

Priti-laksanam

A Forum for Vaisnava Discussion

"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

Volume 17

In the service of
His Divine Grace

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A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

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Dear Readers,

I would like to thank everyone for their wonderful response to our appeal that was mailed out along with the last issue of Priti-laksanam. You have sent exactly enough for all the mailing and printing expenses of this volume. I hope you really like this issue, because I am asking you again to help out, this time by convincing your devotee friends to subscribe and advertise in Priti. If you feel that in some small way this journal is at all helpful in healing our society so that we may progress together in Krishna consciousness, then please copy this issue and send it to other devotees, or lend it to them and encourage them to subscribe and support it.

This is your publication. Thanks for taking care of it. Please write in with your thoughts and comments and use it as an advertising vehicle. We're hoping to get wider and wider responses to make it fully representative.

In this issue I respond to a couple of people's concerns about my attitude and ability. I honestly welcomed their letters because they help me clarify these things for myself and this is a necessary and beneficial process for any editor to go through. Special thanks to those folks.

Also in this issue you will hear about an extraordinary GBC and Temple Presidents meeting that took place here in Alachua.

One last note: Since this office is now producing *ISKCON World Review*, *Priti-laksanam*, and *The Hare Krishna Directory and Resource Guide*, and we are simultaneously training *gurukulis* and welfare

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mothers here in occupational skills, we are getting bottle necked. That is why these issues are coming out so late. IWR, which we just mailed, ran three weeks behind schedule and the Directory is two years behind. There is a remedy to this problem, additional trained staff, but the remedy will also take time. We are setting up a non-profit educational institute to obtain grants so that we can hire and train more staff, buy more computers, and expand the actual office space to accommodate our increasing responsibilities.

In the meanwhile, please tolerate the temporary inconvenience and understand that we are completely dedicated to all of these projects. Each of them serves an important need in our society. If I had sufficient funds in my hand I would be conducting interviews with prospective staff and hiring contractors by now. We don't have the funds yet, but only time and more effort is separating us. I have complete faith that we will be able gear up and serve you better. Please accept my humble apologies if the wait between *Priti-laksanam* issues puts you into anxiety. We may be slow, but by Krishna's grace, we are steady.

Thanks again. Please continue to do your best to keep Priti supported with more and more devotees involved in their journal.

Your servant,
Sarva-satya dasa

ISKCON Raises Big Bucks for Abused Kunti dasi Alachua, US

It's been about 8 years since I first encountered information from *gurukulis* about the abuse suffered by Krishna's children in ISKCON. Sure we had all heard about "problems" at the Dallas school and that it was closed down. The exploits of a certain pedophile were infamous, and most devotees assumed that he had been somehow dealt with—besides that was all part of the New Vrindavan mess, not ISKCON, right? Well, my education began when Raghunatha Anudas gave us a copy of his *ISKCON Youth Veteran's* newsletter. There

I read with sadness, disgust, and anger of the reported abuse perpetrated, tolerated, and perpetuated by some of our leaders and their servants.

In recent years I have covered the news for IWR at three North American leadership councils where the kids, now adults, tentatively but bravely sat in their little row of chairs and trotted out their horror stories. Afterwards the leaders would issue a letter of apology or pass a resolution. Small steps in the right direction after hearing how these kids and their siblings, schoolmates, mothers, fathers, and Srila Prabhupada's society in general were victimized by a system that did not value children. The *gurukulis* told of children in our schools, under some "ashrama teacher's" supervision, or on ISKCON property who left their bodies or were severely injured due to improper supervision, became sick and did not receive proper medical care, were routinely put in fear, told that they were unwanted, humiliated, malnourished, neglected, molested, and generally invalidated as people.

When those *gurukula* alumni were children, did everyone who knew of or suspected these things just shut up about it because they might be kicked out, themselves? "Don't question authority." Get those mothers out collecting. Send the father away on traveling *sankirtana*. "Family life is *maya*." Kids in distress who tried to get help had their letters confiscated, their phone calls censored.

Mommy! Daddy!

Krishna's children. Srila Prabhupada invited them to take birth in his movement. Their parents chanted 50 rounds to purify themselves to have them. They were so cute, clapping their little hands in *kirtana*.

Shocking. Why was it allowed? Why couldn't these violated and completely helpless children even have normal private access to their parents to seek relief and protection? How could anyone be so cruel and irresponsible? Why weren't children valued? I'll return to this later. First, it is necessary to recognize the progress we have been making as a society and keep

this in balance, and we have these kids and even some leaders to thank for that.

Two weeks ago, something special happened at one of these meetings with the GBC and temple presidents. To help set the stage, Yasodadevi dasi of North Carolina, a professional child abuse counselor and program director with 15 years of experience, spent a full day explaining the damage that abuse causes. She brought graphic pictures, case histories, statistics, and scientific data to convince people to treat abuse as deadly serious. Manu dasa of the ISKCON Youth Ministry was originally scheduled for a 45-minute presentation on another day. He turned the floor over to a panel of other *gurukula* alumni and the session stretched over four hours that day and two hours the next.

The first *gurukuli* to speak, Krsna Avatara dasa (*Priti-laksanam* co-editor), said in a steady voice, "This is your last chance. Some of these *gurukulis* are ready to contact lawyers." Taking turns speaking maturely and clearly, the young men and women related their experiences in graphic detail. "I was made to eat my own vomit when I couldn't handle that awful oat water." "I started wetting my bed and panties due to fear and was made to wear my soiled underwear on my head all day long." "I was locked in a closet all day." "I was forced to marry an abusive man against my 14-year-old will." "I was not allowed to speak with my brother, my only comfort, who was as afraid as I was." "The teacher made all the kids spit on me even though I was innocent and they knew it." "I was beaten and had welts and bruises every single day I was at the Vrindavan (India) *gurukula*." "I was raped repeatedly." In stark contrast, one of them, Gopi dasi, spoke of her ideal experience in *gurukula* and lamented that the loving care she received from her teacher, Urmila dasi, was not an experience shared by the other panel members.

After they spoke, Yasodadevi told the assembly that, statistically, 25% of those in front of them could go on to abuse their children if they did not get help. She asked how many of them had constant headaches, sinus problems, diabetes, recurring

nightmares, and other clinical symptoms. All the hands but one went up. Constant abuse from which there is no escape causes trauma, she explained, which laboratory observations show causes actual nerve damage and other changes in the brain. PTSD—Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Sannyasis cried. You could see the shame in some of the men's eyes. I believe it was even more than the awful threat of lawsuit that spurred these men, so committed to ISKCON, to go beyond passing resolutions.

The kids struck their hearts. Finally.

Gone was the countenance of denial. Everyone in the room offered their obeisances to the kids. Present were Tamal Krsna Goswami, Bir Krishna Goswami, Bhakti-tirtha Swami, Virabahu Prabhu, Ravindra Svarupa Prabhu, Naveen Krishna Prabhu, Sridhar Swami, Vipramukya Swami, Romapada Swami, Prithu Prabhu, Rasananda Swami, Badrinarayana Prabhu, Brahmananda Prabhu, Murlivadaka Prabhu, and numerous temple presidents. Bhakti-Tirtha Swami was the first to respond, crying how embarrassed it made him feel to listen to the mature *gurukula* students speak these things. He urged the leaders present to act.

Sridhar Swami chokingly told the assembly how he himself had been abused as a child. He rallied the devotees to raise over \$100,000 right on the spot, plus he donated his two most valued fund raising tools—his personal notebook computer and a digital computer image projector. This fund is already being set up for a non-profit corporation run by *gurukulis* in cooperation with the NA GBC. A board comprised of three GBC and four *gurukulis* has held a series of meetings with other second generation devotees. With devotee financial and corporate advisors they are creating a professional service to help our second generation get training, employment, counseling, housing, financing, and other services that they need to have fulfilling and productive lives.

It is a daunting task. It takes courage and love to recover from abuse, as well as vision and training. Please, let's all pray

right now that those who actually have experienced protected and happy schooling in ISKCON become the norm, and that pedaphiles and abusers around the world will know that they can forget about preying on our children. We can have a society that protects its kids because we can all share the vision of valuing children as the most precious asset in our social makeup. No longer is it acceptable to dish out repetitive corporal punishment from which children have no hope of escape—even in one's own home. Parents, teachers, children, and all ISKCON managers need lots of training in the prevention of abuse and the proper management actions to take should abuse occur. Let's pray that the leaders and other responsible adults who have for years been trying to end child abuse get more support from the GBC to bring our society to an unshakable standard, where families and the children, women, and men that make them up are valued. Let's pray together that leaders weak in compassion and courage (an abuser may be your best friend or even your spiritual master) are eliminated from positions of authority.

Let's pray that the GBC, by raising these funds as seed money for *gurukuli* services, has signaled a real beginning in establishing shared responsibility among all members of our society for bringing children up in Krishna consciousness.

Why children were not valued in our fledgling ISKCON society is a question I have pondered for years. What unnatural conditioning caused people to act against their own God-given propensity as human beings to nurture and protect the little ones? My short answer is the bodily concept of life. We were preached to, not that women are spirit souls, but that women are *maya*. If that is so, then what is the product of a woman's body? Children. *Maya*. The enemy. Energy suckers, instead of precious charges and hope for the future. And women? *Mayadevis*, not Krishna conscious mothers to be cherished and protected because their service is selfless giving to others. We nurtured sick visions and negative attitudes about one another. The wonder is that we survived as a society at all,

and that the most vulnerable of us, the children, have cared enough to want to save their society from itself.

Although I have spoken of these abuses in the past tense, I must now clarify that the danger is still among us. Less than three months ago a little boy was *molested* by a *gurukula* administrative assistant here in Alachua. Immediately upon discovery, the headmaster contacted our community Child Protection Service representative who called the police. The perpetrator is now under the supervision of the local authorities and is receiving counseling. The little boy, who sounded the alarm by telling his parents, has evidently survived emotionally in tact. Also, reports have floated in that a known pedophile is still at large elsewhere. This illustrates the importance of every devotee community forming a child protection team that is trained to screen members before allowing them to work with children, and that makes sure children, teachers, parents, and administrators are trained to deal with abuse swiftly, effectively, and compassionately. We must also track these offenders and be fore armed.

In this Centennial year, it is essential to set straight a great wrong against Srila Prabhupada's beloved children. When he was about to leave his body he instructed the GBC to do certain things. Prominent in that short list were establishing Varnashrama colleges (to train our youth for their occupations), self-sufficient farming communities (to engage them in progressive Krishna conscious society), and an ISKCON constitution (to spell out the duties and limits of power for the different segments of our society). For years, the GBC neglected these important tasks, emphasizing mainly expansion and book distribution.

Now it is time to return to the other important and basic thing Srila Prabhupada wanted us to develop—a spiritual, loving society in which everyone is facilitated to go back home, back to Godhead. And like Sridhar Swami said, "It's time to put our money where our mouth is."

Dear Readers,

When I first went to the GBC/Gurukuli meeting I thought that I would be wasting my time. I thought that my comments would be falling on deaf ears. After all, these were the "same people" (not necessarily literally) that have been in denial for years. However, to my pleasant surprise, I saw that after we told our stories, not the cold unemotional faces I expected, but men and woman, *grhastas*, *sannyasis*, and *gurus*, sobbing like little children, their eyes filled with grief and shame.

