

# Priti-laksanam

A Forum for Vaisnava Discussion  
Volume 8, October 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.

Articles and letters appearing in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher. *Priti-laksanam* is an internal publication, not intended for public distribution. Send all correspondence to *Priti-laksanam*, Box 1952, Alachua, FL 32615-1952.

## Contents

Notes from the Editor .....	1
NECTAR SECTION	
Madhurya-kadambini, Chapter Two	
LETTERS	
A Column of Universal Interest—HH Nirananda Swami .....	3
Letter to Srila Prabhupada— Anonymous .....	3
Who Should Stand Where?— Anonymous .....	3
In My Opinion—Anonymous Why the Negativity about Hindu- ism?—Narendra Devadas .....	4
Let's Not Procrastinate—Karla .....	4
Comment on "Knights in Shining Armor"—Mahatma dasa .....	4
Concerning Beverages— Caturatma dasa .....	5
Non-alcoholic Beverages— Anonymous .....	5
ESSAYS	
Invocation-Jayadvaita Swami .....	5
What to Do? Where to Go?— Vijeta dasa .....	6
Vaisnava Relations with Karmi Yogis—Hanumatpresaka Swami .....	7
Compassion—Guruprasada Swami .	7
Overcoming Psuedospiritual Vanity— Kaviraja Goswami dasa .....	8
Sharing Feelings—Kishor dasa .....	9
Well Wishers of Each Other— Hamsavatara dasa .....	9
The Very Best Medicine— Krsna-krpa dasi .....	10
Guidelines for the 4 Asramas— HH Nirananda Swami .....	10
Avoid Problems & Politics— Anonymous .....	11
On Making Marriage Work— Arya dasi .....	12
Till Death do us Part— Krsna-bhajana dasa .....	13

Rock or Metallica?—Syama dasi .....	16
Viewpoint on Women's Issues— Tom Gaffney .....	15
In Response to: "Rectifying Basic Imbalances"—Hare Krsna dasi .....	16
The Truth Shall Make You Free— Gaurangi dasi .....	17
PERSONALS .....	19
ADS .....	20

## Notes from the Editor

As you'll note, the length of *Priti-laksanam* keeps increasing. Many articles are more lengthy than they need to be to get the point across. *Priti-laksanam* is a type of *ista-gosthi* and everyone should be given the facility to participate in the discussion. We all know how frustrating it can be if one person (or just a few people) takes up all the available time during a group discussion. This issue I was unable to print everything I received. My plea:

Be concise! Good writers know: Cut, cut, cut. Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami that said, "Essential truths spoken concisely are true eloquence."

I need to locate Patatriraja Prabhu in Badger, California. Can someone please send me his address and give him a copy of this issue.

I received many anonymous submissions this time. Is this really so necessary? In many cases the topic wasn't even controversial so I'm not sure why we feel a need to hide. Please don't send anonymous submissions. In cases where the subject is really controversial I may consider anonymous submissions.

• Please remember to send your submission on disk. I can accept IBM or MAC format; 5.25" or 3.5"; ASCII or

word processing program. I just don't have time to re-key in all the articles that are submitted. Most of what I receive has been generated from a computer. Please send your disk.

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 (7 in all) are available for \$1.00 each. Thanks again to this issue's donors. Their demonstration of support and encouragement makes it possible for me to send this issue to you.

—Pranada dasi

Visnudut dasa, Australia \$20.00  
Gauranga dasa, Canada \$20.00  
Kaviraja Goswami dasa, CA \$5.00  
Kurma dasa, Australia \$10.00  
Narada Muni dasa, Alachua \$10.00  
Narendra Devadasa, CA \$10.00  
Mahatma dasa, Dallas \$5.00  
Nama Priya dasi, Tuscon \$25.00  
Brahma Sampradaya \$2.00  
Kanka dasi, CA \$10.00  
Patatiraja, Badger \$5.00  
Jayasri dasi, Australia \$10.00  
Gita Priya dasi, MS \$5.00  
Madana Gopal, Sweden \$70.00  
Hare Krsna dasi, Ireland \$12.00  
Jaya Krsna dasa, FL \$10.00  
D. Larsen \$14.00  
Schaffener, France \$25.00  
Hari Nama dasi, FL \$10.00  
Akhilesvara dasa, Canada \$10.00  
Madhavananda dasa, TX \$11.00  
Ganesa dasa, CA \$20.00  
Gopinatha dasi, FL \$10.00  
Anonymous GBC \$20.00  
Ranga Puri dasa, Bolivia \$20.00  
Krsna mayi dasi, GA \$20.00

## NECTAR SECTION

*Madhurya-kadambini*

## Chapter Two

## The Second Shower of Nectar

In this work one will not find a full dissertation on dualism and monism (*bhakti* vs. *jnana*), but for those who expect it, they may find it in another work called *Aisvarya Kadambini*.

The wish-yielding creeper of pure *bhakti*, growing in the field of the heart, is the refuge of the devotees who firmly vow (*ardha vrata*) never to seek any fruits except *bhakti*, and who, like bees (*madhu vrata*), are obsessed with the desire to taste nectar. The very life of this creeper is a favorable attitude to devotion and the Lord. Like a touchstone, its very presence makes the heart lose its iron-like material qualities and acquire spiritual qualities of pure gold (*bhakti*). Having sprouted, growing upwards, that creeper then unfurls two leaves, which are the splendor of *sadhana bhakti*. The first leaf is called *klesa ghni* (dissolution of suffering) and the second is called *subha da* (attainment of auspicious qualities). The smooth upper surface of the two leaves, in a preeminent position by the characteristic of spontaneous greed for everything pertaining to the Lord, and by genuine affection for the Lord in a particular relationship (*yesam aham priya atam sutasca trans*: I am their own dear son) is the jurisdiction of the king called *raga*.

The rough lower surface of the leaves, being in a somewhat lower position because its activities are generated out of scriptural rules, and because spontaneous, deep affection for the Lord is lacking due to absence of a pure relationship with the Lord, is the domain of the king called *vaidha*. However, both *raga* and *vaidha bhakti* equally share the qualities of *klesa ghni* (disappearance of suffering and sin) and *subha da* (appearance of auspicious qualities).

*Klesa*:

The literal meaning is suffering or affliction, but here the meaning may be taken as the causes of suffering. These *klesas* are the cause of sinful and pious activities which result in material misfortune (unhappiness) or good fortune (material happiness). *Klesa* is of five types.

1. *Avidya*: ignorance, to mistake that which is impermanent to be permanent; to mistake that which is full of misery to be blissful; and to mistake what is not the self to be the self.

2. *Asmita*: false ego, bodily identification of me and mine; *raga*: attachment, desire for material happiness and those means which will give it.

3. *Dvesa*: hatred, repulsion to unhappiness or the causes of unhappiness.

4. *Abhinivesa*: attachment or absorption accrued through past births, to certain objects, to the means to attain them, and to one's body, and fear of death.

The stages in the development of sin—*prarabdha* (fructified), *aprarabdha* (unfructified), *rudha* (preseed) and *bija* (seed)—are included in these five *klesas*.

*Subha* or auspiciousness consists of such qualities as disinterest in material affairs, interest in the Supreme Lord, friendliness to the Lord, mercy, forgiveness, truth, simplicity, equanimity, fortitude, gravity, respect, humility, and being pleasing to all. This is proven by such verses as "*sarvair gunais tatra samasate surah . . .*" (All the qualities of the *devatas* are present in the devotee.)

"*Bhaktih paresanubhavo viraktir anyatra caisa trika eka kalah*" (Devotion, taste for the Lord, and detachment from all else appear simultaneously.). By this, one should understand that the two qualities (destruction of suffering and appearance of all good qualities) appear simultaneously. However the cause of some difference in the two leaves unfurling, some difference of rate in the disappearance of the undesirable qualities (*asubha*) and the appearance of the auspicious qualities (*subha*) *bhakti* develops by gradual stages. Though this is very subtle and difficult to perceive, the intelligent men have ascertained this through scrutiny of the various effects.

First, the prospective devotee develops *sraddha* or faith. "*Sraddha*" means to have firm trust in the import of the scriptures dealing with *bhakti*. It also means to have a genuine desire to undertake the activities described in those scriptures (that desire which acts as the cause for their execution.) Both of these types of faith may be naturally or by force.

Then, taking shelter of the lotus feet of *guru* he inquires from him the proper conduct, and by following his instructions, that person begins to live and carry out friendly relations with devotees of similar status and to take the association of realized devotees.

Next, he begins to practice different types of service. This is called *bhajana kriya* or execution of devotional

activities. This also is of two varieties: unsteady (*anisthita*) and steady (*nisthita*). Unsteady performance of devotional activities is of six types (in sequential order): false confidence (*utsaha mayi*), sporadic endeavor (*ghana tarala*), indecision (*vyudha vikalpa*), combat with *maya* (*visaya sangara*), inability to uphold vows (*niyamaksama*), and enjoying the waves (*taranga rangini*).

*Utsaha mayi*: Just as a child, having just begun study of the scriptures, thinks he has immediately become a great scholar worthy of everyone's praise, a person just beginning devotional service may develop the audacity to think that he has mastered everything. He is called *usaha mayi*, or filled (puffed-up) with enthusiasm.

*Ghana tarala*: A child sometimes is diligently engaged in his studies and yet at other times, because of inability to understand the scriptures and because of lack of real taste, becomes totally negligent. In the same way, a new devotee sometimes practices the different activities of devotional service and sometimes neglects them. Being sometimes assiduous and at other times negligent, his endeavor is called *ghana tarala* (condensed-dilute, thick-thin).

*Vyudha vikalpa*: "Shall I just spend my life happily in family life, making my wife and children Krsna conscious, and worshipping the Lord; or should I give them all up and go to Vrndavana and become a real success by engaging full time in hearing and chanting with no distractions? Shall I wait until the last stage, after enjoying all sorts of pleasures, when I have understood that the whole material world is simply a forest fire of affliction, or should I renounce right now? Should I regard this family life as death, deep well concealed by grass, and give up unreliable family life while young? Or shall I wait until the death of my old parents before renouncing? If I give up family life in an unsurfeited state I will think of family life after renouncing. If I should die in that condition I will go to hell. From that type of renunciation I won't get any strength. Therefore for the time being, I will just work to keep my body alive, and later, after satisfying all my desires, I will enter Vrndavana and engage in worship of the Lord twenty four hours a day."

"As scriptures point out, it is wrong to think that *bhakti* arises from renunciation, but one can say that *bhakti* gives rise to renunciation, for renunciation is dependent on *bhakti*. But in the life of renunciation of course there is no

worry for maintenance since wherever one goes one is offered food. But on the other hand, household life is a prison only for those who are attached. If one is a devotee there is no harm in household life." In this way the mind spends time vacillating between household life and renunciation.

"Shall I engage in chanting or rather in hearing, or shall I engage in service? Let me rather engage in many *angas* of *bhakti* like Ambarisa Maharaja." When one imagines in this way all types of options it is called *vyudha vikalpa*, or extensive speculation. *Visaya sangara: Visaya vista cittanam visnvavesah suduratah, varuni dig gatam vastu vrainindrim kim apnuyat.* One whose heart is lost in materialism is far from obtaining devotion to Visnu. Can a man going east catch something which is going in the opposite direction?

The devotee, with this understanding—that he cannot attain steadiness in serving Krsna without renunciation or detachment from material enjoyment—resolves to renounce his addictions. But his attempts at renunciation often end in enjoying what he is trying to renounce. Such a person is exemplified in the *Bhagavatam: Jusamanas ca tan kaman parityago 'py anisvara* (One who is not in control, though he tries to give up his material desires, ends by submitting to his lust).

This on-going battle with his previously acquired desires for sense pleasure, in which he sometimes meets with victory and sometimes with defeat is called "*visaya sangara*" or war with sense pleasure.

*Niyama aksama:* Then the devotee will resolve: "From today I will chant such and such number of rounds of *japa* and will pay so many obeisances. And I will perform services for the devotees. I will not talk on any subject except the Lord and I will give up all association with people who talk on material matters." Though he makes such resolutions every day, he is always unable to execute them. This is called *niyama aksama* or inability to follow rules. *Visaya sangara* is the inability to give up material enjoyment, whereas *niyama aksama* is the inability to improve his devotional service.

*Taranga rangini:* Finally, it is well-known that the very nature of *bhakti* is to be attractive, so all types of people become attracted to the devotee, the abode of *bhakti*. And as the popular saying goes, "by the attraction of the populace one becomes wealthy." *Bhakti* produces much opportunity for material gain, worship and position.

These are weeds around the creeper of *bhakti*. Performing activities, or seeking ones pleasure (*ranga*) amidst these weed-like facilities, which are but small waves (*taranga*) in the ocean of *bhakti*, is called *taranga rangini*, delighting in material facilities.

## LETTERS

### A Column of Universal Interest

H.H. Nirananda Swami  
Brooklyn, NY

I just received a copy of your most recent edition of *Priti-laksanam* and I was very happy to see that so many devotees are contributing articles in the most eloquent style. Perhaps some of them could also be encouraged to write for *Back to Godhead* magazine which could definitely use some fresh material.

Concerning your Personals, I think the space in your newsletter could be put to better use by printing information of more universal interest. My suggestion is to have a column entitled: "Announcements." There, you could list the names of parents and their newborn babies, marriages, opening of preaching centers, installation of Deities, starting of new businesses, etc., which would be most enlivening to the international community of devotees.

Since many of us read your publication from cover to cover, to have to read the same personal ads again and again is totally boring. Besides, it is questionable whether such information should be made public at all. I believe that seeking a marriage partner is a private concern. Close friends and family members may be of assistance in finding a mate, but to publicly advertise one's own availability is humiliating and self-denigrating. I see nothing wrong with offering a match-making service, however, as long as there is guaranteed confidentiality.

### Letter to Srila Prabhupada

Anonymous

Dear Srila Prabhupada,  
I beg to offer my humble obeisances. All glories to your Divine Grace. Your matchless gift is delivering us from *nirvisesa sunyavadi*. I do not know Krsna or devotional service. But you are teaching me. As you say, "Do you really think you are serving Krsna?" No! He is engaging me!

