

# Priti-laksanam

A Forum for Vaisnava Discussion  
Volume 7, June 1993

"Offering gifts in charity, accepting charitable gifts,  
revealing one's mind in confidence, inquiring confidentially, accepting *prasada* and offering *prasada*  
are the six symptoms of love [*priti-laksanam*] shared by one devotee and another."

— Nectar of Instruction, Text Four

Dedicated to  
His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada  
Founder-Acarya of the  
International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

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## Notes from the Editor

In the last issue I briefly mentioned devotees taking inspiration from the energy building up behind Prabhupada's Centennial celebration. Paratrikananda Prabhu expresses a vision similar to one I've had and heard other devotees express recently. So I read his submission with interest and hope, with the hope that on Prabhupada's 100th birthday we can

celebrate together as a large family, not as splintered groups around the world.

To successfully come together, worship Prabhupada together and spread his glories will not happen automatically, though. Each of us will have to make a conscious decision to join the campaign to glorify Srila Prabhupada. For some of us this may mean putting aside past differences or personal priorities. For others it may mean having to be humble and apologize for wrongs committed. For others it may mean coming closer to devotees within ISKCON. For others it may mean reaching out from within the institution. But the central point—glorifying Srila Prabhupada—should be an attractive, easy goal for each of us.

Let's not hesitate. Our lives are moving so quickly to completion and here's our chance to do something together for Prabhupada before we part ways. The interview with Lokanatha Swami will give you an update on the Centennial Campaign's progress in the area of Reuniting Prabhupada's Family.

There are a number of interesting submissions in this issue. I'm always happy to see devotees articulating their realizations. Especially moving for me was Mathuresa's piece "The Little Jarvis Girl." Read it and see for yourself how it will make you think deeply about our relationships with each other.

My special thanks to Jagadisvari Prabhu for keying in this issue. I couldn't have done it without her help. Please remember to send a disk with your submission if possible. I can accept IBM or MAC format; 5.25" or 3.5"; ASCII or word processing program.

To receive *Priti-laksanam* send your

name and address and I'll include you on the mailing list. Donations are needed and are making it possible for continued publication of the newsletter.

Back issues (6 in all) are available for \$1.00 each.

I humbly thank this issue's donors. Their practical demonstration of support and encouragement makes it possible for me to send this issue to you. —Pranada dasi

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#### NECTAR SECTION

##### Madhurya-kadambini

Visvannatha Cakravarti Thakura  
Chapter One Continued

The word "ahaituki" (causeless) in this statement indicates that devotional service appears without material cause (*hetu*).

Again, in such statements as "yadrachaya mat kathadau," "mad bhaktim yadrachaya," and "yadrachayaivopacita" the word "yadrachaya" must mean "by His own independent sweet will." The meaning of "yadrachaya" in the dictionary is "complete independence." Sometimes people take the word to mean "by luck or chance." But that meaning is not suitable here, for then one must inquire

as to the origin of the good fortune: Is its cause material, pious activities (*subha karma*) or not? If one assumes that good fortune is generated from pious activities, then *bhakti* is ultimately generated from material *karma*. *Bhakti* becomes dependent on material *karma*. This is a contradiction to its independent, self-manifesting nature. And, if one considers that this good fortune is not due to pious activities it becomes both indescribable by words and unknowable by the intellect. Consequently, it is insubstantial and cannot be accepted as a cause.

If one proposes that the cause of *bhakti* is the Lord's mercy, one must then find a reason for the mercy. Thus this statement, giving rise to further need for explanation, is inconclusive in itself.

If one therefore says that the cause is the Lord's absolute, unqualified or causeless mercy, then the Lord appears to show favoritism in bestowing it. Since the unqualified mercy should, but does not, fall upon everyone equally the Lord is partial to His devotee. But the partiality that the Lord shows in protecting His devotees from the persecution of evil elements does not imply a fault in the Lord, but rather an ornament which enhances His character. This overruling nature of the Lord's affectionate obligation to His devotees, which, like a powerful king, subjugates all contradictory factors, will be discussed in the eighth chapter.

In proposing the unqualified mercy of the devotees as the cause of devotion, one may object to the fact that the devotee's mercy, like the Lord's can be partial. But if one considers the nature of the *madhyama bhakta* one finds that he does exhibit partiality in his distribution of mercy. He exhibits *prema* toward the Lord; friendship to the devotees; mercy to the innocent and disregard for those hostile to *bhakti*. As well, since the Lord is subservient to His devotee, He makes His mercy follow after the mercy of His devotee. Thus there is no irregularity in this proposal.

Now, the cause of that mercy manifesting itself in the devotee is *bhakti* within his heart. Without having *bhakti* there is no possibility of the devotee manifesting mercy to others. Thus, in this case, the self-manifesting, independent nature of *bhakti* is again resolved.

Therefore, in the statement "yah kenapy atibhaghena jata sraddho 'sy sevane" (a person who has attained faith in the service of the Lord by extreme good fortune) the words "atibhaghena"

(extremely good fortune) should be understood to mean the attainment of the mercy of the devotee that surpasses (*atikrama*) the results of material pious activities (*subha karma*).

Here, one should not consider that, since the devotee is dependent on the will of the Lord, the devotee cannot initiate the bestowal of mercy. For the Lord accepts subservience to His devotee and gives preeminence to the devotee's position by giving him the power to bestow the Lord's mercy. Though the Lord as Paramatma oversees those matters relating to the *jiva's* external senses, which are the reward from his past activities (in this respect not giving complete independence even to His devotees), the Lord shows special mercy to His devotees by giving them the independent power to bestow mercy to others. In *Bhagavad-gita*, Krsna Himself speaks of His *prasadam* as the only way to attain His eternal spiritual realm. This *prasada* takes the form of the Lord's bestowal of His own *krpa sakti* to His devotee.

To be continued.

#### NOTABLE QUOTE

"Prabhupada said that as you get older you get more enlivened. Not like the materialist, as they get older they can only remember the 'good ol' times'.

"With internal development you feel happy and satisfied with simple, essential, unchanging things like reading Prabhupada's books and chanting Hare Krsna—or trying to improve those things.

"You will see, 'Oh, this is a wonderful Society. All over the world people are being given the chance to become Krsna conscious.' Your sentiment may be different from, 'We have such and such a building. And look at this picture of all the devotees here. I'm part of this big movement.' But the essence of our appreciation will be there. When we see that ISKCON has had trouble and that we have failed in some ways then perhaps we can't have a certain euphoria, but we think, 'Prabhupada is so wonderful that he came and despite all these odds—that in the material world it is so difficult to have a pure movement—still the Hare Krsna movement is continuing and is overcoming its difficulties. Except for this there would only be barbarian life in the world.'

"So this is a realistic appreciation of ISKCON. Why give up all idealism and your positive attitude just because things change and you change?"

## LETTERS

### "Advice on Personal Ads"

Hridayananda dasa Goswami  
Beverly Hills, California

Thank you for kindly sending me Volume 6 of *Priti-laksanam*. If you will permit me a single bit of advice, I think the last of the personal ads contained a questionable statement, namely:

"Friendship and possible marriage from female devotees . . ." (emphasis mine). I understand that a man or woman wants to know a possible marriage partner prior to making a commitment, but a gentleman should not advertise for lady friends whom he may marry. If he chooses not to marry a lady, then he should offer her all respect as his mother. This is the culture Srila Prabhupada has given us.

I received two other identical comments and agree with the point. Therefore only Personals that explicitly request a marriage partner will be printed. If the wording in an ad is questionable I will edit it or not run it.

### "I Hope The Issues Are Healed And Resolved"

Greg Anzalone  
San Francisco, CA

I had a chance this weekend to read through the issues of *Priti-laksanam* that you sent me. The specific concerns of your newsletter are beyond my experience but the general idea of those concerns are not beyond my understanding. By the tone of your comments and the comments of others, it seems clear that some "grass-roots" effort was/is needed within the movement. The conundrum of change is that the problem always appears to be more simple than the solution. Or, those that wish for change find the effort necessary for that change beyond their capacity.

I am inspired by your effort. I applaud your desire to create a healthy environment, an environment that is much larger than your own. The geographical scope of your readership is incredible. I hope your newsletter has continued success, but more importantly, I hope the issues it addresses are healed, resolved, or brought into the light of constructive debate.

### A Response "To 'Damsels In Distress'"

Wallace Dorian  
Culver City, CA

Sita Devi Dasi's essay in Volume 6 about women and men in ISKCON was electrifying, intelligent, emotional and to the point. Sita devi dasi can place her lotus feet on my head any time.

### "A Forum For Honest Expression"

Sakuntala devi dasi

Houston, TX

*Priti-laksanam* is great. I believe it will have impact in changing unhealthy attitudes within ISKCON, as well as offering a forum for honest expression.

### "A Great Service for Srila Prabhupada's Mission"

Gauridasa Pandita dasa

Seattle, Washington

Thank you for your nice newsletter, *Priti-laksanam*. I have just received and read Volume 6 cover to cover. It is very nice and much needed. There should always be open communication between devotees. You are providing a great service to Srila Prabhupada's mission that is missing in other publications.

I enjoyed the nectar section especially the article about Jahnava Devi. With all the male gurus in ISKCON today I wonder when they will finally open it up to the females. I think the women would be better off and free from exploitation which has been the case so far. I would have no problem with that, especially considering what the male gurus have put us through in the last sixteen years.

It's nice to hear the vast array of devotees in their individual ways reveal their minds and hearts to the Vaisnava community. From the serious to the humorous, Hanumat P. Swami's Uncle Gismo is always interesting, along with hearing the more serious complaints of our trials and tribulations within and without ISKCON.

My advice on improving *Priti-laksanam* would be to put the nectar section first and the personals and ads last or at least not right off the bat. The first impression is most important.

### "Emotions Aroused In A Positive Light"

Vidura dasa

Kisumu, Africa

My sincere thanks for sending me your publication *Priti-laksanam*. Your idea is certainly bearing fruit and is one which deserves every support. Your courage in presentation and balance of views is an effort we must all commend you for.

I have not been able to write to date for different reasons but feel when I pick up a copy of *Priti-laksanam* that I

am right there with the devotees and am a part of this wonderful ISKCON world-wide movement. It is not always easy to maintain the feeling of being a part of this great revolution when you are stuck here in the middle of the equator with little or no association and your only contact is by letter or the occasional expensive telephone call. But when *Priti-laksanam* started to make it's way here I was so happy to have it and to participate in the debates and to have my emotions aroused in a very positive light, whether agreeing or not with your correspondents. It is all very positive and I hope with your move to Alachua you will not shirk in your endeavor to churn this nectar and points of discussion which we all need so much.

If you do not hear from me it does not mean that I am not there or not sending moral support for your effort. Keep up the nice service to the Vaisnavas, you can be assured of nothing but success.

### "A Breath of Fresh Air"

Indradev Bernal

Soquel, Calif.

I want to congratulate you on the quality of your newsletter. I wish we could see more like it around, definitely a breath of fresh air. Could you please include my name in your mailing list, we all here in Santa Cruz appreciate your honest, forward approach to Krsna consciousness.

### "Let's Work Together!"

Chaits of Gurukula Alumni, Inc.

Culver City, CA.

I also hope that we can come together and transform the Krsna conscious movement into a full fledged Society. Open and honest communication is vital for this to happen. Thank you for your part in this endeavor. *Priti-laksanam* is a large step toward making this vision a reality. If our faith is strong and we act upon our beliefs, it will happen. I am convinced of that. Let's work together!

### "Acceptable Beverages?"

Anonymous

I am a bit distressed and confused over the actions of some of my Godbrothers and sisters and need advise. Decaffeinated coffee, as well as, "alcohol-free" beer products are the beverages of choice for otherwise very fixed-up devotees. Caffeine-free and alcohol-free products are not 100% devoid of the substances that render them against the principal of "no

intoxicants." How do these beverages rank as acceptable beverages: If they are acceptable, what makes them as such, and if not, what can we do to discourage their use? Help! Can someone please explain.

#### "Inspiration To Our Spiritual Lives"

Catura dasi

San Diego, CA

We both continue to enjoy reading the newsletter and find it an inspiration in our spiritual lives. Many devotees here are enlivened by this newsletter.

#### "Learn To Love One Another"

Mahavegavati dasi

Buffalo, NY

For so long we hear of so many different issues which *all* boils down to one thing; many of us as devotees do not properly understand Srila Prabhupada's books, nor have many of us attained that level of advancement to realize that which Srila Prabhupada has given us from the scriptures and shown us by his example. Needless to say, so many of us are still on the bodily and mental platform.

All that aside, I'd like to quote Srila Prabhupada's definition with regards to why, generally, women are considered less intelligent. Hopefully this should clear up a few misconceptions.

*Srimad-Bhagavatam* purport 3.23.54, "... generally all women desire material enjoyment. They are called less intelligent because they are mostly prone to material enjoyment." Intelligence or lack of it is defined with regards to one's desire and inclination (or lack of it), toward sense enjoyment.

That is Srila Prabhupada's statement: "Intelligence," (as he defines in *Bhagavad-gita*, 10.5) "refers to the power of analyzing things in proper perspective," which means ultimately to know what to accept for Krsna's service and what to reject. One who indulges in sense gratification, neglecting their surrender to Krsna, is less intelligent, be he man or woman.

We should realize, after all these years (or at least understand by what we've been told by Srila Prabhupada and the scripture), that we, the soul, go beyond these bodily designations and although there must be recognition of them for practical purposes, they should not be employed so as to hamper another devotee's advancement and rights to have access to service to Krsna. Come on, let's grow up after so many years. If we can't learn to love one another as devotees, then how are we going to be able to *honestly* preach it

to others. We have to preach by words and by example. How can we effectively give to others what we don't have ourselves?

