

Priti-laksanam

A Forum for Vaisnava Discussion
Volume 9, January 1994

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

—Nectar of Instruction, Text Four

Dedicated to
His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Founder-Acarya of the
International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

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Notes from the Editor

I had to decline on publishing a few submissions that were sent in anonymously. Please make a note that to be published in the newsletter you must include your name. I did include "Childless Couples are Also Glorious," which is listed as anonymous because there is a chance that the author sent in their name but I lost it! There were few submissions that didn't get published because of space limitation; and one or two that didn't make it because the tone of the article was too "attacking." Even critical points can be made maturely, philosophically and in offensively. Let's try for that.

One of my Godsisters expressed that she and some others objected to the Personals section and ask that I remove it from the newsletter. Although I have included this section in this issue I will give the matter further consideration. However, my initial thought is, "If you take offense to the ads, or don't like the content, then please don't read it." There are devotees who appreciate and

require the service and there is no other channel in our entire Movement to address the need. I personally can't afford to separate the Personal into a separate publication. What really is the harm?

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

To receive *Priti-laksanam* send your name and address and I'll include you on the mailing list. Donations are needed and are making it possible for continued publication of the newsletter. Back issues (8 in all) are available for \$1.00 each. A sincere thank you to this issue's donors. Their demonstration of support and encouragement makes it possible for me to send this issue to you. I may have to begin distribution of *Priti-laksanam* through subscription. I'll give more news on this in the next issue.

—Pranada dasi

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NECTAR SECTION

Madhurya-kadambini

Visvannatha Cakravarti Thakura

The Third Shower of Nectar*Anartha-nivrtti*: clearing the material impurities

After *bhajana kriya* comes *anartha nivrtti*, or clearing of bad qualities, which obstruct the progress of *bhakti*. *Anarthas* may be classified into four types, according to origin: those arising from previous sinful activity, those arising from previous pious activity, those arising from offenses against devotional service and those arising from *bhakti* (imperfectly performed).

Anarthas arising from previous sinful activities fall in the category of the five types of *klesa* previously mentioned: ignorance, false ego, attachment, hatred and addiction to evil. *Anarthas* arising from pious activities are the addictions to the results of pious action (*sattva guna* sense enjoyment, *mukti*). Some people include the *anarthas* arising from pious activities under the categories of the *klesas* mentioned above (since the presence of *bhukti* and *mukti* deprive a person of *bhakti*., and therefore prolong his existence in the material realm.)

Those *anarthas* which arise from offense refers to those arising from the *nama aparadhas*. The *seva aparadhas* (offensive actions toward the Lord, such as entering the temple with shoes on or in a vehicle) in themselves are not a direct cause of *anarthas*, for *seva aparadhas* do not usually have effect, being nullified by constant service, by chanting the name and by such activities as recitation of *stotras* which have the power to cancel the effect of any *seva aparadha*. However if one becomes careless, and takes advantage of the fact that he is protected from all effect of *seva aparadha* by the above measures, his *seva aparadha* becomes *nama aparadha*, an *anartha* which will obstruct his progress. He is guilty of the *nama aparadha* of committing sin on the strength of the holy name. (The word "nama" in the phrase "*nama aparadha*" refers not only to the holy name but to all the *angas* of *bhakti*, of which the name is the primary representative.)

Even, according to *dharma sastra* (scriptures dealing with codes of *karma*) it is said that, if one willfully commits sin, on the strength of *prayascitta* (remedial measures for commission of sin), then the effect of the sin will not be

destroyed but rather increased.

On the other hand, taking advantage of scriptural statements which guarantee the permanent effect of even a little devotional service, or which guarantee perfection by simply chanting one Krsna mantra etc., and, as a result, neglect some of the *angas* of *bhakti*, does not produce *nama aparadha* and *anartha*, for committing sin on the strength of the holy name refers to the willful commission of sin (actions condemned by the scriptures and which require remedial measures, including the *seva aparadhas*), thinking that the power of devotion activities will nullify the bad effects. It does not refer to a willful omission of a secondary *anga* of *bhakti*. For, unlike the path of *karma*, where failure to perform all the *angas* is an offense which will deprive one of results.

For the scriptures say that if, in the performance of devotional service, a person intentionally closes his eyes and attempts to run, he still has no fear of stumbling or falling or of not attaining the goal. This means a person who takes shelter of devotional service suffers no loss of results nor is he deprived of the goal, even if, knowing all the *angas* of *bhakti*, he knowingly neglects to perform some of the secondary *angas*.

Closing the eyes and running does not mean ignorance of scripture (*sruti* and *smrti*, considered as one's two eyes), for that contradicts the direct meaning, which states that the person has eyes but does not use them. Neither should one consider that closing the eyes and running (intentional neglecting some of the *angas* of *bhakti*, and eagerly pursuing the goal), and any actions resulting from that mode of progress, will include intentional commission of the thirty two *seva aparadhas*, for the verse describes a person who has sincerely taken shelter of the process of *bhakti* as outlined by the Lord himself. (In that case there is no question of intentional *seva aparadha*.) The thirty two *seva aparadhas* beginning with "entering the temple while wearing shoes" and other such *seva aparadhas* should be understood to be offensive acts, and should never be intentionally committed. Thus in the scriptures a person who intentionally commits a *seva aparadha* is condemned as a two-legged animal.

If the *nama aparadhas*, though they be long-standing, have been committed unconsciously (but their presence is inferred by the results, lack of advancement), then one should chant the name constantly. By that, steadiness *bhakti*

will be attained and gradually the offenses will be neutralized. If it is committed in full knowledge, however, there are other matters for consideration.