Here I am in the very situation I prayed 20 years ago would not happen. I have failed and let you down. But is

that really true? Your message is becoming clear. Failure or success in devotional service is not measured by the same standard as material results.

You will soon be clearing it up. The future is bright because of you. The ability to cooperate with false standards obvious from the start was there in your order and instructions. You told us your books will never fail, and your teaching warns about cheating religionists.

Your dear son writes, "Frankly they are wishing everyone would merely talk about these abstract things . . . as they cannot face the results . . . under their practical miscalculations."

Thank you, Prabhupada, for association of your Prabhupadanugas. You never forget Krsna, and I never think about Him. You continue to go on protecting me, anyway. I remain praying to learn how to serve you, falling in the dust of your lotus feet.

### Who Should Stand Where?

Anonymous

Just a piece of information from the world of empiric so-called science regarding who should stand where. An argument that has appeared in *Priti-laksanam* goes: "Women should stand in the back so that men don't become agitated. But the scriptures state that women are 9-times lustier than men. So where is the sense to put the women in the position that is more susceptible to agitation? Thus, women in the back is contradictory."

Research has shown that men become more aroused by sight stimulus, and women become more aroused by touch stimulus. Lord Kapila and other authorities confirm that the sight and sound of a woman are most dangerous for the spiritual life of a soul in a male body. As for the conclusive truth as to who should stand where in today's ISKCON, obviously we should do what would please Srila Prabhupada the most. If he wasn't clear on this point, maybe it's not very important.

### In My Opinion

Anonymous

Are you GBC approved? Why do you print letters not supported by *guru, sadhu* and *sastra*. Gay devotees! Ridiculous! Why not meat-eating devotees!

I am addicted to beef-eating but I love Krsna. Don't criticize me. Plus I love to have sex with my own gender. I also take intoxication and gamble. Do you love me too? Then don't discriminate. Print it!

Is this a lesbian-run paper? Why

are half the articles about women! Why are you complaining that men say women are less intelligent in ISKCON? It confuses neophytes and causes ill-feelings. Accept the *sastra*. *Niti sastra* says "Women are considered (in general) half as intelligent as men!" And he wrote this 500 years ago, in Kali-yuga! That's why there are no women *gurus*! Srila Prabhupada said in *Teachings of Queen Kunti*, "Generally, women cannot speculate like philosophers." And in *Teachings of Lord Kapila* "Women are considered inferior to men." In *Srimad Bhagavatam* 1.1, Chapter 7, text 42, page 385, the third sentence down, "Women as a class are no better than boys, and therefore they have no discriminatory power like that of a man." That is why you can't understand! Understand? Just accept it! And the scientific reason why, if you want to know, is because "women hit puberty at age 12, and stop developing, and boys reach it at age 14."

P.S. By the way, I spoke to one *guru*, and it's more important to serve advanced devotees that it is for a bunch of ignorant, confused neophytes to reveal their minds to each other.

In my opinion, your magazine is worse than worthless, it's offensive and contaminating. Please stop it and change your format. Accept only *guru*, *sadhu* and *sastra*. Not logic, common sense, what my mother told me, etc. I'm only trying to help you. You're making things worse for everybody! I'm sorry. Please accept my humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet.

#### Why the Negativity about Hinduism?

Narendra Devadas

Mountain View, California

For an Indian immigrant in the U.S., like me, ISKCON is a spiritual oasis. I am deeply appreciative of the positive spiritual influence ISKCON has all over the world, I am also aware of the positive publicity created by ISKCON for India even though it is a by product of ISKCON's spiritual pursuit.

Spirituality is a personal relationship between God and an individual. Even though a religious organization can create an environment for spirituality. Spirituality itself is individualistic since it excludes the material aspect of the organization. When one confuses spirituality with the organization that promotes it, we have a religious zealot. Some of these zealots end up in influential positions and cause serious problems. They promote one-upmanship as if they are leading a football team, or, worse, a religious war.

I am referring to the "Goals of the Centennial" as published in *Prabhupada Tosani*, an ISKCON publication. One of the goals is "creating public recognition of the Hare Krsna movement as a leading 'contender' . . . complete guidance of human race . . . complete alternative to contemporary, "hodge-podge" Hinduism . . .

The "hodge-podge" Hinduism has been responsible for tolerating, maintaining an *deven* promoting spiritual aspects of several other religions and many more subsets of Hinduism including Vaisnavism. For millennia Hinduism has set an example for religious, spiritual and environmental tolerance. Because Hinduism realizes that spirituality is individualistic and not a promotion of concept.

ISKCON, in its short life of twenty five years has been plagued with numerous cases of murders, sexual abuse of women and children and other crimes. Because of this, ISKCON is losing its credibility as a spiritual organization in the US and some of the other countries. In recent years ISKCON has solicited financial and moral support from the Hindu community all over the world and the Hindu community has willingly responded.

It is important for ISKCON's GBC committee to monitor its leadership/publications and to learn modesty. It needs to resolve its numerous moral and organizational problems before criticizing any religion including a great religion such as Hinduism. If nothing else, ISKCON should learn religious tolerance from Hindus and Hindus should not learn religious intolerance from the West or other cultures!

As a life member of ISKCON, I have confidence that ISKCON will someday be a tolerant, spiritual organization that respects all religion and has strength to stand on its own merits instead of having to stoop to criticize other religions to find strength and recognition.

ISKCON, because of the western origins of its founding devotees should know that we can only spread religion, but not spirituality, by a holy war, and that we can spread spirituality only by being spiritually enlightened.

#### Let's Not Procrastinate With Our Problems

Karla

Alachua, FL

I am a Bhaktin. My impression is that there is not enough education in ISKCON in regards to knowledge of

gender in regards to Prabhupada's intentions and scripture.

We need to establish greater unification and policy in regards to treatment and our understanding of women.

This needs to be written down, administered, and understood beginning with our definition of less intelligent and other scriptural examples, and statements, including Prabhupada's examples and live experiences, in addition to temple room formats (exceptions and choices in regards to places and times for women), *prasadam* lines and exceptions, behavior to *sannyasis* and what to expect . . . and all laws passed that concern women in ISKCON. For example, women on the GBC? Yes or No, how many, what roles?

This manual will show what is correct, incorrect, allowable, not allowable in ISKCON in terms of treatment of women and where to voice concerns. Also, subtle codes such as a temple president and his wife should be included. For example, I believe his wife should be the one to carry his messages to the women and have more direct contact with them than her husband, and only when necessary. These codes protect women, and not just their bodies, their feelings, but mostly devotees. There must be a complete manual, and reference guide. This will lessen the confusion for devotees and aid in better relations, resulting in less turn off to Krsna consciousness, resulting in better preaching. Devotees must be able to write in their questions and concerns to be addressed in this book to insure it is complete and accurate. There must be an adequate compilation of experiences with Prabhupada that will insure accuracy. This manual must be sent to every temple and must answer questions and then revise them. It must be easily accessible to everyone and agreeable. It must include the ISKCON laws concerning women. Please, let's not procrastinate our problems!

#### Comment on Sita Devi Dasi's Article

Mahatma dasa

Dallas, TX

I could identify personally with almost everything she said. In other words, at one time I thought or acted in the ways she described. I don't think that way now, so if I'm a barometer of how things are progressing in this regard, they are getting better even though the external manifestations may not be as many would like.

## Information Concerning Beverages

Caturatma dasa

St. Louis, MO

While I appreciate reading your *Priti-laksanam*, I generally don't bother writing since my voice is just another angle on one of many subjects that I have an opinion (never a lack of those!). Besides most of the time my particular view is usually stated in one form or another.

However, I think I may have some information that will be of some help to the anonymous writer concerning beverages. I will note that I don't bother to respond usually to those who are not willing to put their name to their statement, or inquiry, but this time I am. Due to my long time involvement with the food industry, particularly health food, I do feel I have the background to answer.

The non-alcoholic beverages do indeed contain .05% of alcohol. By the nature of their production it is already there. However, due to being packaged as a beer-type beverage they are required by law to include the amount of alcohol, however insignificant. This is actually less than the amount of alcohol, or fermented drink, that is found in most all of the bottled and canned juices that are sold on the shelves of your local health and grocery store. But, since they are not packaged as alcoholic type beverages, they are not required to print such information. Is it therefore still acceptable as a devotee drink? Since the intoxicating element has been removed I would say most certainly. What do I base this opinion on? Regarding chocolate, Srila Prabhupada stated in one letter (June 8, 1975) that if it is not an intoxicant then it is all right. So since this non-alcoholic beer and wine as well as fruit juices are not an intoxicant, I, for one, would say it seems rightly so. Of course maybe I am jaded by the fact that I have been drinking the stuff for years! I can just see them saying, "So that's what's wrong with him!" But based on my evidence I think it is accurate.

Concerning decaffeinated coffee I would guess that the same applies but I have not done the research into this so I don't know the food industries idea on this. I do, however, have a letter from Prabhupada where he states very strongly, "No! You may not serve decaffeinated coffee in our restaurant" (Nov. 19, 1976).

## Non-alcoholic Beverages

Anonymous

Regarding the acceptability of non-alcoholic beverages as non-intoxication: The amount of alcohol in non-alcoholic beverages is so minute, that even orange juice contains more alcohol, what to speak of it having any intoxicating effect whatsoever. Also, philosophically, the prototype of everything exists in its pure form in Vaikuntha. Therefore, those who drink non-alcoholic beverages, or even eat "veggie burgers," are not necessarily hankering for dope or flesh; rather, these good foods have been contaminated demonically with alcohol and flesh, and are not inherently bad. Rather, it is devotional service to restore the integrity of these cereal beverages and legume patties. It is the drunkards and meat-eaters who are unknowingly hankering for these foods in their pure form, and not necessarily vice-versa.

## ESSAYS

### Invocation

Jayadvaita Swami  
Alachua, FL

*The following talk was presented at the Relationship Conference in Alachua, Fl. in August.*

An invocation is "a calling for," traditionally a calling for God, or these days more often a summoning forth of desired qualities within ourselves.

I wouldn't suppose that you expect me to summon forth something valuable on my own. Rather, since this is a gathering of devotees—devotees of the *sankirtana* movement—<sup>TM</sup>I'd suppose my role should be to help us get started in doing that work of invocation together.

To that end, I'd like first to suggest that we call forth our remembrance of Srila Prabhupada, of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and of Radha and Krsna—because it's only through them that we all have relationships with one another.

Our present relationships as friends, partners, and family members will last for some time—but they'll all soon be cut and reshuffled. Only the ties we have through Krsna, as spiritual living beings, will permanently endure.

Therefore, our present relationships gain meaning and value the more they draw us closer to Krsna. And unless they bring us toward Krsna, they have no value at all.

Next, I'd like to suggest that we invoke our *sraddha*, our faith in Krsna

and the process of Krsna consciousness. *Sraddha-sabdē visvasa kari sudrāha niscaya| krsna-bhakti kaila sarva-karma-kṛta haya.*

We can automatically perform all supporting activities by rendering transcendental loving service to Lord Krsna. Firm, confident faith in that process of devotional service is called *sraddha*. By performing pure devotional service, one automatically receives *moksa*, liberation from repeated birth and death. So what to speak of less valuable achievements like morality, prosperity, and satisfaction for the mind and senses.

Therefore, I'd like to suggest that we invoke our attitude of open acceptance and eagerness for everything favorable for Krsna conscious devotional service—the association of devotees, . . . the service of the Deity, . . . the chanting and hearing of the holy names of Krsna, . . . the study and discussion of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, . . . and the desire to live in the atmosphere of Vrndavana. . . . These five items can bring us everything we might desire in life.

I'd also like to suggest that we invoke our rejection of everything unfavorable to Krsna consciousness. We can happily afford to protectively close our hearts to sense gratification and mental speculations.

*anyabhilasita-sunyam  
jnana-karmady anavrttam  
anukulyena krsnanu-  
silanam bhaktir uttama*

*sarvopadhi vinirmuktam  
tat-paratvena nirmalam  
hrsikena-hrsikesa-  
sevanam bhaktir ucyate*

For this we can make good use of healthy doubt and Krsna conscious skepticism, clear judgment and trained discrimination because these can help us distinguish between substance and illusion. And that understanding can uproot for us the threefold miseries of material life.

In particular, we can benefit by being careful to keep mundane ideas, mundane solutions, and mundane values from displacing Krsna's ideas, Krsna's solutions, and the eternal values of Krsna consciousness.

We can call our attention, especially, to the trap of confounding the mind with the spirit soul, and psychology with spirituality. For those for whom this trap is a way of life, therapy takes the place of *sadhana*, psychologists take the place of the *guru*, and mental and emotional journeys take the place

of progress on the spiritual path.

To illustrate what I mean, I'd like to mention a well-respected guide for many people of our generation. He's a practicing psychiatrist, educated at Yale. And he brings to his work many qualities we think of as spiritual: openness, honesty, maturity, concern and respect for the people he works with, and a commitment to inner growth. He's also extremely articulate.

One of his books is *The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values, and Spiritual Growth*. On page 1 of the Introduction, he tells us that as a psychiatrist he feels he ought to mention at the outset the assumptions that underlie his book. Here is the first of them:

"I make no distinction between the mind and the spirit, and therefore no distinction between the process of achieving spiritual growth and achieving mental growth. They are one and the same."

By the grace of Srila Prabhupada, those of us here—the participants, the organizers, the presenters—do recognize the distinction between the soul and the mind. And we can keep in view the differences between methods meant for spiritual growth and those meant for mental growth. Methods meant for mental growth never get us off the material platform. They never factually meet the needs of the spirit. But the process we've been given for spiritual growth takes care of both the spirit and the mind.

So as this conference proceeds, by the grace of Srila Prabhupada and the grace of Krsna, we can strengthen our conviction that to soothe all distress, mend all fractures, heal all wounds, and bring about perfect wholeness, balance and harmony there's no better method than the process of pure devotional service and the chanting of the holy names—Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

### What To Do? Where To Go?

Vijeta dasa

British Columbia, Canada

So many times, my wife Arya devi dasi and myself have asked these questions. When Srila Prabhupada was physically present the answers were much simpler. Go almost anywhere and do almost anything in the association of devotees as long as it pleased Srila Prabhupada.