Finally we had been able to get through to them. And furthermore, Sridhara Swami had made a comment to the effect "sentiment is nice, but we need to put our money where our mouths are." Then all of a sudden, like a huge Hawaiian wave, donations came pouring in from *gurus*, *sannyasis*, the GBC, temple presidents, heads of ISKCON projects, and other individual devotees eager to correct the serious mistakes the first generation made. They seemed to have realized that, for all these years, they had been putting buildings and projects before the welfare of their children. We had been made to feel unimportant—just a byproduct of their sex life. And the sexual and physical abuse that ensued was just a manifestation of that sentiment. I really respect Sridhara Maharaja for putting his money where his mouth is. I really respect Manu Prabhhu, our GBC Youth Minister, for tirelessly keeping up the drumbeat. I felt that the first generation really genuinely felt sorry for their inaction.

The next day Children of Krishna, Inc. was conceived. This organization will be run by *gurukula* alumni for *gurukulis* in need. The pledged funds are to be used as seed money to establish a trust that will deliver important services for second generation devotees. The short term objective is to establish a professional service and raise more funds. The next step is to give psychological and financial assistance to those who were the most harmed by abuses. By financial assistance, I mean scholarships for college, or technical training, and loans for viable business opportunities.

In addition we would like to raise the

standard of the screening process of potential teachers to keep out the abusers. We will be providing a list of abusers and alleged abusers to each ISKCON community so that they may protect their children. One of our long term goals is to raise the standards of all ISKCON *gurukulas* to a professional level so that even people who are not ISKCON members will want to send their children to our schools. We will also be forming an archive of abuse documentation, for those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it. In a nutshell, we want to make sure nothing like this ever happens again. The result we envision will be first class *gurukulas* for our movement and happy, healthy Krishna conscious children, generation after generation.

So far we have raised \$102,108 in cash pledges, but we need more. This is a huge project and there is a lot of work to be done. So we have two requests. First, if you have been a victim of past abuses as a child in ISKCON or if you know of someone else who has, we would like to know about it in as much detail as possible. Please include your name, phone, and address. We are documenting every single case possible. My second request is that if you are in a position to send us a contribution of any kind or size, please do so. Buildings and projects are important, but our most important asset is our children. I don't want what happened to me to happen to my children and we can effectively change our society by giving the kids hope for their future in it.

Please contact Children of Krishna, c/o P.O. Box 238, Alachua, FL 32616; 904-462-5054; fax: 904-462-5054.

Your servant,
Krsna Avatara dasa

LETTERS

Editorial Conflict of Interest?

Arya Dasi

Quathiaski Cove, BC, Canada

We really value this newsletter, and I know many other devotees share our feel-

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ings. We are pretty much voluntarily cut off from main stream media and even refuse to receive any transcendental publications which may minimize Srila Prabhupada's glorious position.

I wish to express a concern. *Priti-laksanam*, as an open forum, connects the universal body of devotees. I pray that this unique quality of *Priti-laksanam* will not be threatened by a new 'magazine policy' which is not uncommon when there is change over of editor/publisher and staff. My fear is that as this journal is produced in the ISKCON World Review office, ISKCON may dictate a new policy and may severely edit the magazine contents to suit its purposes. I hope my fears are unfounded. It is understandable that if you receive an article which may be laced with personal hatred and animosity and twisted facts to promote one's own opinion, or may even be a subtle form of 'hate literature,' it's your duty to avoid such blasphemy.

The very name of *Priti-laksanam* suggests "...revealing one's mind in confidence, inquiring confidentially..." and that is the very reason why the *Priti-laksanam* is held so dearly by so many. It's not a vehicle for promoting one particular paradigm, but a medium of exchange for devotees which may assist our better understanding of the fundamental aspects of Krishna culture. So many of my favorite grass roots magazines have undergone undesirable transformations when they changed hands. Should this be a cause for concern?

Dear Arya Prabhu,

Your letter spoke of our sensitive position, in which we are producing IWR and *Priti* from the same office, with a possible conflict of roles. We are trying to wear the different hats effectively and keep the projects separate, but we may make mistakes from time to time along the way. Not only must we guard against exclusivity in our editorial policy in *Priti*, we must also be careful not to alienate ISKCON leaders or others from trusting IWR, because of our association with *Priti*. We have a lot to lose either way if we slip badly or too often.

We want both publications to serve as

bridges that bring devotees closer together and unite our spiritual society. However, people will only use a bridge if they feel it is strong enough to carry them (their messages) securely to the other side. That's why we (here), and *Priti*'s and IWR's readers and users, must continue to be ever more conscious of the different purposes of the two publications and keep each pure within its own context. Please pray for us and keep us on track with your input based on *guru*, *sastra*, and *sadhu*, as well as your own God-given good sense. If we stumble, please be patient with us. We can learn from our mistakes.

Pranada Prabhu spoke with us a number of times in San Diego when she was setting *Priti* up. We discussed its goals, purposes, audience, promotion, distribution, and a little (not much) about policy. The goals and all that are clear. I believe that the policy part should evolve along with our society and according to Srila Prabhupada's guiding principles. According to time, place, and circumstances, we must carefully guard the workings of the publication, so as to facilitate devotees raising their consciousness and relating more and more Krishna consciously.

We may choose to delay submissions that we find to be counter-productive or offensive to *Priti*'s stated goals. It is our duty to build good will amongst the devotees so that devotees are better able to share understandings and healthy relationships. This may sometimes require us to be discreet and cautious—which could also possibly mean we wait for a more auspicious time to present a controversial letter, or ask for some rewrite, or solicit opposing views to run at the same time. We can be careful and inclusive at the same time. However, I cannot imagine running anything that is obviously inimical to or envious of Srila Prabhupada and his instructions (which include building our spiritual society).

Sarva-satya dasa, Editor

How Could You?
Joseph Montgomery
S. Attleboro, MA, USA

For some time, one of my co-workers has occasionally shared with me different Hare Krishna periodicals. I must tell you how disturbed she was by your last issue, #16. She was close to tears when she pointed out to me incredibly enough where you had put in print that the leaders in your movement had blatantly been exposed as having no concern for the issues women face.

How could you even print such information, and on the front page? Maybe you all need to go back to some type of apprenticeship in the art of how to encourage co-workers. There are seminars for that type of stuff.

Anyway, she is a dear friend of mine, so I am writing this on her behalf, unknown to her, hoping that perhaps you'll make amends to the many women you must have offended. Life is too short to go on being such chauvinistic, two-faced liars. I say liars because you give women the hope that they'll be heard, open the door a crack, then slam it back in their faces.

Dear Mr. Montgomery,

Thank you for your thought-provoking letter. I hope you will forgive me for upsetting you and your friend. You are the second person to communicate to me today about how heavy that editorial on the first page of our 16th issue sounded.

You may not be a Hare Krishna devotee, but I'm glad you wrote. This journal is not meant for the public (as is stated on the cover). It is supposed to be a safe, internal place for our discussions on Krishna conscious social and personal relationships. You are correct in saying that we need seminars on how to encourage co-workers. You are also right that I should make amends to your dear friend and "the many women I have offended." I do apologize that this editorial sounded harsh. In retrospect, I would have worded it differently, especially the part on page 1 about the leaders' comments. It's possible I have also offended some of our leaders who may feel misrepresented. If so, I apologize to them, as well, and ask for their forgiveness.

It is a heavy situation, though. Too many women have been carrying more

than their share in society (almost ALL societies, not just ours), insecure and oppressed. And misunderstood, unheard. Maybe I know a little about how that feels. Did you read my whole editorial? Do you remember where I wrote: "Please don't feel that by taking this tack [of broadening the topics in the journal] we are deserting the so called 'women's issue,' which is a Vaishnava issue [meaning everyone's issue in our Vaishnava society]. ISKCON history shows that, in our immaturity and lack of Varnashrama environment, we created second class citizens, based on the body. This was wrong. Wrong philosophically, as well as every other way—we are not our bodies. It's been such a big error, it has badly stunted the development of our society."

If your friend or you had read on, you would have read, in that same issue, a heart-gripping piece by Bimala dasi, "I Don't Understand," which is as persuasive a woman's view as I have ever read. About half the voices in that issue were women's. I said in my editorial we're going to continue to cover women's issues and we will. No door slamming, okay?

I won't take the time now to explain about Varnashrama and how that protects women, other writers in *Priti* are covering that better than I can here. I feel it is my duty as an editor to point out our society's shortcomings as well as to praise its progress and successes. We cannot learn without the truth. I also feel it is my duty to try and be a bridge, to facilitate different members' progressive interaction. I had spoken with a few subscribers who either used to be in leadership positions or are presently in leadership positions, who have either missed the point about the discussion in *Priti*—that men and women devotees must relate respectfully and spiritually in this material world (not an easy trick). Or they sincerely believe they have already gotten the point, and want to move on to other topics. I felt dissatisfied, perceiving that the connection was not there, so I brashly called attention to that. What I failed to say, is that I also know of other leaders, even top managers and gurus,

who are earnestly listening, trying to understand, and are relating to all Vaishnavas as Vaishnavas. I should have encouraged them instead of berating them. I hope and pray that my lopsidedness has not hurt Priti's ability to connect people.

It seems to me that we (myself included) all need to raise our consciousness on how we make snap judgments with little effort or thought, how we are chauvinistic and prejudiced, or how we fail to consider the impact our words may have. You may have some right to call me or others liars. I have the right to tell you are mistaken in this case. I did not lie to the readers. Women are still in there. I told the truth of how I think we need to broaden Priti's topics to connect more with the leadership. I am guilty of presenting it negatively and being insensitive. I should have worked harder at finding a positive, encouraging way to bring it up.

Sarva-satya dasa, Editor

Prana Krishna Dasa
Madison, WI, USA

I am just writing to thank you for the wonderful forum you are providing to the Vaishnava community in the form of *Priti-laksanam*. For decades devotees had needed a publication that would provide them with an outlet for their concerns and their ideas. It is great that you are giving us this long overdue ability to exercise our voices in print.

While I'm sure that *Priti-laksanam* is nothing new to many other devotees, I was only recently introduced to it by my friend Vasu Murti Prabhu. I was so impressed by the frankness of the discussion that was allowed within its pages that I subscribed immediately. Keep it up. And good luck! Hare Krishna.

Arya dasi
Quathiaski Cove, BC, Canada

Some devotees have misinterpreted my critical article in the Jan. issue as a political statement, and due to the confrontational nature of my words, this is understandable. But, being a political activist was not my intention, as I wish to explain.

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In response to my criticism, many older devotees have come forward to express their feelings that they too have felt displaced in their devotional service, as did Tribhuvanesvari Prabhu. Puranjana dasa made it very clear in his memorial to Tribhuvanesvari that he has great empathy for devotees who feel this way, and I did not mean to challenge his convictions. The issue which concerns me in his memorial is that he said "so we could say that she was killed [by ISKCON authorities who dismissed her from her pujari service], if one could be so blunt." A radical statement such as that may evoke feelings of anger, hatred and irreconcilable differences, which is counter productive towards our spiritual growth.