Disrespect for Vaisnavas

Sadhu ninda or criticism of Vaisnavas is the first offense. The word "ninda" means animosity or malice. If by chance this offense occurs, the person should be repentant, recognizing his own low nature in having committed the offense. In the same way that a person who has been burned by fire seeks relief in fire, he should nullify the offense by lamenting, resolving to come before the Vaisnava, fall at his feet, and satisfy him by offering his obeisances, praises and respects. If the Vaisnava is not satisfied, the person should remain ready to comply with his every wish. If the offense is so great that the Vaisnava's anger does not die, in great remorse, thinking himself most unfortunate and bound for hell because of his offense, he should give up everything else and take shelter of continuous *nama sankirtana*. By the great power of *nama kirtana* certainly, in time, that person will be delivered from his offense.

But if one, reluctant to put oneself in a humble position by offering repeated respects and service to the Vaisnava that one has offended, justifies himself by arguing that simply taking shelter of the name is sufficient for the deliverance from offense, then he is guilty of further offense.

Nor should one be of the mentality to think that the offense of *sadhu ninda* operates only in relation to a Vaisnava who is fully and perfectly qualified with all the qualities mentioned in scripture, such as tolerance, mercy and kindness to all living entities (*kṛpālur akṛta drohas titikṣuḥ sarva dehinam*), and therefore minimize one's own offense by pointing out some defect in the devotee. The scriptures say that, even a person who is of very bad character, a cheater, devoid of proper behavior, malicious, devoid of *samskaras*, if he takes to surrender to the Lord, must be considered a *sadhu*. All the more must a devotee who may show some occasional fault be considered a *sadhu*.

Also, if a great offense has been committed against a Vaisnava, but the Vaisnava does not become angry because of his exalted nature, the offender should still fall at that devotee's feet and seek ways of pleasing him in order to purify himself. Though the Vaisnava may forgive offenses, the dust of his feet does not

tolerate the offenses and delivers the fruits of the offense on the guilty person.

Sometimes, no suitable respect can ever match the causeless or fathomless mercy of the powerful, spontaneous, most elevated of *maha-bhagavatas* in their distribution of mercy. For instance, even though made to carry Rahugana's palanquin and made the object of the King's harsh words, Jada Bharata bestowed his mercy. In a similar way Cediraja showed mercy to the atheist *daityas* who had come to do him violence. In the same way Sri Nityananda showed mercy to Madhai, even though Madhai had injured His forehead.

The offense of *guror avajna*, or disrespect to guru, the third *aparadha*, may be considered in the same way as the first *aparadha*. Misunderstanding the position of Visnu, Siva and demigod
Second *aparadha*

Conscious beings are of two types: Independent and dependent. The independent being is the all-pervading Lord (*isvara*) and the dependent beings are the particles of consciousness (*jivas*), energies of the Lord, who pervade individual bodies. The independent consciousness (*isvara*) is of two types: one is not touched at all by *maya*, and the other, for the Lord's pastimes, accepts the touch of *maya*. The first type of *isvara* is called by such names as *narayana*: *harir hi nirgunah saksat purusah prakrte para*. It is Hari who is directly the non material Lord transcendental to material nature. The second type of *isvara* is called by such names as *Siva*: *sivah sakti yutah sasvat trilingo guna samvrtta*. Siva accepts the three *gunas* and is covered by them.

Though Siva is covered by the *gunas*, one should not think that he is in the category of *jiva*. As the *Brahma-samhita* states, Siva is a transformation of the Lord, just as yogurt is a transformation of milk. In other scriptures also Siva is glorified as *isvara*. Brahma is also accepted as *isvara* in such statements as: *sattva rajastama iti prakrter guna . . . hari virinci hara*. But Brahma's position as *isvara* or lord should be understood as power invested in a *jiva* by the Supreme Lord that Brahma is able to create the universe.

The modes of ignorance (*siva*), passion (*brahmin*) and goodness (*visnu*) may be compared to the wood, smoke and fire, three progressive stages of fire. As smoke is superior to wood, so the mode of passion is superior to the mode of ignorance, but as in the smoke one

cannot perceive the fire, so in the mode of passion one cannot realize the Supreme Lord.

In the mode of goodness which is like the blazing fire, one can perceive the Lord. As the fire in wood, though present, cannot be perceived, so in mode of ignorance, though present, Lord cannot be perceived with form. The happiness of realization of the Lord in His impersonal aspect may be compared to the state of sleep which is characteristic of *tama guna*.

The *jivas* are of two types: those who are covered by *maya* and those who are not covered by *maya*. The covered *jivas* are the *devatas*, men and animals. The uncovered *jivas* are of two types: those under the influence of the Lord's *aisvarya sakti*, and those uninfluenced by that *sakti*. Those not influenced by the Lord's *aisvarya sakti* are of two types; those who, by practice of *jnana* merge in to the Lord (a lamentable condition), and those who, by practice of *bhakti*, remain differentiated from the Lord and taste nectarean bliss. Those who are influenced by the *aisvarya sakti* are of two types: those influenced by *jnana* belonging to the spiritual sphere (e.g. four *Kumaras*), and those influenced by the function of creation etc. coming from the material sphere (e.g. *Brahma*).

One may consider that Visnu and Siva are non different, being the same *isvara* mode. Though this is true, one must understand that there is a difference in worship of the Lord with a touch of material qualities and with no material qualities. Brahma and Visnu, on the other hand, are completely different *tattvas*: Brahma is *jiva* and Visnu is *isvara*. Sometimes Brahma and Visnu are described as identical in the *Puranas*, but one should understand this statement by the example of the sun (*Visnu*) and the jewel (*Brahma*) which is invested with the light of the sun, and is therefore considered nondifferent.