For the first three years following Srila Prabhupada's physical disappearance the choices were not too difficult.

It was quite unique being part of an international spiritual family with facilities and engagements almost anywhere in the world, and we were still childless so moving around was not too complicated.

However, when children arrive on the scene, the focus of attention gradually shifts from "conditional" devotional service and then to "occasional" devotional service and sometimes to "unmanifest" devotional service. I say "unmanifest" because sometimes devotees (grhasthas in particular, but not always) have become so focused on the family scene. Devotional service to Srila Prabhupada ceases on the physical platform. I have found, however, that most disciples still desire to serve Srila Prabhupada but their service is confined to the subtle platform with the physical body pondering "What to do? and Where to go?"

We are a good example of such bewilderment. Six more years flew by and we found ourselves new "west coast" residents in a small city on Vancouver Island. It was 2 1/2 hours to the temple so our involvement was very limited. The *gurukula* had just folded and we didn't want to raise our family in a big city anyway. After six more years, struggling in this chosen lifestyle practically devoid of any association or devotional service, drifting further and further away from Srila Prabhupada's teachings, we had finally had enough!

However, by this time we were really entangled so the haunting questions of "What-to-do" and "Where to go" became even more profound. Drastic measures had to be employed; sell the business, sell the house and cars, sell most of the furniture and where did all this stuff come from anyway? Pull the kids out of school, get passports and visas, we're all going to live in India. Will go to the holy *dhama*, get some association, get purified and re-connected with Srila Prabhupada's mission, go for the mercy of the holy *dhamas* and presiding Deities, engage in some devotional service and stop cheating my family from their rightful Krsna conscious heritage.

With the hope and expectation of living and serving in India for a couple of years, we arrived in Bombay just in time for Radhastami last year. The experience that followed was stimulating, rewarding, ecstatic, nerve-racking, frustrating, shocking and unfortunately short lived. But that is another story in itself. After six months in India with my

wife and five children the proverbial questions popped up again, "What to do, where to go?"

The obvious choice was back to the west coast, only this time we were enlivened, enthusiastic and determined to do something for Srila Prabhupada. We were armed with Deities, paraphernalia, contacts in India, addresses of old devotee friends and new acquaintances. We have become much more connected with the Vancouver temple, but most importantly we have become extremely desirous of devotee association. We are not however, willing to live in a big city so we have located ourselves a 15 minute ferry ride from a small city, Campbell River on north Vancouver Island.

It is a vibrant community of alternative lifestyle seekers. The pristine environment abounds with recreational activities and thus attract thousands of environmentalists, hikers, campers, sailors, divers, photographers, artists and of course writers.

We are in the process of reviving a candle business here on the coast to support ourselves, but we have a much grander vision! We have found a commercial building with large picture windows facing the main highway on Vancouver Island. It is beside a Dairy Queen and opposite a McDonald's. It has a large parking lot and easy access. We hope to lease this space and set up a Govinda's Restaurant, boutique, reading room and preaching center. At present we are setting up vegetarian cooking classes in the Community Center here on Quadra Island and letting people know that Krsna's message of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* has arrived.

We hope to use the profits from any business venture to establish a summer retreat for all devotee children wishing to practice Krsna consciousness in this beautiful environment.

Most importantly we wish to invite any devotee family to visit and/or relocate here so we can work together to please Srila Prabhupada. We have 5 children ranging in age from 3 to 13, who are also very anxious for nice devotee association. If you have any ideas, suggestions, or investment capital you would like to engage in this dynamic preaching endeavor we look forward to corresponding with you.

So the answer to "What to do" and "Where to go" is quite simple. Seek out and associate with devotee families, either in a large urban temple community, a rural community or simply like minded devotee families near you (or

where you would like to be). Engage your energy in the service of Srila Prabhupada and spread his message tirelessly. Follow the example of the sincere Vaisnavas like Rohininandana Prabhu, who is preaching from a remote location. Come together regularly in groups large or small, chant Hare Krsna, distribute *prasadam* and always remember Srila Prabhupada and his eternal teachings. In this way we can enliven one another, make spiritual advancement, preach to others and thus please Srila Prabhupada.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience and beg to remain your humble servant. Vijeta das c/o Jim Moore, General Delivery, Quathiaski Cove, British Columbia, Canada, VOP1NO

**Vaisnava Relations  
with Karma Yogis**  
Hanumatpresaka Swami  
Berkeley, CA

I see "a very important topic." Come! Let us discuss it in the pages of *Priti-laksanam* and the Society of Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON in general.

1) After traveling all over (and within) a moderate sized chunk of the Society for two years and reviewing the issues of *Priti-laksanam* and other Vaisnava journals I've come to the fundamental conclusion that a lot of us are not doing *bhakti yoga*! We are doing *karma yoga*!

This is important. We are discussing Vaisnava relations, the *Priti-laksanam* forum. But a lot of us are trying to have Vaisnava relations with *karma yogis*. Its kind of like trying to make *kitri* with lentils. You think you are using mung *dal* but you are not using mung *dal*.

Q: What is a Karma Yogi? (50 pts.)

A1: *Karma yogis* are usually about 4'7" and weigh about 87 lb. and can run at the speed of light for half an hour or so. No?!#

A2: A *karma yogi* is somebody with a hairy nose, green fangs and lavender horns with little brass hooks on the top... No!#

No?! O.K., lets look at the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* by His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada. *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* 6.46, purport.

"When we speak of yoga we refer to linking our consciousness with the Supreme Absolute Truth. Such a process is named differently by various practitioners in terms of the particular method adopted. When the linking process is predominantly in fruitive activities it is called *karma-yoga*, when it

is predominantly empirical it is called *jnana-yoga*, and when it is predominantly in a devotional relationship with the Supreme Lord it is called *bhakti-yoga*. *Bhakti-yoga*, or Krsna consciousness, is the ultimate perfection of all *yogas*, as will be explained in the next verse." But doesn't Krsna hate the "Karmis"! Isn't *karma-yoga* for fringe devotees?

From *The Nectar of Instruction*, Text Ten: Translation: In the *sastra* it is said that of all types of fruitive workers, he who is advanced in knowledge of the higher values of life is favored by the Supreme Lord Hari. Out of many such people who are advanced in knowledge [*jnani*], one who is practically liberated by virtue of his knowledge may take to devotional service. Purport: Those who act on the basis of Vedic knowledge perform sacrifices for the satisfaction of Lord Visnu and to receive benedictions from Him. In this way they are elevated to higher planetary systems. Such *karmis* are superior to the *vikarmis*, for they are faithful to the directions of the *Vedas* and are certainly dear to Krsna.

Considering all this its clear that we are talking about a fine distinction between devotees and *karma yogis*. There is a long discussion about *bhakti yoga*, *yoga*, *karma yoga*, *karma misra bhakti*, *karma*, *sukarma* and *vikarma*. But my space is limited so I want to be practical.

There was this guy, one of my best friends, who used to truck his synthesizer and P.A. system to the San Francisco temple every Sunday Feast on the bus. It was a lot of work. But he was attached/attracted to that type of music/work/*karma* so he did it. The problem arose when one Sunday the program was moving in a certain way and there wasn't really any time to wait for him to get the whole system set up so we kind of went ahead with an acoustical *kirtana*.

Then, he blew-up! He pulled out a .45 automatic and shot the *pujari* seven times in the head, pulled down the chandeliers and called the police. It wasn't actually that bad, but I could see that he was really upset because he felt that he was going to all this work to please the devotees and nobody cared. It became a real problem and its is a real problem, a lot of times for a lot of people in our community now.

From *The Nectar of Instruction*, Text Five: Purport: "In order to intelligently apply the sixfold loving reciprocations mentioned in the previous verse, one must select proper persons with careful discrimination. Srila Rupa Gosvami

therefore advises that we should meet with the Vaisnavas in an appropriate way, according to their particular status. In this verse he tells us how to deal with three types of devotees—the *kanistha adhikari*, *madhyama-adhikari* and *uttama-adhikari*. We can see from practical experience that there are different types of Vaisnavas. The *prakta sahajiyas* generally chant the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*, yet they are attached to women, money and intoxication. Although such persons may chant the holy name of the Lord, they are not yet properly purified. Such people should be respected within one's mind, but their association should be avoided. Those who are innocent but simply carried away by bad association should be shown favor if they are eager to receive proper instructions from pure devotees, but those neophyte devotees who are actually initiated by the bona fide spiritual master and are seriously engaged in carrying out the orders of the spiritual master should be offered respectful obeisances.

So, I will stop at this point. I've probably offended enough people for one essay and I will wait to take the reaction to these thoughts before I go and make some more asinine observations. The Society is veeeeery large and most of us are *karma-misra bhaktas*. Therefore, to live together properly there has to be a two-sided realization that there is a kind of relationship of clinical mercy between the *madhyama adhikari bhakta yogis* and the *karma yogis*.

For these and other interesting essays please send \$1.00 and a return address to POB 4261; Berkeley, Ca 94704; USA for your free copy of the next issue of the *Hanuman Express Dispatch*.

**Compassion**  
Guruprasada Swami  
Hawaii

With a beginner's understanding of the laws of nature and the way in which *karma* works, it is often easier to separate ourselves from the pain of another by rationalizing "It's his *karma*." The security of a hardened heart, immune to pain and suffering, is often preferable to a heart fully open and vulnerable to the hardships of another.

As *bhakti yogis* or *bhaktas*, we are taught in the beginning about service. Service to God, service to the spiritual master, service to our Godbrothers, etc. Our whole consciousness is being trained up so that we can spontaneously see what needs to be done and

respond in the proper way for the pleasure of *guru* and Krsna.

We need to go further. We need to move beyond the conception of "us" and "them," "*karma*" and "*bhakti*", etc. The God we see in the temple, in our *guru*, in the hearts of our Godbrothers and sister is also living in the hearts of all living entities.

When we can see through the veil of the material condition of a person and see their divinity, that they are part and parcel of God, we will not see another person's suffering as *karma*, but rather how our own *karma* will be affected by our response to that suffering, knowing full well that each individual soul, behind every mask, is our brother, our *guru*, our God, as Mother Teresa says, "in all his distressing disguises."

Our devotional service should not be locked up in temples, but rather become interwoven in the very fiber of our daily lives.

Every second we are given a chance to respond to each situation in remembrance or forgetfulness of our position of servant. In our *mantra* meditation, Prabhupada said that we should be crying out to God, "Please engage me in your devotional service."

If we try to maintain that mood, there will be no end to the opportunities to serve. But if we limit our service to the temple and to people we consider saintly, truly we are limiting God. Indeed, we are saying that the God in this heart isn't as good as the God in this one. True, divinity may be easier to see in the heart of other practitioners of our particular faith, or in the heart of our teacher, but it is neophyte not to recognize that quality, even covered over, in every living entity and act with respect accordingly.

If your *guru* tripped and fell flat on his face before you at this instant would you stand back, laughing, and say "Oh, it's his *karma*." Or would you rush to his side to help him up and make sure he wasn't hurting?

Your love for God is made visible and is measurable by your response to suffering, by your compassion.

Think about your attitude toward suffering and compassion and ask yourself, sincerely, "Behind which mask is my *guru* hiding today?"

### Overcoming Pseudospiritual Vanity

By John A. Hantz

(formerly Kaviraja Goswami Dasa)  
Concord, CA

In the following essay I attempt to address the fundamental issue of religious hypoc-

risy. Some may think that I am being too hard on myself, too negative. Rest assured I'm only attacking the false egotism which surrounds my being.

Several years ago, in an all too rare and fleeting moment of brutal self-honesty, I came to understand that all false-esteem aside and regardless of external pretense to the contrary, I was not a Vaisnava. Of course, this is certainly no surprise to any who have ever had the misfortune of my cripple-minded and cruel companionship. Yet under the intoxicating influence of monstrous self-pride, my unbridled false ego had drastically distorted my elemental self-perception to conceitedly presume that I was actually trying to develop genuine affection for their Supreme Lordships Sri Sri Radha-Krsna, through allegedly progressive loving service, and that I might therefore be considered a Vaisnava. However, in my flickering glimpse of luminosity it became embarrassingly apparent that despite my previously imagined affiliation with Sri Gaudiya Vaisnavism, I was not then, and am not now, in fact, a Vaisnava.

Rather, I am a conditioned *jiva* soul, bound by *karma* to an ephemeral existence in a material body. What audacity! What impudence! What arrogance! How heinous, that I, a lowborn *mleccha*, debauchee, rascal had so recklessly (and absurdly) harbored the exceedingly vain, self-delusion of ever having been a Vaisnava.

In all honesty, my wicked heart was filled with the baser, brutish emotions which commonly fall beneath the actual human spectrum of feeling. What to speak of vainly laying false claim to such lofty titles of pre-eminent regard such as "Vaisnava", I was barely human, as exposed for all to see by my own naturally devotionally regressive behavioral patterns and subsequent character deficiencies.

At this point, after carefully observing the capricious cunning of my own puny, corrupted mind, among other things, I came to notice that for grossly materially conditioned beings such as myself, walking the spiritual path properly is an extremely subtle process. There are in fact, seemingly endless detours which lead to a self-deluded, ego-centric, semblance of true spirituality. I also observed how extremely easy it is for the conditioned soul to deceive himself into wishfully believing that he is actually experiencing genuine spiritual growth, when in truth, he is merely galvanizing false egotism and consequential pseudo-

spiritual vanity through mere cosmetic devotions. This basic misconception is not unique to any one spiritual tradition.

There is always the tendency to lazily seek short cuts to spiritual attainment when not understanding that it is the iron character forged on the fiery, ordealous and arduous road of gradual progress that prepares the soul for the accurate and humble perception of his own genuine development. Those who thoughtlessly seek and exploit apparent loopholes to actual spiritual achievement usually do so because of an elemental over eagerness to obtain and bask in the admiration of their spiritual siblings. The empty vanity of such ill-motivated attempts almost always results in eventual failure. True spiritual progress is achieved by natural, honest devotional self-improvement. Behavior and practice are consequential—one thing leads to another, until the esteemed spiritual ideal is pragmatically imbibed by the sincere adherent.