#### "Topics For Discussion"

Bud Konowitz

Charlotte, North Carolina

While attending Gaura-purnima at the farm community in Efland, North Carolina, a very good question was raised with reference to giving a *brahmana* money. One devotee asked, how can her husband perform solely as a *brahmana* without any monetary payment. Indeed some might wonder why would a true *brahmana* need money. It is suggested by various sects of the *sanatana-dharma*, that when a "holy man" visits a town or home, that upon the holy man's departure, the holy man be presented with food and money. The *brahmana* does not need the money for personal gain. The money is used for the expenses of travel, and to support the *brahmana's* family at home. I might add that many temples have two donation boxes. One box for the temple and the other box for the priests.

The next topic was raised by a dear friend of mine. It is customary among various sects of the *sanatana-dharma* to burn prayers in the HOMA (sacrificial fire). This friend stated that their understanding of the *Vedas* was that women are not supposed to light sacrificial fires. I personally know several women *pujaris*, and head *pujaris* in ISKCON.

There are two sets of scriptures in the *sanatana-dharma*. Aside from the scriptures we know as the *Vedas*, there also exists another set of scriptures known as the *agamas*. I wish I could go into detail, but that would take a great deal of time. The point is this. In India a woman gained entrance into the "renounced order" by demonstrating that the *agamas* stated that such a practice was allowed.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no reason that a woman cannot create a HOMA, especially if there is no temple in the area. If anyone has more information on this subject, I would like to know what scripture does prohibit women from starting HOMA.

#### "Overdue Discussions"

Mahasakti dasi

Adelaide, Australia

I have enjoyed reading *Priti-laksanam* very much and it's great to see different topics which are not being usually discussed very openly, being aired through this newsletter. And of course,

it's well overdue to discuss some of these problems that women face in ISKCON. I joined in 1985 and I immediately perceived it as a very dark area and I felt that the movement couldn't progress very well while 50% of the population in ISKCON were treated abominably. Of course, not all women will agree about that, but I've seen and experienced a lot of it and been appalled. I get a bit bored by it too because it can cause friction amongst devotees all because of bodily identification. Keep up the good work. Let's hope we don't get too bogged down by any one issue. But still, let's hear it all.

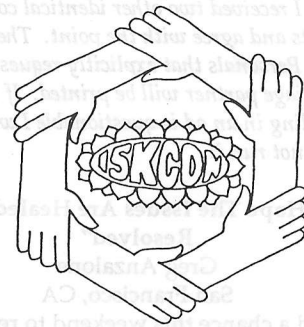
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#### ESSAYS

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#### "Project Unity

Uniting Prabhupada's Family & Strengthening ISKCON"



The following is an interview with Lokanatha Maharaja regarding Project Unity, a new project formed by the Centennial Committee to address important social aspects of our Society.

PL: Maharaja, can you give some background to the inspiration behind this project?

Lokanatha Maharaja: The inspiration for Project Unity came from devotees around the world. Last year after I was appointed Centennial Minister and our group did some brainstorming to finalize the master plan for the Centennial. Some felt that because the celebration was for such a grand spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, that everything should be done on a very grand scale. The sky was the limit for us we thought, and though it sounded big and nice we weren't sure whether our plans were practical. There was also some feeling that we may be missing certain important areas. We wanted to check whether we were right or off so I sent some 200 letters circulating around to senior men all over the continents.

The responses varied. Some appreciated what we were planning, some thought that we should be

thinking bigger, while others were disappointed that we had ignored some aspects that they wanted to see included.

The main concern expressed was that Prabhupada's family, Prabhupada's children, Prabhupada's grandchildren, *gurukulis* be unified to glorify Srila Prabhupada.

There are many different concerns and issues which some felt are weakening our Movement. Someone said, "You're talking about putting decorations and ornaments on a body, but that body is not healthy. The body is sick, so what use is the decoration and embellishment?" There was a feeling that unless our Society focuses on these various issues and addresses them then there won't be a chance of unity. This was an important point for us.

We started thinking in more balanced ways. Now we've scaled down the events portion of the Centennial lotus. We went over our list of goals to determine what was achievable and what was beyond our capacity. We cut back on some of the ceremonial aspects and decided to add focus on this aspect of reuniting Srila Prabhupada's family and strengthening ISKCON.

This all happened during the year. Since the GBC meetings were coming up we proposed that the GBC appoint high level committee(s) to tackle issues, such as women's role in ISKCON, education of our children, concerns of different *asramas*, etc. The GBC decided instead that the Centennial Ministry should do a survey, or an audit, of the devotees living inside and outside the movement to find out what steps were needed for ISKCON to become united and strong. [The GBC resolutions are reprinted at the end of this interview.]

Our staff members, including Pancaratna Prabhu who is a visionary, came up with this project, Project Unity, which addresses 3 of the 10 petals of the lotus of activities for Centennial, namely, increasing Prabhupada consciousness, uniting Prabhupada's family, and strengthening ISKCON. The other 7 petals take care of events, publications, memorials, and other ceremonial functions.

PL: What will be Project Unity's first order of business?

Lokanatha Swami: There are 5 areas Project Unity would like to develop, but the first aspect will be a world-wide survey that we'll implement to understand the various reasons why devotees leave ISKCON; to quantify as far as possible the extent and depth of

different concerns; and reveal how official ISKCON is perceived both from within and without amongst both devotees and sympathizers. The survey is being designed right now by a committee in Alachua under the professional guidance of sociologist and sympathizer Dr. Burke Rochford. The survey committee is taking great care in designing/writing the survey to assure that an accurate and open assessment of many elements in our Society can be determined from answers on a well prepared questionnaire. Facts that are culled from the survey will be dealt with under the other areas of Project Unity such as a board of reconciliation and an integration committee.

PL: Do you have a personal goal you would like to see achieved by Project Unity?

Lokanatha Swami: I would like to see a united, strong ISKCON. That is what we have been discussing in our meetings in Alachua and with other devotees as I travel. We have to define unity first, and then try to achieve it. We're in the initial stages of working on Project Unity and as we have more defined goals and results we'll share them with devotees. •

#### 1993 GBC Resolutions Regarding the Srila Prabhupada Centennial

#49: Whereas the GBC is hopeful that in the spirit of the Srila Prabhupada Centennial all of Srila Prabhupada's family may unite for this celebration, and understanding that this may only be a first step in many cases, the GBC body hereby formally extends apologies to any devotees who have been hurt by poor treatment or mistakes made by ISKCON leaders.

#50. That the Centennial Ministry will organize a global survey or audit of devotees living both within ISKCON communities and outside as well as those who have left the full-time practice of Krsna consciousness in order to help understand the steps that can be taken to develop a strong, united ISKCON. Similar efforts are encouraged in open forums like *istagosthis*, conferences, ISKCON publications, etc.

#52. Whereas the Srila Prabhupada Centennial has unique potential to accomplish the following ISKCON objectives: appreciation and recognition of Srila Prabhupada; unity and strength in the ISKCON family; developing and involving ISKCON congregation; expansion of *sankirtana*, especially book distribution, and whereas, the Srila Prabhupada Centennial can function as

a deadline for achieving certain agreed upon goals, it is resolved: That the International Society for Krishna Consciousness shall make the campaign for and celebration of Srila Prabhupada Centennial a focus of all its activities through 1996.

*A copy of Project Unity's prospectus, which details the five areas Project Unity is concerning itself with, can be obtained from the Centennial Global Ministry at 62 Sant Nagar (near east of Kailash), New Delhi, 110 065 India. Phone 91-11-642-1763; FAX 91-11-647-0742.*

#### "Vaisnava Association"

Mulaprakriti dasi

Badger, CA

On May 1-2 in Topanga, California, a number of devotees including Dhanesvara dasa and Atmavana dasi, Nrsinghananda das and Mohana dasi, and Gopavrindapala dasa and Mulaprakriti dasi sponsored a weekend gathering on the topic of improving our *Vaisnava* association. More than 100 devotees, attending from all over the U.S., experienced a new enthusiasm for this ancient all-important subject. The topic of our movement's unity as "one big family" was discussed from many insightful perspectives. The eye-opening exchange of ideas, realizations, and personal feelings surpassed everyone's expectations. A large number of participating devotees returned to their respective temples, communities, and families with new hope, friendships, and success formulas for healthy and productive interaction to serve Srila Prabhupada together.

The conference was divided into four categories, each including a presentation as well as open-mike discussions, experiential processes, and small group interaction. The topics of peer association, led by Gopavrindapala dasa, (friendships, closer trust, intimacy, and commitment to each other [men and women's groups]) and the devotee's relationship with the institution, with Dhanesvara dasa, were discussed on Saturday. Sunday included male-female association facilitated by Gopavrindapala and Mulaprakriti (the psychology of marriage and practical guides for *grhasthas*), and 2nd generation and youth issues, Mohana and Amrita dasis gave a workshop on parenting and self-esteem, with many *Gurukulis* sharing on a panel discussion. The information presented and discussed was researched from Srila Prabhupada's teachings and ideas for practical application for our modern culture

were discussed.

The mood of the weekend was heartfelt, honest, and ecstatic. A special highlight was a unique stage production by one of the devotional men's groups in *New Dwarka* entitled "PAMHO" (Please Accept My Humble Obeisances). This was a hilarious and poignant portrayal of our history and potential in working together as devotees. This type of *istagoshi* gathering for exploring and improving our relationships is an exciting avenue for our future. There is an upcoming Devotee Association Conference in Alachua, Florida on Aug. 14-15 [See the advertisement on page 21] and possible others this summer on the East Coast and in Europe. Anyone wanting audio or video cassettes of the conference and play (filmed by Yadubara dasa) may contact Nrsinghananda dasa at ITV. We would be very happy to hear from any devotees interested in these subjects and are willing to participate in other conferences. Please write c/o Gopavrindapala dasa and Mulaprakriti dasi. P.O. Box 143 Badger, CA 93603. (209) 337-2545.

#### In Response To The Relationship Conference

Nandini dasi  
Arizona

The following letter was written to Nrsimhananda in Topanga expressing Nandini's feelings after attending the conference described above:

Thank you for having this place here [Topanga Canyon preaching center] and continuing despite all the hard times. I know you've been through things as bad (or worse) than I've been through, but somehow you've managed to keep your sense of humor about it. You've been such a gracious host to all kinds of people, from GBC hard-nosed no goodniks to gentle, curious seekers who come to the Sunday Feast. There's also those "difficult" people like me, who criticize and try to break down faith of those who hope that ISKCON can be "saved."

Thanks so much for treating me with the patience you seem to have so much of. I can genuinely say that your help is acknowledged and appreciated. I want to be close to Krsna and Prabhupada, but until last weekend I didn't think it was possible to accept the good stuff without accepting the whole package.

That conference on devotee relationships, put on by Gopavrindapal, Mulaprakriti and Dhanesvara, was

remarkable. I didn't expect much, but on Saturday morning I suddenly found myself in a room of 80 devotees who were eager to talk about issues that have been painful for all of us. Things that have been "under the carpet" all these years. After talking about our feelings in the large group and in small groups for nearly 48 hours straight, we all felt closer to each other and closer to Prabhupada & Krsna. I'll never forget this weekend, thank you once again for inviting me out for it.

#### GRHASTHA ASRAMA ADVISORY SERVICES

##### Initial Request for Information

Loka Saksi Dasa

ISKCON Rio, Brazil

This year the GBC passed Health & Welfare resolution 93-75:

The GBC Body approves the appointment of Loka Saksi Prabhu as the Co-ordinator for Grhastha Advisory Services. . . . The Coordinator's responsibilities are:

- a. To assemble materials for a *grhastha asrama* handbook.
- b. To gather information on how marriage matches occur in different parts of the world.
- c. To work out guidelines in consultation with senior *grhasthas* in good standing about child raising, economic security, etc. (theoretical and practical).
- d. To correspond with *grhasthas* and managers world-wide about householder questions.
- e. To tabulate the successes and failures of grassroots efforts to deal with *grhastha* problems now underway in different regions of the ISKCON world and make the information available to all ISKCON devotees.

His Holiness Jayapataka Swami, who sponsored the resolution, gave some of his reasoning as follows:

The batting average of ISKCON marriages is really poor. Newlyweds are fired-up for their new *asrama*, but more often than not they are like moths flying into the fire. They are generally ill-prepared to face the challenges of their new *asrama* due to many misconceptions, illusions, romantic ideas, lack of proper role models and poor fund of knowledge of married life's demands. The result is that our marriage failure rate in ISKCON seems higher than the *karmis*.

Strong *grhasthas* means strong families, means strong society. Our weak families are a curse and future generations will suffer due to it. For ISKCON to grow through the centuries

we need to establish proper *grhastha asrama* standards around the world.

Although I am a *sannyasi*, how can I stand by and see so many marriages destroyed? We all want to see strong *grhasthas* couples. If we have to take birth again in this world, we are really going to need it. I don't want to be born in a broken family again!

To implement this resolution and give a broad-based approach to resolve ISKCON'S marriage problems, this humble servant of yours appeals to all concerned devotees to help. Any information you can offer—resource materials, experiences, observations or suggestions—especially in reference to the above items of the GBC resolution will be appreciated. We need your ideas and input now!

If you are already involved in any such programs (i.e., marriage counseling, training, compatibility, match-making, occupational referral, etc.) either officially or in a grassroots way in your area, or if you know someone else who is involved or think should be involved, please let us know. Recognizing already existing (or non-existent) programs is naturally the priority to systemize and develop our overall efforts. Whatever the case, don't hesitate to contact me at the following address. The need is too urgent to ignore. Loka Saksi dasa, GBC, Co-ordinator for Grhastha Asrama Advisory Services, c/o ISKCON RIO, Rua Armando Coelho de Freitas, 108, Barra da Tijuca, CEP 22620. Brazil.

#### "Doing What is Natural"

Ramboru Devi Dasi  
Vrndavana, India

Fifteen years ago, I was living as one of the rare married women in an ISKCON community, where virtually everyone was single and celibate.