In some *mahakalpas*, even Siva, like Brahma, is a *jiva* invested with power by the Lord: *kvacij jiva visesatvam harasyoktam vidhir iva*. Like Brahma, Siva is sometimes a *jiva*.. Thus Siva is sometimes classed with Brahma, as in such statements as: *yas tu narayanam devam brahma rudradi daivataih sMatvenaiva manyeta sa pasandi bhaved dhruvam*. A person who considers Narayana as equivalent to Brahma, Siva and the other *devatas* is a low rascal.

Thus those who have not fully researched in the matter say that Visnu is the Lord, not Siva; or that Siva is the Lord, not Visnu; or that since I am a

devotee of Visnu, I will not give regard to Siva, or visa versa. Such people, deliberately involving themselves in arguments, become offenders. If such offenders can become enlightened by a knowledgeable devotee, then they can realize how Siva and Visnu are nondifferent. With this realization, and by performing *nama-kirtana*, the person can nullify his offense.

Sruti sastra ninda: disrespect for the *sruti* scriptures, *Vedas*

If one commits this offense one obtains relief when one has the fortune to understand from a knowledgeable person that the *srutis* mercifully help the most blind, unqualified and independent people to come to the path of *bhakti*. Commission of the fourth offense can be nullified by using the same mouth that criticized the scriptures (such as the *srutis*, propounding *karma* and *jnana*) to praise the same scriptures, and to praise the practitioners of those scriptures (e.g. performers of *karma* and *jnana*), and by performing loud chanting of the holy name.

In the same way one should understand the appearance and nullification of the other six offenses. Nullification of the *anarthas*

The four types of *anarthas* mentioned, namely, those arising from previous sinful activity, from previous pious activity, from *nama* *aparadha*, and from cultivation of *bhakti*, have five grades of eradication: limited (to one *anartha*), pervasive (affecting many *anarthas*), general, complete and absolute.

Anarthas arising from *nama* *aparadha* are removed in the following stages. One should understand that the word "nullification" (*nivrtti*) applies not only to the complete absence of *anarthas*, but to any of the progressive stages of nullification as well. Thus with performance of devotional activities (*bhajana kriya*) there is nullification but the eradication is limited. With the appearance of *nistha*, the eradication is pervasive. With the appearance of *rati* or *bhava*, the eradication is general. With the appearance of *prema* the eradication is complete. With the attainment of the Lord's lotus feet, the eradication is absolute.

Thus, in the case of Citraketu, who had attained the lotus feet of the Lord, his accidental *maha* *aparadha* to Siva was apparent, not real, for there was no ill effect from his mistake. By the abundance of *prema*, his assuming the form of an associate of the Lord and

of a demon (*Vrtrasura*) were practically non-difference.

The cause of the offense of Jaya and Vijaya was a manifestation of personal desire derived from *prema*. The two desired in this way: "Oh Lord of Lords, you desire to fight but we do not see a suitable opponent for you. All those available are too weak. Though we are strong, we are not inimical to you. Somehow or other, make us inimical to you, and realize your desire to fight. We, being your faithful servants, cannot tolerate to see any lack whatever in your perfection. Diminish your quality of affection for your devotees, and fulfill our prayer."

Such occasional discrepancies in mentality can be overcome with one's intelligence (which can discern them, guided by scripture and *sadhu* and can then act accordingly).

The eradication of the *anarthas* arising from previous sin is as follows. With the performance of *bhajana kriya*, the eradication is general, with the appearance of *nistha* eradication is complete, and with the appearance of *asakti* it is absolute.

The eradication of *anarthas* arising from *bhakti* is as follows. With the performance of *bhajana kriya*, eradication is limited. With the appearance of *nistha* it is complete, and with the appearance of *ruci* it is absolute.

The wise men have concluded this by considering all matters thoroughly. One may raise the objection that these stages of extinguishing *anarthas* do not apply to devotees, quoting such verses as: *anghah sanghavad akhilam sakrd udayad*.

With one utterance of the holy name all sins are destroyed.

Yan nama sakre chravanat pukaso'pi vimucyate samsarat. If one hears the holy name even one time, a *candala* can obtain liberation from the material world. Also, in the case of Ajamila, simply by his uttering the Lord's name once in *nama-bhasa*, all *anarthas*, even up to *avidya* (ignorance, the root cause of material bondage), were removed and he attained the lotus feet of the Lord.

This is all true. One should have no doubt that the holy name has such inestimable power. But because the holy name, being unhappy with offenses committed against it, does not manifest its complete power in the offender. This is indeed the reason why the sinful tendencies continue their existence. Though these tendencies continue for some time, the servants of death have no power to attack such a person. *Na te yama pasabhart ca tad bhatan*

svapne'pi pasyanti. Such a person does not see *Yama* or his servants carry nooses even in dreams. *Na vidyate tasya yamair hi suddhih*. For them there is no need of other forms of purification.

The case of the offender losing the mercy of the name is similar to a subordinate who is offensive to his wealthy master. He is denied proper care, and is treated indifferently by the master. As a result of the withdrawal of mercy, that person suffers poverty and distress of all sorts. At the same time however, people not under the jurisdiction of a wealthy master do not suffer such hardships. But if the offending servant puts himself at the beck and call of his master, the master gradually shows mercy, and that person's suffering is step by step eliminated. In the same way the offending devotee will at first suffer some miseries, but if he performs sincere service to the spiritual master and to the scriptures etc., the name will again gradually manifest mercy and gradually eliminate his evil tendencies.

Thus one cannot argue against the gradual elimination of *anarthas*.