At present the Greek Orthodox Church in Greece is experiencing violent physical conflicts between Christian factions. This is also happening in India between the Sikhs (who originate from Hinduism) and Hindus, as well as Muslims and Ba'ha'is in Iran, and so the story goes on and on.

In the mood of rendering service to Srila Prabhupada, we are obliged to heal past wounds and bridge the gaps between opposing camps so that we may glorify this sankirtan movement as inaugurated by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

I wish to deeply apologize to Puranjana Prabhu for the way in which I presented my complaint. In its own way, his memorial to Tribhuvanesvari devi dasi was heartfelt and sincere and I pray that he and others who have taken offense as a result of my lack of consideration will forgive me. I must also praise the glorious sentiments of Tribhuvanesvari dasi who felt great separation from Srila Prabhupada and her objects of worship, Sri Sri Radha and Krishna, right until her final breath. She will always be an inspiration to us all.

Bob Roberts
Commerce Twp., MI, USA

I greatly appreciate *Priti-laksanam*. We need it! It's a wonderful service for you to continue Prana dasi's work. I share your chagrin in reading that so many subscribers see it only as "just women's issues."

Priti-laksanam has dealt with women's issues, and that, of course, is greatly needed. But there has been so much more than just one issue in Priti-laksanam.

In Response to Giridhari
Mahalasksmi dasi
Badger, CA, USA

I am not an expert writer, but I have been consulting with other writers whose work I respect and I am slowly developing a little ability to respond to Giridhari dasa, who in Vol. 15 criticized my writing in Vol. 14 of *Priti-laksanam*.

I had sent a response in for the last issue, which I am actually relieved was not printed. I feel that way today after a phone discussion with Kunti dasi, as she assured me that there was a plan to print my article, but there was concern that it was not tactful. So, I am going try again (after at least 10 hours writing and probably at least 20 hours of thought).

I would first like to say something personal; something I probably share with a large segment of women (though no one likes to talk about it). I was molested as a young child by someone close to me. An older sister stumbled on the scene, and it stopped (after perhaps 5 or 6 episodes of abuse). About 99% of the damage done to me was emotional and psychological.

I joined the Hare Krishna Movement at age 14. Until I was 19 years old, I didn't even begin to understand I had been seriously damaged on an internal level. At that time I was hospitalized in a mental hospital. Basically, I wanted to be married, but I couldn't understand my emotional or physical reasons for this desire. I was unconsciously sunk in absolute denial from the time I was 5 or 6. So, I short-circuited, to put it plainly.

Years have passed. I have been married 16 years, and have 6 children. I have gone through lots of changes. I am sometimes struck by how seriously I am still affected by what happened as a child. Basically, I am not sensitive enough; my tendency to defend myself is overwhelming when I am put down, and I tend to lose perspective on issues.

I am praying to Krishna that I may learn to hear and respond humbly, sensitively, and intelligently to what people say. So, here goes . . .

I will first response to you, Giridhari Prabhu, with some questions. Was there anything in any of my articles that you found constructive or pertinent to or for women? Do you consider all the quotes from Srila Prabhupada's books in my article in Vol. 14 to be also grounds for attack? Do you realize that in attacking me, you are putting down the entire mood of submission that I was trained in during the 70s in ISKCON?

I feel the need to defend my five years of brahmachari training. If you listen to the video tapes, Acarya I and II, there is a segment wherein a female reporter asks Srila Prabhupada, "Is it true that women are supposed to be subservient to men?" Srila Prabhupada replied, "Not 'supposed,' they are!" Do you think that the mood which I was raised in (which you are attempting to disparage) has no basis in Srila Prabhupada's teachings? I'm sorry, but I don't accept that you have come to very good conclusions. I feel that in scorning and seeking to discredit a presentation based on scripture and Srila Prabhupada's teachings, you risk offending Srila Prabhupada, who is the Founder Acarya of this movement.

Personally, I am hurt, but not offended, that you could say, "Why does she have no concern for the egos, or spiritual growth, or anything, of women?" I hope that is not an opinion shared by many. Was Srila Prabhupada also trying to "enable men's addictions to being superior lords" (I am quoting your article in Vol. 15) when he said the above, that women "are" subservient.

In *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, 3.25.2., we find this verse, "O Vidura, Devahuti served her husband with intimacy and great respect, with control of the senses, with love and with sweet words." In the purport, let us study this sentence: "As constituted by bodily frame, a man always wants to be superior to his wife, and a woman, as bodily constituted, is naturally inferior to her

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husband." I am emphasizing in this context NOT the words "husband" or "wife." I find the words "as constituted by bodily frame" to be most significant. In discussing the possibilities of a woman being a temple president, how will these natural distinctions be used constructively if the woman is chastising the man? My husband and I discuss this frequently; he says he thinks that there are women who could make very good temple presidents. I always respond, "Maybe a few—it would be very hard."

Next I want to ask you why do you consider me to be on a homily? The word "homily" would suggest that I am very much on a false ego platform, would it not? I may very well be, but I have tried to pray to my spiritual master that I may repeat his instructions purely, without personal motive. So, please tell me what I have said to cause you to feel I am on a homily. I am sure I can benefit by your observation on this. (We have been taught to preach, and giving a homily is preaching, but you have used the word with a negative connotation.)

May I point out next that I have never used the word "retiring." The thought of being "retiring" is repulsive to me. I hope one day to be back in the airport with Srila Prabhupada's books, as I was for many years.

You have misquoted me many times. NO WHERE did I say "men's egos are very puffed-up and fragile." As far as "enabling men's addictions to being superior lords," I am perceiving that you are getting modern day psychology classes and the neophyte's conception of "We're all spirit souls, let's forget the designations" jumbled up together. That doesn't work. I certainly do not want everyone to cater to men's egos; I think Krishna's ego is a much more attractive goal. May I also humbly mention, Srimad Bhagavatam is considered the literary incarnation of Krishna, so to abide by the instructions of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is to be Krishna conscious.

Here, I would like to stop and offer homage and obeisances to my God sisters who have been hurt, misguided, and betrayed by the onslaught of Kali-yuga;

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okayed, by men. I am also in that category, and I know it to be a crippling, painful thing to experience. Because I was so little appreciated during my years in the Boston and NY temples, despite collecting at least \$150,000, I find it hard to personally deal with the issue. I didn't think it was appropriate to criticize or acknowledge the lack of sensitivity that my years of Krishna conscious upbringing were tinged with, because I had no other shelter. Why bite the hand that fed me? To leave never entered my mind. When I was 15, I will never forget how the Boston temple president slapped me on the side of the head, and cruelly told me I was just a robot and my parents had totally destroyed me. I hid in a bathroom for a day and a half and cried and cried, not knowing what I had done. Now, I look back and realize, I was just an overconfident teenager. The really sad part is that I saw that man about 8 years ago, and when I brought up the incident to him, all he could say was, "Did you deserve it?" After 14 or so years, he still had not acknowledged that his actions were abusive. What I needed was understanding counsel.

My suggestion to Giridhari Prabhu is that he try to write or otherwise encourage men to be better husbands, temple presidents, fathers, and members of society. Maybe you could write to the GBCs and ask them to begin expanding their vision a little and learn to encourage men to take care of women properly. Isn't this the basis of the problem? There really isn't any incentive for men to become loving, caring, husbands if all the emphasis is on "stay brahmachari," even when we know that most men will probably be married eventually anyway. If more glory and status was given to men being honest about their actual duties to society, maybe men would be inclined to study the scriptures and follow the examples of Krishna conscious *grhasthas* ("guru-patnis") as they are described in the scriptures).

It is essential that we deal with all the unfortunate incidents of abuse, and do whatever is possible to ensure that they are not repeated; whether the abuse be

physical, emotional, or mental. One approach is to instill love, kindness, and respect in our children. At the same time, we cannot stop striving for or deny the principles given by Srila Prabhupada in his books, regarding the relationship between man and woman.

I would also like to mention, I never said, "Men see women as sex objects and tend to lust after them." I understand, essentially, that you are concerned that women be taken care of, and that is very noble of you. In your campaign, please don't neglect what is the proper Vedic understanding of a woman's role. (In your letter, you say, "In the West, there should be absolutely no problem these days with women as authorities with a little power." Personally, I think it unwise to use anything in American culture as a standard to fashion our lives by; let's not forget that these people also endorse wholesale slaughter of mother cow.

My obeisances to all the women on the path of devotional service. My purpose is not to personally criticize anyone, and if I have, I humbly beg forgiveness. My own intent, to respond to Giridhari Prabhu concerning my agenda, is to give myself strength by constantly being absorbed in Srila Prabhupada's books and instructions, specifically as they pertain to women in his movement. My example in my own marriage is that I have been supportive of my husband in his struggle to overcome material desires, as he has been supportive of my struggle. I have had moments when life itself was too painful to bear, but somehow by Krishna's grace I am still here. Whether in happiness or distress, we must remember that our solace is Krishna's lotus feet and preaching His glories.

Rupacandra dasi
Bonners Ferry, ID, USA

The January issue of *Priti-Laksanam* inspired me to look up the word chaste. The dictionary gives its definition as "virtuous; pure in style; subdued." This says worlds! As do the men who outrightly advertise for obedient wives in the Priti personals. It was amazing to see how quickly women's

issues turned up in *varnashram-dharma* discussions. Lord Ramacandra went to great lengths to disguise Himself in order to gauge the temper of society. Today, our leaders can simply subscribe to Priti!

I hope after hearing about Chanting for Unity (CFU), devotees in America are anxious to rise to the occasion and make a tumultuous vibration for Srila Prabhupada this summer. At times Bhaktin Lori will attempt to connect parties at camp stops, so include some of this type of information when checking with her. You can get park guides and 1-800 reservation numbers from national and state park agencies. Parks are great places to hold Padayatras, so be sure and check out the facilities in your area. Some parks, like Yellowstone, go on a first-come basis. Famous *kirtana* leaders and Padayatra parties that can serve as incentive connection pivots are needed. Also, let CFU know of any events you'd like to steer devotees toward.

CFU connection points for Padayatras are Heart Lake Healing Gathering, June 21-23 in NE Washington; National Rainbow Gathering, July 3-5 in the Missouri Ozarks, and the Summer Olympics in Atlanta.

For more information on CFU, please contact me at Rt. 1, Box 497A, Bonners Ferry, ID 83805; 208-267-3902.

ARTICLES

"At Any Cost . . ."

(3rd article in a continuing series on
daiva varnashrama dharma)

Rupanuga dasa
Alachua, FL, USA

By 1970, when I became president of the New York temple, the procedure for becoming a *grhastha* was established: first, a legal marriage. Then, after at least six months, if both husband and wife had demonstrated their faithfulness, a *vivaha yajna* was performed before the Deities in the temple. After some time, the *garbhadana samskara* was allowed, whereby both husband and wife would chant at least 50 rounds before intercourse. By preparing

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the parents' consciousness in this way, a suitable soul would be attracted to the womb at the time of conception.

Srila Prabhupada wrote the beautiful marriage ceremony, during which the bridegroom says, "Yes, I accept [name of woman] as my wife, and I shall take charge of her throughout both of our lives. We shall live together peacefully in Krishna consciousness, and there will never be any separation." And the bride says, "Yes, I accept [name of man] as my husband throughout my life. There shall never be any separation between us, either in happiness or distress. I shall serve him always, and we shall live together peacefully in Krishna consciousness." Before the ceremony the priest spoke on the importance of marriage; after the vows were exchanged a fire ceremony was performed. With the blessings of Srila Prabhupada and the presiding Deities the couple entered the *grhastha ashrama*.