After performing the *garbhadasa samskara*, (chanting 5,400 times, the Hare Krsna *mantra*) my husband and I conceived our first child. Naturally, both of us, as full-time preachers of a preaching mission, desired to nurture a soul who would also someday take up the "family business" of preaching the *sankirtana* movement.

When the pregnancy test revealed clearly positive, and gradually news of our parental status trickled out, from all sides there were cries, "Oh no, now your preaching work is finished!" The movement was at the time (and still is) in a very experimental period and preaching with family members so far had not proved to be a very easy business. In spite of all this, there we

were, new-age pioneers pursuing an ancient, time-tested philosophy.

So far, during our 2 1/2 years of marriage, my husband and I had worked together as a team, and as I gazed into the crystal ball of the future, I felt baffled over how to go about making this present circumstance some kind of a preaching endeavor. My husband's solution was simple. He joined the traveling book distribution party, and I was left back at the temple to "hatch-the-egg!"

Being an odd-ball in a monastic community, I felt desperately alone. Living in a foreign country, the language of which I vaguely knew, and having only scant understanding of the Hare Krsna philosophy, already handicapped my efforts at preaching the message of love of God. Now, with a child on the way, and husband gone, my space of mobility was limited to the circumference of a very small room. Much like an unwed mother, I felt abandoned by family and friends, isolated and rubber-stamped as some kind of untouchable.

The other devotees had told me that the child in the womb was very sensitive to sound, and that if he hears transcendental subject matter during that time, it can have a very powerful effect on the rest of his life.

I had been in the movement then, almost 3 years and had not yet read the ever-increasing collection of Srila Prabhupada's books. So I thought, "This is my chance, I *must* read them *all* now. I had personally witnessed the struggle other mothers in our Society went through when it came to reading, and I realized that this opportunity may never come again for me—at least, not for a long time. I panicked. My immediate plan of action became obvious—to take advantage of this time to read Srila Prabhupada's books, not silently only to myself, but loudly so the child the womb could also hear.

As I set out to realize my desire; to read *all* of Srila Prabhupada's books, I began with *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Canto 1, Volume 1, all verses and purports included. Reading out loud hour after hour, often 3-4 hours daily, I completed 2-3 volumes per week. In the beginning, it was a struggle to remove myself from unessential conversations and activities, but driven by the nagging desire to do it made me determined. Time was limited, and I realized that the greatest service I could ever render my child (as well as myself) was to firmly lay the foundation for preaching; hearing from the lips of the pure devotee. After the

child's birth, this unique opportunity would vanish.

As I read and read, often, I observed how my attention on the subject matter came and went, but, I thought, "even if my consciousness is absent, there is someone inside who is listening," so I just kept reading loudly with total detachment until my jaws got glued and tired, and I was forced to take a break. "In this age, hearing is more important than thinking, because one's thinking may be disturbed by mental agitation, but if one concentrates on hearing, he will be forced to associate with the sound vibration of Krsna." (*Bhag.* 3.35.24, purport)

Gradually, I found during service time, my tongue hankering for the opportunity to recite *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Then, ideas would come to mind how to be more efficient in saving time for reading.

One idea was to rise at midnight or 1:00 AM to get extra uninterrupted time to read. Another idea was to eat my meals in 1/4 of the time it usually took, and use the balance time to plough through another few pages of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Anyway, as I read, I came to the story of Devahuti and her husband's advice on how she could obtain the Supreme Lord as her son. He said, "You have to factually engage in devotional service with austerity and penance, following the religious principles and giving charity. Then the Supreme Lord will be pleased with you and will come as your son." (*Bhag.* 3.24.4 and purport)

I was beginning to see that the makings of a preacher or great devotee is scientific, and that the environment for receiving such a great soul must be cultured by the parents long before even conceiving a child.

Srila Prabhupada explains in a verse describing the household life of Prthu Maharaja: "As a householder, Prthu Maharaja had five sons by his wife Arci, and all of these sons were begotten as he desired them. They were not born whimsically or by accident. How one can beget children according to one's own desire is practically unknown in the present age (Kali-yuga). In this regard, the secret of success depends on the parent's acceptance of the various purificatory methods known as *samskara*. The first *samskara*, the *garbhadana-samskara*, or child-begetting *samskara* is compulsory, especially for the higher castes, the *brahmanas* and *ksatriyas*—as is stated in *Bhagavad-gita*, sex life which is not against religious principles is Krsna

Himself, and according to religious principles, when one wants to beget a child, he must perform the *garbhadana samskara* before having sex. The mental state of the mother and father before sex will certainly effect the mentality of the child to be begotten. A child who is begotten out of lust may not turn out as the parents desire. . . . If the mental state of the parents is prepared before they have sex, the child which they will beget will certainly reflect their mental condition. . . . Prthu Maharaja did not beget his children out of lust, nor was he attracted to his wife for sense gratificatory purposes. He begot the children as a *grhastha* for the future administration of his government all over the world." (*Bhag.* 4.22.53, purport)

Not only does the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* give practical information how to prepare the foundation for having good children before conception, but it further explains how to nurture the child's life toward Krsna while he is within the womb: "When he was in the womb of his mother, Prahlada Maharaja listened to the words of Narada Muni. One cannot imagine how the baby in embryo could hear Narada, but this is spiritual life; progress in spiritual life cannot be obstructed by any material condition. This is called *ahaituky apratihata*. Reception of spiritual knowledge is never checked by any material condition. Thus, Prahlada Maharaja from his very childhood, spoke spiritual knowledge to his class friends, and certainly it was effective, although all of them were children." (*Bhag.* 7.7.1, purport)

Maharaja Pariksit had a vision of the Supreme Lord while lying in the womb, which left him so impressed that his goal in life became to regain that self same vision of the Supreme Lord. Srila Prabhupada writes, "Maharaja Pariksit, fortunate as he was, got the impression of the Lord even within the womb of his mother and thus contemplation on the Lord was constantly with him. Once the impression of the transcendental form of the Lord is fixed in one's mind, one can never forget Him in any circumstances. . . ."

"Srila Jiva Gosvami remarks in this connection that every child, if given an impression of the Lord from His very childhood, certainly becomes a great devotee of the Lord like Maharaja Pariksit. One may not be as fortunate as Maharaja Pariksit to have the opportunity to see the Lord in the womb of his mother, but even if he is not so fortunate, he can be made so" Srila

Prabhupada continues, "there is practical example in my personal life in this connection. My father was a pure devotee of the Lord, and when I was only 4 or 5 years old, my father gave me a couple of forms of Radha and Kṛṣṇa. In a playful manner, I used to worship these Deities with my sister, and I used to imitate the performances of a neighboring temple of Radha-Govinda. By constantly visiting this neighboring temple and copying the ceremonies in connection with my own Deities at play, I developed a natural affinity for the Lord. . . ."

In Ireland, there is a saying, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," and, as I soared through chapter after chapter of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, I became convinced that it is Kṛṣṇa's calculated desire that every mother actively participate in the nurturing of devoted souls for the propagation of His own mission. I could plainly see how every mother, by her personal preaching effort could potentially change the face of the earth. Even if she cultured only one pure devotee, just see the spiritual potency of such a single personality as Srila Prabhupada!

In the Vedic society, mother plays a sacred role in developing the future generation, as she takes the position of *guru*, giving direction and setting a perfect example for her family.

We learn from Mother Suniti's wonderful example how to urge the child further toward the Supreme Lord, after the child's birth. She advised her saintly son during a situation of personal turmoil that he "was only a small child, 5 years old, and it was not possible for him to purify himself by the way of *karma-kanda*. (pursuance of fruitive activities). But, by the process of *bhakti-yoga*, even a child of less than 5 years or anyone can be purified." (*Bhag.* 4.8.22, purport) "Any five year old child can be trained and within a very short time his life will become successful by realization of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Unfortunately, this training is lacking all over the world. It is necessary for the leaders of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to start educational institutions in different parts of the world to train children starting at age 5 years, thus, such children will not become hippies or spoiled children of society, rather, they will become devotees of the Lord. The face of the earth will then change automatically." (*Bhag.* 4.12.23, purport)

"Like Suniti, every mother should train her child to become a devotee like

Dhruva Maharaja. Suniti instructed her son, even at the age of 5 years, to be unattached to worldly affairs and to go to the forest to search out the Supreme Lord. She never desired that her son remain at home comfortably without ever undertaking austerities and penances to achieve the favor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Every mother, like Suniti, must take care of her son and train him to become a *brahmacari* from the age of 5 years and undergo austerities and penances for spiritual realization. The benefit will be that her son becomes a strong devotee like Dhruva, certainly will he not only be transferred back home, back to Godhead, but she will also be transferred with him to the spiritual world; even though she may be unable to undergo austerities and penances in executing devotional service." (*Bhag.* 4.12.34, purport)

My apparently bleak and desperate situation, became a golden opportunity due to association with *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Taking advantage of this opportunity, in turn revealed to me the essential nature and importance of just doing what was natural for me—being a mother, with the special flavor added of service to Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission. Instead of "jumping out of a window," trying to escape from the potential entanglement of family life—making do with the already 'givens' and sprinkling the dust of devotional service over the seemingly mundane situation I was in, magically surcharged it with hope, significance and new life.

#### "Amicable Dealings"

Bali Mardan dasa  
Millwood, NY

I was impressed by the sincere and heartfelt sentiments expressed in your newsletter. My reaction was to feel remorse for the many offenses I have committed to Vaisnavas. I beg forgiveness at their feet.

Many devotees feel they are in a distressed condition. Without justifying the causes of such distress the plight and prayers of Kuntī devī come to mind. Can we follow her example and use such situations to our spiritual advantage by depending more directly on the mercy of *guru* and Gaurāṅga?

It hurts to hear how the service of devotees has been detrimentally effected by the actions and attitudes of their peers and mentors. In a letter to me dated 8/14/74, Srila Prabhupada states, "All of our members are giving voluntary service, so they should always be encouraged in their service

attitude," and 9/5/74, "Amongst ourselves there must be very liberal and friendly dealings. This is not an ordinary thing that if somebody has got some fault he should be cut. He should be reformed by amicable dealings."

Vaisnava relationships are based on purity and realization, compassion and love. To institutionalize such things is not as easy as voting a resolution or mouthing palatable words. We need pure actions based on pure realization.

How to achieve this? Mahāprabhu instructs us to cleanse the impure mind by Sri Kṛṣṇa *sankīrtana*. We must attempt to elevate ourselves and our family of devotees so that feelings of being used and abused are transformed to those of being loved and cared for. This could have the effect of increasing the ocean of devotional service as we all become enthused.

Comments or questions? Write me  
P.O. Box 9, Millwood, NY 10546.

#### "Vaisnava Calendar"

Bhakta Rupa dasa  
Calcutta, India

I recently received a letter from a devotee in the US. who wrote:

"It has come to my attention that many devotees are somewhat disturbed with the present Vaisnava calendar.

Many devotees feel that Srila Prabhupada had originally instructed that we should follow the calendar determined by the Caitanya Math in Mayapur. When Srila Prabhupada left, the GBC decided for an accurate determination of Ekadasi but when Srila Prabhupada originally instructed about this, some objections were raised but he insisted on the Caitanya Math calendar.

"We are feeling that even though there may not be an exact determination, it may very well be better to follow things the way Srila Prabhupada originally instructed them. There may be many considerations but it stands that Srila Prabhupada instructed things in a certain way, and we feel it may be better in the end to just follow things the way Srila Prabhupada said to do them."

Perhaps other devotees might also be interested in this topic. If you think so you may want to print the above together with my response, which was:

"The GBC Body (pre-1990) spent a considerable amount of energy in researching the issue, and also flip-flopped on it before reaching the present conclusion. Markandeya Rsi Prabhū did considerable research, interviewing prominent Vaisnavas, and



wrote a lengthy paper, which was eventually accepted by the Body. The paper does not directly answer your point though, but in a cover letter dated December 8, 1989, written when the report was initially circulated to the GBC members, Harikesa Swami says:

"For your information, a member of the committee interviewed Pradyumna about his work on the calendar during Prabhupada's time. Pradyumna said that he made the calendar for ISKCON for two years during the lifetime of Srila Prabhupada (1976-1977) and for two years after that (1978-1979). His calendars for 1976 and 1979 included Ekadasi calculated for foreign zones according to local sunrises. This was not widely advertised since the devotees of ISKCON were not into following the strict Ekadasi (*nirjala*-no water). Pradyumna was following the *nirjala* Ekadasi at the time and therefore calculated the correct time of Ekadasi for different places. According to him, Prabhupada knew about this local calculation and did not object to it. Pradyumna seemed unaware of Prabhupada's supposed comment that the calculations were over intelligent. It doesn't mean that Prabhupada never said it, but that Prabhupada did not consider it important enough to correct Pradyumna personally and allowed him to go on with the calculations. Indeed, according to Pradyumna, when Prabhupada wanted to know when was Ekadasi he asked Pradyumna to tell him.

"Please consider new information carefully in the light of the unanimous conclusion of all the experts interviewed in this paper. Please also consider that Prabhupada's relationship with Pradyumna was very special. Often he would criticize him externally for mumbling *mantras* and throwing water here and there, yet at the same time Prabhupada personally gave Pradyumna the worship of the first *saligrama sila* in ISKCON, which engaged his propensities perfectly. Similarly, Prabhupada externally criticized him for carrying so many books but reading none of them, yet he depended on Pradyumna and the same books to complete his own books and even engaged Pradyumna in translating the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* after his departure from this world. Therefore, although Prabhupada externally passed a one word comment about the hard labor of creating a calendar, he accepted Pradyumna's work. Actions speak louder than words. What speaks louder, Pradyumna's two years of

calendar calculations while traveling with Srila Prabhupada under his direct supervision, or a one word comment spoken in passing to a person who had nothing to do with the creation of the calendar? Please consider this point while studying the paper. Did Prabhupada want that this one word comment should determine the future of the Vaisnava calendar for the next 10,000 years?"