"I have not committed any offenses." One should not make such statements. One can infer the existence of either recent or long-standing offenses by their effect. The effect of offense is that a person will not manifest any symptoms of *prema* by performance of *nama kirtana*, *Ad asmasaram hrdayam vatedam tad grhyamanair hari namaddheyaiah; na vikriyetaatha yada vikaro netre jalam gatra ruhesu harsa*. One's heart is as hard as stone if, when chanting the holy name there is no change in the heart, tears in the eyes or standing of hairs on the limbs. *ke te'paradha viprendra namno bhagavatah krtah/ vinighnanti nram krtiyam prakrtam hyanayantihi*. Oh best of *brahmanas*, what are the offenses against the name of the Lord which cancel the results of all one's performances, and turn everything material? In other words, what are these offenses against the Name of the Lord which, being committed, prevent any results from repeatedly hearing and chanting the Lord's name, qualities, which should give *prema*, from serving the sacred *tirthas* which bestow perfection, from tasting repeatedly the ghee, milk and *betal prasadam* which destroy all desires for sense enjoyment, from which all those spiritually potent activities become mere material?

This is the serious effect of *nama aparadha*. If this is so, one may then argue that if these offenses are so

serious then a person who commits a *nama aparadha* simply loses the grace of the Lord and thus cannot even take shelter of guru or perform devotional activities. This is true. Just as during a serious fever, losing all taste for food, it becomes impossible to eat, a person who commits a serious offense loses scope for hearing, chanting and performing devotional activities. There is no doubt about this.

However, if the fever lessens with time, some taste for food develops. Even then, nourishing foods like milk and rice cannot give their full power of nourishment to the person suffering from chronic fever. They bestow some benefit, but cannot relieve him of his wasted condition. An invalid's diet and medicine can, however, with time, restore him to his previous healthy condition. At that time the full potency of normal food can be utilized by the body.

In the same way, after a long period of suffering the effects of *aparadha*, the intensity reduces somewhat and the devotee develops a little taste. Again the devotee becomes qualified for *bhakti*. Repeated doses of hearing and chanting the Lord's name and performance of other devotional processes, gradually, with time, reveal everything up to *prema*.

Accordingly, the experienced devotees have described devotion as progressing gradually by stages, starting with faith, followed by association, *bhajana kriya*, *anartha nivrtti*, *nistha*, *ruci*, *asakti*, *bhava* and *prema*.

However, the absence of symptoms of *prema* and traces of sinful activity in devotees who are practicing the devotional processes such as *kirtana*, cannot always be attributed to *nama aparadha*. Nor can the presence of material distresses always be attributed to the reactions of previous *karma*, which should be destroyed by correct execution of *bhakti*. For instance, though Ajamila was without offenses, he did not manifest the symptoms of *prema*, even though he named his son Narayana and called that name many times every day. Moreover he was also inclined to sin (sexual relation with a prostitute). And Yudhisthira, though free from past karmic reactions, had to suffer many material miseries.

Just as a fruit-bearing tree bears fruit in due time, the holy name, being pleased with an offensesless person, will reveal its mercy to him in due time. The effects of heaps of sin which are due to precious bad practices are as insignificant as the bite of a serpent

without his poison fangs. And the sickness, lamentation and other sufferings undergone by devotees are not due to sins in previous life. For the Lord Himself has said: *yasaham anugrhnami harisye tad dhanam sanaih/ tato 'dhanam tyajanty asya svajana duhkha duhkhitam*. Gradually I take away all the wealth of the person whom I favor. Being penniless and most miserable, he is rejected by his family and relatives. *Nirdhanatva maha rogo mad anugraha laksanam*. The person without the malady of material possessions is the object of my mercy.

Thus the Lord, thinking of the welfare of His devotee, in order to increase his humility toward, and longing for the Lord, bestows on him all sorts of suffering as His mercy. This suffering is not the effect of sinful actions in previous lives.

LETTERS

Comments on the Last Issue

Arcita Dasa
San Diego, CA.

Generally I do a selective read of the publication and this one was no exception. However, some of the material stood out and elicited the following comments.

Regarding, Vaisnavas and *karmi-yogis*, Hanumatpresaka Maharaja's presentation of the subject is witty. I'd like to add that a person who has fruitive intentions but who accepts and practices the *yuga-dharma*, chanting Hare Krsna, should be accepted as a devotee. There's a verse in Rupa Goswami's *Padyavali* that says that if a person even thinks of chanting the Lord's holy names Lord Brahma readies paraphernalia for worshiping that individual. In a 1967 lecture Srila Prabhupada said, "Suppose you are in this Krsna conscious society. Now, you cannot expect that all the members of the Society will be first-class men. How can we expect? We are collecting members of the society from all classes of men. So there may be a man in goodness, a man in the passion and a man in the ignorance. But if you think, 'Oh, this man is not good. That man is not good,' Oh... No. You should be tolerant. You haven't got any connection with this man or that man. You are connected with the philosophy..."

"Compassion"—Excellent!

Guruprasada Swami's essay speaks for itself. "The Very Best Medicine"—Krsna Kṛpā Dasi's sentiments are welcome. My immediate reaction was, "Here's a

devotee who's reading and appreciating *Srimad-Bhagavatam*."

Thoughts on the Last Issue

Uttamasloka dasa

Ontario, Canada

I've just read several articles from Volume 8 of your newsletter and I felt compelled to respond with some general comments. There are several recurring themes in the letters and articles and these seem to be a perpetual plague to many devotees around the world. The first issue is that of the "less-intelligence" of women. The actual reality is that all over the world there are people who are incredibly intelligent, those who are very intelligent, those who are moderately intelligent, those who are minimally intelligent, and those who don't fall into any of the above categories.

In real life today you will find among *each* of the above groups, some individuals that are men and some that are women. It's an indisputable fact.

Notwithstanding women's fair treatment and equal rights, what difference does it make how many of each gender are in each group? Who's keeping track anyway? Is this some kind of game that someone is trying to win?