Of course, there will always be impatient and lazy-minded larva like myself, who would arrogantly attempt premature ascension to the transcendent firmament before having metamorphosed the prerequisite wings of *sraddha*. Any such premature attempts at spiritual levitation must surely be considered mere flights of fancy. Thus it is possible by power of imagination alone for a caterpillar to falsely believe that he has already become a butterfly without ever having undergone the natural transformation process. And so it was that I had deceived myself to believe that I had become the rarest and most superexcellent of all beings in existence, a Vaisnava, a servant of God.

After all, Srila Prabhupada had humbly expressed that he was "only trying to be a servant of God," because "a servant of God was no ordinary thing." How then was it that I had so casually seen fit to supercede his earnest self-perception by vainly considering myself a Vaisnava? Contrary to my grave personal misconception and ignorant vainglorious presumption—overfertile imagination and Vaisnava practices alone, do not a Vaisnava make.

Truly, it is not possible for those of impure heart, such as I, to even conceive of the incomparable transcendent splendour of pure love for God, what to speak of vainly imagining the overwhelming emotional effects of such paramount affection in unrequited separation, as exemplified by the real

Vaisnava through the Supreme agency of *suddha krsna-nama*, the soul's fervent prayer for the eternal service opportunity at the toenails of the lotus feet of the servant of the servant of the servant of Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahabrabhu.

### Sharing Feelings In A Mood of Trust and Confidentiality

Kishor Das

Gloucestershire, UK

For the time being, I'm staying in a treatment center for recovering addicts—drugs, alcohol, food, co-dependency—and learning more about my real self that I ever did before. I didn't realize the pain we had really to go through before arriving at true honesty with oneself and, consequently, with the world.

I can relate very much with your newsletter as it contains mature, heartfelt feelings of people obviously anxious to see Prabhupada's mercy mission/ gift of pure Krsna consciousness realistically upheld without naive or fanatical interpretation. In one letter, Prabhupada told me, "If I do nothing else, let us just produce one such sincere devotee of Krsna, that's all." For me, this clearly shows that, far more than great achievements (external), the most pleasing thing for Prabhupada to see is the achievement, in each of his children, of honest, sincere and unjudgmental Krsna consciousness, based on love for ourselves and for each other.

Recently, I had a deep talk with my old friend, Maha Visnu Swami, who asked if I thought there was a "real place" within ISKCON for the kind of self-examination and 12 step-based counseling we've been practicing here in 'isolation' for three months. My answer was that there will not be a complete, progressive ISKCON without the facility for devotees (of all ages and persuasion) to be able to come together in a loving and safe environment and frankly share their feelings of anger, sadness, loneliness, anxiety, happiness, confusion, etc., in a mood of trust and confidentiality. All within the house (under the same roof) that Prabhupada painstakingly structured for us to build around.

If you, or any of your readers, want to write me here, I'd just love to hear from you. I'm going through a change in my personal life which, three months ago, I would not have believed possible. At present, I'm walking through my own fire, feeling like running away from all this almost every day. I'm proud to have come this far, living in-

house with a group of fourteen nondevotees(!) and feel it would have been impossible to endure without the warm and loving support of my friends and family in Krsna consciousness. Send mail to: Kishor das c/o Nelson House, Brimscombe Hill, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GLS 2QP, UK.

### Well Wishers of Each Other

Hamsavatara dasa

Honolulu, Hawaii

I have been receiving your newsletter for some time now, and I find that the issues discussed are important ones. I also feel it is the desire of many devotees to change behavioral patterns between us in our relationships, and also in our relations with society in general. From the letters sent it is obvious that we are all maturing. In this maturing we are seeing our mistakes of the past, and tiring of living in the world of pretense. So many are sincerely desiring to heal old wounds, and play their part in helping to spread this sankirtana movement around the world. We realize that it's not good enough just to achieve high distribution "scores" of literature, but to come across favorably to the general populace.

One very important point I'd like to make is that simply attempting to change one's outer behavior is not enough. It is like treating the symptoms of a disease, but not it's cause.

It is necessary to go deep within our hearts to face up to our shortcomings first, then learn the essential building blocks to change from within. There is a need for character development first and foremost. Lord Caitanya is so merciful in picking up the most fallen of this world. Srila Prabhupada's mercy was boundless in this regard, accepting many hippies, and dropouts, that had never developed healthy inner traits of character. It is important that one is candid with himself if real change is to be effected.

There are an incredible amount of extremely dysfunctional devotees that need to stop pretending the problem requires no outside help. Before one can be a lady, or gentleman, before one can be a truly useful member of a spiritually motivated society, or any society, but that of criminals, one must develop basic character traits such as honesty, compassion, and straightforwardness. We must carefully endeavor to develop a wholesome attitude toward life individually, and collectively. The reason there is so much envy, cruelty, and dishonesty permeating our lives is

due to developing poor traits of character. Why are devotees seemingly unfeeling toward each other so often? Why does ISKCON have such a high rate of spousal and child abuse, and divorce? Why the criminal actions that have clouded the fund-raising activities of the entire movement?

I don't mean to suggest that it is or ever was intended by the society at large, yet it undeniably occurred frequently resulting in horrible newspaper headlines, editorials, magazine articles, etc. Why would a devotee of the Lord even entertain the notion of stealing from a temple or another devotee, or anyone else for that matter? (What to speak of the horrifying sexual abuse of our children that has occurred in so-called *gurukulas*.) If one understands the law of *karma*, to do such things is terribly illogical, and virtual insanity. Why the envy amongst devotees when one of us excels or succeeds in personal endeavors?

We must become each other's well-wishers if we are to successfully work together to follow the order of our spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada. Partrikananda Prabhu's idea of a "coalition" is a very good one indeed. Simply words from the GBC or other authorities in ISKCON, or from devotees that they have somehow changed is not going to be good enough. Do we want to work together, or is it going to be "all or nothing"? Many of us have had such frightful experiences that the memories cannot just be buried with words. Myself I have been the victim of atrocities committed by devotees from robbery to other forms of deceit and criminal actions. My beloved daughter at the age of 16 still does not talk to me (12 years of negative influence has taken it's toll), and all because I was venomously disliked for my attitude of non-surrender to a "guru" Godbrother who has since left the *sannyasa* order, his disciples, and the movement to marry a meat-eater and return to the illusory world which he originally left to serve Srila Prabhupada in the first place. My story in this regard is nothing unusual, it's sad to say. If we are compassionate then we forgive. To forget is another thing entirely.

I have been a twice-initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada for 20 years, and have seen so many indiscretions within the movement during this time. (Sometimes I seem to feel that the most wonderful, loving days I remember in ISKCON was in the 2 years I associated with the temples before

joining in 1972.) When Srila Prabhupada left control of most affairs to the GBC (while he was still here) things started to get out of control, culminating after Prabhupada left in 1977. Then utter chaos prevailed. Now after the big storm many of us have not lost sight of the goal, and once again want to work together to achieve something before we have taken our last breath. To waste precious time is the greatest sin.

It is important that devotees use every positive means to learn how to develop good character traits. It takes discipline, dedication, and devotion. Once the destructive elements of personality have been changed to become constructive, there will be a healthy redirecting of our energy in all that we do or say. Then we can see each other as brothers and sisters working for the same cause. Then we will try to dutifully execute our responsibilities to ourselves, our families, to guru, and to Krsna. There can exist camaraderie where once was suspicion and distrust. Then we can truly become well-wishers of each other, and work effectively to spread this Krsna consciousness movement.

**The Very Best Medicine—  
Chant Hare Krsna  
Krsna Krpa devi dasi  
Canada**

Your April issue has me inspired to quote some verses that really help me. I joined in B.C. in 1976, am happily married to a fine Vaisnava and have four children.

Sri Uddhava, Krsna's very good friend, spoke with him one time about harrassment in general. He said, (*Bhag.* 11.22.61) "Oh Krsna, the conditioning of one's personality in material life is very strong and therefore it is very difficult even for learned people to tolerate the offenses committed against them by ignorant people."

Krsna replied, (*Bhag.* 11.23.2-3) "There is virtually no saintly person in this world capable of resettling his own mind after it has been disturbed by the insulting words of uncivilized men. Sharp arrows which pierce ones chest and reach the heart do not cause as much suffering as the arrows of harsh, insulting words that become lodged within the heart when spoken by uncivilized men."

But a saintly devotee, Krsna explains, (*Bhag.* 11.22.58-59) "Even though neglected, insulted, ridiculed or envied by bad men, or even if beaten, tied up or deprived of his/her occupa-

tion, spat upon or polluted with urine by ignorant people, (if that soul desires the highest goal in life) should in spite of all these difficulties use his intelligence to keep himself safe on the spiritual platform."

In this regard Krsna narrates the story of the Avanti *brahmana*. Although he had been assaulted and harrassed by many people, he refused to identify a perpetrator. Now, I don't say that devotee's rights violators should go unpunished. That is the GBC's administrative duty and opportunity to please Krsna, as many great, non envious, warriors such as Arjuna pleased Krsna. But for our personal spiritual advancement the Avanti *brahmana's* advise is most advantageous. Similarly, Jesus Christ also refused to identify a perpetrator just before he was crucified. Dharma also, when addressed by Maharaja Pariksit, acted according to the principle that, (*Bhag.* 1.17.22) "the identifier of the perpetrator achieves the same destination as the perpetrator." It is under the influence of the three modes of nature that we consider ourselves the doers of activities that are actually carried out by nature, or that others are the doers or perpetrators of crimes against us.

The Avanti *brahmana* realized that people were not the cause of his happiness or distress. The insults they inflicted pertained only to the body, not the real self. If we think that it is our astrological chart that is to blame, that chart also only pertains to an object with a birth date. Since we souls are *aja*, unborn, how does that effect us? If we say it is our gender, race, nationality or even Kali-Yuga that is to blame, these also pertain again to the birth of a body which we are not. So how can we justify being angry with anyone?

The Avanti *brahmana* concluded, (*Bhag.* 11.23.42) "These people are not the cause of my happiness and distress. Neither are the demigods, my own body, the planets, my past work, or time. Rather it is the mind alone that causes happiness and distress and perpetuates the rotation of material life."

(*Bhag.* 11.23.48) "Failing to conquer this irrepressible enemy, the minds, whose urges are intolerable and who torments the heart, many people are completely bewildered and create useless quarrel with others. Thus they conclude that other people are either their friends, enemies or people indifferent to them."

Elsewhere in the *Bhagavatam*, Prahlada Maharaja told his Dad, "Do

not discriminate in your heart between enemies and friends; make your mind equipoised toward everyone. Except for the uncontrolled and misguided mind, there is no enemy in this world."

Unfortunately this instruction made Dad even more angry, as good instruction often does, and Prahlada, who is most expert at tolerating, tolerated that, too.

As for controlling the real enemy, the mind, Lord Caitanya and Srila Prabhupada have prescribed a change of diet, Krsna's *prasadam*, and the very best medicine—chant Hare Krsna. I sincerely hope this helps you, it's all I know.

**Guidelines for the Four Asramas  
H.H. Nirananda Swami  
Brooklyn, NY**

As the Srila Prabhupada Centennial Festival approaches, we are surely going to see a revival of enthusiasm to rebuild ISKCON and to restore Srila programs to the level they had attained when His Divine Grace was physically present.

To make ISKCON healthy again means to restore its credibility as a movement based on integrity, honesty, and compassionate dealings amongst its members. When the atmosphere of duplicitous politics is replaced by loving exchanges between devotees and glorification of Krsna's holy name becomes the focus of our society's leaders, ISKCON will once again be all-attractive, even as it was when Srila Prabhupada was with us.

I have never been one to engage in ISKCON bashing, but it is obvious to me that a boil cannot be cleansed simply by blowing on it. Nothing has hurt the reputation of our movement more than the misbehavior of our leading manager/preachers. I think it is time we realize that devotees in the renounced order of life require as much encouragement from their Godbrothers as their Godbrothers are expecting from them. Just as parents confer as to what is in the best interest of their child, devotees need to consider how the *sannyasa asrama* can be strengthened by following the guidelines that determine the nature of our interactions and by observing proper Vaisnava etiquette in our dealings.

For *sannyasis* to be overburdened with managerial responsibilities is not in their best interest. There are many senior householder men who have had experience managing temples but who are now otherwise engaged. Unfortunately, ISKCON's orientation is toward

autocratic leadership rather than participative management and thus *sannyasi* managers are forced to isolate themselves in administrative offices with the weight of the world on their shoulders. *Sannyasis* would feel invigorated if they could divest themselves of at least part of the burden of running temples and spend more time hearing and chanting with their Godbrothers and spreading Krsna consciousness. To re-create an ISKCON family will involve drawing devotees back by giving them a chance to contribute their service voluntarily and to have a voice in what goes on through participative management.

As householder devotees become more aware of the inner workings of the temples, they will soon notice that because of their managerial role, *sannyasis* have compromised the cardinal rule of avoiding the association of women. Although they are not even meant to hear a woman's name mentioned in conversation, *sannyasis* are obliged to engage in lengthy discussions with unmarried women in our temples because of their leadership position. To preserve the sanctity of the *sannyasa asrama*, devotees all need to be informed or reminded of the proper standard that is to be maintained in all situations.

First, a *sannyasi* should not speak to a married woman unless her husband is also present. Secondly, he would not speak with an unmarried woman unless a male householder devotee is present. These conversations should be brief. Third, *sannyasis* should avoid speaking to women informally, even in public places. We should also do away with the "open door" policy. It is not acceptable for a *sannyasi* to speak with a woman alone in his office, even when a door is kept open. If their conversation is not being overheard by others, it is to be considered a private talk.

If *brahmacaris* are to emulate their natural mentors, the *sannyasis*, a much higher standard needs to be established. Householder women can help transmit this standard of chastity to ladies who live in the temples and to female guests and congregation members who may have occasion to speak to a *sannyasi*. I would also recommend that women offer obeisances to *sannyasis* (including their own *gurus*) from a distance, just as Lord Caitanya required of His female worshipers.