If you think your point deserves a more in-depth treatment, I suggest those interested correspond with Markandeya Rsi at Box 5155, 65005 Karlstad, Sweden. You may also correspond with other GBC members to understand why they felt this adjustment was proper.

There is one additional point that I can make though, which helped to convince me of the need for adjustment: Suppose the sun rose at 5:50 AM on October 12 in Mayapur, and the Caitanya Math calendar says that that day is Ekadasi. Now you say that in Sandy Ridge, NC you want to observe Ekadasi on the same day. I also agree, but what is the definition of the "same day"? Is it the day that starts ten and a half hours later in NC called "October 12" there also, or the day that starts thirteen and a half hours earlier in NC called "October 11" according to local custom in NC. We are accustomed to assuming that the day called "October 12" is the "same day," but what if the Japanese had conquered the world last century instead of the British and established the "Osaka Meridian" instead of the Greenwich Meridian? Then the International Dateline would run down the Atlantic Ocean instead of the Pacific! What would the residents of Sandy Ridge be calling the "same day" as October 12 in Mayapur? Certainly it would be the day that started thirteen and a half hours earlier.

Why should we be so insistent on following this custom if we have convenient access to an alternative, more natural one, based upon Vaisnava understandings? If there is a real significance in the physical planetary alignment on Ekadasi (i.e. if its not just some superstition) then we should base our observance on the physical reality. Of course, if it meant we would sit at home for hours making calculations instead of preaching, then it would be better not to be so concerned with such details. But that is no longer the case.

"Perpetuating Hate"  
Candrasekhara dasa  
Alachua, FL

He walked in with a shotgun and said, "Hey, look Prabhu, it's a real nigger killer!"

A few weeks later—

A devotee I used to know in the Brooklyn temple in '72 came to the temple from South Africa: "Hey gee! How's South Africa?" "It's crazy over there." "I'll bet, and it will get crazier. The whites are fearful, the blacks are oppressed. . . ." With this he said, "Nonsense! Oppressed—nonsense! I can't believe people think like that." I was sincerely incredulous. I said, "They can vote?" To which he replied: "Well, no, but . . . The blacks are crazy. The blacks want everything, they won't work—you know blacks—they're monkeys." Realizing there was no point in arguing, I said, "Well, I'm no South African expert . . ." He didn't know he was talking to someone whose wife was black. I said, "Didn't the whites take their land?" He said, "No one lived in South Africa before the white man came."

I know devotees who are an integral part of the temple community who routinely refer to blacks as "niggers" and I've heard a 2 1/2 year old devotee child call them niggers in the grocery store.

Monkeys. Cult members. Niggers. Rather impersonal isn't it? This is not as simple as it may seem at first.

Prabhupada said, "There is no distinction between black and white, no question of language, nothing. You see practically. There is white child, black child. They do not know how to speak. But they are chanting and dancing. So this movement is so important. . . the whole world will be united."

" . . . because we do not love Krsna, therefore there is partiality . . . and as soon as you try to love Krsna, then you will see, 'Oh, the cows are my brothers, the black people are my brothers, the white people are my brothers, the ants are my brothers' . . ." SF 9-13-68. "We want to unite the whole world. . . And actually that is happening. In our society we have got devotees from all sections of people . . . from black and white. . . we are seeing according to *Bhagavad-gita, panditah sama darsinah.*" 7-16-71 Detroit. " . . . one is black, one is white. We have no such distinctions. Everyone is servant of God." 7-11-75 Phila.

"Being Engaged"

Bhakta Wallace Dorian

Culver City, CA

Recently, in the essay by Dhanesvara dasa "Submission and Surrender,"

Volume 6, he posed the question to devotees, "What do you like to do." He alludes to the fact that once a devotee finds a proper engagement (after doing some menial service which is still transcendental), the devotee may be more inclined to stay in ISKCON, or the temple environment for an indefinite period of time. I certainly agree with this concept as the best of all possible worlds. But let's be candid, ISKCON is not as big an institution (if I may use that word) as, let's say, the Catholic Church, where one may find the kind of service suitable for that devotee's talents. We must also take into account the economic base in ISKCON at the present moment that may also be a significant factor, at least as far as maintenance is concerned.

In addition, there is also the problem of relocation, particularly difficult if one has a family, assuming an engagement could be had at some temple somewhere on the globe. I also believe it was Srila Prabhupada's desire that his disciples eventually move up the ladder as it were, into a position by which a devotee could flourish utilizing his/her talents much the same as one would find in "secular" society. I'm sure this will resolve itself with future generations entering ISKCON and as our movement expands.

We must also take into consideration that for some devotees, preaching *Bhagavatam* and distributing Srila Prabhupada's books is the highest achievement and I'm sure many devotees around the world are satisfied with that particular service. I do agree however, that something must be done about keeping devotees properly engaged according to their nature and abilities within ISKCON thereby keeping a strong base of devotees.

#### *Building A House*

Using myself as an example, I have been associated with ISKCON for almost fourteen years and have seen devotees from all walks of life come and go. I've seen marriages break-up and I've seen the turmoil and obstacles our great movement has gone through over the years. This is the Kali-yuga, so it is not surprising that these things are taking place, dysfunctional childhoods not withstanding. There is always going to be some envy in this world, in or out of the movement and the road to purity as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati once said is "set with thorns," but we mustn't give up. It is essential that if ISKCON hopes to be a viable movement that will be instrumental in bringing about a "Vedic civilization"

for the next 10,000 years, and if it is going to attract other souls lost in the ocean of repeated birth and death, it is imperative that we as devotees communicate and cooperate with one another despite our cultural and/or bodily differences. After all, we're pure spirit soul and sometimes it's not that easy to see the Paramatma in everyone's heart. Especially after someone has cut you off in traffic.

I've often jokingly said that the best test for one prior to taking *sannyasa*, is to drive the LA freeways for at least 24 hours without getting angry at another motorist. If they pass the test they can take *sannyasa*.

#### *Cultural Conquest*

In an interview given sometime ago in ISKCON World Review, Tamal Krishna Goswami stated that Srila Prabhupada once said that the "movement would expand through cultural conquest."

Naturally, as a struggling filmmaker and writer, I took this to mean that the masses in general would be attracted to ISKCON through film, television, theater, dance, music, etc. But hardly does one see anything "Krsna conscious" when turning to these forms of mass entertainment. Film, for example, has always been a powerful medium these past 90 years utilizing all the art forms that is at once kinetic and emotional in all genres. So it would make sense that according to time, place and circumstance, preaching in the future will and must be done through these mediums as a pathway leading to the *Vedas*. Today, people are attracted to film for example and television has turned the world into a "global village." I'm sure there is no shortage of talent within ISKCON to bring about a revolution in film by realizing the *Vedas*, such as the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* in an epic manner that would rouse and excite the people in general.

While ISKCON has "in-house" film and video such as ITV here in Los Angeles, the time has come for ISKCON in general to start giving consideration to moving into the professional arena in this regard thereby keeping it's devotees who could best utilize their natures artistic or otherwise and keep them engaged in what it is he/she would "like to do." This would also exclude any "monopoly" amongst devotee-owned businesses.

#### *A Strong Foundation*

I know this is a long and winding road to Dhanesvara dasa's original question, but I believe it is imperative, as ISKCON moves into the next millen-

nium, to somehow appeal to the newly formed ISKCON Foundation, for example, to begin appropriating moneys as well as arts funding for devotees where by devotees may submit proposals to be reviewed. This would be similar in nature to the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) that subsidizes artists either individually or collectively. By this kind of mass preaching, more and more people will be attracted to ISKCON and Srila Prabhupada's books. It is a fact, that it is extremely difficult for any devotee to raise capital for Krsna conscious projects from the private sector, unless that devotee is from a wealthy family or extremely well-connected in the business sense, and even then the final cry is, "Will it make money?" In answer to this age-old question, at least from a devotional point of view, the answer I pose is, "Will it save souls?" Money will always come in time, it's in Krsna's hands.

A case in point is when Srila Prabhupada's spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta told him to "make dolls." He envisioned a time when the people would be attracted to such a preaching device. Thus, the FATE museum here in LA that is at once kinetic, emotional and transcendental. It is obvious that film requires huge sums of money and mass distribution outlets, but in the final analysis, at least from a financial point of view, it will be an investment in the future of ISKCON in so many ways. Namely, popularizing the *Vedas* on a mass scale in a professional manner. Once the foundation is strong, then devotees will find something they will "like to do," while continuing with their preaching and *sadhana*. A family divided cannot stand is an old adage. ISKCON must give full consideration along with the Foundation itself to implement these programs by which the movement can expand culturally and spiritually by using the devotees nature and disciplines.

#### *"Nectar"*

Mina dasi  
Red Bank, TN

I wanted to share with you some of my ecstasy. I am having such a good time. It is becoming more and more clear to me that the nectar we are looking for is in preaching.

Preaching is the essence. Books are the basis. Utility is the principle. Purity is the force.

Somehow we must see how to facilitate the chanting of the holy name and relishing and distributing food

offered to Krsna. Everything else will come from that.

We don't have to be in a big position or have millions of dollars to work with, a big following or big buildings. We only have to have a little desire to want to facilitate the chanting of the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* and taste and distribute *prasadam*. I am convinced this is our primary business. Of course, how to do that may require some plan-making, some arranging, some facilities, etc.

I am having such a good time. I almost think I must be dreaming. My health was not very good over the last few years. In March I moved to Murari Sevaka because of the clean air and peace and nature, and the wonderful intimate *darsana* of Nitai-Gauracandra. My health improved, by Krsna's grace, and I was able to obtain permission from the Department of Parks and Recreation, in Chattanooga, about 2 hours from Murari Sevaka, to have a vegetarian lunch program on Wednesday afternoons. I kept thinking Srila Prabhupada would like this. I felt his encouragement. It has been going on successfully since January.

I now have an apartment in Chattanooga and have only had to prepare the offering once by myself. People who come to the lunch want to learn how to cook the recipes: *pakorras*, *samosas*, chutneys, *sabjis*, *laddus*, *halava*, etc. So they come to my apartment in the morning and we prepare the offering together. Then we have a little *kirtana* for Prabhupada and Krsna, take *prasadam* and discuss in a friendly way some of the philosophy. Then we go to the Carver Center and distribute the remnants to whoever comes. Sometimes poor people, sometimes educated people interested in community development, sometimes a whole class full of children.

It always more than pays for itself. I simply put a little can out on the table. It has a sign on it, "Your donation helps to continue the program, thank you." I have never asked anyone to put anything in the can. It is a magic can. When it is time to pack up and go, I look in and it is full. Checks, five dollar bills, it is magic.

And other opportunities are coming from the *prasadam* distribution. I was invited to set up a program for chanting, *Bhagavad-gita* class and *prasadam* at a New Age Church and it is now becoming a monthly event.

During the week whoever I meet I give them a flyer inviting them to the lunch.

On Saturdays there is a flea market in the heart of the city where I can set up a little book table and chant Hare Krsna all I want. It is ecstasy. The little children wave and sometimes jump in the air with their hands over their heads. Or they just stand and watch and listen for a long time. I am able to sell books and incense and meet people.

I am convinced we must make the effort to arrange our lives in such a way that we can preach. Not that we wait for someone else to make programs. We must make the programs. I believe that the single most important instruction of Srila Prabhupada is to preach Krsna consciousness as it is, as he has given it to us. All else will follow. Chant, dance and take *prasadam*.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada and all the Vaisnava *acaryas* past, present and future. I welcome your comments and correspondence. Anyone who would like to help please contact: Myrna Baron (Mina dasi), 2807 Dayton Blvd. #2, Red Bank, TN. 37415 (615) 870-5066.

#### "Healthy And Happy"

Janis

Alachua, FL

Unless the brain and body are healthy, how can they serve as instruments for Krsna?

By sattvic practices, such as *hatha-yoga*, careful eating, and analysis of unproductive tendencies to be dissolved in *sadhana*, our well-being and relationship with Krsna will be enhanced.

The karmic vehicles that we are born into must be understood and dealt with; or else, e. g., we'll have overly cerebral types thinking that they're *brahmanas*, while in fact carpentry would serve them and the community nicely (and shorten a lecture or two!).

"Fall downs" are often the result of mind-body dis-ease rather than being a problem on the purely spiritual platform.

It's also good to have all life-level circumstances as positive as possible for devotees. Thus, we may be engaged in higher devotional activities than simply the hard struggle for survival. To this end, we should facilitate each other's life-level welfare. Again, much of what appears to be purely spiritual problems is in fact a lack of the basic necessities of life, with its attendant stress.

"The *hatha-yoga* system is meant for controlling the five kinds of air encircling the pure soul by different kinds of sitting postures-not for material profit, but for liberation of the minute soul from

the entanglement of the material atmosphere." Srila Prabhupada, Bg. 2.17 (my emphasis)

#### "Proposal For A Coalition of Devotees"

Paratrikananda dasa

Los Angeles, CA

The Problem

At this stage in the evolution of the Krsna consciousness movement it must be acknowledged that a large number of devotees simply will not work under the banner of ISKCON. It should be noted that most of these devotees are not opposed to ISKCON but that they are opposed to some of ISKCON'S administrative policies. Individually or in small groups these devotees can, and in many cases are, continuing to preach. But, if the devotional community in general remains broken into a thousand different splinter groups, how can we expect the world to see our movement as having anything better to offer than the Christians, with their myriad denominations? We are supposed to be helping Prabhupada build a house in which the whole world can live.

