

The Avanti PRE Curriculum

Exercise Sheet 7.4.3b

“Srla Prabhupada’s Life”

1. Srila Prabhupada was born on September 1, 1896 in Calcutta. He was called Abhay Charan. His parents, whose surname was ‘De’, were followers of Chaitanya.
2. Abhay De attended a prestigious school called Scottish Church College in North Calcutta. The professors, mainly Europeans, were moral, religious men. Growing up in British-controlled India, Abhay became involved with Mahatma Gandhi’s movement to secure Indian independence (India became independent in 1947). Abhay achieved a degree in *English, philosophy and economics* but renounced it because he objected to British control of India
3. He married a girl named Radharani and had five children (three sons and two daughters).
4. Abhay ran a small pharmaceuticals business (selling medicinal products).
5. In 1922, he met his own spiritual teacher called Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, a leading figure amongst the Chaitanya Vaishnavas. At their very first meeting, . . . Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati asked Abhay to take the teachings of Lord Krishna to the English-speaking world.
6. Abhay was initiated by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta in 1933, and, as a disciple, was determined to carry out his guru’s instructions. His spiritual name was Abhay Charanaravindam
7. In 1950, Abhay retired from more active householder life to concentrate on spiritual matters
8. In 1959, he left his family to become a sannyasa (wandering mendicant), and received the title Bhaktivedanta Swami.
9. In 1965, at the age of sixty-nine, Bhaktivedanta Swami travelled to New York City aboard a cargo ship. The journey was treacherous, and he suffered two heart attacks aboard ship. With the help of some American students, Srila Prabhupada rented a small storefront on New York to use as a temple.
10. On July 11, 1966, , Bhaktivedanta Swami officially registered his growing organization in the state of New York. He called it ‘The International Society for Krishna Consciousness’ (ISKCON). His followers respectfully called him ‘Srla Prabhupada’.
11. In the eleven years that followed, Srila Prabhupada:
 - (a) Circled the globe 14 times on lecture tours, bringing the teachings of Lord Krishna to thousands of people on six continents.
 - (b) Established over 100 ISKCON centres and projects (farms, schools, restaurants etc.) throughout the world, with major temples in Vrindavan and Mayapur (both in India).
 - (c) Initiated over 5,000 disciples
 - (d) Completed the writing and publishing of over 70 books on the Chaitanya tradition.
12. Srila Prabhupada passed away on 14th November 1977. Responsibility for his mission now rested with his leading but relatively young disciples. Some became gurus and initiated their own disciples, this carrying forward the ancient teachings of Lord Krishna and Lord Chaitanya.