Srila Prabhupada himself performed the first marriage ceremonies, until 1969 when he started giving second initiations. Thereafter, temple presidents performed the ceremonies. Whenever I performed one of those ceremonies it was a purifying, auspicious and sobering experience. Taking vows before the Deities is a serious matter.

Yet, early in the movement Srila Prabhupada expressed concern because some of his disciples were not taking their marriages seriously and were separating, despite their vows before the Deities. Even after such a good start, there were too many difficulties, most likely due to neophyte misunderstandings and a history of bad habits.

Those difficulties, especially since Srila Prabhupada's disappearance, have increased tremendously. In many cases their causes might have been avoided. Be that as it may, Srila Prabhupada gives much guidance to those about to marry, or already married—which includes most devotees. Beyond mere survival techniques, Srila Prabhupada provides enlightenment that leads to a happy marriage as an inextricable part of one's Krishna consciousness.

"Happy" doesn't mean without an occasional quarrel, but as Srila Prabhupada told me, "Quarreling between husband and wife should be seen as impermanent, as the storm clouds come and go."

The *grhastha ashrama* has an important place in *daiva varnashrama-dharma*, the scientific organization of human society. Srila Prabhupada wrote extensive and practical teachings for ourselves and future generations. Everyone, renunciates included, must accept that a *daiva varnashrama* society absolutely depends upon the *grhastha ashrama*. The *sannyasis* must preach to encourage the *grhastha ashrama* and expand it to the masses of people. One must fulfill *grhastha* duties to naturally graduate to the *vanaprastha ashrama*. And *brahmacaris* must be sufficiently Krishna conscious and properly trained to enter the *grhastha ashrama* in a spirit of detachment. Unmarried women also must be trained for the *grhastha ashrama*. For the people in general, the *grhastha ashrama* is their shelter and access to spiritual life.

In the 3rd Canto, Chap. 14, verse 18, purport, Srila Prabhupada writes:

"The orders of brahmacarya, or pious student life, household life with a wife, retired life, and renounced life all depend for successful advancement on the householder who lives with wife. This cooperation is essential for the proper functioning of the institution of the four social orders (*varnas*) and the four spiritual orders (*ashrams*) of life. The man who lives with a wife has a great responsibility in maintaining the members of the other social orders. Except for the *grhasthas*, or the householders, everyone is supposed to engage in the spiritual advancement of life, and therefore the *brahmacari*, the *vanaprastha* and the *sannyasi* have very little time to earn a livelihood. They therefore collect alms from the *grhasthas*, and thus they secure the bare necessities of life and cultivate spiritual understanding. By helping the other three sections of society cultivate spiritual values, the householder also makes advancement in spiritual life. Ultimately every member of society automatically be-

comes spiritually advanced and easily crosses the ocean of nascence."

According to this, spiritual advancement is automatically achieved by everyone as they live up to the roles Srila Prabhupada expects. The *grhasthas* assume financial responsibility while the others willingly live with the bare necessities of life and preach.

Clearly, Srila Prabhupada's plan requires a stable householder *ashrama* to carry responsibility for the education and protection of everyone else. Such a stable householder's responsibilities begin at home with his own wife. In the 4th Canto story of King Puranjana, the king stays away from home, neglecting his wife. Srila Prabhupada comments:

"Actually the woman must always be protected by her husband. We always speak of the goddess of fortune as being placed on the chest of Narayana. In other words, the wife must remain embraced by her husband. Thus she becomes beloved and well protected. Just as one saves his money and places under his own personal protection, one should similarly protect his wife by his own personal supervision. Just as intelligence is always within the heart, so a beloved chaste wife should always have her place on the chest of a good husband. This is called *ardhangani*, or half of the body. One cannot remain with only one leg, one hand or only one side of the body. He must have two sides. Similarly, according to nature's way, husband and wife should live together. In the lower species of life, among birds and animals, it is seen that by nature's arrangement the husband and wife live together. It is similarly ideal in human life for the husband and wife to live together. The home should be a place for devotional service, and the wife should be chaste and accepted by a ritualistic ceremony. In this way one can become happy at home."

Srila Prabhupada expects his followers to protect their wives as described above. When the *grhastha* men cultivate this attitude, crises will be avoided, such as those which might occur when a child is born, or grown children leave home, or the natural

psychological changes of middle-age ensue, or there is a necessary re-assessment of mutual responsibilities and spiritual engagements as the marriage matures.

Examples of what Srila means by "taking charge" or "personal supervision" of the wife are: to guard her health; to provide a secure platform for her to make spiritual advancement, i.e. adequate living and cooking facilities, income, etc.; to protect her from the domination, control, or exploitation of others, especially from other men, including those who abuse spiritual or managerial authority; to always appreciate her personal assistance; to reinforce her shyness and chastity and value highly her faithfulness; and to encourage and arrange facility for her to use and develop her psycho-physical abilities (which require more opportunity as children grow).

Above all, it is up to the husband to take the spiritual lead and set the example. This is the duty of a *pati-guru* or a Krishna conscious husband. His counterpart is the *dharma-patni* or chaste wife accepted on religious principles.

In Chapter 15 of the *Krsna* book, Lord Krishna, Himself, acts as the ideal householder by rising before the *brahma-muhurta* hour just as the cocks crowed. "Although Srimati Rukminidevi, the first queen of Lord Krishna knew that *brahma-muhurta* is the most auspicious time in the entire day, she would feel disgusted at the appearance of *brahma-muhurta* because she was not happy to have Krishna leave her side in bed. Despite Srimati Rukminidevi's disgust, Lord Krishna would immediately get up from bed exactly on the appearance of *brahma-muhurta*. An ideal householder should learn from the behavior of Lord Krishna to rise early in the morning, however comfortably he may be lying in bed embraced by his wife."

In October, 1976, Vrindavana, Srila Prabhupada told the story of how Sitadevi, unguarded, was kidnapped by Ravana. Of course only a false form of Sita was kidnapped, but this pastime showed how even Sita devi, "the direct potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead—she is showing that without being protected, she

can be ravished, kidnapped, misused . . . Another lesson is that even Lord Ramachandra was attached; naturally one is attached to his wife. If we become attached to a woman, then we have to accept so many dangers. Even Lord Ramachandra accepted so many troubles. He could have created many millions of Sitas, but He is showing the example that it is the husband's duty to give protection to the wife—at any cost." (Tape 78-093)

Srila Prabhupada went on to quote how Bhismadeva instructed that women should always be protected carefully, and commented: "If the quality of shyness is broken, it will be very dangerous for her. It is folly to check it. I have seen especially in the Western countries, there is no home—practically, there is no homely happiness because women are allowed to mix freely and there is no protection. They're not married; there is no husband. The father also does not take care. As soon as the girl becomes 15 or 16 years she goes away. Therefore I have practically seen there is no home, there is no peace . . . they [women] should be given protection. They should be trained up how to become faithful wife, affectionate mother. Then the home will be very happy. Without happiness we cannot make any spiritual progress. We must be peaceful. This is the preliminary condition."

Clearly, peaceful householder life requires real protection of women. That is Srila Prabhupada's intention when the groom vows during the marriage ceremony "to take charge of her throughout both of our lives." And the bride, in turn, vows faithfulness to her husband in happiness and distress. Following these vows creates the spiritual strength of the *grhastha ashrama*. Lord Krishna put enough strength in that *ashrama* to support the rest of His *varnashrama* creation, to facilitate the activities of all the members of human society. But in the course of history, as Sri Arjuna originally argued (and, in effect, predicted) in the *Bhagavad-gita*, the elder members of society became unable to protect women. When the women became corrupted, family life fell from *grhastha* to

grhamedhi and the resultant unwanted population developed into the modern miserable society.

Srila Prabhupada set about to re-construct the original *daiva varnashrama dharma* society intended by Lord Krishna. The *grhastha ashrama* is the cornerstone of that renewed society. All the plans were given to the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, but ISKCON is far from being organized as a functioning *daiva-varnashrama* society. As the first family man to join this movement (then I had a two-year old son), I'm asking, "Where do we go from here?"

Significantly, in a spiritual society, the *grhastha* can be either a *brahmana*, *ksatriya*, *vaisya*, or *sudra*, while the other *ashrams* are to live as *brahmanas*, to secure the bare necessities of life and cultivate spiritual understanding. Yet, most *sannyasi-brahmanas* are directly engaged in administration, government, fund-raising, etc. Is this because the *grhasthas* have become too weak, preferring that the *sannyasis* work or perform the duties of *grhasthas*? If so, is this anomaly because *grhastha* men failed to protect their wives and children? And have the *renunciates* failed to teach and preach to the men about responsible *grhastha* life? Have the renunciates become artificially attached to the governing spirit which belongs to the *grhastha ashrama*? Is the result a disenfranchisement of many devotees from the services Srila Prabhupada intended for them?

Hasn't there been more competition than cooperation? And, now with years of developing economic stability, are the *grhasthas* preparing for more devotional service besides family matters and social relations? But where are the leaders—those who do more than parrot the devotees' awakening need for *daiva varnashrama-dharma*? Where are the followers who are educated to recognize bona fide leadership? What's the action plan?

And what about the *gurukulis*, the youth who age with each issue of their *Spirit, Not This Body* newsletter, those flowers of our movement upon whom Srila Prabhupada

put his hopes? Where is their place in the Krishna sun? Will there ever be a transfer of power and responsibility from the elders to the juniors? Who is training them or anyone? Or do we "elders"—the converts—continue our role as their protectors from *maya*, forgetting that they were born in this movement to spread it? Are *gurukulis* expected to make the same mistakes their elders made? Or, are they committing themselves to Srila Prabhupada by choice or free will, taking advantage of their auspicious birth? They certainly are trying to, without much help!

The answers to these questions provide clues as to where responsibilities lie. One thing is certain, the future of Krishna consciousness depends on a strong *grhastha ashrama*. And a strong *grhastha ashrama* depends upon the protection of wives and daughters—at any cost.

Towards Varnashram Dharma: a Constitution for ISKCON (Continued from last issue) Krishna Dharma dasa Manchester, England

One thing we like to offer in ISKCON is the idea of spiritual solutions to material problems. (1) One particularly awkward material problem of today is that of societal organization. We are witnessing severe difficulties in almost all societies, whether they be capitalist, socialist, communist, autocratic, democratic, theocratic, or whatever. I don't think I need substantiate that statement with evidence; a glance at any serious daily newspaper should suffice. The virtual collapse of communism—the increasing unemployment, poverty and crime in Western consumer society and the oppression of the theocracies and autocracies—nothing seems to be working very well. Library shelves are filled with books offering numerous ideas, theories and examples of different kinds of social structures and systems. But I think it is fair to say that we have yet to see in practice anything even coming anywhere near to perfection.

So what spiritual solutions has ISKCON got to offer? Can we show anything better?