We can strengthen our commitment to Prabhupada and accomplish much more if we are united. The efforts of hundreds or thousands of devotees working in sync is much more effective than each of us working individually or in small groups. For this reason, Srila Prabhupada wanted an international society of devotees. Many of us feel the need to re-group but there are still many philosophical differences and the fear of bureaucratic exploitation. In addition, if devotees form an organization outside of the ISKCON institution, it will be seen as a separatist endeavor and a threat to the institution. The result of this will be that the devotees who work within ISKCON will feel alienated from those outside, and Prabhupada's house will still remain divided.

#### A Solution

Although we may have differences, we must, as Srila Prabhupada did, try to see the sincerity in all devotees, and hope that others will see some sincerity in us. A possible solution to the above mentioned problems is to form a coalition. The American Heritage Dictionary defines coalition as: "An alliance, especially a temporary one, of factions, parties or nations." The word "coalition" implies that it's members do not always see eye to eye but that they have found common ground. The word "coalition" also implies that the unification of factions is not eternal but

it is temporary—it is for a specific purpose. Members of a coalition do not need to make a long term commitment. In effect, our coalition can be seen as an experiment—“Can we work together for a particular goal over a specified period of time?” If the experiment is successful we can continue with other projects and stronger commitments to one another and to Srila Prabhupada. Eventually, we hope to be able to reconcile our differences and re-integrate ourselves into a healthy ISKCON.

The coalition can be seen as a provisional measure toward that end. In addition, safeguards would be established in the coalition charter to keep overly ambitious members of the coalition from exploiting other members.

We have nothing to lose by joining such a coalition. Most devotees have developed their own sources of livelihood but still long for devotional association and a sense of community and inter-community identity. A coalition will allow us to satisfy these needs without having to give up our independence. And, if we do not like the direction the coalition is taking we can simply withdraw our support.

#### *What Is Our Common Ground?*

Our common ground was, is and always will be service to Srila Prabhupada. Time and time again we have seen that, despite all of our differences and difficulties, devotees both new and old; both inside and outside of the institution, retain their love for Srila Prabhupada. The upcoming Srila Prabhupada Centennial is a unique opportunity for all of us to show the world how wonderful Prabhupada is. It is also a chance for us to show Prabhupada that we can work together, as he wanted us to. The Srila Prabhupada Centennial is a project that ISKCON must dedicate manpower and money to. If there is a coalition of devotees who are willing to make a major contribution to this project, it would only make sense for ISKCON to welcome such help. A Prabhupada Centennial Coalition is non-threatening to all parties because all parties would retain their independence while working cooperatively toward common goals.

#### *Proposed Statement Of Purpose*

##### *Prabhupada Centennial Coalition*

The Prabhupada Centennial Coalition is a union of Vaisnava communities, organizations and individuals, formed for the purpose of honoring His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Prabhupada on the 100th anniversary of his divine appearance. We, the members of the coalition, are autonomous and independent from one another, and do not agree on all issues. However, we are in complete agreement that Srila Prabhupada is the center of our lives and should be properly glorified in 1996. Therefore, in this arena, we agree to set aside our differences and work cooperatively. It is our intention to associate with each other, to encourage each other, to promote initiative, and to pool our talents and resources for projects of mutual interest. In so doing, we hope to please Srila Prabhupada and repay a small portion of the debt we owe him.

#### *Concluding Statement*

Most of us are tired of reading philosophical papers and debating. We can talk from now until the cows come home but unless we start doing something, Krsna will bring the cows home without us.

If you'd be interested in joining a Prabhupada Centennial Coalition, have any questions or would like to offer some feedback, we'd like to hear from you. A more detailed proposal for a charter and a list of many exciting centennial projects is available upon request. (Please send SASE) Patrick Hogan, 8203 Blackburn Ave., Apt. J, Los Angeles, CA 90048. (213) 651-4243

#### **“Nobody Has A Monopoly On Krsna”**

Chitraketu dasa

England

You say in your editorial that Krsna consciousness is struggling in the States but booming abroad. Well, there are two types of growth of Krsna consciousness: one is when the movement expands through book distribution, establishment of temples, *nama-hattas* etc., and the other is when the creeper of devotion grows (almost imperceptibly) and matures within the heart of the devotee. When there is a freeze on useful outward activity, it often gives an opportunity for introspection and inner development.

In England, the movement, as an organized body, is actually shrinking rather than expanding, but what is happening is that many devotees who have been left stranded have taken to serious introspection and have come to the realization that they each have more potency within themselves (God-given potency) than they would otherwise have been led to believe. Many of us have been trained to rely on others to dictate to us the way of grace; we have depended on temple presidents and

various *guru*-like figures, none of whom will be able to help us at the time of death. At the time of death we depend upon our own advancement and integrity, aided by Krsna's grace, to take us over the last obstacle and into eternal peace.

In short, I feel that temple life has resulted in many of us becoming over-dependent and not daring to imagine or suggest that Lord Krsna, as the Supersoul, is in every heart and is capable of guiding and supporting each individual separately. Although we cooperate together, our own personal development should not be stunted. Each individual should be able to stand alone if need be, just as Srila Prabhupada did when he came to America. Of course, a disciple is never alone, because his spiritual master walks with him.

When I was a Christian, I prayed to God, my God, not anyone else's God, and I felt supported and guided by my own inner voice. After becoming a devotee, I learned to listen to others, specifically Srila Prabhupada and others who claimed to represent him. Soon I became incapable of hearing my own inner voice because of the variety of contributions from outside.

Now, after 13 years of service in ISKCON, I find myself living outside and married with a family, but with hardly any recognizable service to perform, except for my daily 'invisible' *sadhana*. However, I have discovered one thing—that inner voice is still with me and has not gone away and is in fact clearer and more audible than ever. Now I know that that voice is the voice of the Supersoul, the Guru within, and without pride I can say He never fails me although I often fail Him. Is it overwhelming audacity to suggest that one can speak with God in the silent moments of prayer? This is something we were taught to expect as Christians; as devotees are we meant to be suspicious of our own inner guide? There is a source of light and love deep within the heart; although imperfectly perceived, it is nonetheless the source of boundless comfort and bliss. I don't need 'gurus' if I can perceive God within myself, and this is no doubt the reason why institutions and organized religions don't encourage such realizations—because it breeds a type of independence which makes the individual the judge of his own actions.

I don't wish to be anarchic, because such realizations are only gained through the inexplicable grace of the great servants of God, through whom

one comes to know that one is actually an eternal servant of the servant of that same Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Organizations then become more like cooperatives, wherein independent individuals who are masters of themselves, each in their own right, come together for the purpose of propagating God consciousness. In such an organization there is no scope for artificial dominance and domineering or browbeating, because there are no threats or curses that could possibly cause fear or perturbation in any of the cooperating individuals.

Sri Krsna works in mysterious ways—but one thing I have learned while being outside the temple and in “*maya*,” as they say, and that is that Krsna belongs to me and He is mine, as much as I belong to Him and I am His. Without this sense of owning Krsna, one wouldn’t have the strength to turn down so-called ownership of all the other petty things in the material world. I have realized that Krsna is my God and that I have a personal relationship with Him—all right, that sounds a bit like blowing my own trumpet, but I strongly feel that many of the maladies within ISKCON are caused by over-dependence on others, rather than relying on one’s own flocks of sheep who have followed the “follow my leader” syndrome, and you wonder who is to blame for the resultant situation!

Religious bodies throughout the centuries have claimed to hold a monopoly on God, but mystics, poets and seers have constantly refuted their claims. *Nobody has a monopoly on Krsna*, and I am not afraid of being called names for saying that. That is nobody except Srimati Radhika, of course.

#### “Children, Gurukula, and Needs”

Yaduvendu dasa  
Leicester, UK

In practicing Krsna consciousness, it has always been a source of comfort, to know that if I don’t make it back to Godhead in this life, at least I will have another chance, taking birth in the family of devotees next time. “What a wonderful thing that would be,” I used to think. “Growing up free from the conditioning of the material world.”

Now, a few years on, I look back upon such naive notions, as romantic image—sunny days in spiritual childhood, akin to the belief I once had in Santa Claus. Certainly quaint, but nothing to do with reality.

From what I’ve seen of devotees as parents, I’d prefer to take birth in the

family of Nama Hatta members, or failing that, a “good” atheist family, who are able to offer love and stability any day—because I know, however I may be feeling now as an adult, if the love and meeting of needs is as absent in my next life, as it was in this, I’ll be just as messed up, and just as disabled; devotee parents or not.

This, and other shifts in perception—I no longer mistrust. I see them as a natural process of growth. Advancement means to move forward—from one position to the next. Not very different from any other kind of journey. Unnecessary things must be left behind. Especially on a spiritual journey. We have a long way to go, we must travel light. In our case, we progress by means of realization. Realization means new ideas. Without leaving the old redundant ones behind, where is the question of advancement?

What amazes me are devotees who don’t change. Who remain as they were ten or twenty years ago. Like relics from a by-gone age. Afraid to take the responsibility to think for themselves, and perhaps to disagree.

I have passed that point some time ago, and I am prepared to disagree, with anything that does seem right. One of my biggest contentions concerns the traditional ISKCON view of *gurukula*, which I see mouthed around, imitatively, without much thought, or insight.

Many devotees bring up their children according to their own discretion, which may be good—or bad, depending on what they went through. But what I’m talking about is the message that I see coming from so many who represent the voice of authority in this movement. People who are regarded as knowing what they’re talking about. That, I see as neither good or bad, but positively dangerous.

I’m really tired of all the nonsense talked about; spiritual standards at the *gurukula*, and that’s what it is—nonsense! Spiritual standards, as administered in the way that we’re familiar with, are just another form of child abuse. So important are “the standards,” that the ordinary needs; of which a child has so many (many more than an adult) are deemed quite unworthy, resulting in a barrage of problems. Far from developing finer qualities, the child may develop character disorders, and neurotic qualities, due to their emotional, or physical needs not being met. One consideration, amongst many, is the

sense of inner shame a child may feel, in having to disown certain aspects of it’s inner self, that they may feel, does not quite match the high expectations set.

Four regulative principles don’t come into it. Abuse of children—and that includes neglect of needs, is about the most unspiritual thing in the world. It is the sin of all sins—much worse than meat eating. Why did Prabhupada not preach like that? Because it’s taken for granted; Krsna consciousness is meant for those who have already come to the civilized platform, where such common-sense matters should be self-evident. But is it the common denominator, at the root of all that can be called evil. Show me a serial killer, thief, rapist, tyrant, someone who cannot function, or relate to others in a mature way; or delay the urges of the senses, and I’ll show you someone who has suffered some sort of abuse as a child.

It is not so much a question of having a TV or not having a TV or having the latest computer games, or trainers etc., although it could be. What it is a question of, is being conscious of needs. A child’s needs develop as they develop, and in teenage years the needs become very acute. They need to feel comfortable about themselves. Sending them to school in shabby clothes from donation bags will not do this! Nor making the girls wear long dresses like Victorian matrons. They need to “fit in” amongst their contemporary’s, and not feel odd. They need to feel they belong, that they have a place in their society (which cannot mean just devotee society). External symbols; like wearing the right clothes, using contemporary slang, listening to contemporary music, and everything else that comes with it, all plays a part, and an innocent part at that!

Deny them these basic rights, as I see many devotee parents doing, and you may have children who will not even want to be devotees, as we have seen many times. All they need is to grow up feeling Krsna consciousness is a nice thing, to be able to associate it with good, happy, feeling. That cannot be achieved by ramming it down their necks—only the opposite.

Gurukula? Create a happy environment, have some pictures of Krsna on the wall, do a little chanting each day, read stories about Krsna, or Rama, and teach them everything else they need to know. Forget standards!

### "Ladies to the Back"

Chinmayi devi dasi  
Leicester, England

Since everyone is putting their "word" in favor of this and that, I thought I would put in a word (or two).

I'm living up here in Leicester so please forgive me if I don't know exactly what's happening but I take it that there is some controversy about where the women stand to have *darsanas* and *kirtanas* in the temple.

In 1972 in Los Angeles when I joined the temple, the women and men were opposite each other in the temple at all times during the morning and evening programs, with an aisle down the middle. Srila Prabhupada, when he was there, would sit in the middle of the back on his *vyasasana*.

I was a new devotee and young (16 years) coming from High School and I don't think it's at all surprising to anybody that I used to wonder at times if that *brahmacari* across the way was noticing my *kartala* playing, dancing, etc., and hey, I don't think I was the only one! I'm sure that *brahmacaris* or any of the men or women in the temple were falling into the same distraction. It was especially awkward as we actually had to face each other to avoid showing our backs to the *vyasasana*.

Now, when the new temple was being constructed, Srila Prabhupada was shown the plans and he said that the men should stand in the front and the women in the back on the balcony. Well there were complaints from the women, but Srila Prabhupada just laughed and said, "They are dancing on the heads of the men" (meaning that because we were on the balcony our feet were above the heads of the men). He said that the women could come downstairs in the temple but he was very firm, the men in the front of the temple, and the women in the back. After that, no more complaints or questions. Srila Prabhupada made the rule.

Now, I'm not saying that Vaisnavis who want a better view of the Lord just secretly want a better view of the men. I am absolutely sure their intentions are pure, I'm just saying that the tendency for sex attraction is very strong. I'm sure if I were to ask, "Who of you are free from sex desire—please raise your hand" not one hand would be shown.

O.K. one might say, "Well you can get attracted to a man or woman wherever you stand in the temple" and you would be right, but the fact remains, Srila Prabhupada made the

rule not to punish us but to protect us. The rule was not made by some horrible male "leader" who is ignoring religion so that he could satisfy some egotistical whim because he wants to "abuse and neglect" the women.