There are lots of people that are more or less intelligent than me, and I personally don't care if some of them are men or women. Someone else's intelligence level makes no real difference to me in my life. It doesn't affect the quality of my existence or my devotion to Krsna.

Now the truth is, that possessing intelligence does not mean the absence of stupidity or ignorance. And just because you have great intelligence, does not mean that you are expert at using it wisely. There are many intelligent people who are in ignorance or who act very stupid under various circumstances. In fact, all of us do from time to time!

Intelligence is only one factor in a complex human existence which has many integrated components. It is not even an overriding element that is absolutely critical to devotional progress. Krsna says that He will supply intelligence to *anyone* who is devoted to Him with love. That sounds pretty good to me. Simple and straightforward.

Prabhupada never wrote or said that women were stupid. I know personally for a fact that he thought many of the actions of some of his male disciples were extremely stupid! And

especially the *sannyasis*! Of this there is no doubt!

Prabhupada actually gave women equal facility in deity worship, which is still not acceptable in India. He broke with sastric traditions, at the risk of being severely criticized, just to facilitate their devotional service to Krsna.

The real thing to look at is how Prabhupada always treated his female disciples with love and respect. He was never mean to them. He appreciated their service as much as anybody else's. Prabhupada internally certainly saw beyond their temporary gender and circumstances, and regarded them as spiritual beings—parts of Krsna.

This is the actual example he set by his personal behavior—*acarya*. It doesn't matter how many verses one can quote about women being less intelligent, the example of Prabhupada's behavior is clear, and it makes perfect sense.

Another issue is the concern some devotees have about their relationship with the "Movement" and ISKCON. ISKCON is NOT the "Movement." Lord Caitanya's movement exists *wherever* there is even one sincere devotee who is endeavoring to develop their love for Krsna, and trying to help as many other living entities in that regard as possible. Again, Prabhupada is the best example of this. That is the real Movement. ISKCON is only one *small part* of the Movement, as we all can be. The choice is ours. It's that simple.

It seems that there are devotees who live outside of ISKCON who are disturbed by how things are being run, etc. They feel the leaders are D-ISKCON-functional! I personally think it is a waste of time to try to go back into ISKCON and change it to "how it used to be," or "how Prabhupada really wants it to be." Forget it. Don't waste your time. Why bother getting unnecessarily entangled and frustrated?

There are so many sincere souls all over the world who want to know the truth about God. Why not concentrate on cultivating one's own personal sphere of influence—large or small? That's where the action is. Is there something else to do that's more important?

Let's look at Prabhupada again for the example of an *acarya*. Bhaktisiddhanta told him to preach in English in the west. Prabhupada went to the Gaudiya Math after Bhaktisiddhanta passed away, and asked them to help him fulfill his mission. They told him to forget it and

to just work under their supervision and guidance. Prabhupada said, sorry, I've got important work to do, see you later. And the rest is history.

Prabhupada didn't try to change the Gaudiya Math. He tried to change the world. And he did change the world—by teaching people why and how to *change their lives*. By his *association*, people became interested in Krsna and everything that relates to Him. Amazing—just by personal association. Prabhupada had no Gaudiya Math authorization or facility. But he was a sincere pure devotee.

If one is a sincere pure-intentioned devotee, then one will surely manifest *some* level of transcendental qualities that are symptoms of one's current internal spiritual condition. Transcendental qualities are universally attractive, and if due to one's association, others are attracted by those qualities, they will inevitably want to know why and how they have developed.

The bottom line is whether people are inspired to become devotees of Krsna by one's association. And if other devotees are inspired in their devotional service by one's association, then that really says a lot too.

Point A is where you are right now at this moment in eternal time. Point B is becoming a pure devotee. The distance between Point A and Point B is different for everyone, and it doesn't really matter how big the distance is either. What really matters is if you have truly realized where Point B is and how to get there. If you are going in the right direction towards Point B, as best and as fast as you personally can, then congratulations, and I offer you my humble obeisances!

Krsna says, "Let not the wise disrupt the minds of the ignorant—just show them the way of devotion by the example of your *behavior*." He also says that devotees are very rare. Well if there's someone in this world who is at that point in their material journey where it is time for them to find out about Krsna, I will gladly tell them everything I know and help them in any way that I can.

The fact of the matter is, that Krsna is the one who sends lost souls to other devotees to find out about Him anyway. It's His doing. These are the types of affairs He becomes involved in. Any sincere soul can certainly have all of the knowledge I have been given. It was given to me as a gift and I was told I could give it freely to anyone who genuinely wants it.

Of course, it's our responsibility to

give this knowledge to others without any distortion and free from improper motivation. The onus is on us to keep it pure. Ultimately, no one is really watching us except Krsna and Prabhupada. They are the only ones we have to answer to. We should be doing it because we are inspired by Them in the first place.

We should be glad to help out in any way we can. It's a privilege, and we should always be grateful whenever that wonderful opportunity comes our way. Krsna says that there is no one who is more dear to Him than one who helps others understand Him. He says those devotees will surely come back to Him without fail. He personally promises it. That sounds good to me. It's that simple.

Stigma of Mental Problems

Lisa Wimberly
Mt. Clemens, MI

I just got done reading #8 and I felt there were finally a couple of articles that got to the real heart of all the issues (though the individual issues are still important). Guruprasada Swami's letter on compassion really touched my heart. I have contact with only one temple, but I've watched that temple change a lot over the last seven years. One thing that has all but disappeared is compassion. The compassion that was there moved home to England. When I first came to ISKCON through a class at college, I was struck by how sincere everyone was. Now, I am usually struck by how insincere everyone is. Granted, people would say that after all my years around the temple, I never "moved in" so who am I to talk. But, I'm not trying to name-call and run. I find it very sad in light of the potential there for all sorts of positiveness. And it was definitely part of why I never did "join up" (at the advice of a beloved devotee friend, by-the-way). I'm sure I'm not alone in this instance.