ISKCON is itself an organized institutional society, so what about its own organization? Is it in any way distinct and different from what we see in greater society? Is it something we can demonstrate to the world as being ideal? Do we even want to have such organization within ISKCON? Is it appropriate, or should we simply be an integral group of preachers and missionaries with as simple an organizational structure as possible? Sometimes we even encounter the argument that ISKCON is an organization held together by a philosophical accord and love and trust—that anyone who follows the instructions given by Srila Prabhupada is a member of ISKCON and we do not require any bureaucratic and official structures to confirm that. In any case, how can we get involved with societal organization on a broader scale, offering solutions to the problems mentioned above? These and other associated questions will be examined in this essay.

ISKCON's Organization

I would like first to examine ISKCON's own internal organization. What is the present framework and is it what it should be? We find some specific direction about how to manage ISKCON given by Srila Prabhupada, although not so much in our main canon or literatures. It was in his discussions with ISKCON leaders and in his letters and finally in his will, that Srila Prabhupada spoke more directly about ISKCON management. Obviously the first consideration in organizing society is its leadership and this was dealt with by Srila Prabhupada in his formation of the Governing Body Commission (GBC). This he established in pursuance of the order of his own spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, who had asked for such an entity to be formed within his own earlier organization, the Gaudiya Math. I shall not trace the history of the Gaudiya Math here, but suffice it to say that they failed to form a GBC body and thereby the mission did not succeed in the way desired by Bhaktisiddhanta Maharaja. At least, that is, as far as preaching was concerned. We find this stated by Srila Prabhupada as follows:

"Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, at the time of his departure, requested all his disciples to form a governing body and conduct missionary activities cooperatively. He did not instruct a particular man to become the next acarya. But just after his passing away, his leading secretaries made plans, without authority, to occupy the post of acarya, and they split in two factions over who the next acarya would be. Consequently, both factions were asara, or useless, because they had no authority, having disobeyed the order of the spiritual master. Despite the spiritual master's order to form a governing body and execute the missionary activities of the Gaudiya Matha, the two unauthorized factions began litigation that is still going on after 40 years with no decision." (2)

Therefore, a GBC body was formed early in ISKCON's development. Even during his presence, Srila Prabhupada wanted to transfer the responsibility for managing ISKCON to the GBC. The precise function of this body was defined to some degree by Srila Prabhupada and since his departure the GBC itself has further refined that definition. Perhaps the nearest thing to a full definition was made in 1987 by a large group of Srila Prabhupada's disciples. At that time, perceiving that there may be a lack of confidence in its leadership, the GBC body empowered a 50-man committee, comprised of senior ISKCON devotees, to review, revise and even reform the GBC. This committee published a short paper which detailed the requisite qualities and role of the GBC and its representatives. The paper was fully based upon extensive research into the instructions of Srila Prabhupada. In respect of the subject matter of this essay, the most significant item mentioned for the GBC body as a whole was the first one: "To be the ultimate managing authority (in ISKCON)." (3) This statement is actually found in the last will and testament of Srila Prabhupada. There followed a list of many other functions for the GBC, both collective and individual. One of those statements, which I would like to focus upon and which I feel could ultimately contain all other definitions of

functions and roles, is "To formulate a constitution based upon Prabhupada's indications and to be held accountable to it." (4)

This I feel is a critical point. A constitution should be, as far as may be possible, a full definition of structure, organization and managerial procedures within ISKCON. In fact there are already many various definitions of these latter things to be found throughout the resolutions of the GBC body. But these have yet to be correlated and compiled into a single working document, or constitution. It is therefore seen that ISKCON as a whole presently lacks a certain coherence and uniformity, at least structurally and managerially. Being aware of this fact, the GBC body has delegated a group of devotees to work on the formation of a constitution.

The Ultimate Authority

Where then should it begin? We know at least that the GBC body is the "ultimate managerial authority." But that alone is not a definition of a complete and complex society. We find a few other directions in the instructions of Srila Prabhupada regarding management of ISKCON. "The management of our different centers is comprised of three officers, namely a president, secretary and a treasurer." (5) "So far the practical management is concerned, that is required, but not that we should become too much absorbed in fancy organization . . . so whatever organization needs to be done, the presidents may handle and take advice and assistance from their GBC representative." (6) So a quite simple structure was defined and that has pretty much endured to the present day.

Srila Prabhupada also gave some directions as to how the GBC should function. "To map out global preaching strategy for the world wide society, while leaving details of local preaching to the local management." (7) "To chalk out yearly plans and then execute without change." (8) "To ensure that current policies and regulations of the GBC Body are upheld in his zone." (9) "To supervise and advise, not dictate, in all the above." (10) The basic instruction is that the GBC should have the ultimate

power in ISKCON, but should not wield that in a hands-on fashion to manage the society. Day-to-day management should be localized. Policies and standards, both managerially and spiritually, are set by the GBC, but their implementation is effected by local managers. The GBC simply acts as an overseer, although the power of veto must be held by them.

This raises an interesting point. For effective organization within any structure, power should always be accompanied by accountability. Rights or privileges should always be commensurate with responsibility. Have you ever been in the awkward position of being responsible for a task, but without being handed, from your boss, sufficient authority to perform that task? Or perhaps as a leader you may have some experience of being the person where the "buck stops," but you don't have any control. And, of course, we have all seen the havoc that can ensue when a leader runs amok, acting as a law unto himself. It should be obvious that to effect the kind of organization we require in ISKCON, giving all ultimate power to the GBC, while freeing them of the responsibility for day-to-day management, and at the same time building in certain checks and balances, will require a carefully thought out and well defined structure—especially as the society grows in size and complexity.

It is also of interest to note that the GBC body has the responsibility to "appoint, suspend and expel GBC members." (11) In other words, the GBC itself is an oligarchic entity. It is not open to voting or election for membership, outside of its own members. This was how Srila Prabhupada defined it. They really are the final authority in ISKCON. The only way there can be accountability for oligarchic bodies is to have a constitution to which they are accountable. Of course, even that is no guarantee against serious abuses of power in such a structure. Short of revolutions, nothing can stop tyrannical and despotic leadership. But we would certainly not expect such things to occur within a spiritual society, where the top leadership is, after

all, likely to be the most spiritually mature individuals. A constitution would surely provide adequate controls and restraints.

Another point to consider in formulating our structure is the growing demand for democratic representation. As ISKCON increases in size and scope there are more and more distinct groups, beyond just the core full time membership, involved in its operation. Different levels of committed supporters form ISKCON's growing congregation and they, in return for their support, need a voice in deciding how ISKCON is run. Although the classic Vedic conception of society is one of autocracy—the all powerful monarch—Srila Prabhupada did at times indicate that democracy has a place in ISKCON. For example, in 1974 he instructed the devotees not to change the temple president at Bhaktivedanta Manor without a vote amongst all the devotees. In fact he even went so far as to say that even the GBC could not change the president without a local vote. (12)

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**Honor Your Goddess
Subhalaksmi dasi
Murwillumbah, Australia**
(From an article in
New Govardhana News)

Readers may be surprised to hear that there are many goddesses right here in Murwillumbah. Srimati Radharani, the beautiful consort of Sri Govardhanadhari is the supreme goddess. To render service

and thus please Srimati Radharani is the aspiration of us all, for she can give the supreme benediction of love for Krishna.

Many devotees however, do not acknowledge the presence of numerous other goddesses in our midst and remain sadly unaware of the wondrous benefits of pleasing them. In this brief article I will explain who these goddesses are and why they should be revered.

In the Vedic culture, a man is considered most fortunate if he is blessed with a qualified wife. He may own a magnificent house with exotic furnishings, charming gardens, and a plentiful stock of food grains as well as other household paraphernalia, but that splendid house is not considered a home, indeed it is considered null and void without the presence of a wife, referred to in the *sastra* as the *grha laksmi*, the goddess of the home. Thus in Vedic culture, all married women are designated "devi." In those families that honor the devi, there is prosperity, happiness, and spiritual progress; where she is neglected and abused, there is wretchedness and sorrow.

The *Manu Samhita* states:

"Women must always be honored and adorned by their fathers, brothers, husbands, and brothers-in-law, who desire their own welfare. Where women are honored, the devas are pleased; but where they are dishonored, no sacred rites yield their rewards. The family in which women lament quickly meets with destruction; the family in which the womenfolk rejoice will always prosper." (Manu 3. 55, 56, 57)

Hold on! I can almost hear some readers mutter, "Isn't that a bit over the top? After all, we've been hearing for years that women are the personification of Maya, the gateway to Hell, lusty as tigers, unintelligent, etc., etc." There are some statements in the *sastra* that may appear to depreciate women, but these passages have more to do with men's attitude to women rather than the inherent quality of women themselves. In fact Lord Krishna Himself in the *Bhagavad-gita* tells us, "Among women, I am fame, fortune, fine speech, memory, intelligence, steadfastness, and patience." (B.G. 10:34) These are considered feminine

qualities.

A man who looks on women with contempt displays his own ignorance. An educated, cultured man sees all except his wife as mother—a most honorable position in any civilized society. As for his own wife? A man's wife is his devi, his service is to protect her, provide her with the necessary comforts of life, give her children, love her, honor her in all situations and be the source of all auspicious instructions for living a dharmic life. Naturally his devi, heart full of gratitude and love for her *guru-pati* (husband-guru), will serve her husband with sincerity and respect. Such a fortunate woman, cherished by her husband, will keep the home in good order, care lovingly for the children, and execute the duties of life, both material and spiritual, to the best of her ability.

Families are the blocks of our community. Where families are stable, happy, loving and godly, our community is also. Where families are torn apart by bitterness and hatred, unmet needs and frustrations, then there is also chaos in our community. The personal trauma that results from breakdown of family values, creates a high level of social disturbance. This undermines our effectiveness in presenting the sublime message of sanatana dharma to the world at large.

Therefore an intelligent man who desires to assist Srila Prabhupada in his mission to establish Krishna consciousness in the western world will understand clearly what his duties and responsibilities are. He will honor and protect the devas in his community and specifically always act to ensure that his own particular devi, his wife, is cared for and happy.

Srimati Laksmidevi, the consort of Lord Narayana, gives us these jewels of instructions in the *Laksmi Tantra*: "I am the womanhood pervading the entire universe and inherent in all women. He who abuses women, abuse Laksmi, he who abuses Me, abuses the entire three worlds. He whose heart is gladdened by the sight of women, like moonlight, and who never entertains evil thoughts about them, he is most dear to me (Laksmidevi). The fact that I am the

mother of the three worlds, am the basis of womanhood, makes my procreative and nurturing powers manifest in women. Knowing women as my direct manifestation, how can an integrated man refrain from revering them? One should never hurt women, and should never think of wronging them. An integrated man who wishes to attain fulfillment of yoga should always act to please women as mothers, as goddesses, as myself." (*Laksmi Tantra* Chapter 43, Selected verses 62-72)

A progressive sattvic society will certainly desire to cultivate this auspicious consciousness. This can be an important step towards establishing a stable varnashram society. It is well known by all that a prosperous and thriving society begins with stable, loving, and happy families. To accomplish this it is necessary to recognize and deeply appreciate the *grha-laksmis*—the goddess of the home.

I would like to thank Sri Ram Ramanujacarya of Sydney for bringing these wonderful verses from the *Manu Samhita* and *Laksmi Tantra* to my attention. I would like to thank my husband, Sriman Ratna Bahu dasa, for giving them personal meaning. Despite all of my failings, he treats me as a goddess and has become genuinely and truly my prabhu.

