

## Preface

April 1965: While approaching the Scindia Steam Navigation Company in Bombay to sponsor his passage to America, Śrīla Prabhupāda received one of their complimentary diaries. He used it at first as an appointment book. Once his voyage to America on the *Jaladuta* began in August of that year, he made regular entries in the diary to record the events of the journey.

Subsequently, the diary was kept in the safe of the New York temple until 1972, when Śrīla Prabhupāda requested Bali-mardana dāsa, the temple president, to take personal care of it. Today it is still in the care of Bali-mardana dāsa, and he is arranging for its permanent display and preservation.

Excerpts from the diary were first published in 1980 in Volume 1 of the *Śrīla Prabhupāda Līlāmṛta*, the authorized biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Portions have also appeared in some of the annual *Vyāsa-pūjā* books. With the approach of the Śrīla Prabhupāda Centennial in 1996, we feel it is fitting that the diary be presented in its entirety.

Śrīla Prabhupāda once wrote in a letter about the need to meticulously preserve the writings of the previous *ācāryas*, especially their handwriting, as follows:

"...we may take care of them by treating them against insects and storing them in a tight, dry storage place where they may be preserved for future generations of Vaiṣṇavas to see the actual handwriting and words of such great saintly persons. Treat this matter very seriously and thoroughly, and take all precautions to protect this wonderful boon of literatures forever.... These items are very, very priceless and are a great treasure house of Vaiṣṇava lore, so be very careful in the matter and take all precautions to guard them.

[Letter to Acyutānanda dāsa dated June 12, 1972]

Again, in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* there is a description of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu praising Rūpa Gosvāmī's fastidious handwriting (C.c. *Antya* 1.96-7). Thus, the handwriting specimens of pure devotees are intimate momentos of their spiritual lives, and we must therefore consider ourselves most fortunate to have the remnants of Śrīla Prabhupāda's handwriting.

This diary of the voyage of the *Jaladuta* is a personal account of the challenging journey that launched Śrīla Prabhupāda's life mission. Readers will find it to be a remarkable document in the history of religious movements. It reveals the full measure of Śrīla Prabhupāda's devotion, faith and self-abnegation, which qualify him as one of the world's few genuine spiritual leaders. We hope this book will inspire others to appreciate Śrīla Prabhupāda's triumph over adversity and to follow in his footsteps.

## Introduction

Śrīla Prabhupāda was instructed by his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English-speaking peoples. Toward this end, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami published the first *Back to Godhead* magazine in 1944. He also began to write translations and commentaries on *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and other Vedic literatures. In 1965, after publishing three volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, he approached the owner of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company, Sumati Morarji, for a complimentary passage to the United States. After considering his request for some time, she finally agreed and issued him the ticket.

In the port of Calcutta on August 13, 1965, carrying only a small suitcase, an umbrella, and a bag of dry cereal, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, as he was known at the time, climbed up the steep gangway onto a cargo ship named the *Jaladuta*. The ensuing journey presented considerable hardship. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote of some sea-sickness, and on the thirteenth day of the voyage, during the passage through the Arabian Sea, he suffered a massive heart attack. He was concerned that he might pass away, but in his uneasy sleep that night he had a dream, a vision. Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared. The Lord was in an open boat, along with His other incarnations. Kṛṣṇa was rowing the boat, and the boat was pulling Śrīla Prabhupāda's ship with a rope. Kṛṣṇa was smiling at Śrīla Prabhupāda and was pulling the ship all the way to America! Śrīla Prabhupāda did not write about this occurrence in his diary but simply drew a line through those troubled days, declaring that he had passed over a great crisis in the struggle between life and death. Years later he related these events to his followers.

After the crisis, Śrīla Prabhupāda regained his strength and recommenced his entries in the diary after the ship docked in Port Said, Egypt. Then, after crossing the Mediterranean Sea, the *Jaladuta* passed through the Straits of Gibraltar and into the Atlantic Ocean. Uncharacteristically, the ocean appeared like a placid lake. The Atlantic crossing was so effortless that the ship's captain remarked that he had never seen anything like it. After a total of thirty-five days the ship at last berthed in Boston, at Commonwealth Pier, on September 17 at 5:30 a.m. The next day the *Jaladuta* continued to New York, where Śrīla Prabhupāda disembarked onto a lonely Brooklyn pier to begin his mission in the West.

In our presentation of *The Jaladuta Diary*, we have also included photographs of noteworthy memorabilia—Śrīla Prabhupāda's passport and visa, the ticket issued by Scindia Steam Navigation Company, the sponsorship form of Gopal Agarwal, and handwritten copies of the two poems that Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote upon arriving in America, "Prayers to the Lotus Feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa" and "*Mārkinē Bhāgavata-dharma*." Some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's descriptions of the *Jaladuta* journey from his conversations and letters are also reproduced here. These have

appeared in previous archival publications and may be found in entirety in the computer database of Śrīla Prabhupāda's complete works.

We offer many thanks to Bali-mardana dāsa, Sundarakāra dāsa, Māyāpriya devī dāsī, Jāhnava devī dāsī, who did the color illustrations, and to the many other devotees whose efforts have made this publication a reality.

There is a sequel to this diary. In New York, in January of 1966, Śrīla Prabhupāda began recording another diary, which spans the period from January to October of that year. This diary is not as well known to devotees as the *Jaladuta* diary, but it covers the time when Śrīla Prabhupāda was a guest of Dr. R. Mishra up until the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) was incorporated and the first *Back to Godhead* magazine was published by Śrīla Prabhupāda's early Western followers. We also intend to publish this second diary as an offering for the Śrīla Prabhupāda Centennial.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is the pre-eminent *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* of our time. His voyage on the *Jaladuta* thirty years ago marked the beginning of a spiritual revival, and the twelve years after his arrival in America saw the Hare Krishna movement spread to major cities worldwide. For millennia, the Vedic tradition had been hidden behind the boundaries of India and within Sanskrit and the vernacular languages. To a world immersed in a materialistic ethos, Śrīla Prabhupāda revealed the wisdom of this timeless philosophy.

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