"Well Wishers of Each Other" and "I Need to Avoid the Problems and Politics" also struck home. . . . especially the latter. One of my observations of the devotees I know is that there seems to be a fair number of abused individuals walking around. My prayer for ISKCON is that there does end up being some sort of counseling program for devotees. I am a psychology student and I walk and talk and listen to these friends and see their pain getting stuffed further and further in while they become more dysfunctional toward everyone around them. While I agree taking shelter of Radha-Krsna is a

good thing, hiding behind Them is not the same. Unfortunately, I have also observed that often devotees who do attempt to deal with their "material" problems are not so highly thought of—perhaps child and wife beating is more acceptable. Or, maybe the temple is so desperate for a specific service to be rendered that they turn a blind eye to the person who leads a virtual double life. Honestly, I look around and see virtually an unending clientele. If nothing else, I hope *Priti-laksanam* will rattle enough cages high up so that therapy (in addition to the standard "Chant!") is available to all devotees and the stigma of dealing with "material," "mental platform" issues is lifted.

A Thank You

Jagadisvara dasa
Chardon, OH

I always enjoy reading all the letters in your forum. Some are encouraging, others are painful to hear. I want to especially thank Guruprasada Swami for his essay, *Compassion*, (Vol. 8, Oct.). I think that he has hit the nail directly on the head. It is this kind of high-quality Krsna consciousness which will do the most good in resolving the recurrent themes hindering ISKCON's full blossoming, such as women's issues, etc.

Devotee Welfare

Sajjanasraya dasa
N.S.W., Australia

I am one of those Godbrothers living on the "edge" so to speak; aloof from the local Sydney temple for about ten years.

Since our beloved Prabhupada disappeared from our vision so many traumatic events have taken place "within and without" the Society His Divine Grace founded for the spiritual solution of all the conditioned souls. So many of these nefarious occurrences are nothing but scandalous, so nay the least, yet the so-called elite managers having amassed *acarya*-status have not addressed the fundamental issue of devotee welfare. I remember when preaching in Uttar Pradesh circa, early 1976, up to Mayapur, 1977, based in Sri Krishna-Balaram Mandir, making life members with Akshayananda Swami's party, we were allotted a few *rupees* for our maintenance.

In the western temples I have seen devotees have had to leave temples to maintain themselves. When one management takes over a temple then everything seems to be changed from the previous management. This is the mentality of "building and breaking,"

which Srila Prabhupada denounced over and over. Properties have been sold, temples have been closed, devotees have been black-balled according to individual's whims.

But enough of this negativity, let us move with the rising sun of Lord Kṛṣṇa and come together to share *Priti-laksanam*. It is so inspiring and thought-provoking to hear from "old" Godbrothers, God sisters and new ones.

Refreshed and Healed

Visnudatta dasa
Australia

I was very gladdened to read Sita devi dasi's article "Damsels in Distress" and to be exposed to your magazine *Priti-laksanam*.

Very impressive to read such practical Kṛṣṇa conscious reading that seemed to be lacking in our Society for so long. I really feel refreshed and healed by reading the articles. I have the Vol 5, Dec. 1992, and in particular found "Fellowship" by Rohininandana prabhu most meaningful. Those issues were suppressed for so many years due to false renunciation and imitation.

I am certainly guilty of the above mentioned offenses and in particular I remember a remark made constantly by male devotees misinterpreting and exploiting Prabhupada's words to fulfill selfish goals. "Women are less intelligent," said Prabhupada many times. Coming from the mouth of a pure devotee, unconditioned and situated on the platform of pure devotional service, one might relate to this statement as the Absolute Truth, and yet, the point of reference should be the "intelligent man who is more superior in his intelligence to women." So who is an intelligent man, at least we know for sure that Prabhupada was, but we cannot imitate him, thinking I am man, therefore, I am more intelligent than woman. That is the mistake I know I made. At least if one is somewhat intelligent he would be also humble, humble enough to look upon the great souls that joined ISKCON as very intelligent. How could anyone put down the devotional attitude of any devotee and especially of the Matajis. We lost so many talented, great souls by suffocating their fire of devotion due to criticism and imitation. The fear of intimacy coupled by false renunciation has a devastating effect on both parties.

Our women are more intelligent than any other women in the universe that have not embraced Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I love my God sisters and

Godbrothers and offer my deep apologies for any offense I have committed, knowingly or unknowingly, due to false imitation and incorrect interpretation of our Guru Maharaja's words. The offenses committed to God sisters and consequently to Prabhupada are terribly embarrassing and I feel guilty. How many Matajis left the movement rejected, hurt, full of hatred, only to take shelter in gross material life of sex and drugs, due to systematically being put down by partners and Godbrothers. How many most devoted God sisters, enthusiastic and sincere, were pushed away due to gross manipulation and exploitation?

Let us hope that your magazine and the work of devotees such as Sita devi dasi will help our Movement to thrive.

The Perfect Solution

Divya-sari dasi
Alachua, FL

I hope and look forward to the day when we, and the variety of disciples in our communities, cease to blame, or judge anyone, anything and can quietly put an end to it, once and for all.

We can all turn our eyes inwards and look deeply and honestly within our hearts and mourn and repent. We are fallen *jivas*. We have denied the very existence of the Supreme Lord, of a Divine Master for millions of births. We are traitors! We have betrayed a life of shocking beauty and astounding truth. We *jivas* with our bodies, are like spoiled brats, making incessant demands. Why? To be more than. We must fully embrace less than. Then we have peace and harmony, humility, tolerance and respect. And we have only good feelings for each other. Kṛṣṇa-katha for each other.