If somebody new comes to the temple, when they ask why the women are at the back, why can we say, "Our spiritual master made the rule to protect us from the distraction of subtle sex attraction so that we may concentrate our attention on the Deities instead of the opposite sex who happen to be facing us." We are not pure, let's face it. If they ask "Why not the women at the front?" Well, that's easy. Women are naturally shy, we don't want to chant and dance whilst men might be watching. I would certainly feel uncomfortable with the men standing behind me and everybody knows that although my 16 year old tendencies might not be so prominent, I'm not so "naturally" shy, so I can imagine what the truly shy ladies feel.

Finally, there was some quote by another devotee that the women "have been indoctrinated in a gradually self-demeaning self-esteem that acclimates them to viewing such discrimination as normal and acceptable." I'm sorry but I just cannot believe that statement. Since when has standing at the back of the temple room proved such discrimination? We are not barred from *darsana*. It's so absurd to think that the back of the temple is bad and somehow the front is good. Didn't Lord Caitanya stand next to the Garuda Stamba? Haridasa Thakura wasn't even allowed into the temple, what do you think he would have to say about this? Radha-Gokulananda can see us wherever we stand, but if we try to concoct our own rules—going over Srila Prabhupada's head—such efforts to improve our society will fail.

Since I knew the instruction from Srila Prabhupada I felt I should speak up. Please forgive me if I have unknowingly offended anybody.

### "A Woman's Place in Modern Gaudiya Vaisnavism"

Dharmapada dasa

I recently read Kundali's essay in the December 1992 issue of *Priti-laksanam* entitled "Ecstatic Women Stand Back." It prompted me to gather some of my thoughts on the role of women in ISKCON.

A little while ago I saw a program on educational TV about several women's groups that had a contention with Muslims in America. They

complained to the Muslims about the position of women in their religion. Needless to say, the Muslims really got roasted, right on television. The P. R. was very bad for them. I would hate to see something similar happen to ISKCON. Say, for example, televised interviews with disgruntled female devotees or former devotees. This issue must be addressed.

There is a context within which we must function; in modern society, women are not considered property as they were in Vedic times. In fact, women are citizens with full rights and privileges equal to men. This is seen on both a legal as well as a social-functional level. Eventually, the society around us will impose this context on us. We must be ready to incorporate it if we want to be acceptable for preaching. We are getting a bad reputation amongst non-devotee women that have had contact with our society.

In this regard, I once saw a movie made in India which depicted a scene from a temple room in Bengal during the times of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. The women were in the back of the temple room and could still see the altar room which was lit up. This may have been Vedic but it is not acceptable to modern society. Even the Hindus that come to the Sunday feast do not abide by such norms. The ladies elbow their way to the front along with everyone else.

Our lady members should also be allowed to go to the front of the temple room as a daily routine. It should not be that we make ourselves more palatable to the public for the Sunday Feast then change to a different standard later on in the week. To take things a step further, we should think about the time when women will routinely fill posts such as temple president and G.B.C. In this regard, it is actually illegal to discriminate against women on the basis of gender. Hasn't ISKCON had enough lawsuits already!

It might be argued that such a presence might disturb the *sannyasis* and *brahmacaris*. But didn't Srila Prabhupada mention that if the *sannyasis* want to avoid the association of women they should go to the forest? *Sannyasis* and *brahmacaris* should avoid THEM, not the other way around. It's not that women should not be able to come and go freely or stand in the front of the temple room or hold a public post because of *sannyasis* or *brahmacaris*. Ideally, householders should manage anyway, and *sannyasis* should give direction and advice (except in extreme situations). I'm not sure, but I think

that the average Prabhu would agree with me.

We can't expect women to surrender to the role of followers only. Due to the onward march of Kali-yuga, the men have become too unprepared and even degraded to deserve absolute authority over women. Even in our own ISKCON society, the needs of women have often been minimized and their feelings pushed aside. Women need to have a say in things so that their needs are not overlooked.

No entrenched ISKCON bureaucrat will bring this about. (No offense intended). It is up to women and the common man (in this case, devotee) to make this an issue to be dealt with. Those who have sympathetic feelings in this regard should work within the system to bring this change about. Letters should be written to G.B.C.s just as the *karmis* write their congressmen and elected representatives. (By the way, if we are mature adults and even *brahmanas*, why can't we elect ours!) Hopefully, the leaders of ISKCON will receive this issue in a sincere way and do the needful. Hand in hand, we can all blissfully walk down the path of change to a more functional ISKCON.

#### "An 'Outsider's' Perspective"

Amber Rollins  
Hurst, Texas

When I first became interested in Krsna consciousness seven years ago, I often prayed and desired for a forum like this, and for devotees to openly discuss the issues they are now, especially women's issues.

I would like to, if I may, give the perspective of an "outsider" as to the treatment of women in ISKCON. I call myself an outsider because I've never been initiated and I live kind of far from the closest temple, so I can't visit or go to *mangala-arati* as often as I'd like. I do, however, chant every day, read Prabhupada's books, and am a vegetarian.

When I first read *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, I felt an explosion of joy at the affirmation that we are not our bodies but pure souls. I have seen a great deal of ugliness based on the bodily conception, and other churches (like Islam and organized Christianity) not only do not preach against it but most of the time seem to condone such ignorance. Reading *Bhagavad-gita* opened a window in my mind; here at last was a real religion. But my excitement turned to doubt the first time I attended the morning program and was told I had to stand in the back. Ask any African-

American about the tremendous psychological and physical alienation that such a restriction produces; an entire civil rights movement began in reaction to it. In fact, imagine the legal and moral indignation ISKCON would have to face if the rules which apply to women were instead stated against blacks:

"Black people are less intelligent."  
"If a black person is chanting *japa* in the temple room and a white person comes in, the black must leave."  
"Black people are only suited for simple work."  
"Blacks cannot lead class."  
"Blacks are not allowed on the GBC or to become temple president."

I have never known any devotee who would think or propound such prejudicial ideas against any ethnic minority. Why, then, do devotees tolerate such an attitude toward women?

Speaking for myself, I chant, I read, I listen to tapes, I cook *prasadam* in my home, but I still feel as if there's only so far I can go toward Krsna consciousness because of the oppressive atmosphere in the temple and the lack of roles and role models for women (and by the way, thank you so much for helping to change this by running the pastimes of the most holy Sri Jahnava). A few small changes would make such a giant difference, both for me, and Krsna knows, how many other aspiring Vaisnavis.

Thanks for listening. May *Priti-laksanam* continue to provide this incredibly necessary service.

#### "Save The Women and Children"

Daksinavari devi dasi  
Alachua, Florida

Dear Prabhus: Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak to the assembly of devotees through the medium of this newsletter. Only those who've been denied the facility of giving class (most women devotees) can fully understand the frustration of not being given the chance to express their realizations.

Recently, I received a newsletter called "Save the Cow." I commend the devotees who are involved with this program and do not wish to discourage them. However upon receiving this, my response was: "I want to send out a newsletter called 'Save the Women and Children.'" I am embarrassed to see the abuse and neglect of women and children in this movement that is either tolerated and/or encouraged by devotees in management positions.

I desire to see the following change in attitudes and policies:

(1) Classes that touch on the topic of marriage should equally emphasize the responsibility of the man, as well as that of the woman; to carry out their duties in marriage as a team. All the responsibility for success or failure of the marriage does not rest solely upon the woman's shoulders. (I know that many disagree with this. I am prepared to debate this point on the basis of Prabhupada's writings as well as common sense, through this newsletter.) (2) Just as we ladies are requested to aspire to acquire the qualities of Gandhari and others, Srila Prabhupada's life as a *grhastha* should be held up regularly as an example for all married men to follow.

Although Srila Prabhupada strongly desired to render full time service to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, he did not yield to the temptation to leave his young wife. There were many obstacles: A. She refused to take initiation B. She remained stubbornly addicted to tea. C. She refused to preach, even to guests in her own home.

Despite these discouraging factors, Srila Prabhupada worked very hard at his pharmaceutical business and gave her 5 children. He did his best to preach as much as possible, always trying to involve his family, with little success. He was dutiful to the end—until his children were grown. Only after 36 years of marriage, at the age of 54, did he finally give up these attempts. He became a renounced *vanaprastha*, leaving home for good.

Prabhupada's example is strong. Having an "unsubmissive" wife is not an acceptable excuse for deserting your family. True, it can make your life difficult. Material life is fraught with difficulties, but we can preach in any condition. If a man begets a child, that is his service to Krsna: to raise that child and care for him or her—financially, emotionally and spiritually. If the leaders of this movement tolerate anything less than this, then we, as a society are not even human, what to speak of transcendental.

At this point, I would like to object to a phenomena that is going on to this very day. Devotee men are deserting their families, going to another zone and sometimes to another country where they are welcomed with open arms. They are not being pressed by temple or GBC authorities to resolve the family conflict and resume financial, emotional and spiritual responsibility toward their own children. This is a great tragedy and a great offense. Any

society that allows neglect of it's own children will perish.

We are not meant to be silent when a devotee is being offended. Our children deserve the best. Krsna condemned Gandhari for failing to object to her husband's offenses to Draupadi. Even grandfather Bhishma had to suffer reaction for not speaking out against the stripping of the Pandava's queen. If the elders of our movement remain silent when devotees in their jurisdiction neglect women and children then these same elders will also suffer karmic reaction. Everyone must become accountable for their activities.

My dear Godbrothers, please hear me. In a previous life, I was a man who was cruel to women. Therefore I have suffered grievously at the hands of men, even as a devotee. Please do not follow my path. Take good care of those dependent on you. Otherwise you will be forced to come back here and reverse roles as I was. I'm telling you—Krsna means business!

Bg. 12.15: "He for whom no one is put into difficulty and who is not disturbed by anyone, who is equipoised in happiness and distress, fear and anxiety, is very dear to Me."

*Srimad-Bhagavatam*: 5.18.9. Prahlada Maharaja says, "May there be good fortune throughout the universe and may all envious persons be pacified. May all living entities become calm by practicing *bhakti-yoga*, for by accepting devotional service, they will think of each other's welfare. Therefore let us all engage in the service of the supreme transcendence, Lord Sri Krsna and always remain absorbed in thought of Him."

**"Our Children Are Not Our Children, They Are Krsna's Devotees"**

Aniruddha devi dasi

I have been accused of child neglect on more than one occasion. The three times I was reported, I was living in a very falsely prestigious neighborhood, where my neighbors knew and didn't like the fact that I was a devotee. I thought that by moving to a devotional atmosphere I would stop getting hassled, but that was not the case. I came to the conclusion that Krsna was trying to tell me something.

I worked hard to try to be more attentive with my children, but no matter how hard I tried, without being extreme, it wasn't enough. Then I came to the realization that the people who criticize the way I took care of my children were people who were not

married, were married and didn't have children or mothers who were so on the bodily platform that they didn't want anyone yelling at their kids except themselves.

Your children are not your children. These children are Krsna's devotees. Parents can't be with their children all the time. It is not fair or practical to expect them to be. I've seen children get away with murder because the parents weren't around to do anything, and no one wanted to offend the parents. Who's neglecting these children? It isn't always the parents. It's everyone else. When someone says "Why don't you take care of your kids?" Isn't what they are really saying "So I won't have to?" Women and children go hand and hand. Our children are being treated just as unfairly as our women. Instead of seeing them as Krsna's devotees we see them as sex-life results.

Parents in the movement should realize that *their* children aren't the only ones that they should chastise and that they are not the only ones who should chastise *their* children. Correction is another form of affection. It means, "I want you to be Krsna conscious." When correction doesn't come, it means "I don't care." Chastisement is more effective when it comes from someone who isn't the parents.

We can't continue to wash our hands of raising these children. Although the belief is that it is the parents responsibility to teach them, the fact is that everyone else is teaching them apathy. Is it such a burden to tell a child not to do the wrong thing, or take a child back to his or her mother, or move a child off the road and tell him not to go there? Why do the parents have to be the only ones that love them. If we don't show that we love them they won't stay.

**"Rectifying Basic Imbalances"**

Teresa

Oregon

It is very encouraging indeed that there have been such profound explorations of the women's issues; it is clear that many sincere devotees are thinking and working for rectification of this basic imbalance. It is especially gratifying that some of the most crucial and persuasive pieces have been written by men! Such as Adi Purusa and in the last issue Datta dasa and Kaviraja Goswami dasa. I appreciate the fact that Datta dasa brought out a certain realistic and relevant perspective that needs exposure. He makes some telling points

about the facts of how the lives of single men tend to be very destructive and unwholesome. Over 20 years ago a famous sociologist named Jessie Bernard did a lot of research that showed that according to different criteria of mental health and well-being in general, single women/spinsters were far better off than married women, and the unhealthiest group was single men.

Since then of course society has continued to break down and there are huge numbers of single mothers and the feminization of poverty. It is strange that Datta then undercuts his own presentation by asserting that "women tend to become degraded without the guidance of a man." There is no evidence to support this.

I think it would be helpful if devotees became more informed about the actual conditions of people's social and psychological situations. I think such awareness would enhance sensitivity and compassion. Over and over I have been astonished at thought patterns that vaguely insinuate that Vedic standards of propriety and role behavior are without question relevant for Westerners. We need serious examination of this whole mode of thought and real assessment of intention and results or affects.

I have often heard some ideas in the temples that intimate that men are degraded by association with women and/or marriage. But the facts show that men are usually uplifted and healed by a relationship with a woman; there is a tendency for their lives to be more wholesome and constructive. Men devotees should be aware of the current context of the mass culture because it will help them to understand women better and have more appropriate expectations of their behavior.

Men cannot expect women to be submissive, because girls have had to curb or destroy submissive qualities in order to avoid being continually sexually exploited. The simple truth is that the only chaste women around are the opposite of submissive. The only "protected" girls are those who have been trained by their parents from about 4 to resist being molested, date-raped, etc. Men have to accept the fact that women can't have submissive personalities these days. Likewise, it is absurd to expect women to be shy, since most of us grew up in a culture where shyness is seen as a fault, a problem to be eradicated. A shy child causes real concern and even shame to parents. If the shyness persists and is



not overcome, the child experiences situations of great anguish in schools. It is awfully ironic to think of girls who suffered for their shyness and struggled to become assertive and unselfconscious, then later became devotees and were criticized for being too forward, not shy and demure.