Please understand that these guidelines are not meant to disparage women; rather they constitute the culture of Krsna consciousness. When

devotee women honor this tradition of chastity, they become qualified to receive Krsna's blessings. They will also automatically earn the respect of male devotee managers that they have been clamoring for in your newsletter.

Each day that I must witness this compromise, I am painfully reminded of the loss of the friendship and association of so many of my Godbrothers from the renounced order who fell prey to the enticement of the material energy because of their loose interaction with women. I can hardly imagine how painful this must be to Srila Prabhupada. All of us have experienced the protective hand of the Supreme Lord, but we also need to protect one another from the onslaught of illusory ideas of enjoying separately from Krsna. Although they may be the spiritual head of a spiritual movement, *sannyasis* are not beyond the reach of *maya*. Devotees from the four *asramas* need to cultivate their friendship and trust in one another. We must share the experience of spreading the Krsna consciousness movement by working together shoulder to shoulder, concentrating our efforts on broadcasting the glories of the holy name and the Lord's pure devotee. This will give our movement spiritual strength.

Dear Prabhuh, any correspondence will be forwarded to me by addressing it to: H.H. Nirananda Swami, 305 Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn, NY 11217

#### I Need to Avoid the Problems & Politics

Anonymous  
Manhattan Beach, CA

No doubt, there are some really positive comments and reports of events within your newsletter, and I would like to commend you on your efforts. However, I become livid when I think that somehow "honoring the self" along with honoring the Lord could be construed as a "new age" concept! We are all destined for *sannyasa* at some point in time, and my understanding is that this requires that one begins to focus on becoming self-situated, which, in a psychological framework, means developing a sense of worthiness and love for the self along with one's obligations to others. Within my practice, I see first-hand that when people begin to feel lovable and worthy of being an individual, they are more peaceful; they give up their self-defeating behaviors and bad habits; and they become more productive. Contrary to some opinions, valuing the self at least as much as you value others

does not lead to selfishness, but rather to a more loving, caring, unselfish character. Criminals and those who cause a disturbance within society are those who don't value themselves, and consequently, are incapable of valuing others.

Creating future *sannyasis* begins with a loving, stable, nurturing environment, where each family member is treated with honor, respect and given the message that he/she is worthy of having individual thoughts and feelings. There is a place for spiritual training, but there is also a place for individuality. According to psychological theory, an individual cannot grow if he is in denial of where he genuinely is. The defenses (against being in touch with the self) begin to develop at a young age due to the messages received in the home. Within ISKCON, there appears to be a preponderance of the defenses known as denial, projection, intellectualization, and rationalization. To deny one's feelings is as detrimental to self-realization as being too attached to one's feelings. We need to watch our egoism and false pride which can fool us into believing that we are more advanced in spiritual life than we actually are. Ironically, it is too much attachment to the opinions of others (which is actually, too little investment in the self) that has led to the problems within our society: the fragmentation of our families and the degradation of our children. Many men "renounce" their commitments to their families—for profit, adoration, and distinction—and a fear that their genuine thoughts and feelings are inadequate. This is also the basis of the women's issue. If men were to get in touch with their feelings—they would all desire to marry these wonderful women. And so their defense against this public admission of "weakness" takes the form of mistreatment and hatred of the female sex, projecting onto them all the disowned parts of themselves. If they were to come to terms with their genuine selves, they would lose their prestige within ISKCON; and for one who does not take delight in the self, this would be a horrible fate!

Interestingly, anyone who has a successful *grhastha* marriage will tell you that although there may be an initial honeymoon period, this is very short-lived. Bhaktivinoda described marriage as a sacrifice in the mode of passion that gradually transforms into the mode of goodness. Even within the psychological community, it is a known fact that the honeymoon period lasts

from 6 months to several years, and then the real work of the relationship begins.

A good relationship, according to one theoretician, Murray Bowen, must always be a balance between the self-realization process and togetherness. Problems within the marital dyad inevitably result when the couple is too dependent on each other, or too alienated from each other. My understanding of this is that the individuation process is built into the design of the universe, and none of us can escape it. To be aware that "too much dependence on anyone saps the vital energy" is to be aware of the nature of the human being. So even in psychology, we believe that each of us is destined to separate and individuate.

Fritz Perls said that psychological maturity is realizing that you are responsible for yourself; and this applies to men and women equally. Most of the marital problems that I deal with relate to the disillusionment couples experience when they realize that each is rather inadequate to satisfy the other's desires, and that they both must invest more energy in becoming self-satisfied. A woman may submit to the authority of her husband, if he is a worthy man. But she should always remember that her happiness is to a great degree, her own responsibility. When she performs her duties, she should do them because she believes they should be done, rather than because she is expecting that her husband will appreciate her efforts.

Similarly, each husband should perform his prescribed duties, attending to his family and his occupation because they should be done. The couple should be aware of gender differences; learn good communications skills; and be vigilant that what goes around, comes around. If one wants to have a loving, supportive spouse, care should be taken to nurture those feelings within the relationship. However, there is also the understanding that we each have our limitations, and that individuation is as important as togetherness. This is Vedic theory and it is also psychological theory.

### On Making Marriage Work

Arya dasi  
Canada

The recent discussions between devotees, in particular married couples, has encouraged this submission. I admire the move of the GBC to allocate a position in the body to assist with

householder issues. Jayapataka Swami's statement really touched my heart, and the attempts of concerned devotees such as Mulaprakriti and Gopavrndapala are most admirable.

As we are products of our environment it is understandable that we find ourselves afflicted by this problem of marriage dysfunction. It is a global affliction. Fortunately, many individuals with keen insight have presented guidelines in books and related courses. It is a matter of reaching out for help, it is there in our local libraries and community based family support centers. Although they may be nondevotees, they are human beings with problems similar to our own. Our great advantage is that we have Lord Krsna with us and we are praying for His guidance.

Aside from becoming familiar with the above mentioned information and applying it to devotee communities, as is already being done by devotees in California, there is another consideration. Love. In the course of a temple lecture one may hear mention of the supreme love, love of God, which is our ultimate goal and is strongly desired. One may also hear of misplaced love, love of dog, which is strongly condemned. But rarely is love within marriage and family mentioned. Without having the opportunity of experiencing love within our marriages, it is almost impossible to create a nurturing and harmonious atmosphere within the family unit, which in turn helps to foster sane, caring, sensitive human beings, who may embody many desirable Vaisnava qualities.

We do, however, hear much mention of sex in the course of a lecture, sometimes over and over, always in a very derogatory context. This is understandable, as it is spiritual enlightenment that we are receiving. However, the youth in our movement hear of sex over and over to the point of ludicrousness. They, and we, seldom hear positive attributes to the intimacy of a loving home environment. Perhaps we have a strong diversion for the term *love* in connection with man-woman relationship due to the loose use of the term in recent history. But, where marriage and family is concerned, it is the secret ingredient!

Another major concern amongst householders is the standard of complete celibacy. Understanding and accepting the spiritual benefits of abstinence from marital sex will doubtlessly come as one progresses in his/her spiritual advancement. Until

this realization comes, we try to adhere to the principle by the order of the guru. True understanding is something which is personal acceptance and thereby practiced rigidly. As we chant 16 rounds per day, offer our *bhoga* to Krsna, refrain from gambling and speculation, so too shall we pursue celibacy.

The *grhastha asrama* is an intermediate stage of life, which takes one who chooses this *asrama*, from the innocence of childhood to the responsibility of family life and eventually accommodates renunciation in due course of time.

We are apparently bewildered by so many broken marriages within our movement, but when young men and women are taught to be repulsed by the concept of an intimate relationship with the "opposite sex" how can we ever hope to have healthy marriages! Note, I am not strictly referring to "sexual" intimacy here!

The strict guidelines for spiritual advancement are there by the mercy of the *guru*, and when we receive initiation from the *guru* we have a duty to follow his instructions. Marriage also involves vows of commitment, and promises, to assist one another so that both spiritual advancement and a satisfying householder life may succeed. In this way the husband and wife may experience peace of mind and offer one another support. As their lives alter with time, so will their relationship.

It seems that in order for the rate of successful marriages to increase within Krsna consciousness, there has to be a deeper understanding of the marital vows. We do not marry to provide a "constant nagging judge" to our "better half" someone who (if it should occur) will let us know when we may be weak to our spiritual vows. But rather, a lifetime friend who will use discretion and kindness in all dealings. A considerate critic perhaps, if necessary, but not a judge!

As Srila Prabhupada said many times, the man and woman in marriage become as two halves of a whole, as amazing as it is. And with time comes that feeling of single mindedness. Marriages that work and last do so because the marriage partners want it to, and they're willing to work through the hard times, sometimes even disasters, rather than submitting to despair. As Queen Kunti prayed, "I wish that all those calamities would happen again and again so that we could see you again and again, for seeing You means that we no longer see

repeated births and deaths.”

Aspirant and present householders should understand that cohesiveness of a good marriage does not occur instantly. It requires mutual desire for it to work, and it needs to be nurtured by the love which develops in the course of a relationship.

### **Til Death Do Us Part**

Krsna-bhajana dasa  
Leicester, England

*I researched the topic prior to an ISKCON judicial inquiry, at which I was a representative for one of the parties. Having examined the circumstances of this couple's marriage collapse in some detail, I became more convinced than ever that we have to prioritize marriages in our society and do all possible to alter the current situation. The history of a couple whose hearing I attended was one of almost total neglect on the part of ISKCON authorities. They received no guidance prior to the marriage, none during the marriage itself, and theirs certainly needed it. Instead they were seen, as far as I can ascertain, as book and laksmi scores and not as individual people with needs, feelings, emotions. I am convinced that their suffering, ending in the breakdown of their marriage, could have been avoided if the proper steps had been taken to assess their compatibility in the beginning or if proper support had been given them and the opportunity provided for them to 'settle down' as husband and wife, without the intense pressure to do sankirtana that always seems to have accompanied them.*

The article in *Priti-laksanam* #7 entitled "Save The Women and Children" begins to touch on an extremely important issue, one that needs serious attention within our Society. The essence of the problem described by Daksinavari devi dasi is that of men accepting responsibility in marriage. I, like many devotees, am unhappy that ISKCON apparently has a higher divorce rate than mainstream society. Whether statistically verifiable or not, this is the reputation that exists. The phenomenon of divorce points to a serious deficiency in our whole approach to marriage.

It's Kali-yuga. Marriage is based on the consideration of sex-life. "When the wife is accepted as a sense gratificatory agency, personal beauty is the main consideration and as soon as there is a break in personal sense gratification there is disruption or divorce." (*Bhag.* 3.14.20 purport). "In materialistic marriages generally there are too many troubles and frustrations because the basic principle for both the husband and wife is their own personal sense

gratification. Therefore there is inevitable conflict and divorce petition. But in Krsna conscious marriage the basic principle for both husband and wife is to serve Krsna nicely and to help the partner advance in spiritual life. In this way both the husband and wife are true benefactors for one another and there is no question of any serious conflicts or separation." (Srla Prabhupada to Balai, 7/21/69 LA).

If divorce is so commonplace within ISKCON we have to admit by logic that sex-life is too prominent a consideration in our marriages. This is particularly serious when we are talking about marriages sanctioned by temple authorities and performed before a fire. Questions need to be asked. Is there sufficient guidance and counselling being given to the couple before the marriage takes place? Is the concept of basic compatibility being examined, with or without the aid of an astrologer?

"The phrase 'like disposition' is very significant. Formerly boys and girls of similar disposition were married; the similar natures of the boy and girl were united in order to make them happy. . . . Before marrying, one should select a wife of like disposition and not be enamoured by so-called beauty or other attractive features for sense gratification." (*Bhag.* 3.21.15 purport). "The central idea is that if the boy and girl were on an equal level the marriage would be happy, whereas inequality would lead to unhappiness. Because care is no longer taken in marriage, we now find many divorces." (*Bhag.* 9.18.23 purport).

Temple authorities dealing with marriages are implicating themselves in a serious business so it is important that the couple stepping up to take the vows during the fire sacrifice are fully conscious of the commitment they are about to make. They must also seriously and deeply accept the responsibility of that commitment. As much responsibility rests with the man as with the woman, if not more so, since he must protect and maintain both his wife and any subsequent children.

Srla Prabhupada had to deal with marriages at a certain stage in ISKCON history and so there are many lectures and letters dealing with marriage vows. Prabhupada stressed over and over again that there must be no separation or divorce. He made the couple agree to this before completing the ceremony, sometimes insisting that they sign a document to the effect. "This marriage business should not be taken as a farce,

but is a very serious matter. Recently so many couples have been caste adrift by the waves of Maya's influence. That is hard to check, but still the devotees must realize the responsibilities of household life. And there is no question of separation. Too much this has been happening and I am very much displeased. So if they are promising not to separate under any circumstances, but to work cooperatively in the service of the Lord, then my sanction is there for their marriage, and my blessings as well. Otherwise not." (SPL to Bhagavan dasa, 7/7/71 LA).

Srla Prabhupada was strongly opposed to the concept of divorce: "This divorce act is encouraging prostitution and should be abolished." (*Bhag.* 1.17.38 purport). "In Vedic civilization the husband and wife were not separated by such man-made laws as divorce. We should understand the necessity for maintaining family life in human society and should thus abolish this artificial law known as divorce. The husband and wife should live in Krsna consciousness and follow in the footsteps of Laxmi-Narayana or Krsna-Rukmini. In this way peace and harmony can be possible within this world." (*Bhag.* 4.23.26 purport).

Perhaps some devotees are saying, "This is not Vedic India! Its Kali-yuga! Why is he quoting *sastra*? Who does he think he is?" Still, aren't we trying to stem the tide of Kali-yuga by establishing Krsna consciousness? "But our point is not to try and bring back the old type of Hindu society. That is impossible. Our idea is to take the best ideas from the original idea." (SSR ch.6 Finding Spirit). From Prabhupada's stance on divorce it is clear that he sees lasting marriages as one of the best ideas, one that he wants implemented as part of the Golden Age.