We can make our dealings with each other gentle, friendly, mild, and undisturbing. We can make our hearts affectionate for each other. We can make our thoughts with respect and goodwill for each other. And simply leave our material way of relating behind, as undesirable. All glories to Om Vishnupada Srila Prabhupada, the illustrious founder of ISKCON.

ESSAYS

Chanting in the Therapeutic Situation

Caitanya dasa (Brother Aelred)
Armidale, NSW, Australia
As a Catholic monk (brother, not priest)

I am regularly involved in pastoral counseling. While a considerable amount of time is devoted to cognitive strategies—for example, the Rational Emotive Therapy of Albert Ellis—the "centerpiece" of my work is the use of *japa mala*, the chanting form of meditation.

Chanting is a powerful therapeutic "device," and I am convinced that devotees should feel confident in recommending it at this level or point of contact. While *japa mala* is, of course, inseparable from its religious setting, it is not always desirable to put religious content first. Religious teachings can certainly be introduced later—especially in response to curiosity and *naturally*—occurring inquiry. For example, I am frequently asked to tell my clients "a little about" the "tradition" from which the *maha-mantra* has emerged.

I am simply putting into effect Prabhupada's instruction that we should just get them chanting. . . . give them *some* taste. There can be no doubt—as I have found from experience—that chanting is *immediately* attractive and "self-reinforcing." Of course, it is understood that there is *some* level of acceptance of a "greater than me," "a higher Reality," "God." A faithless person could not honor or respect the holy name.

Most of the Christians whom I counsel/teach have no difficulty accepting the *maha-mantra*. Clearly, I am presenting it in a non-sectarian way. I point out to them two things: (1) that the names of God are honored in all the great religious traditions, and that these names are simply enshrined in the sacred language of India with the *maha-mantra*; (2) that they can use the *maha-mantra* without seeing themselves as "becoming Hindu" or changing religious allegiance. I will usually point out that the *maha-mantra* does not "belong" to the "Hare Kṛṣṇas", and that there is no suggestion that they need to "join the Hare Kṛṣṇas" in order to chant successfully.

With regard to the last point, it is obvious that the question of initiation has not arisen. The context is simply one of beginning the chanting process.

I think it will interest you to know the official position of Roman Catholic Church with regard to "Eastern" forms of meditation—insofar as Catholics may wish to use them in their personal devotional life. I am quoting from a document entitled Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on some Aspects of Christian Meditation (1989):

"The interest which in recent years has been awakened also among some Christians by forms of meditation associated with some eastern religions and their particular methods of prayer is a significant sign of this need for spiritual recollection and a deep contact with divine mystery. . .

"The majority of the great religions which have sought union with God in prayer have also pointed out ways to achieve it. Just as "the Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions," neither should these ways be rejected out of hand simply because they are not Christian. On the contrary, one can take from them what is useful so long as the Christian conception of prayer, its logic and requirements are never obscured. . . ."

Predictably, there will always be some people—Christians in this instance—who feel unable to chant an "Indian" or "Hindu" *mantra*. In their case I simply follow Srila Prabhupada's lead:

(To Father Emmanuel): "... If you would like to cooperate with us, then go to the churches and chant, 'Christ,' 'Krstá,' or 'Krsna.' What could be the objection?

... If you stop killing animals and chant the holy name Christ, everything will be perfect. I have not come to teach you, but only to request you to please chant the name of God. The Bible also demands this of you. So let's kindly cooperate and chant, and if you have a prejudice against chanting the name Krsna, then chant 'Christos' or 'Krstá'—there is no difference. . . . God has millions and millions of names, and because there is no difference between God's name and Himself, each one of these names has the same potency as God". Therefore, even if you accept designations like 'Hindu,' 'Christian,' or 'Muhammadan,' if you simply chant the name of God found in your own scriptures, you will attain the spiritual platform. . . ." (*The Science of Self-Realization*. p. 118; p.117)

In this context, the *mantra* which I recommend is one which is popular among the followers of the Catholic priest Father Bede Griffiths: Om Namah Christaya.

So, whether my clients/students chant the *maha-mantra* or the above Christian *mantra*, the benefits to body, mind and heart are truly spectacular. But, as I have already said, it may often be better to defer entry into specifically religious material. The initial point of entry is often in the following terms:

"The need for repetition and

monotony seems to be natural. Mothers rock their babies in a hypnotic rhythm and croon rondo lullabies. In later life we lull ourselves back into that remembered ecstasy by mantras and chants and dances and strobe lights in which we repeat a word, a tone, a movement, or a pulse until the monotony captures us and sets us, strangely, free. The hypnotic sounds of rain, falling water, or drums, create a rhythm that resonates in the brain, silences distracting thoughts and inner dialogues, and allows us to transcend our everyday state of consciousness." (Sam Keen, *Inward Bound: Exploring the Geography of Your Emotions*. Bantam Books. 1992 p. 70)

I am sure that the devotee who is committed to the efficacy and wonder of the *maha-mantra* needs to recognize the presence of simple, even rudimentary phenomena associated with chanting. This is not to demean the *mantra* in its spiritual potency; it is simply to recognize that anything which we do in this body will have simple phenomenal aspects. Why not use them to advantage in introducing people to the benefits of chanting? The bigger things can come later.

Some Practical Cases (much abbreviated)

1. Two cases of Schizophrenia: This condition is commonly marked by intense and distressing "internal dialogues." In this situation the mind cannot rest, and the person becomes exhausted. My clients have found that chanting "stills the chatter of the mind" very effectively. Further, as philosophical understanding increases, the real significance of what is happening gives them real hope—namely that the Name of God (God Himself) is occupying that space previously dominated by destructive "inner dialogues."