Sometimes it seems that men are totally oblivious of the reasons why women question and resist being subordinate to male supremacy in ISKCON. I feel that for women to accept complete subordination to male dominance is simply to cater to men's false egos. The whole culture of the progressive intelligentsia today is saturated with the idea that history itself condemns patriarchy—male dominance and aggression have ruined the world. It is also a cliché that "women's ways" will be the source of healing it. In this context, one can see why some women find it hard to accept the validity of male supremacy in ISKCON. It would be different if women devotees were accepted and really protected; especially if there were a system that treated women with a lot of personal care and helped them find husbands trained with positive attitudes. If the men really provided "shelter from the storm," few women would have problems with being subordinate.

Women have not only been denied association and a place to stay or live in temples; I know of instances when they have even been rejected and denied the opportunity to do service or get spiritual guidance from someone because of their sex. And they were expected to accept and tolerate these excuses and also continue to give financial support! I have been told that in the many situations where a woman devotee was chronically abused and battered by her husband, there was rarely intervention on her behalf. The situation was known and tolerated.

Modesty in dress and a sensitive, respectful attitude to everyone are all that should be expected of women in temple communities, and women deserve appreciation for these qualities since they go against the grain of the mass culture where women scorn modesty and humility today. The women devotees deserve a lot of credit—have they been the perpetrators of any of the egregious episodes in the temples of the gross offenses, physical violence, larcenous betrayals, child abuse, etc.? If devotees were more thoughtful and sensitive we could avoid some unfortunate syndromes.

One is when some irresponsibility of unkindness provokes a woman to be a bit brash or frontal in her behavior and then some men accuse her of being "unchaste." There is some confusion about transposing the required qualities of an ideal wife in an ideal marriage to a much wider context—it seems unfair. Likewise, when men insult women categorically, a woman might protest this attack and then she is accused of being too much on the bodily platform. That is a rhetorical technique that seems ridiculous and unfair.

I think we all want to leave behind as much as possible the mundane consciousness of bodily identification, which is a form of insanity anyway and to reduce tension between the sexes. We have to look more realistically at the thought patterns that help or hinder this. We want to become more absorbed in the ecstasy of transcendental sound vibration, not petty ego trips. I too yearn to escape from Babylon (modern Western society), but the cultural isolationism of the devotional lifestyle becomes practically impossible when the devotee community is so dysfunctional and reduced. So let's stop crippling ourselves with these artificial, puerile, suffocating and poisonous thought patterns!

Let's be thoughtful and responsible about what our words and thoughts create. For example, Hanumatpresaka Swami provided us with "A Gismo View of Ladies." I guess it's a joke, but then the subtext has to be that the women's issue is a minor thing worthy of mockery. Anyway, he covers himself with disclaimers but definitely insinuates the idea that women are less intelligent. This sort of thing seems to me to be destructive and irresponsible for the following reason. But first of all, it's simply not true that boys are smarter than girls who receive equal education. Girls get better scores on the SAT verbals. I thought everyone knew this.

Prabhupada's statements about women's inferior intelligence were relevant to a culture where girls were uneducated and trained only to be servants or ornaments. Insinuations that women are dumb but pretty are pointless or dangerous today. A lot of psychologists have studied people's behavior in institutions and have documented the overwhelming power of expectations/role modeling. Expectations create behavioral reality. A very important research experiment was one in schools some years ago. Classroom teachers were intentionally misin-

formed about IQ scores. Some children's lower IQ scores were reported as much higher. Because the teachers then subtly treated those students in a way that expected intelligent performance, the children actually surpassed themselves and did good work and progressed nicely. So one can see how foolish it is to ever make allusions about women being less intelligent.

Anyway, we are all of us coming from a degraded culture and a pitiful educational system these days—we are all "less intelligent." And Datta's assertion that men today have greater power to discriminate and analyze seems strange. Men also grew up in the insidious television culture that makes everyone passive idiots. Jerry Mander's 1974 book *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* documented the power of the TV medium itself, irregardless of content, to stunt and virtually destroy the power to logically analyze and discriminate. I think that we need to soberly recognize the facts of the current debasement, including the many factors of the effects of things like lead poisoning, then strive to create Vaikuntha-lila oasis of relief from the material world, where the devotees are all encouraged and respected. Where there is Krsna there is some *ananda*, in serving His holy name, form and pastimes.

"Associating With Women: Who, Me?"

Bhakta Steve

Miami, Florida

TIME: Early AM

PLACE: ISKCON of Your town

It's really chilly! Wish I had one of those Swedish bead bags. Oh well . . . austerity is the wealth of the *brahmanas*.

Let's see. Across Main Street and down Elm or over to State Street first and then to Elm? Hmm. Okay, Main it is. Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Hare Krsna, Hare—Krsna! It's the lady jogger with the cocker spaniel again. Gosh, isn't she cold wearing that Spandex—

Hold it, mind! Hold it, right there. What's that on your right hand? Remember why you have it on?

Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Hare—

Oh no—my keys. Where's my . . . Oh there they are . . . Whew! Okay. Where was I? Right. Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama/ Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna

Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

DON'T WALK. No problem. Just wait till the light changes, chant meantime. Hare Krsna—Now what does this lady in the Acura want? What's she looking at? Don't tell me she's never seen someone mumble to himself in this town. Uh oh, she's smiling at me. What do I do? What do I do? Smile back? No that's not a good idea. But if I just look away she'll think I'm rude. Maybe she's a devotee waiting to see if I'm cordial. Maybe I could preach to her. Maybe—

Maybe, I'm in *maya*. Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. (Louder) Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. (Still louder) Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. (Loudest) Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

Who's that? Oh, right, the new *mataji* from abroad. What's her name? Mother . . . what was it now? Forgot it. FORGET IT! Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. I'd sure be able to chant more sincerely if there weren't so many distractions. If only there weren't so many women around deliberately wrecking my *sadhana*. If only they were more chaste, if only they spoke less, if only they covered their heads when they walked past me, if only they were MEN, then surely I'd become a pure devotee. Wouldn't I? WOULDNT I?

Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

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## SPECIAL FEATURE

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### "The Little Jarvis Girl"

Mathuresa dasa  
Alachua, FL

When Raghunatha heard about the accident he made a mental note to call Talavana Prabhu as soon as possible. He didn't know Talavana and his wife Laxmi that well, but this was important. It would be impersonal to let it pass.

Two days later, when Raghunatha pulled into New Gandhamadana, he still hadn't called, and the mental note lay concealed under a heap of other things to do. Raghunatha had been on

the road for over a week, selling shampoo and skin cream to beauty salons. He was worried about his own children and wife and he was wondering almost aloud why he, a devotee, a person of the not-the-body persuasion, had joined the cosmetics industry's sales force. It was just a job, he knew, but he was taking extra precautions not to become body conscious.

Balarama Prabhu paced the parking lot chanting *japa* as Raghunatha drove up and parked beside the New Gandhamadana temple. Balarama was short, thin as a choody noodle, and out going. He greeted Raghunatha with folded palms and a "Haribol."

"How's the beauty business?"

Balarama asked, walking up to Raghunatha and standing right in front of him. "Oh, not too bad," Raghunatha replied. "Must be hard serving the body when you want to be serving Krsna, huh, Prabhu?"

"This is also service, Balarama, maintaining my family. Unfortunately I can't do it right here on the *dhama*."

"I don't know about that, Prabhu. I think. . ."

This was an old debate, disguised though it may have been by Balarama's kindly face and over solicitous repetition of "Prabhu." Raghunatha wanted to get on a better track. "So, what's been happening around here?" he interrupted. "Have the *pujaris* finished the new outfit for Govardhana Puja?"

"Not yet . . . Of course, you know that Madri is still in the hospital."

"No, I didn't."

"Broken arm, broken collar bone, broken leg, and some head injuries."

"Really?!" Raghunatha winced.

Balarama nodded his head gravely. "Yes. She was riding on the back of the motorcycle. Her boyfriend was hardly hurt. Some scratches and bruises. She'll be OK. She was lucky. Krsna protected her."

Madri was Talavana and Laxmi's fourteen-year-old daughter. She had lived at New Gandhamadana with her parents, her older brother, and her older sister for the first eleven years of her life. She still came around with her parents, though she now preferred the name Mary Lou. Mary Lou Jarvis. She was petite, with curly brown hair and large, dark eyes. At the *gurukula* she had once played Rukmini in a Janmastami play, captivating an audience of devotees and guests. It was about Mary Lou's accident that Raghunatha had intended to call Talavana.

"How's her mother and father

taking it?" Raghunatha asked, glad to be on the same wave length with Balarama.

"Haven't seen them since they came over just after Ratha Yatra," Balarama shrugged. "They were apologizing when Madri and her boyfriend rode the motorcycle on the farm and scared that guest *pujari*."

"On the motorcycle . . . when they were both intoxicated. . ."

"Yes."

"I heard about that. They weren't intending to scare. But of course they dress like bikers. . ."

"Yes. The *pujari* was frightened," Balarama continued with a sigh. "So you know, it's her *karma*, Madri, that this should happen, because she offended Lord Jagannatha's *pujari*."

In the current of the conversation, Raghunatha let this comment drift past his scrutiny, though he could feel it turn his stomach. In general he didn't like *karma* used that way. Balarama had once said it was "instant *karma*" that Raghunatha had stubbed his toe while doing a silly dance in the *prasadam* room. Ah well, maybe it was. Made you want to avoid getting so much as a scratch.

"What hospital is she in?"

Raghunatha asked.

"I'm not sure. Probably the big one in Thomasville."

Raghunatha went in and paid obeisances to Lord Jagannatha, honored some *maha*, and talked with several other devotees. Everyone showed sincere concern and seemed to agree that it was "pretty heavy *karma*" that had landed Mary Lou in the hospital, but that maybe it would make her more sober. At least that was the drift of the discussion that Raghunatha absorbed. According to the devotees, Talavana and Laxmi had taken the adversity in stride and had agreed that Mary Lou should understand the material world, what to speak of the back of a motorcycle, to be a dangerous place.

Later that afternoon Raghunatha drove to town to make a deposit before the bank closed at four. He was still thinking of Talavana and Laxmi, not of phoning them exactly, but in a more philosophical vein. They had faced many of the same obstacles that he and other ex-temple devotees were facing. When New Gandhamadana's big *sankirtan* parties and incense business dissolved in the late eighties, Talavana had had to leave his duties as head gardener to look for work. After years in the temple he and Laxmi were, like everyone else, out of sync with even

some of the most basic customs and technologies outside. They had, first of all, no credit or employment histories. Without so much as a credit card, they had felt like extraterrestrial when they shopped at the lumber yard or the hardware store. For job interviews Talavana had bought himself a three piece suit and a pair of shoes from K-mart. That had looked extraterrestrial. Even the telephones had seemed different. Laxmi had called an operator to ask what was the difference between tone and pulse, and the operator couldn't clearly explain.

For Talavana and Laxmi hardest of all was taking care of Mary Lou. On this point—taking care of their children—Raghunatha and Talavana had had a short but memorable discussion one Sunday evening after the feast: how the older kids wanted independence: How to let them have it (as if you had a choice) and still impose some discipline. Mary Lou was the youngest of Laxmi and Talavana's three children. Her older brother joined the Marines the same summer the family moved from New Gandhamadana. Her older sister lived with grandparents in Phoenix, where she attended a junior college. Mary Lou wanted to get out, to attend public school. She demanded her freedom.

And she got it, to the distant consternation of some remaining temple devotees, who thought she needed more discipline. Mary Lou got to wear make-up on the condition that she chant at least two rounds each morning. Got to hang out at the bowling alley on Friday and Saturday nights as long as she attended *mangala arati* on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Got to go with her boyfriend to Pizza Hut as long as she stuck to the plain cheese pizzas. These "Madri regs" were sometimes the target of jokes back at the temple, but Raghunatha didn't like the so-called humor. Though his own kids were much younger than Mary Lou, he could foresee having to impose similar regs, unless secondary schooling developed rapidly in devotee communities.

So I'm somewhat at odds with devotee thinking, Raghunatha was saying to himself as he walked into the bank to deposit the checks collected during his week on the road. There were long lines at the three windows as tellers processed the rush of Friday afternoon deposits. Raghunatha got in the line at Mrs. Parson's window. She was a middle-aged local whose great great grandfather had helped found the

bank. She was friendly with devotees in a cordial, businesslike way and had learned to be tolerant, it seemed to Raghunatha, with devotee idiosyncrasies—with the hand-sewn bags of coins the devotees used to bring in from *sankirtan*. With the get-ups that even to Raghunatha sometimes looked odd: shaven head with *sikha*, unshaven face, *kurta*, *yogi* pants, and flip flops. Anyway, that was seventies and early eighties stuff. Devotees had come and gone, and come again, and here was Mrs. Parson, the kindly meat-eater, Raghunatha thought charitably, still stamping deposit slips and cashing checks. He reached the front of the line.

"Well hello, Mr. Robertson," said Mrs. Parson, who knew devotees by the names on their checks. "Back from your travels?"

"Yep. All the way up to DC this time. I've got skin cream on the brain."

"Well, it's a living anyway, isn't it now?" she said, thumbing expertly through his checks.

"I guess it is."

"That's what I tell myself about the banking business," Mrs. Parson spoke with an alacrity developed from dealing daily, over several decades, with the pains and pleasures of people she served as part of her profession, like a dentist or a barber. She had the catch phrases, friendly repostes, and rejoinders down pat, yet she injected enough of herself into the words to touch customers old and new and put them at ease. Raghunatha had leaned his elbow on the counter.

"There you go," she said, pushing a receipt across to him.