Nobody expects that all marriages will always run smoothly. There will be rough patches which may require outside assistance in order to navigate. Our society must begin to provide this kind of guidance. Since ISKCON is still relatively small, finding compatible mates within the society will remain difficult for some time. "Best fit" situations will continue to be common and so we must provide the backup to help them work.

Srla Prabhupada often refers to disputes between husband and wife as being insignificant: "So, of course, in India the quarrel between husband and wife, nobody cares. Nobody takes very seriously. The husband may complain, the wife may complain. Everyone says,

"Yes, yes. That's all right. It will be all right." They never go to court for divorce." (Lecture 9/14/66 NY). Are we giving that reassurance to members of quarrelling couples or are we fanning the flames? Are we ignoring them altogether? Do the couples realize that their quarrelling is not as serious as it might seem? Do they feel able to talk to other devotees about their relationship problems? Are we providing a guidance service for this purpose, one that knows what it is doing according to Srila Prabhupada's teachings, not the modern non-devotee concepts that Prabhupada condemns? The right kind of positive support could help couples overcome difficulties: "There may be very great rumbling, but the result is very small, maybe some drizzling. Similarly, a husband and wife may fight, but if you don't give them any seriousness, they'll mitigate. That is the process. But in the western countries, in the name of liberty, so many family lives are dismantled simply by this divorce case." (Lecture 4/2/72 Sydney).

The husband must treat the wife kindly and with respect. Devotee couples in good Krsna consciousness can, at least theoretically, see each other as equal spiritual beings. Even if we have strong material elements in our marriages, which is probably the case for most of us, the husband should understand that treating his wife nicely with plenty of affection is important in maintaining a happy marriage. Although it means the man becomes the servant of his wife, as in the story of King Puranjana, this is necessary for preventing disturbance in family life. This should actually pose no problem for a devotee husband striving to rid himself of the bodily concept. He would naturally see his wife as a devotee and want to serve her in his role as her husband.

Sometimes conflicts that arise between husband and wife do reach the point where the couple cannot stay together, at least for a while. "The Vedic system therefore gives a concession for the wife to separate from her husband for some time and go to her father's house." (SPL to Sudama, 1/1/71). This instance quoted involved Prabhupada inviting the woman to stay with him, in his capacity as her spiritual father. Generally: "Sometimes such separation for a time is beneficial for husband and wife both, but there is never any question of divorce." (SPL to Jadurani, 11/16/70).

Prabhupada would sometimes deal with a husband/wife quarrel by

advising the two to reside in separate temples: "There is no question of divorce. Even if you fight, you can remain in one temple, he can remain, but there is no question of divorce." (Lecture 4/6/72 Melbourne). "If your wife keeps herself peaceful living separately from you, I think you can arrange for the time being like that, but in my opinion, this business of separation may not be developed into a case of divorce. . . . Anyway, both your wife and yourself cannot think of marrying again; that is not my advice." (SPL to Rupanuga, 9/9/67). "I do not approve anyone's separation who are married by me. If they disagree they may live separately, but there cannot be divorce. When one is separate, one may fully devote to Krsna but no more marriage." (SPL to Krsna devi, 9/67).

Members of separated couples may begin to think of re-marriage, if that was not already a factor in their marriage break-up. But Prabhupada's view on this is clear from letters to devotees: "Regarding re-marriage, no, re-marriage should be always discouraged. Re-marriage means encouraging sense gratification. Our mission is to curtail sense gratification." (SPL to Rupanuga dasa, 8/21/75).

In the purport to *Bhag.* 9.20.22 Srila Prabhupada explains why there is no divorce in Vedic culture. It is because when there is disagreement between the husband and wife, the son delivers the father, not the mother, from material abominations. She is delivered by the husband. Therefore she remains faithful and chaste to her husband. Remember that Prabhupada said we're not trying to bring back the old type of Hindu society, just take the best ideas.

Prabhupada's lectures and letters are consistent with his statements in his books on the topic of divorce: "Married means that one should be satisfied with one woman and one man. That's all. And there is no question of divorce. Divorce is introduced by the modern rascals, but it is not sanctioned by any religious person." (Lecture 8/22/71 London).

In the earlier days of ISKCON, as now, couples were going for divorce despite Prabhupada's instructions. In some letters Prabhupada resigns himself unwillingly to devotees taking this drastic step: "We do not allow divorce, but in your country it is a common thing. Although we do not like it, according to the country, what can be done? There is a Sanskrit saying, do according to the country's laws. If both the present husband and wife agree to

divorce, then they can do it and re-marry, what can be done? (SPL to Rupanuga dasa, 11/1/74).

What of the fate of the divorced couple? "This knot is very difficult to undo, even though a man and woman separate either for the principles of varnasrama or simply to get a divorce. In any case the man always thinks of the woman, and the woman always thinks of the man." (*Bhag.* 5.5.9 purport).

Sometimes the behaviour of either husband or wife is so abominable that it may cause serious harm to the marriage or even make it impossible for the partner to continue with the relationship. A husband leaving his wife and children so that he can indulge in sex with another woman is a most abominable action. "I am so shocked to hear from you that you have left your good wife for some time to have sex-life with another girl, who is also a devotee, and that she is now pregnant with your child. That is most disturbing to me. . . . So let her live in New York and you live in Paris with your wife, what can be done? But you should not ever see or correspond in any way with her again. . . . If someone will have her, she may get herself married and be happy in Krsna consciousness—I do not want that she should go away from shame. But you must have nothing more to do with her." (SPL to [name withheld], 12/17/72). In such a situation women are the principal sufferers. Behaviour of this kind needs to be heavily but reasonably disapproved of within our Society to the extent that possible culprits will be dissuaded from engaging in such activities. Sometimes the worst will come to the worst. In the purport to *Bhag.* 7.11.28, Prabhupada explains that a husband or wife can give up the association of their partner if that partner becomes fallen, and live separately from them.

Are Prabhupada's books the lawbooks for mankind for the next ten thousand years? If we agree to a principle like this then do we not need to make a serious attempt to implement Srila Prabhupada's instructions in all aspects of our lives? Most of us are imperfect, full of human frailties and shortcomings yet as devotees within ISKCON, temple or congregational, can't we begin to make a concerted effort to bring our marriages in line with our Founder-*acarya's* desire?

Our Society is guilty of great hypocrisy because our failed marriages are stark evidence that we are unable to practice what the books we distribute

preach. We're not even matching 'for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health.' . . . I meet some men who have fallen victim to deviant behaviour on the part of their wife but in my experience it is usually the other way around. Do you agree? Men who fail to carry their responsibility for giving spiritual, emotional and physical support to their wives and children indicate a yawning gap in the training being offered by our Society to its members and point to failure on the part of the general body of devotees to recognise the needs of the women and children whose welfare and protection should be the priority of ISKCON's administration (administrator/*ksatriya*, or at least acting as one?).

We need strict guidelines governing the entry into marriage so that we don't continue to end up with irresponsible men leaving distressed wives or producing families which they then abandon.

We need organized bodies consisting of trained or experienced devotees whose function is to offer support and guidance to married couples in temple and congregational situations.

We need to prioritize the welfare of the women and children within our Society so that we can truly offer a viable alternative for the future of mankind.

We need to give our leaders this message: "Please, help us get it together!"

#### Rock & Roll Or Metallica?

Syama devi dasi  
San Diego, CA

I would like to address the issue of rock or metallica music. There are many opinions on this, and I must admit I see value in all of them. I think it is just a matter of evaluating where a teen is coming from, and dealing with it from that point. No teenager is better or worse, just different.

If a teen has not yet heard rock, wouldn't it be best if the whole thing could be avoided? Of course, once teens have listened or become attached to it, adults need not put them down but offer them a positive alternative, like TK's tapes, or Shelter. Making similar but nondevotee music acceptable also is not a good idea, and has only become OK with them because at some point we made it OK with us. There needs to be discrimination.

This is not meant to advise one to rush in and rip their teenagers tapes. That is not the process. But neither is ignoring it. The issue must be ad-

dressed. These teenagers are intelligent souls and chastisement isn't what works for them, education is. They cannot understand and believe what we do not fully believe ourselves (and that is why we have made rock or metallica acceptable). We need to explain to them that we merely wish to offer a balance. We just want to share the whole picture with them, and we verbalize that we believe in when they point out the good side of this music.

Why should adults say this? Because it's true. If we don't start speaking from a point of truth, why should they listen? Therefore, we can be open minded to hearing, and maybe they will do the same, if we are doing it from a point of honesty and sincerity. Then we can add our knowledge along with our personal experiences that as one gets too involved in this music, in addition to doing good it can do harm as well.

Something else worth mentioning to them is that it's not always merely a phase; many of us still have our generations rock tunes running through our heads and can't get them out. Sometimes it even causes us to give up and we start listening to them all over again. We wish to spare our teenagers this problem.

We are not to set out and prove that it has no benefit at all, nor that it always does harm, but just wish to increase their awareness that these negative aspects are there too.

I also recall that Prabhupada gave the instruction that any instrument may be played during *kirtana*, simply that the music is not to predominate the sound vibration of the chanting, and instead is to enhance it. Wouldn't devotee rock and roll require the same?

Conveying all of this to teenagers is merely a matter of attitude/consciousness. If we don't have an attitude, neither will they.

#### Viewpoint On Women's Issues

Tom Gaffney  
Danville, CA

As a devotee who left institutional ISKCON many years ago, I was very interested and heartened to recently read a number of *Priti-laksanam* issues. This mood of openness and mature reflection is long overdue and great things may come of it. *Jai!* I'm moved to offer my viewpoint on the women's issue.

In my experience of temples in the US, certain rather slippery concepts were/are deployed in a mealy-mouthed way as a means to keep

women in their place, basically. There were frequent illusions to ideas that women are flawed and stigmatized in some ways, and that basically the female sex is a lesser birth, and that the only possible partial compensation for it is to be very strictly "chaste," which meant effectively to submit to male authority and try hard to avoid displeasing the men with status. Some advanced women devotees were able and willing to largely ignore all this, a few became "Uncle Toms" in the system, and most learned gradually to accept the rationale that chaste devotees could have a status that rendered them somewhat exempt from categorical sexist attacks personally directed.

Let's look at the concept that women are less intelligent, so often bandied about in the temples, in the presence of the ladies. I never heard illusions to Prabhupada's negative statements about black Africans made in front of black devotees in the temples, so why have women devotees been subject to open insults? What could be the point of referring to the stigma of inferiority? Let's be honest with ourselves: what other purpose could the chronic insults have, except to allow the men to lord it over the women? Always the tired old war-horse of women's lesser intelligence is trotted out as a justification for the power arrangements etc., but when subjected to the slightest logical or historical scrutiny, it can be seen as remarkably irrelevant and unreal.

Sometimes it was said that women have only less "material" (mundane or academic) intelligence, but are spiritually equal. But there is such abundant evidence that disproves this. In confusing, slippery contradiction, it was sometimes said that women are less intelligent because their consciousness is just lower; they are less inclined to rigorous philosophical study or austere spiritual practice, because they are more prone to material enjoyment. All this may well have been the case in the old Vedic culture, but it seems a strange idea that since women were systematically barred from participating in the rigorous monastic expression of a cult, their non participation can be used as grounds to impugn them.

All over the world, women have had striking aptitude to become spiritual practitioners and probably greater piety than devotion. In the West, it is women who fill churches an read books about meditation. Finally, it was sometimes said that women are less intelligent because their emotional,

sentimental natures cripple their ability for logical an objective analysis. Men might have had such an edge over women in a highly developed refined traditional culture, but such a distinction is quite irrelevant these days. And isn't heart wisdom more valuable than head in spiritual life? It is pretty obvious that if you look around, common sense will tell you that these days men are equally inclined to hedonism, lust and fuzzy thinking.

So what right do men devotees have to stigmatize women, to put special burdens and psychic onus on them, and to treat them so badly they have to already be saints to tolerate it? Clearly you don't encourage women to take up or stick to *sadhana* by telling them they have less aptitude for it.

There are hundreds of topics in Krsna consciousness that are so uplifting and enlivening and purifying. There is simply no reasons to ever bring up the one thing that is counterproductive, except to enjoy lording it over females. OK, the topic of female subordination might be broached to put it in historical perspective. Vedic society used to be organized in a way that did generally promote spiritual advancement, though some might say at women's expense. In any case, girls did no receive the same education as boys and they were channeled into modes that would please men, allowing men greater facilitation for spiritual focus in some cases and material enjoyment and sense gratification in most cases. So of course men saw them this way! Again, it seems simpleminded and unfair to restrict women to one sphere and then criticize them for those qualities.

Let's be honest: We need women and therefore feel insecure and therefore we try to control them. Or we totally reject the parts of ourselves that need them and this rejection/renunciation also results in efforts to control them. These desires to control and dominate are rarely honestly admitted; they are concealed and result in twisted, slippery ideas that dissolve into gibberish when logically analyzed, but are still used as means of control.

The truth is that women actually have several advantages in bhakti yoga and men are the ones with the inherent disadvantages. Men's bent toward scientific and mathematical intelligence is largely irrelevant in devotional service; women's bent toward literary studies helps them in reading and understanding scriptural texts, etc. It also might be said that women are more

adept in the subtleties of the inner spiritual life and that their submissive qualities to obey and serve facilitate the disciple/guru relationship. And what about the idea that the constitutional essence of every soul in relation to Sri Krsna is to be female? And of course women are more talented for most of the concrete temple activities such as sewing for and dressing the Deities, cooking and cleaning and preaching to visitors and guests in a nice, friendly and sensitive manner. None of these advantages are ever mentioned; women are kept under a cloud of conceptual inferiority. One technique for doing this, recently used by one *sannyasi* in a recent issue of *Priti-laksanam*, was to cast some slightly disparaging remarks and then discount them, saying they are not important. Any protests that occur can then be mocked as trivial, but women devotees are effectively kept in their place, off-balance, by the chronic slippery hints about their inferiority.