"You Need a Therapist"

Devan Dasa

St. Clairsville, OH, USA

Too often when a devotee talks to another devotee about a personal problem, the response is, "You need a therapist." Granted, it may sometimes be true. However, since this is currently used too often it has turned into escapism. No one has to help anyone if they can keep passing it down to professional help. It seems so many have gotten too caught up in their little niche, attachment to peace, and being sattvic. These things have blocked them from caring enough from those outside of their self, so one is forced to take shelter of a therapist. No one wants to hear troubles. Troubles are for therapists. No one is allowed to even have problems anymore, so we are forced to put on a pretense of a

perfect problem-free life.

Directing so many toward professional help is therefore a pattern in our society, and has the payoff of not getting involved. It also causes the person expressing the difficulty to feel like they might really be crazy rather than just have problems. They already feel like that, since this has become a popular philosophy being preached and they don't need wood added to the fire. That probably causes them to act out more than their problem caused them to do. It also causes them to get more upset because, as they reach out, others put it back on them so they don't have to get involved.

Maybe, hopefully, it's because we don't know how to help, preach, share, or just what to say. Prabhupada wanted us to be the most intelligent class of people. What do nondevotee intellectuals do when they don't know something? They look it up. Research or education, but they don't sit back in their personal comfort while another suffers, or ignore it, return it, or pass it down to others to deal with.

I'll concede that to help others we can't just start out blindly. We need to qualify ourselves in a variety of ways. Maybe we also need to admit we don't read Prabhupada's books as much as we used to and therefore have lost touch with and even forgotten some of the answers, or focus on answers that make our personal point rather than taking the humble position and reading what Prabhupada is really saying. As a direct result we are dependent on therapists to solve difficulties for us.

Admittedly, sometimes we do need a professional, though one can become addicted to them as well. We especially need to stop telling an upset devotee that they are using/abusing this or that devotee as their therapist. We should feel honored they turned to us. Odd. We used to call that preaching. Now we call it using and abusing. Let's take some responsibility and get involved. Also, let's not put down those who already feel down. Don't think they will always be that way. Remember, tomorrow they may be up while you are down. Would you want that kind of response?

**False Austerity
Kamalasan dasa
Berkeley, CA, USA**

I served at the ISKCON Honolulu temple as a *brahmachari*. There was another *brahmachari* there who worked day and night for the temple, and slept very little. One day about mid-afternoon he was driving the temple truck on the multiple lane highway at about 65 mph. I was the passenger. I was looking at his face as I spoke to him, and suddenly saw his eyes roll back and his body become limp—in a fraction of a second. I thought, "That's strange. What is he doing?" as the truck swerved into the lane on our right side—in the remaining fraction of that same second, I realized he had fallen asleep!

So I quickly grabbed the wheel and steered the truck back onto our original path. As the truck swerved to the left, he snapped back into wakefulness and fought me for control of the steering wheel, shouting, "What are you doing?" At that moment, I realized he had so suddenly fallen asleep, then suddenly awoke, that he was unaware of his little "cat-nap" at 65 mph.

I shouted, "You fell asleep! You were asleep!" and he said, "No! I did not fall asleep!" So he thought I suddenly tried to steer us off the road. Yep! that really got the adrenaline flowing.

I have seen that when people push themselves too far into austerity (like sleep-deprivation) they don't become enlightened—they enter a separate reality.

**Where Did We Come From?
Satyaraja dasa
New York City**

Since you focus on cutting-edge Vaishnavism, I thought I would jot down some thoughts on the hotly-debated "jiva issue" for you. I am referring, of course, to the perennial debate about where the infinitesimal soul comes from: does he/she fall into the material world from the spiritual world or from some lesser spiritual region, or are we eternally existing, in some form or other, in the world of three dimensions? In other words, do we fall from the spiritual sky, or not?

20 Priti-laksanam

It needs to be said that supporters of either side come to the debate with preconceived notions. We claim allegiance to a particular spiritual authority, and this will necessarily dictate our preferred conclusion. That is to say, we approach the argument with a prefabricated agenda: if we are followers of Narayana Maharaja, for example, we will look for arguments that support the "no-fall" doctrine, for this is the belief of that Vaishnava. If, on the other hand, we are ISKCON followers, we try to find evidence that neatly fits with Prabhupada's version, which, according to most people, is that the soul does indeed fall from Vaikuntha.

It is almost humorous when we consider how easy it often is to tell just *who* is going to support *which* point of view. It seems that we are less serious about finding out the truth than in finding evidence to support the doctrines of our "camp."

That being said, I recently read *Our Original Position*, published by the GBC Press, and I feel that this book sums up the issue nicely—exactly in the mood of Srila Prabhupada. Those with opposing points of view, who shall remain nameless but who include well known and senior Prabhupada disciples as well as the bulk (if not all) of the Gaudiya Math, will be hard-pressed to respond to the essays in this volume. Elsewhere, Ravindra Svarupa Prabhu has offered some insightful ideas regarding this subject (not necessarily in his first BTG article along these lines, but in his second, which served to clarify the first.) Both this in-depth book and Ravindra's articles are mandatory reading for one who wants to understand the ISKCON position on where the jiva comes from.

My own feeling is that the issue is extremely subtle, and one needs developed spiritual intelligence to understand all the various nuances of the subject. It was for this reason, no doubt, that Prabhupada often settled the issue for his disciples in the following all-too-familiar way: "Don't worry about how you got here—worry about how to get out!" Nonetheless, the question persists, and there are many things to

think about in relation to it. For example, Jiva Goswami teaches that the souls who manifest lila in Vrindavan emanate directly from Baladeva; those in Vaikuntha come from His first expansion, Sankarshana; and the souls of this world come through the agency of Mahavishnu. So there are different kinds of souls, who come from different places, for different reasons. Most of us, then, come from Mahavishnu, whereas most souls in the spiritual realm come from some other source. But that still doesn't resolve the central questions, "who are we initially?" "where do we ultimately come from?" and "do we fall from the spiritual world?"

Although I mentioned earlier that one needs spiritual intelligence to understand these most subtle issues, and even though I have not been graced with this quality, there is a traditional story (appropriate to this subject) that I would like to relate. At the risk of seeming simplistic, I would like to propose a way to harmonize the fall and no-fall theories in an easy-to-understand, direct way. When I was a new devotee, I heard a story that seemed to resolve the issue on whether we fall or not. As I studied Vaishnava tradition in the years that followed, I heard the story again and again, and each time, at least for me, it resolved the two sides of the issue to my complete satisfaction. The story runs as follows: Once, while in the spiritual world, you were playing ball with Krishna. The ball flies over your shoulders and lands in a well. You run after the ball and look down into the deep well, the glistening water reflecting your own astonished face. There, for the first time, you see your reflection without Krishna, and you contemplate life as separate from Him.

That brief moment of separatist contemplation is your whole sojourn in the material world. Your forgetfulness of Krishna is the blink of an eye in the spiritual world, but it is countless centuries in the land of birth and rebirth.

Think about that for a moment. In the "ball" story cited above, we do not fall from the spiritual world—in fact, we never leave! So the "no-fall" proponents are correct.

But, as we stare into the well, we *do* forget Krishna, and that does constitute "leaving" in a very real, if not literal, sense. So the "fall" proponents are correct as well.

If we are asleep at home in bed, but we travel in our astral body to far off lands, did we go or not? In one sense, we never left our bed. But, in another, we traveled to wherever our dreams take us. This, I believe, may shed some light on the jiva issue, and I invite Vaishnava scholars to write to me, letting me know if they agree or disagree (and if they know where I might trace this "ball" story in the literature of the Goswamis).

As a side note, other religious traditions have also grappled with this question, but none have such a compelling view as that of the Kabbalists (the mystical Jewish tradition). They, like us, believe that birth is possible not only in a human body, but in a stone, a papaya, or a cow—apparently the Judaically-favored embodiments. And they, like us, believe that all forms of reincarnation are educational, not punitive, and that one may be liberated from the round of birth and death by the grace of a saintly person. The Kabbalah further offers a complex understanding of the soul, saying that each individual manifests in six parts. Those parts of the soul in need of edification are reincarnated in the material world while the remaining parts never leave the spiritual world. The parts that never leave are called "the root soul," and this "stronger" part of the soul helps the weaker parts, who must travel through the material world to learn their lessons and eventually graduate to the spiritual platform. (There is also some Kabbalistic concept of two parts of the same soul meeting in this world—that's when two people think of themselves as soul-mates. Of course, the Kabbalah recognizes that not everyone who *thinks* they are soul-mates necessarily *are* soul-mates.) But you can read more about this in my forthcoming work published by Bala Books (1996): *Changing Bodies: Reincarnation and the World Religions*. (Oh well, at least I got in a plug for my new book.)

The Kabbalistic concept may seem

something of a detour from the Vaishnava perspective, but it is a way that rabbis have resolved the falldown question for their own tradition: parts of the soul fall, another part does not. While this is not directly Vaishnava teaching, it points to the same truth outlined above: on the spiritual platform, one thing is not necessarily true at the expense of, or as opposed to, another. Spiritual truths are not mutually exclusive. Or, as we say, *achintya bhedabheda tattva*—inconceivably, spiritual truth is simultaneously one and different. Generally, this *tattva* applies to the soul and its relation to God, but it has wider application as well. We can fall and not fall at the same time, for spiritual truth is not constricted by the same limitations as is material truth. The Western world is led astray by Aristotelian logic, which teaches that everything fits into its own neat compartment and that reality does not overlap. Religion is religion, Aristotle teaches, and history is history, and on and on. Unfortunately, Aristotle could not have been more wrong. Reality does overlap. Just as he had disagreed with his teacher, Plato, in regard to reincarnation, saying that it did not exist, he disagreed too regarding the nature of logic. And so, in the Western world, inheriting our sense of logic from the great (if misled) Greek philosopher, we conclude that opposites cannot be the same. For they are opposite.

But spiritual logic need not conform to Aristotle's conception, which has severe limitations. Rather, spiritual logic has a nature of its own, one that is not dependent upon the Law of Opposites or the Law of the Excluded Middle. It is dependent on faith in guru, knowledge of the scriptures, and pure devotion to God. Only to such a person will the mysteries of transcendence reveal itself. This is not to say that deep spiritual questions are dependent solely on faith for answers. Rather, we must develop our spiritual sensibilities so that we can perceive more subtle realities, realities invisible to those without spiritual glasses, so to speak.

And so we come full circle: Prabhupada said, "Don't worry about how you got here;

worry about how to get out." This is necessary because by "worrying how to get out," you will become serious about the process of Krishna consciousness and thereby become purified. It is this purification that is necessary to understand the more subtle truths of transcendence, including the mystery of where the jiva comes from. By putting on the spiritual glasses of Krishna consciousness, one can see things that he never thought would be seeable. Thank you for your time, and I anxiously await any feedback in Priti-laksanam.

**Letter Presented to
the NA GBC & TPs
By Bimala dasi
Alachua, FL, USA**

The Women's Ministry is established to deal with the problems of women throughout our movement—especially in the areas of abuse.

