercy clouds. when the forest is on fire you cannot throw a few buckets of water. When the forest is on fire you cannot go there with a spoon and sprinkle some water. That would not do. No other attempts would work. You need some mercy from above. That mercy is the mercy of the Lord which also comes down through His devotees, sadhus , mahatmas.

Hari Hari!