The idea that women's low status of subordination etc., is related to some eternal truth or absolute is nutty. I always knew that these ideas are arbitrary and based on cultural conditioning because from my Irish family I heard ideas that men are the one who were unclean, impure, etc. (And hundreds of books exist with lost of evidence that patriarchy is a recent development. Different invasions or tribal nomadic influx caused chronic warfare that caused pronounced social hierarchy. An army need hierarchy and chain of command and the taking of slaves results in stratification and concepts that slaves and women were chattels or property.)

Traditional Irish culture has some similarities with Vedic culture; there is, for example, "a high regard for fasting and sexual abstinence." I quote from a study of rural village life published in 1979 by Nancy Scheper-Hughes: "On Sunday mornings all the parish turn out for Mass . . . seating are arranged within the chapel according to age, sex and marriage status. In the very front rows sit the widow women, blessed and serene in their dark woolen shawls. . . . In the church vestibule and on the front steps of the church are the bachelors, caps and rosaries in hand, who stand silent and at attention at a religious rite they can neither see nor hear. 'Why don't you go inside, up to the altar, and receive Communion like the women?' I ask, to which the men reply, 'Women "have right" to receive; men have "shame"'. . . . Throughout rural Ireland men are the bearers of sexual pollution

and shame and women the bearers of ritual honor purity, another barrier that divides that sexes. The belief is strongly held in Ballybran that men are more prone than women to mortal or serious sin. The little 'sineens' (venial sins) of women, such as lying, gossip, impatience and cursing do not disqualify them from the state of grace. the more serious masculine sins, however, such as 'bad thoughts,' masturbation, drunkenness, idleness, and irresponsibility disqualify men from receiving Holy Communion."

In conclusion, let us recall that many people know about the disgraceful treatment of women over the years in ISKCON—it's a big embarrassment. If there are any sincere apologists for the status quo, perhaps it is time they came forward and presented an overview analysis and rationale for continuing to promote these concepts that imply female inferiority. If there's a shred of truth to the notions that women are less intelligent and/or less suited for spiritual life, one might wonder at the audacity of asking women for monetary support. It seems wrong to declare that one group is mentally inferior and that they cannot participate equally in an organization, and then pressure them to donate or collect money to support our spiritual life. Many people would find this a glaring and outrageous contradiction.

---

#### RESPONSES TO ARTICLES IN PREVIOUS ISSUES

---

##### In Response to "Rectifying Basic Imbalances" Hare Krsna dasi Ireland

I feel that we must careful if we are going to practice Krsna consciousness according to how we assess our degree of Westernization. The ideals of Vedic civilization which we aspire to have been conveyed by Srila Prabhupada. We also know that material intelligence is not spiritual intelligence.

It is logical that a person who feels a grievance is going to be more vocal than a person who does not. I feel a little nervous that women coming to Krsna consciousness may be picking up an imbalanced view of how devotees feel about the subject of women in Krsna consciousness. I personally have been very happy in my situation for years. Why should I strive to rectify a situation which for me requires no rectification?

preach. We're not even matching 'for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health.' . . . I meet some men who have fallen victim to deviant behaviour on the part of their wife but in my experience it is usually the other way around. Do you agree? Men who fail to carry their responsibility for giving spiritual, emotional and physical support to their wives and children indicate a yawning gap in the training being offered by our Society to its members and point to failure on the part of the general body of devotees to recognise the needs of the women and children whose welfare and protection should be the priority of ISKCON's administration (administrator/*ksatriya*, or at least acting as one?).

We need strict guidelines governing the entry into marriage so that we don't continue to end up with irresponsible men leaving distressed wives or producing families which they then abandon.

We need organized bodies consisting of trained or experienced devotees whose function is to offer support and guidance to married couples in temple and congregational situations.

We need to prioritize the welfare of the women and children within our Society so that we can truly offer a viable alternative for the future of mankind.

We need to give our leaders this message: "Please, help us get it together!"

#### Rock & Roll Or Metallica?

Syama devi dasi  
San Diego, CA

I would like to address the issue of rock or metallica music. There are many opinions on this, and I must admit I see value in all of them. I think it is just a matter of evaluating where a teen is coming from, and dealing with it from that point. No teenager is better or worse, just different.

If a teen has not yet heard rock, wouldn't it be best if the whole thing could be avoided? Of course, once teens have listened or become attached to it, adults need not put them down but offer them a positive alternative, like TK's tapes, or Shelter. Making similar but nondevotee music acceptable also is not a good idea, and has only become OK with them because at some point we made it OK with us. There needs to be discrimination.

This is not meant to advise one to rush in and rip their teenagers tapes. That is not the process. But neither is ignoring it. The issue must be ad-

dressed. These teenagers are intelligent souls and chastisement isn't what works for them, education is. They cannot understand and believe what we do not fully believe ourselves (and that is why we have made rock or metallica acceptable). We need to explain to them that we merely wish to offer a balance. We just want to share the whole picture with them, and we verbalize that we believe in when they point out the good side of this music.

Why should adults say this? Because it's true. If we don't start speaking from a point of truth, why should they listen? Therefore, we can be open minded to hearing, and maybe they will do the same, if we are doing it from a point of honesty and sincerity. Then we can add our knowledge along with our personal experiences that as one gets too involved in this music, in addition to doing good it can do harm as well.

Something else worth mentioning to them is that it's not always merely a phase; many of us still have our generations rock tunes running through our heads and can't get them out. Sometimes it even causes us to give up and we start listening to them all over again. We wish to spare our teenagers this problem.

We are not to set out and prove that it has no benefit at all, nor that it always does harm, but just wish to increase their awareness that these negative aspects are there too.

I also recall that Prabhupada gave the instruction that any instrument may be played during *kirtana*, simply that the music is not to predominate the sound vibration of the chanting, and instead is to enhance it. Wouldn't devotee rock and roll require the same?

Conveying all of this to teenagers is merely a matter of attitude/consciousness. If we don't have an attitude, neither will they.

#### Viewpoint On Women's Issues

Tom Gaffney  
Danville, CA

As a devotee who left institutional ISKCON many years ago, I was very interested and heartened to recently read a number of *Priti-laksanam* issues. This mood of openness and mature reflection is long overdue and great things may come of it. *Jai!* I'm moved to offer my viewpoint on the women's issue.

In my experience of temples in the US, certain rather slippery concepts were/are deployed in a mealy-mouthed way as a means to keep

women in their place, basically. There were frequent illusions to ideas that women are flawed and stigmatized in some ways, and that basically the female sex is a lesser birth, and that the only possible partial compensation for it is to be very strictly "chaste," which meant effectively to submit to male authority and try hard to avoid displeasing the men with status. Some advanced women devotees were able and willing to largely ignore all this, a few became "Uncle Toms" in the system, and most learned gradually to accept the rationale that chaste devotees could have a status that rendered them somewhat exempt from categorical sexist attacks personally directed.

Let's look at the concept that women are less intelligent, so often bandied about in the temples, in the presence of the ladies. I never heard illusions to Prabhupada's negative statements about black Africans made in front of black devotees in the temples, so why have women devotees been subject to open insults? What could be the point of referring to the stigma of inferiority? Let's be honest with ourselves: what other purpose could the chronic insults have, except to allow the men to lord it over the women? Always the tired old war-horse of women's lesser intelligence is trotted out as a justification for the power arrangements etc., but when subjected to the slightest logical or historical scrutiny, it can be seen as remarkably irrelevant and unreal.

Sometimes it was said that women have only less "material" (mundane or academic) intelligence, but are spiritually equal. But there is such abundant evidence that disproves this. In confusing, slippery contradiction, it was sometimes said that women are less intelligent because their consciousness is just lower; they are less inclined to rigorous philosophical study or austere spiritual practice, because they are more prone to material enjoyment. All this may well have been the case in the old Vedic culture, but it seems a strange idea that since women were systematically barred from participating in the rigorous monastic expression of a cult, their non participation can be used as grounds to impugn them.

All over the world, women have had striking aptitude to become spiritual practitioners and probably greater piety than devotion. In the West, it is women who fill churches an read books about meditation. Finally, it was sometimes said that women are less intelligent because their emotional,

Ms. Cronin states that she is "astonished at thought patterns that vaguely insinuate that Vedic standards of propriety and role behavior are without question relevant for Westerners." Of course, they are not relevant—for Westerners. But I don't wish to be a Westerner, I wish to be a devotee of Krsna. For me that means following the process lovingly explained to us Westerners by His Divine Grace.

If "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", or "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", then how is it possible that we can change any of our "Western-ness"? Should we not give up meat? Is the taking of intoxicants so indoctrinated from birth that we cannot stop? According to some psychologists by practicing celibacy we are in danger of becoming sexually repressed, leading to possible mental disorder. According to Ms. Cronin's reasoning it is pointless to follow any regulative principle as they are alien to our Western upbringing.

There may be much material data and research recorded about how women have suffered at the hands of men throughout history: "The whole culture of the progressive intelligentsia today is saturated with the idea that history itself condemns patriarchy—males dominance and aggression have ruined the world." Surely it is a lack of Krsna consciousness that has ruined, and is still ruining the world.

Please don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that there are not instances where women in our movement have been unfairly treated. However, I don't think the answer is to say "These standards are not practical for us to follow, and the men aren't up to standard so why should we even try?"

In my own relationship with my husband, my goal is to attach a Vedic standard of Krsna conscious marriage. He would never claim to be a perfect Vedic husband, nor would I consider myself to have reached the standard of Gandhari, but each of us knows that standard to which we aspire. As I say to my children when they take delight in pointing out another's misdemeanors, "The only person whose behavior you have to worry about is your own." In other words, if each person concentrates on their own striving toward a standard, then their energy will be

better used instead of scrutinizing another's failings.

Ms. Cronin states: "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." But intelligence cannot be learned; knowledge can be learned. Intelligence is a quality present to a greater or lesser degree in the body inhabited by a spirit soul. In any case, surely it is spiritual intelligence that Prabhupada refers to as intelligence, not material intelligence. My brother is a Ph.D. at Trinity College in Cambridge, England and he travels all over the world lecturing on this research program into low-temperature physics and semi-conductors. By material standards he is very intelligent. However, he think any form of religion is simply an emotional crutch, and that the living entity is just a complex assemblage of chemicals that cause our emotions and thought patterns. For him there is no such thing as the spirit soul. He is devoid of spiritual intelligence.

To be a servant is not a position to be abhorred. To be a servant is what we aspire to be, a servant of the servant of the servant of Krsna.

We have to separate material assessment from spiritual. By material standards Srimati Radharani is an uneducated, married, village girl having an affair! But Her rasa with Krsna is the topmost. There simply is no greater love for Krsna than the love of Srimati Radharani. Srila Prabhupada manifested love of Krsna and he explained how we may also achieve it. there is no need to look elsewhere.

In my experience, there is no doubt that a woman and a man have very differing emotions and powers of reasoning. My daughters aged 6 1/2 and 4 1/2 are above average intelligence, yet they are much more emotional than any little boy in the community where I live. Similarly, I have a university degree, whereas my husband hasn't a material qualification to his name; however, without being falsely humble, his logical and clear-sighted ability to analyze a situation is a constant source of astonishment to me.

Prabhupada's intelligence is coming directly from Krsna and who of us is more intelligent than that? Surely we are not going to start questioning Srila Prabhupada himself? Can it be that anyone striving to become a devotee is questioning Srila Prabhupada's judgment?

For myself, the most honest course

is to admit my own shortcomings rather than to question the standard I have failed to reach. I would not presume to say that some of Srila Prabhupada's teachings are irrelevant and unsuited to aspirant devotees from the West.

### The Truth Shall Make You Free

Gaurangi Dasi

India

Before becoming a devotee, I was searching for the truth; I always felt inspired by these words of Jesus: "The truth shall make you free." Now I have come to Krishna Consciousness to meet the Absolute Truth in person. If in the meantime I am not able to face relative truths concerning myself, however unpleasant they may be, then I will remain stuck in the muck and not make any spiritual advancement. These realizations are dawning on me as I am trying to offer Srila Prabhupada something special for his Centennial celebration. My original ambitious idea was to get rid of 100 *anarthas* by 1996. Easier said than done! I cannot even get rid of one single bad habit! Collectively we have to face the truth of the many problems confronting our society and get rid of some *anarthas* in order to have a healthy and rejuvenated ISKCON. And one of the contentious issue is the so called "women's issue."

In the past I thought about the problems faced by women in ISKCON; I objected to the status quo at times, got angry, sad, disgusted with certain oppressive and negative attitudes that some men have toward women, but I just kept on being a "fired-up" devotee, running around parking lots, distributing books, collecting donations, doing the needful. I kept putting the "women issue" on the back burner; after all things were not so bad, the situation had improved over the years, I have not been mistreated myself. But by reading accounts of painful experiences by other Godsisters, by reflecting deeper on the subject and being confronted by many negatives feelings within myself that I had tried to bury or ignore, I realize it is time to seriously deal with this issue. I cannot forget my Godsisters, other potential devotees who get turned away because of this condescending attitude toward women; I cannot forget all the violence inflicted upon women and the weaker ones in this dreadful age of Kali. I did not realize as intensely as now how important and vital it is, for the individual devotees' material and spiritual well being and ISKCON's health and future, to resolve this

contentious issue once and for all.

The time is over when we can just wave a hand or sigh in helplessness when someone puts the women's issue in front of us, or any other sensitive issue that might force us to change or reevaluate what has been taken for granted for so long. Even the "karmis" who are not in such ignorance, as we may sometimes think, can see what is going on behind the "holier than thou" image that we may sometimes try to present to the public.

Who is going to be impressed by a great *Bhagavatam* class when everyone knows that the devotee who just spoke so eloquently might just go home and beat his devotee wife, just to bring her into submissiveness, and "train" her? Who is going to believe in the equality of all spirit souls when the women devotees are so often ignored, neglected, abused or at best shoved in a corner? Who is going to respect us for our rate of separation and divorce that is as bad if not worse as the rate for nondevotees? Who is going to tolerate some unacceptable, demeaning or violent behavior when we add a few seemingly relevant quotes to justify it or even quote Srila Prabhupada, without fully understanding the broad scope of his instructions or adopting his intense mood of love and compassion for all sufferings souls? Plain common sense is something we have seen neglected too much. Facts speak for themselves, if we just have the honesty to open our eyes, look at what is going on, listen to what others have to say. The first step to take in order to solve a problem is to acknowledge its existence. Let's get real! The truth shall make us free.