When I say "women," I mean our daughters, our unmarried women, our wives, and our mothers—all of these are our God sisters. But due to the tremendous difficulties the responsibilities of *grhastha* life impose and due to our 25-year emphasis on renunciation, we also have a growing category that is anomaly in the Vedic literature—it's the single mother—the woman whose husband is absent.

There's an old North American Indian saying that "You can't fully understand a person until you've walked a mile in their moccasins."

I feel that many of you may never have an opportunity to experience these women's lives, so I'm sharing this letter I wrote with you. It addresses many women, our God sisters, throughout our movement, many of whom I come into contact daily.

I should warn you, there is some emotion in this letter. I know that can be scary for some of you. But, remember, this is not hysteria. This is not exaggeration nor distortion. This is the truth. I live it, and many, many of my friends live it.

So you tell me your husband has left.

He is now free to make spiritual advancement. He is giving classes and being adulated by his peers. He is a "great devo-

tee." He sits on the *asana* at the feet of Srila Prabhupada, and silent young brahmacharis bring him water and garland him. He folds his hands and speaks our philosophy.

He is doing big service. Other devotees ask his advice. He is absorbing himself in Srila Prabhupada's books. He can quote all the Sanskrit verses. He travels around the world, on pilgrimage, on preaching missions. He is a big devotee. Women look at him and they look at you and they say, "Oh, you're so lucky. He's so advanced. He's so Krishna conscious. You're so fortunate."

And who are you?

You are nobody. You have his one, two, or three children. You are the tiger, your children are little jackals. You're "unsubmissive, less intelligent, nine times lustier, and all you want to do is to control men."

[Of course, they'll never know the names he called you, because the words are obscene and ugly in your mouth and shock the sensibilities when heard aloud. They won't know where the bruises were, and they won't know how many times you left and came back, or how many tears you cried. Or either, they won't hear about the other women.]

And what is your reality today? Your little jackals are hungry. They need food. They need clothes, and they want toys. They have to be educated. You can't afford *gurukula*. You don't want to put them in public school. If you're lucky, you're on welfare. You need a job, but if you find a job, who'll take care of the kids? You'll lose your medical benefits. You'll lose your food stamps.

You get your job. You go out. You are the father. In the evening you come home. You are also the mother. You cook supper, help with homework, throw in a load of clothes at the laundromat, try to wash a floor, run to the store because there's no milk, hope they don't turn off the electricity, bathe the kids, get them to bed, wonder if you *heard* them, wonder what kind of parent you are becoming, wonder why all you do is worry about money, wonder where your spiritual life *went*, wonder if you'll ever be able to get up in the morning

because you're so tired you want to die, and yes, they did turn off the phone again, but maybe your parents will let you use their credit card just one more time.

And in your heart you remember how life used to be. You were young, new, and eager. You sewed for the Deities—silks and rhinestones, feathers and lace—polished Their silver and brass, cooked the devotees' meals, made the offerings. You distributed Srila Prabhupada's books in airports and malls and parking lots across America. You danced and danced in ecstatic *kirtans* before the radiant forms of Sri Sri Radha-Krishna, Lord Jagannatha, and Gaura-Nitai. You prayed to Them fervently for devotion, for service.

Now you wake in the middle of the night alone and worry that the food stamps don't last the month, that the kids outgrow their clothes so fast, that you can't pay your bills, that you don't want to end up in a shelter. And you pray to Srila Prabhupada, and you feel so very fallen.

I'm writing this to you because I'm your God sister and it breaks my heart to see your plight.

Please don't leave the movement. Don't feel driven away. Don't be discouraged. There are too few of Srila Prabhupada's children. We need you.

We need your strength, your resilience, your incredible determination against overwhelming odds. We need your unconditional love that you are willing to give your children. We need your compassion. We need your softness and your humor, your gentleness and your nurturing.

ISKCON needs you.

I fall at your feet and beg for dust. It is the dust of *your* feet that I am hungry for, your feet as you trudge to work, stalk the grocery aisles, as you sit with your toddler on your lap, showing him or her pictures of Krishna.

The "uninitiated" may read this and feel indignant, feel that I'm being melodramatic, that I've exaggerated, that I am speaking harshly. But you know.

You know who you are, and believe me, you have no idea how many of you there were and there are now. You know that

what I am saying is exactly true.

I pray to Srila Prabhupada, to Srimati Radharani, and to you, the leaders in our movement.

I am requesting our ISKCON leaders to please consider this letter. In Vedic times a man choosing renunciation left his wife and children in a village environment. She lived with his family, or she could live with her own parents, or relatives if need be. He didn't leave his family to scavenge for welfare scraps as its daily maintenance, to be branded as "social parasites" of the government.

After all these years I am not naïve enough to think that you leaders will do anything to actually help these single mothers. But what I would like to believe, however, is that you would at least deal with the husbands and fathers involved. I would like to know that as they took their places on the asana you had asked,

"Where is your wife? Where are your children? Who is taking care of them? Are they hungry?"

So that is my plea. Some of you will be moved. Some of you will see it as "sentimental garbage." Some of you hear the rumblings in the air about the Women's Ministry. Is this women's liberation? Is this the new Neo-nazi feminist movement? Or is this just a voice crying for justice?

Those who study the behavior of animals have noted that in the face of danger cows will form a circle, the weaker ones and babies inside—and stand with their horns facing outward. Thus their calves and elder cows are protected. The Women's Ministry has been established to form such a circle. It has been established to care for the women, to offer them a voice in our movement—a voice of concern and balance and compassion for the growth and welfare of all devotees, and for the growth of our movement.

Somehow or other we've come into contact with the highest, most sublime philosophy—the Absolute Truth. And we have been fortunate enough to be initiated into the Gaudiya sampradaya. How close we are to the goal! We have so much to do for

Srila Prabhupada—and there are so few of us. And there are so many discouraged women.

The reality is that this life is but a flash—a brief moment, a few seconds—compared to the eternity that we've been here. And if we view our existence as a straight line back and forward, we will see that our human births have been male, female, male, female, male, female, back, back, back—and forward too. Why, when we are so fortunate, when we are so very near the end of it all, should we not just encourage each other?

We are a spiritual movement. If we don't have the spiritual vision to see that we are all spiritual beings, that we are all part and part of Krishna, that we are not our bodies but rather we are Vaishnavas—we are Srila Prabhupada's servants, then CAN'T WE JUST PRETEND?

In closing, I ask you to remember these two points: 1) We may speak about protection of women, and it's a vague and disturbing topic. But the minimal protection is the right to perform devotional practices to the best of our abilities—as we did when Srila Prabhupada was physically present; and 2) The women are not the cause of your falldown; it is your own lust.

So, kindly, let us work together; or let us work together *kindly* to fulfill Srila Prabhupada's mission. I'm trying to teach my children this fact—encouragement is free. It costs nothing to give. But it is so powerful and can do so much. So let's cooperate with each other, let's encourage each other, and let's do the work that has to be done—each to his or her own best ability.

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Priti-laksanam
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**Srila Prabhupada
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of God with the social
fabric to sustain it
for millenia!**

PERSONALS

Wanted: Good husband for middle-aged, somewhat attractive, energetic, talented devotee lady. Must be steady, responsible, mature, compassionate, brahminical, consistent, faithful, affectionate, family oriented, a provider, an active preacher, travel and countryside lover, will to spend time with wife, honestly imperfect, and willing to have astrological compatibility charts done. References, please. Contact me c/o my friend, Cintamani dasi, Manchester temple, 200 Mayfield Rd, Walley Range, Manchester, England. (18)

German lady in Switzerland age 34, looking for Vaishnava husband. Not important if you are a congregation member or elevated & initiated devotee. Your goal must be to become Krishna conscious. For 7 years I have really tried to practice Krishna consciousness and don't want to leave it, whatever. I prefer a man 30 to 40, tall and slim, like me, a thinker, poet, preacher, or artist, but no fanatic. I want to help my husband in his spiritual and material life. Send photo to Monika Pauli, Bruderhofweg 43, CH-8057, Zurich, Switzerland. (19)

Very handsome devotee 43 years old, 5'8", 160 lbs, 1st and 2nd initiation. I am kind, caring, loving, and fit. I am a professional, very active with many interests. I'm very active in the temple. Seeking a happy, sincere, pretty devotee over 30. Prefer a professional, but not necessary. Please write, I will make you very happy. Jaya Krishna dasa (Joe Gennaro), 271 NE 38 St. Apt C-211, Oakland Park, FL 33334; 305-561-1438. (17)

ISKCON Life Member, 33 years old, single, college-educated male seeking Krsna conscious wife. I have been in the association of devotees for over 12 years.

Priti-laksanam 25

I follow most of the principles of devotional life and chant on a regular basis. I'm into astrology, Krsna conscious rock & roll, FOLK programs, interfaith discussions, as well as writing and preaching Krsna consciousness at the introductory level. I have many plans for services, and need a wife (partner, not a servant) to help me. Please write me: Vasu Murty, 30 Villanova Lane, Oakland, CA 94611, USA. (26)

Mature and loving Krishna conscious partners can surely help make each other's life journey successful. This financially secure, never-married, youthful 45-year-old Prabhupada disciple seeks similarly intelligent and attractive 25 plus female devotee to learn, grow, and succeed with in marriage. Reply to P.O. Box 241, Leeds, MA 01053, US. (17)

Indian life member of ISKCON for over a decade, active, in good health and spirit seeks Hindu or Hindu convert wife— young, healthy, loving, obedient, sincere, devoted and complimentary. I am 49 years, divorced, in export/import business, financially independent, seeking relocation and the most dharmic lifestyle as a householder in creative fulfilling and mutually beneficial relationship for the benefit of all beings, sentient and nonsentient. I have varied interests in the arts, media and social work. Correspond with returnable photograph to Dhruv Dalmia, 199, Golf Links, New Delhi 110 003, India. Tel/Fax 91-11-4617515. Every letter will be answered. Hari Bol. (25)

I am a 41 year old lady disciple of Srila Prabhupada's. Life is wonderful when Krishna is in the center of it. But it would be even more wonderful to go on this journey of life with a mate. I would love to share my life with a man who can be my best friend and husband. I am

seeking a man who has a great sense of humor, is reliable, trustworthy, communicative, intelligent, optimistic, and joyful.

I am cheerful, dedicated to my beautiful family, upbeat, honest easy going, compassionate, and simple. My interests include self growth, hiking, traveling, metaphysics, Krishna rock and roll, professional massage, and cooking, to name a few.

Krishna consciousness is my first priority and love in my life. But I am still in the material world. I am self employed. I want a man who can appreciate that. I want a relationship and marriage that can grow emotionally and spiritually. I live in Northern California. Send replies to: B. Dasi, 820 W. 4th Ave. #147, Chico, CA 95926. (19)

I am 47-years-old (look like 35), a Srila Prabhupada disciple, and a slender male. I joined ISKCON in 1971. I have 3 children who live with me, all born in ISKCON. I have been divorced for about 8 years. I've served and known most of the Guru's and GBC's. I don't like any type of politics; I'm strictly a farmer. I am in search of a devotee who is attractive, feminine, affectionate, and easy going. She should also be able to communicate, speak good English, and be at least 25-years-old.