"Thank you kindly," said Raghunatha with a nod. "See you in a couple weeks."

Raghunatha turned to leave, tucking the receipt into his wallet. Next stop was the Handy Market for some razors and shaving cream. Mrs. Parson's voice stopped him.

"Oh, by the way," she called, her voice softened by a quiet urgency.

Raghunatha turned, startled by her changed, unfamiliar tone.

"How is that darling little Jarvis girl? How is Mary Lou?" she asked. Her face—through the blue eye shadow, penciled eyebrows, and rouged cheeks—was creased with worry. She waited a long moment for Raghunatha's reply, her eyes upon him.

All Raghunatha could think was yes, Mary Lou is indeed little. A little girl. Talavana and Laxmi's little girl. How is she?

"Ah... she's doing OK, I think,"

Raghunatha stammered, dizzy with the relative lightness of his own feelings.

"Is she? Doing all right?" Mrs.

Parson repeated. "Lynn and Scott were in the other day and said she couldn't move yet because of the casts. She's their youngest, so they were pretty upset." Mrs. Parson's hands were resting on the counter. It was unusual to see them idle. "They're brave of course, the parents, and that little sweetie is going to be back on her feet soon enough. She's such a dear."

Raghunatha felt like a dry stick washed away in the flood of Mrs. Parson's emotion. He nodded as she talked, unable himself to say anything more.

"Oh my, listen to me prattle," Mrs. Parson said, throwing up her hands and patting her perm. "And look at that line behind you!"

Taking her words literally, Raghunatha glanced absently at the line and stepped aside.

"You tell the Jarvis's I asked after them," Mrs. Parson called as Raghunatha headed again for the door. "And you tell Mary Lou I said hello."

"I will," said Raghunatha. "Thank you. Thank you very much."

At the door he turned and waved to Mrs. Parson, but she was back to work with her customers: "How is the little Jarvis girl?" he repeated to himself as he got into his car, feeling like a complete jerk. For Mrs. Parson there had been no talk of *karma*, or of God protecting Mary Lou, or of Mary Lou being lucky, though that was all likely true. Just, "How is she?" That too, he was sure, must have been the primary response of many devotees at the temple, even many of those who, on a different level, discussed the situation philosophically.

Raghunatha vowed to call Talavana and Laxmi that evening, and did in fact call them this time, knowing exactly what to say.

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## PERSONALS

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Please send \$4.00 per ad to run in 4 issues. Only ads seeking marriage partnerships will be considered for publication; please word your ad carefully to show intent for marriage.

Ten-year devotee, early thirties, never married. Tall, attractive, quiet, employed. Seeks chaste, intelligent girl in her twenties. Write me c/o of my sister: Pamela Theimann, 5319 Paradise Lane, Fort Collins, CO 80526.

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Friend invites correspondence for

Prabhupada disciple (never married) from attractive girls (22-32), serious about spiritual life. Send recent photo and birth data to: 3744 Wateka Avenue #6, Los Angeles, CA 90034.

Female discple of Srila Prabhupada seeks a relationship with mature, emotionally healthy male devotee who is interested in real relating, getting in touch, self-expression, becoming a whole person, cultivating a Vaisnava heart and developing real love for one another, Krsna, Srila Prabhupada and all living entities. Not interested in stereotype acting, judgmentalism, or false pretenses of standards. Write to: Therese c/o my friend Kalakanti devi dasi, 210 Ross St., Cambridge CB1 3BT, United Kingdom.

Krsna conscious wife wanted, 18 to 38. Remote rural situation. I am non-macho, wholistic, growth-oriented and into yoga. I'm a massage therapist, musician, home-owner and loving. Devotee of Krsna, disciple of Srila Prabhupada. For photo and details write Peter Levine, 511 Westwood Circle, Belgrade, MT 59714, USA.

38-year old female devotee, disciple of Satsvarupa Maharaja. A little over-weight; excellent cook; great sense of humor. Joined ISKCON in 1978; from Belgium but speaks fluent English. Hoping to meet a mature male devotee to start family. Willing to travel. Contact Purnamasi dasi, 15 Goodge Place, London W1, England.

38 year old mature male disciple of Srila Prabhupada seeks Krsna conscious wife. I am a homeowner and landowner in a rural Vaisnava community and gainfully employed. Involved in personal growth, healing arts, and developing heartfelt relationships with devotees. Write me c/o F. Kress 379 61st St. Oakland, CA 94618

Lone preacher seeks association/ preaching partner (M or F) to be able to continue to enthusiastically using her skills on behalf of Prabhupada's movement. 15 year devotee, history of making devotees/initiating preaching programs. Program established/ developing, but willing to consider relocating. Reply: Dhira dasi, 2368 NW Thurman St, Portland, OR 97210.

Friendship and marriage desired from female devotees, age 20-28. Must be honest, faithful, tolerant, simple, open-minded, easy to get along with, and like cooking. Education, money, looks, etc., unimportant. I am well educated and financially secure. Reply to: Box 1422, Cary, NC 27511.

Worthless, wretched, fallen, (but cute) uninitiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada seeks devotee lady for committed relationship with Krsna in the center. Kids OK. I want a partner, not a servant. Am financially stable, spiritually trying. A masseur, writer, marketer, former actor. Send note, picture, and a small container of hing to: S. Aminoff, 5775 Collins Avenue, #406, Miami Beach, FL. 33140.

I'm a single father raising a 7 year old daughter, I'm trying my best to devote my life to Krsna. I would like to find a loving devotee mother for my daughter. Please respond: Robert Van Disen, 131 Oak St., Crescent City, CA 95531.

Youthful, energetic, thin-waisted, hard-working, 15-year-devotee male, never married, 37 yrs. of age, looking for a young, energetic devotee wife who can cook well. Write, call or visit Syamasundara dasa, Murari Sevaka Farm, Rt. 1, Box 146-A, Mulberry TN 37359 (615) 759-6888.

39 yr. old female Prabhupada disciple with 10 yr. old daughter, looking for a devotee man who is employed and is astrologically compatible for marriage. Must have good communication skills and desire to be his wife's best friend (not guru). Must be actively involved in some healing process which is in line with Srila Prabhupada's teachings (for example, the 12-step program.) I am currently benefiting from a woman's support group. I enjoy cooking and distributing large quantities of *prasadam*. I love to design and sew outfits for my Deities, Radha-Giridhari. I love canoeing and bicycling. I am working toward an AS degree in landscaping.

I prefer to begin a relationship through written correspondence. Please send exact birth time and location to me Ddd c/o Pritilaksanam.

Male Srila Prabhupada disciple involved in personal growth. Kind, caring and supportive. Spiritually and emotionally healthy. Intelligent and attractive, working professionally. Seeks kind and gentle Vaisnava partner for mutual love and growth relationship. Children OK. Prepared to relocate. Please write to Jonathon c/o 4 Primrose Cottages, Aldenham Rd. Radlett, Herts WD7 8AT, England.

Seeking compatible life companion. About me: 41-male, joined ISKCON 1972 (NY City temple), never married, affectionate, max. open minded, within basic rules. Philosophi-

cally minded, 3 years in India. Probably a slender Asian, energetic, independent, not too pretty would be best. Send questions and define your acceptable parameter to: Ron Porterfield, 2649 Benvenue Ave #1, Berkeley, CA 94704.

A communications error in Volume 6 confused the first printing of this ad, reprinted with changes herein as follows:

My obeisances. Would-be servant of the devotees, 2nd initiated 1977, male, 38, seeks better-half, late in life. Professional in health field, self-employed, doing well in business, and attached to the attempt to serve Srila Prabhupada, but currently somewhat over-endeavoring and under-associating. I love: Krsna-kirtana, Krsna Book, *krsna-prasadam*, the holy *dhamas*, *sankirtana*, and Radha-Krsna's devotees. I have a desire for a Prabhupada-centered home life, perhaps to share and increase these loves. I am far from perfect myself, so don't feel unqualified. Let's work together toward our ideals. Astrological data available. Please write: c/o Hare Krsna dasa, 1115-C Austin Ave., Coquitlam, BC Canada, V3K 3P4, or call: 604-931-8484. Hare Krsna.

Lady (youthful 29) seeks correspondence with male devotees about 35 years old interested in possibility of marriage. Six years *brahmacharini* training, three years practicing Krsna consciousness outside the temple, initiated 1986, never married. I am: nice looking, nice personality, slim, artistic, athletic, intelligent, have a sense of humor, and a positive outlook. Neither a doormat nor a fanatical feminist. Please send recent photo and birth details to: Maria Kust, 27 Harbour View Rd, Pt. Chevalier, Auckland 2, New Zealand. All replies answered and treated confidentially.

#### ADS

Cook/Companion needed: Prefer single female, age 18-30. Cooking experience helpful, but not required. Free car, room, all utilities, *prasadam*, clothes, etc. Must be simple, faithful, broad-minded, enjoy cooking, and sincere about spiritual life. For details and application send self-addressed stamped envelope to: Box 1422, Cary, NC 27511.

A great lady, disciple of Srila Prabhupada. Devoted wife and mother of two young children needs volunteer assistance for periods of one week (or more) for fighting a life-threatening illness. Can you help? Northern California area. Contact Rasamanjari dasi (209) 634-5976.

New tapes from Mahatma dasa. *Heart & Soul*, beautifully orchestrated melodies for the *maha-mantra*. *Siksastaka* and other prayers. *Higher Dimensions*, live modern melodious *kirtanas* with KrishnaFest band. Plus other tapes from Sounds Divine: *Our Only Shelter*; *Your Life Will be Sublime*; *Brahma Samhita*; *Isopanisad*; all with Mahatma dasa. *The Magic is the Chanting* by KrishnaFest; and *Eternal Bliss* by Lokanatha Swami. Digitally recorded and mastered. \$5.95 each. \$6.95 overseas. Payable to KrishnaFest, 5430 Gurley Avenue, Dallas, TX 75223. Phone (214) 827-6330.

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Social issues? Family values? Community and economic development? Your concerns are our agenda! *ISKCON World Review*, P.O. Box 238, Alachua, FL 32615-0238, USA. Phone: 904-462-5054; Fax 904-462-5056. To subscribe to 12 issues: US First Class \$18, US Third Class \$10; other \$20.

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I am trying to establish a Prabhupada museum here in Vienna. We welcome anyone who is interested in selling; buying; or exchanging Prabhupada nectar, such as first-edition books, personal belongings, documents, handwritings, BTG's, etc. No item too small or too big. Please contact. Sadhusangananda dasa, Rosenackerstrasse 26, 1170 Vienna, Austria.

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Stay in touch with the continuing progress in Mayapur. The Mayapur Journal is published quarterly and available by writing P.O. Box 4742, 6304 Zug, Switzerland. The cost of a subscription is US\$12.00 a year.

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As a result of the great success of the West Coast Conference on devotee relationships there will be an East Coast conference in Alachua, Florida as well.

The mood of the Conference in California reassured many senior devotees that developing and maintaining close devotee association or relationships is not a "new age" concept. It is a bona fide and eternal loving exchange between Vaisnava's with Srila Prabhupada as the main focus.

Srila Prabhupada's Centennial is rapidly approaching us, and this Relationship Conference, as encouraged by Lokanatha Swami, Minister of Global Celebration for Srila Prabhupada's Centennial, can help expedite reaching the goals expressed by ISKCON'S Project Unity.

Devotees everywhere are praying that we may offer to Srila Prabhupada's lotus feet, the results of warm, loving exchanges between his Godchildren and great Godchildren as was his frequently expressed desire.

If you feel you have expertise in the area of improving devotee relationships, please contact me, or if you wish to partake

of this treasure house of *sadhu-sanga*, please join us in this humble offering of cooperation to our beloved spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada.

If interested please contact: Svayamjata dasa or Titiksa dasi (in advance) at Rt. 2 Box 231, Alachua, FL. 32615, (904) 462-7377.

Conference on Devotee Relationships  
August 14-15

Saturday, the 14th, 9 AM to 5 PM (*Prasadam Served*)

Topics to be discussed: Peer Association, Husband & Wife Relations.

Sunday, the 15th, 9 AM to 3 PM (*Prasadam Served*)

Topics to be discussed: Inter-generational Relations, Devotee Support Groups.

Speakers to be announced. Audience participation will be encouraged. Advance fee \$10.00 per person. At the door fee \$15.00 per person.

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Krsna conscious prisoner seeks like-minded individuals to correspond with.

Please write: Dennis Archer, Fed. Reg. #28083-004, 1299 Seaside Avenue, San Pedro, CA 90731.

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Hare Krsna Rural Life newsletter devoted to the development of *varnasrama*, cow protection, ox power and self-sufficiency in the Hare Krsna movement. Philosophical and practical articles and news from devotees around the world. Edited by Hare Krsna dasi and Vyapaka dasa. Articles and news submissions welcome. Bi-annual subscription \$10.00 made payable to H.K.R.L. Please send to Hare Krsna dasi, 9B Stetson St., Brunswick, ME 04011.

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c/o ISKCON 1683 Main St., E. Hartford, CT  
06108 USA

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### Help Build a Place for Ladies in Mayapur

The Mayapur Administrative Council has approved the development of a women's center in one of the apartments under construction near Srila Prabhupada's *samadhi*. The apartment would include an appropriate place for women to gather for feasts, classes or meetings; a quiet library with books and tapes; and a *japa* room.

US\$17,000 is required to purchase the apartment and make the necessary structural changes. Srimate dasi will live on site and take responsibility for it's maintenance.

Please send correspondence, inquiries or donations (money should be sent via draft/check payable in Indian rupees made out to ISKCON by registered air mail) to Srimate dasi, Hari Nama Parikrama Project, ISKCON Mayapur, Nadia District, West Bengal, India.

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*Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna,  
Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/  
Hare Rama, Hare Rama,  
Rama Rama, Hare Hare*