### **This is not a "Women's Lib" Type Thing**

First of all I would like to make this point very clear: women who have a desire to say what they think, who present doubts or objections to a certain status quo concerning the situation of the women in ISKCON are not on a women lib type of trip! They are sometimes been categorized so by men and also women. Call the dog a bad name and hang it! As one sister had pointed out, no feminist would touch ISKCON with a ten foot pole. So instead of using vague and irrelevant words to cloud the real problems at hand and avoid by the same token their resolution through practical solutions, it is much more fruitful to hear what these women have to say, without prejudices, misconceptions or name calling.

The main issues of the women liberation movement are: independence from exploitative and irresponsible men, legitimate desire for equal rights in jobs, salaries and opportunities. Because of a lack of spiritual values in the women liberation movement, the very idea of freedom has been misunderstood by many women, the result being unrestricted sense gratification and exploitation of women by men (and also men by women) in the name of equality, especially concerning their sexual activities. Degradation and unhappiness were the outcome on one side, but on the positive side women regained their sense of self-esteem, they realized that they could support and help each other, without being solely dependent on men, especially when these turn out to be totally unreliable, violent and abusive. Even though I am not so much in touch with the women liberation movement as it stands today, it seems that women just want to be themselves, exist as full individuals and realize their potential. They don't want to feel sorry for having the body they have. Of course if they could add the spiritual touch, the concept of liberation would reach its ultimate dimension: liberation from the bodily concept of life, liberation from the cycle of birth and death, liberation from the clutches of *maya*, liberation from all miseries and exploitations once and for all.

Women devotees are aspiring for this kind of liberation, just like their Godbrothers. They desire unlimited opportunities for devotional service to Krishna, not sense gratification. They want an equal chance as their Godbrothers to practice *bhakti yoga* and make spiritual advancement. They want and deserve equal access to the devotional facilities offered to us by Srila Prabhupada and Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Too often women devotees are made to feel that the temple belongs first to the male devotees, it is considered their property *a priori*. Many of us are objecting to the subtle forms of exploitation, oppression and compression and the demeaning attitude that women encounter in the name that they are less intelligent, they are the agents of *maya* to seduce and allure these poor men (after all, only their spiritual advancement seems to count). Certainly women need protection, and ISKCON is offering some, but I do not think that at this point many have a clear conception of what real protection means. Let's start to open the forum of discussion on the topic. What is the difference between

protection and domination? Even in India where there is more protection of women with the last remnants of Vedic culture, things are far from being all rosy, as some frightening statistics will indicate in a later part of this article.

As Sita dasi pointed it out in her essay (*Priti-laksanam* Vol. 6) it is mainly a question of attitude. We feel women are being tolerated more than really welcome in ISKCON. Happily the time is past when some devotees were seriously wanting to just get the women out of the temples, ship them to Australia or the Arctic Pole to preach to the penguins! But the scars remain. When it is time to do service and bring lots of *laksmi*, there is no problem, but when it comes to women devotees being able to take up responsibilities, occupy important positions, being included in the management of our society at local levels or at the GBC level, being able to present their ideas, that is another thing. Things have evolved in the past years, otherwise there would not have remained many women in ISKCON, but everything is far from being resolved. First steps first. First comes getting to the root cause of the problem, understanding the situation in the light of *sastras*, Srila Prabhupada's teachings and example, and plain common sense.

End Part One (*To be Continued.*)

---

## PERSONALS

---

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. All new ads will have the first three words in bold; ads run previously will not.

Parents seeking engagement for fifteen year old daughter; marriage within one to three years. She is born and raised in Krsna consciousness; *gurukula* and home school training only, daily full morning program, chants 16 rounds, and does not watch TV or movies, or listen to *karmi* music. She is very pretty (very fair), an excellent cook, loves children, loves to preach, is chaste and protected, and is quite intelligent. We are looking for someone between sixteen and twenty-five years of age who is very serious about spiritual life, is astrologically compatible, and preferably has spent at least his adolescent years in Krsna consciousness. Please send a brief description, birth information, and photo to SNP c/o *Priti-laksanam*.

• • •  
I am seeking Krsna's mercy in finding a suitable wife. I am down to earth, Japanese-American, 5'5", never married, Prabhupada disciple, but not the strict devotee I was in the temple. I chant my 16 rounds and offer

my food. I am still trying to be some kind of devotee. For money I would like to set up a small business and pursue a screen and writing career. I have a great interest in films and literature. Contact Jaya Madhava dasa c/o Koval, 10701 Aurora Avenue North #5, Seattle, WA 98133-8813. Tel: 206-365-3527.

8 year old French devotee is looking for a husband for her loving, beautiful mother. She's 36 years old. We like to live not very far from a temple. Mum is a teacher and we live in a nice apartment in the city. We also like country life. Since 1978 Mum has been so many things: *pujari*, *sankirtana* devotee, BBT worker. We also travel a lot. Please reply to my friend, A. Laboire, 27 Rue de la Goulette, 51100 Reims, France.

41 years young male disciple of Hrdayananda dasa Goswami (first and second initiation). I am of Italian descent, and considered quite handsome. I am very active and work out regularly. I play tennis, scuba dive, gold and enjoy a game of bridge. I have been to Woodstock and back. I have been fortunate enough to travel with my guru to India and across the States. I am serious about my spiritual life, I want to be happily married and maintain a temple room in my home. I al looking or someone to walk on the beach with, to share the joys of life and the pleasure of temple life, a Sunday feast and a *kirtana*. I am looking for a wife, I prefer to meet someone in her late 20s to 30s something. Someone who is settled, knows what she wants out of life, is positive, happy and serious about liberation. Children are OK. Are you out there? Take a chance and write. I am a good guy, ask my mom! So, what's wrong with me? At the moment I am at a federal prison camp for white collar crimes, a.k.a., "club fed" or as my *guru* calls it, "club fed mandir." My crime is a crime of money. I have excellent references from ISKCON, senior disciples, my *guru*, and the GBC. Write me, Joe Gennaro (Jaya Krsna dasa), 27651-004, Box 600 Dorm 3, FPC Eglin AFB, Florida 32542.

Father and Srila Prabhupada disciple seeks marriageable compatible woman, at least 24 years old, with or without children. Prefer Russian, European, Italian girl who is slender, attractive, feminine, affectionate, easy to get along with, friendly, and has a positive attitude. *Sankirtana* experience a plus, but must be devoted to Srila Prabhupada. I am employed, attractive, responsible, slim, healthy, friendly, optimistic, philosophical, independent (slightly!), a good *kirtana* leader and have a great sense of humor. I'm seeking a partner, not a servant, who will be a compliment to my Krsna consciousness (and vice versa), an affectionate wife and a good, loving mother to my children. Please respond to David Jensen, P.O. Box 20572, Castro Valley, CA 94546 USA. All replies answered/treated confidentially.

Male devotee, 38, employed, seeking marriage with attractive, healthy female who loves to preach. We're opening a new preaching center near ocean. Astrological

compatibility a plus, good communication skills a must. Send photo and information to Gd, P.O. Box 2381, Clearwater, FL 34617.

Female disciple of Srila Prabhupada, 36 years old, with children. I am seeking correspondence with mature male devotees interested in marriage. I am interested in total honesty, and whole hearted association. I'm currently working toward a B.A. in Religious studies. I love to cook, preach, and am addicted to *kirtana*. Am willing to relocate. Please write me: S. Sherreitt, HCR 1 Box 4109, Keaau, HI 96749.

42 year old male Prabhupada disciple (initiated 1974). Divorced. I am thoughtful, sensitive, and affectionate; liberal in thought, but conservative in deed. I have learned a great deal about relationships and consider personal as well as spiritual growth essential. I am a recent graduate of the University of Hawaii—BA in psychology (hons.) and am presently a first year law student. After graduation, I will be sitting for the California Bar Exam and relocating there. I am seeking a wife who is sweet, intuitive, perceptive, faithful, and devoted to Krsna and His devotees. I will respond to all inquiries. Please send letter, picture(s), and copy of horoscope (or date, time and place of birth) to MCD, P.O. Box 10690, Hilo, HI 96721.

Srila Prabhupada disciple seeking mature mataji with or without children for correspondence to develop relationship. Must be 30+ years old. Serious about spiritual life. I have many plans for services and need a good wife to help me. I like cooking, preaching and doing business for Krsna conscious projects. Please send letters to: Visva Mohana dasa, c/o Chandrasekhara dasa, 2936 Esplanade Ave., New Orleans, LA 70119.

Energetic, enthusiastic Prabhupada disciple and book distributor seeks wife. I've spent 25 years in Prabhupada's movement by Krsna's grace, & I want to practice the wonderful formulas I've learned. If you are looking to pursue perfection through the intimate exchanges of sharing nectar and serving one another in transcendental devotional service to Sri Krsna please write me and reveal your heart. Please send photo and birth info. I am a little plump, past my prime and ridden with faults; therefore, I can overlook faults too. I want to know the joy and tests of *grhashta* life now. Write me: Visala dasa, 3764 Watseka Ave., LA, CA 90034, or call (310) 558-3016.

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.

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 Watseka Avenue #6, Los

Angeles, CA 90034.

Female disciple 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, holistic, 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.

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, P.O. Box 341703, Los Angeles, CA. 90034.

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 *Priti-laksanam*.

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. Philosophically 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.

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.

Now you don't have to go to embarrassing extremes to find a marriage partner.

V C B

(Vaisnava Compatibility Bank)

ISKCON's International database. "Opportunities for lasting marriage relationships." Discreet and Confidential. Operated by senior devotees: Pancaratna dasa & Atitagina dasi, Dhruva-Maharaja dasa & Sama Priya dasi. Incorporating: Computerized character analysis; Vedic astrological calculation, personal review. FREE REGISTRATION! Each name retrieved only \$25.00 (additional donation if match is successful) For more information write: Vaisnava Compatibility Bank, 1A Rainey Park, Calcutta -19, INDIA or c/o ISKCON 1683 Main St., E. Hartford, CT 06108 USA

## ADS

Dear Anonymous: I read your submission "Plea for Help" in Vol. 2 of *Priti-laksanam* (February 1992) If you're genuinely and seriously interested in giving at least part of your inheritance back to Krsna, I have a very vital and Krsna conscious idea. Contact me, Tdd c/o R.D. McLaughlin, 150 San Francisco Blvd., San Anselmo, CA 94960. I will respond by letter or telephone.

As It Is: The Voice of the Second Generation for gurukula alumni. Send submissions. Six issue subscriptions: US First class \$24.00; US Third class \$18.00, other: \$30.00. Write As It Is, P.O. Box 1395, Culver City, CA 90232. Tel: (310) 204-6944.

Devotee couple, Prabhupada disciples, seeking a child to adopt. Good, solid Krsna conscious family wants a child to raise. We're interested in a newborn, or speaking with a pregnant mother who is unable to keep her child. All responses will be kept in the strictest confidence. Reply to Ldd c/o *Priti-laksanam* address.

Mothers for Krishna Kids—A newsletter about teens to tots, covering relationships, connections, support, more. Sample: \$1.00 plus stamp. Box 43-PL, Badger, CA 93603.

Devotees in Finland are building a temple and require funding. Please help if you're able. Contact Sankarsana Nityananda dasa (Dr. Shankare S. Gowda) at Mimerkinkuja 4 A 12, SF 02100 Espoo, Finland. Tel: 358-0-455-4225 FAX 358-0-456-7003.

Mrgendra dasa, attorney at law, from Los Angeles is making available copies of templates for drawing up a Living Will or Arbitration Agreement. Your copies can be obtained by sending \$1.00 for postage and xeroxing to *Priti-laksanam*.

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.

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.

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, BTC's, etc. No item too small or too big. Please contact. Sadhusangananda dasa, Rosenackerstrasse 26, 1170 Vienna, Austria.

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.

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.

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.

Help Build a Place for Ladies in Mayapur

The Mayapur Administration has approved a women's center in one of the apartments under construction near Srila Prabhupada's samadhi. The apartment would include a place to gather for feasts, classes or meetings; a quiet library; and a japa room. US\$17,000 is needed to purchase the apartment. Srimate dasi will live on site and maintain it.

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.

ANNOUNCING

VAISNAVA COMMUNITY SERVICES

This non-profit organization has been established to serve the social and economic needs of the Vaisnava community. All services are strictly confidential.

- Legal Services
- Personal and Business Financial Services
  - Individual Counseling
  - Health & Welfare Services

For more information on how you can obtain services, or participate in this important new project in the society of devotees send for a prospectus today!

Sesa dasa (Executive Director), Vaisnava Community Services, 3744 Watseka Avenue #1, Los Angeles, CA 90034. USA.

**HARE KRISHNA DIRECTORY & RESOURCE GUIDE  
1994 Edition Coming Up!**

This is your personal networking and shopping resource guide, with listings of individual devotees (along with their interests and enterprises), ISKCON temples, projects, and department heads, information on community development, education, and lots of devotional supplies and ideas.

**The first Directory was widely acclaimed. Don't miss out on this one.**

\$12 prepublication discount price, plus shipping (N. Amer. \$2; other: \$5).  
**Vaishnava Community Development, P.O. Box 1530, Blaine, WA 98230, USA**

**1994 Hare Krishna Directory and Resource Guide  
Yes! We want to be included. Here is our information.**

*Please print—illegible information cannot be included.)*

Devotee Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Names(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov. \_\_\_\_\_ Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Personal interests, business, or devotional enterprises or services (list 3 only):

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

List my name alphabetically by (circle one) Devotee name / Legal name / Business name

Please make the above changes to my existing listing (1992 edition). Enclosed is \$2.

Send my copy of the Directory ASAP. Enclosed is US\$12 plus shipping (N. A. \$2, other \$5).

Please send me advertising information for the "Blue Pages."

I want to submit a Project Profile about my ISKCON project. Please send me more information.

***Must be received before March 31, 1994.***