I need a devotee who will assist me in a project that will benefit the world and please Srila Prabhupada. Should have a desire to live on a 22-acre berry farm. Please send a recent, full photo of yourself. I also would like, if possible, for you to send the date and time of your birth. Send to Sanka Dasa, 116 N. Nash St. Hillsborough, N.C. 27278, USA. (17)

Seeking sweet devotee girl 20-30, interested in living outside the temple in Jagannatha Puri. Any nationality, but speak English. I'm 35, Afro-American,

joined ISKCON 1981. Presently learning computer graphics and TV and video production. My hobbies are sitar, Tai Chi, white magic. I'm an active contributor to Food for Life, holy dharma renovations, self-sufficient living, and Vedic festivals for the public. Write or call: Indrasena dasa, 1736 Blake St., Berkeley, CA 94703; 510-848-4161. (18)

Male, simple, hard working devotee of 14 years, 35 years old, first initiation, never married, no children, seeks a devotee wife, not fanatic, who would like to help me run a vegetarian cafe, and who likes the art of cooking for Krishna. I am myself a good cook. I have recently started a big vegetarian cafe outside of ISKCON management with 100 sitting places. Please write me: Hakon Johansen (Hamsa Vapu dasa), Fosswinkelsgate 18, 5007 Bergen, Norway. (18)

26 year old single male, degree in journalism, seeking Krishna conscious wife. I have been in the association of devotees for over a decade. I chant 16 rounds regularly. I'm into photography, Krishna rock & roll, as well as writing and preaching Krishna consciousness using journalistic skills. I have many plans for services and need a life partner to help me. Please write: Bhakta Ramana, Plot No. 2, Vinay Nagar Saidabad, Hyderabad 500059, India; 91-40-4069820; fax: 91-404-732892.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Transcendental flag-march for the Kali-yuga—The Ratha Construction Book: Want to do something that's really pleasing to Srila Prabhupada? Be instrumental in holding Ratha-yatra in your town or city. Haven't got a Ratha? *The Ratha Construction Book* contains detailed, professional plans and build-

ing instructions for 3 sizes of rathas, guidance on permits, fund raising, etc. Rathas convert into their own travel trailers for low cost transport city-to-city. Tried and proved: all the large rathas in India and adjacent countries plus others in the U.S., Canada, the C.I.S. and other places built or rebuilt according to the plans in the book. *The Ratha Construction Book*—worth hundreds of dollars—is only \$30 (including shipping), payable in Rupees. Free consultation by the author. Rasananda dasa, P.O. Box 1567, Secunderabad 500 003, A.P., India. Fax: (091)040-592426 (c/o Sunder), e-mail: SUPVSR%OU1=03ASCN%P=ICNET%A=vsnb@mcimail.com (17)

For Sale: 17 vol. *Caitanya-caritamrtas* original sets, 30 vol. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* original sets. Wide selection of Prabhupada's works, ranging from like "brand new" to well-used. All good condition books. Write for information, please include your phone and address. Call Dhanistha dasi, #8 Pankey Rd., Carrier Mills, Ill. 62917. Tel: (618) 994-4496. (17)

ISKCON Communications Journal is a forum, a "market place" for preachers in ISKCON. Each issue has more than sixty pages and is full of dynamic and enthralling articles, written by ISKCON's preaching experts, to inspire and assist you in your preaching work for Srila Prabhupada. We invite you to subscribe! Just drop your name, address, and your check or money order in an envelope and mail it to: ICJ, 6 Quarry Court, Helens Bay, BT191TY, North. Ireland. Annual subscription (2 issues) \$18 or... 25DM... £10.

I would like to ask the lady disciples of Srila Prabhupada if they could so kindly share their memories of their personal association with Srila

Prabhupada for the enlivenment of the present lady devotees in ISKCON and for those ladies that will come in the future to Krsna consciousness movement. The material gathered will be for the book called "Srla Prabhupada Teaching His Lady Disciples." So I humbly beg you all lady disciples to please give your valuable cooperation in this matter. Please send any material to: Andarupa devi dasi, Gustav Mollers gata 16, S-211 51 Malmo, Sweden.

SPIRIT-Not This Body! Upbeat magazine by/for gurukula student and Vaishnava youth. Each edition of *SPIRIT-Not This Body!!* is filled with contributions from around the world and is accompanied by a SPIRIT VIDEO! Send some background information on yourself, plus US \$3 for a sample issue. SPIRIT, P.O. Box 1425, Culver City, CA 90232, USA.

Social issues? Family values? Community and economic development? Your concerns are our agenda! *ISKCON World Review*, P.O. Box 238, Alachua, FL 32616-0238, USA. Phone: 904-462-5054; Fax 904-462-5056. To subscribe to 12 issues: US First Class \$23, US Third Class \$13; other \$26.

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.

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.

Good Water Is Good Health! Multi-Pure water filters earn a powerful perpetual income helping others. **Free info pack.** 1-800-667-WATER (9283). Madhavananda Dasa, P.O. Box 282741, San Francisco, CA 94128-2741, USA. (17)

Prabhupadanuga

This *Newsletter for Uniting Srla Prabhupada's Family* includes information on how to encourage devotees to associate, news on reunions, plus articles on philosophy and issues pertinent to bringing devotees closer to one another. Contact the editor, Jnana Dasa, at 108 Melbourne Road, Bushey, Herts WD2 3NE, UK; phone: 44-81-386-1247; or Centennial Office, P.O. Box 1987, Alachua, FL 32615, USA.

For Sale Beautiful 5.31-acre parcel in Govinda Puri, NC. 3,076 sq. ft. home, 5 bedrooms, 2 complete kitchens, 660 sq. ft. temple room, 2 laundry rooms, 10'x30' sundeck, 22' x 42' sunken patio, 2 storied garage-1,152 sq. ft. of storage. Could be single or 2-family residence. 16 fruit trees. Situated in a Vaishnava village surrounded by 12 devotee families. 2 gurukulas nearby, Urmila & Drsta. Radha-Golokananda temple down the road. Value \$240,000. Devotee price \$210,500. 919-563-1035. (17)

Wanted: ITV videos in BETA I format. Bob Roberts, 1895 Portlock, Commerce Twp, MI 48382, US; 810-363-0703. (17)

Join the Fun Party Happening - Chanting for Unity and help let John Q. Amercian Public know something's happening here! 208-267-3902; Rt 1 Box 497A, Bonners Ferry, ID 83805. (17)

Help with office expenses will be needed - Chanting for Unity, Rt 1 Box 497A, Bonners Ferry, ID 83805. (17)

Women Speak Out A newsletter about women protection. Free sample. RR#1, Box 319, Moundsville, WV 26041. (17)

Devotional Puzzles and Games Made fro 1/8" hardboard. Send \$2 for catalogue to Wood Works, P.O. Box 274, Badger, CA 93603. (17)

SERVICES

Adoption Services. All inquiries and information held in the strictest confidence. If you're looking for a couple to adopt your baby, or are a couple looking to adopt a baby send your information, details, and specific requests to: Adopt-A-Child, 15411 NW 89th St., Alachua, FL 32615. Database of interested people currently under development. Already three good families seeking children to adopt. Only serious people need correspond/call.

Keep up with Centennial Events!

Subscribe to Back to Godhead (6 issues)
US: \$18; Canada: \$24; other: \$27
P.O. Box 255, Sandy Ridge, NC 27046

ISKCON World Review (6 issues)
US: \$13; other: \$26
P.O. Box 238, Alachua, FL 32616, US

Prabhupada Toshani (4 issues)
India: Rs 100; other: \$10
"Padayatra," 1027 Hornblend, San Diego, CA 92109, US
or "ISKCON," 62 Sant Nagar (near E. of Kailash), New Delhi 110065, India

Project Future Hope is the job and apprenticeship network for Vaishnava youth worldwide. Contact us with details: a) you can offer employment or training in employable skills; b) you are a Vaishnava youth seeking to learn employable skills and work in a devotee environment. Project Future Hope, P.O. Box 1425, Culver City, CA 90232, USA.

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prabhupada Nectar Project

Record your remembrances of Srla Prabhupada on cassette or type on disk and send, along with an old devotee photo of yourself (with Prabhupada, if possible) to the Prabhupada Nectar Project. Include your personal realizations, dreams, or other personal Prabhupada nectar to share with posterity. Please send attn: Aditi Dasi c/o the North American Centennial Office, P.O. Box 1987, Alachua, FL 32615; 1-800-205-6108 (toll free NA only).

The HANDS ON project was successssfully launched during Gaura Purnia.

Scores of outfits were donated and taken to Sri Mayaur Dham for distribution

by Krsna Kanta dasi. Any Prabhus wishing to obtain a copy of the letter of receipt for donation purposes, please contact Arya dasi, Box 374, Quathiaski Cove, BC V0P1N0, Canada 604-285-2346.

*Thank you very much!
for participating!*

Sahasra Tirtha Jala Maha Abhiseka

**Sponsor a beautiful,
collectable kalash.**



You can be one of the fortunate souls to bathe Srila Prabhupada on His Maha Vyasa-puja Celebration in 1996. By sponsoring a kalash, you will be helping cover the cost, not only of Srila Prabhupada's Maha Vyasa-puja in Calcutta, but also of both local and global Centennial projects and events, as well as the completion of Srila Prabhupada's *samadhis* in Mayapur and Vrindavana.

Part of your donation will also be used to fund the collection of the 1,008 waters plus all other expenses of the Sahasra Tirtha Jala project. You will get to keep your kalash after the bathing. It will be engraved with your name and will be a transcendental heirloom for generations to come.

The Sahasra Tirtha Jala Maha Abhiseka will be the first of its kind in the world, a fitting tribute to Srila Prabhupada, who is delivering the modern world from the blazing fire of material existence by his great downpour of the Lord's mercy.

ORDER YOUR KALASH NOW!

The following varieties of kalashas will be used to bathe Srila Prabhupada:

- 1/2 litre pure copper kalash
- 3/4 litre pure silver kalash
- 3/4 litre pure copper kalash
- 1 litre pure silver kalash with gold
- 1/2 litre pure silver kalash
- 1 litre pure silver kalash w. extensive gold work

• Celebration of a Century kalash

1 litre pure silver kalash with extensive gold work

For further information, please contact the Temple President of the ISKCON center closest to you or:

North America Ramiya Dasa
P.O. Box 1987, Alachua, FL 32615, US
800-205-6108; Fax: 904-462-0550

Europe Hridaya Caitanya Dasa
6940 Septon-Durbuy, Belgium
Fax: 32-86-322929

India and East Asia Sankirtana Dasa
62 Sant Nagar (near East of Kailash)
New Delhi 110065, India
Fax: 91-11-6470742

Australasia Mandapa Dasa
P.O. Box 262, Botany NSW 2019, Australia
Fax: 61-29-666-3060

South & Central America Somaka Swami
Av 7 De Setembro, 1599, Manaus AM., Brazil

CIS Angira Muni Dasa
105 302 Moscow, Izmailouskiy Prosp, 113-2
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Fax: 904-462-2311

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to miss any of the excitement!**

So call us today at 1-800-205-6108, and you'll get in touch with all the celebrations. Whether it's a reunion or a Centennial Feast—you can join fellow devotees to glorify Srila Prabhupada. We want all devotees and members to take part, but we don't know where everyone is, so please help us to invite your friends, too.

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