An interesting issue, though, is the following. In these cases there has literally been too much religious reasoning—to the extent that psychotic episodes have been dominated by, even "triggered" by, religious content. In this situation I have emphasized chanting—simple chanting—even to the exclusion of reading! I have insisted that *Chant and Be Happy* be the only reading for the time being. Indeed, where one of my clients insisted on reading *Bhagavad-gita*, he started to become anxious and tense. The schizophrenic does not need abstract concept—especially of a religious character.

2. A client suffering the long-term effects of hallucinogenic drugs, specifically LSD: This young man is periodi-

cally overwhelmed by what the LSD trips "opened up"—"a cosmic mission" to which he feels called. This "mission" has been reinforced by what an astrologer has said of him—that he is "a cosmic person." This combination is destructively incapacitating. His only real hope is to return to a "centering of the awareness." He must get "anchored" lest, as he says he "spin out" completely.

What chanting can achieve is neatly focused in a passage from *Prabhupada lila*:

One morning a couple attended the lecture. . . . During the question and answer period the man asked, "What about my mind?" Prabhupada gave him philosophical replies, but the man kept repeating, "What about my mind? What about my mind?"

With a pleading, compassionate look, Prabhupada said, "I have no other medicine. Please chant this Hare Krsna. I have no other explanation. I have no other answer."

I do not know what happened to this man, but I do know that my client must be reminded, over and over again, to simply chant. There is no doubt that chanting gives relief from disturbed mental processes, and that it subtly and gradually creates new and stronger perspectives—ways of seeing.

3. A homosexual male: Chanting, along with a firmly cultivated service attitude, has shown this man that a previously almost insatiable desire is amazingly satisfied—without the need for gross sex, or, for that matter sexual activity in imagination.

Although I have no knowledge of the mechanisms involved, I am prepared to advance the opinion that chanting of the names of God spontaneously satisfies a whole range of psychophysical needs.

4. An older male who was involved with "channeling" and who, as a result, went through an horrific and life-threatening encounter with an evil "presence": This client has found that in his quite profound conversion to spiritual values he has needed to become ever simpler in his devotional life. The chanting of the holy names—in his case "Om namah Christaya"—meets this need and call perfectly.

5. Many clients referred to me by doctors, and suffering from hypertension (high blood pressure): Chanting makes a major contribution to the correction of this condition. Sometimes the results are quite startling!—as in a case where the client was in danger of burst blood vessels in the brain. Within

two weeks his blood pressure had returned to normal. This particular phenomenon is of very great interest. 6. Many clients referred by doctors, and suffering from a generalized anxiety state: Simply, the generalized state of distress is counteracted by the centering created through chanting. Many people are convinced that there is no escape from this generalized dis-ease, and they are correspondingly amazed by the very simplicity of chanting and its profound effects.

Of course, for these and other conditions, modification in life-style is essential. Usually, however, the marked improvement which the client observes provides practical impetus to such change.

By way of conclusion, I suggest in the strongest possible terms that devotees approach most people from this very practical orientation. If this is done, then there is the very real prospect that, as with me, doctors will see us as a practical community resource and be prepared to refer patients to us. Better that we be seen as valuable resource people than as weird religionists!

Quality of Exchanges

Narasingha Gurudasa
Athens, Ohio

Regarding Anonymous's harshly-worded and critical letter on pp. 5/6 of October's issue. The language that was used to describe the contributing devotees to your magazine was very unpalatable; actually the letter served as a practical demonstration of the mind functioning on the stage of *utsaha mayi*, as described in the initial "Nectar Section." I only wish there was more open exchange. Let me give a personal qualifier.

I have been intimately connected with New Vrindavan for 15 years. When things started to go really awry there, most of us were too close to see clearly. After all, Bhaktipada's original staunch determination to represent and glorify Srila Prabhupada had won our faith and loyalty. So as he began to introduce his own ideas, and to subtly (and I believe unconsciously) reduce the import of Prabhupada's actual words and intentions, we didn't catch it. We were too isolated. We only heard one interpretation of things: Bhaktipada's. He was our *guru*; and he became *sadhu* and *sastra* as well. Or he became the filter through which such

were represented to us.

Meanwhile, what was the quality of exchanges between New Vrindavan and the rest of the body of ISKCON? When senior devotees outside began to see serious discrepancies take root, what did they do? Srila Prabhupada explains that when a gentleman sees an intoxicated man about to stumble unaware into a road full of traffic, he tries to pull him back, without care that the intoxicated man may take offense and act in a hostile manner.

Unfortunately, there were few gentlemen who were willing to take that risk with us at New Vrindavan. Instead, we heard of all kinds of resolutions and excommunications and analyses made by senior persons in California, Calcutta and *karmi* courts, without their deigning to come and see us or try to discuss the issues with us. I remember Jayadvaita and Trivikrama Swamis came once; unfortunately, they had little opportunity to discuss much with the greater body of devotees there. In retrospect, I thank them for their efforts, and apologize sincerely for whatever offenses were made to them by myself and others out of our ignorance.

How few personal, i.e., person-to-person, attempts were made to rescue the main body of simple devotees at New Vrindavan from the *maya* that was thickening around their beloved leader. Everything was so formal and distant and haughty; and so unappealing! There were a few letters here and there, usually written with a similar kind of vituperative style as Anonymous's, which usually has the opposite effect to actually opening a person's mind and heart to the issues being presented!

By Krsna's grace, I have been able to reconnect my understanding of Krsna—consciousness with Srila Prabhupada's transcendental explanations, and over the last year or so have become (hopefully) freed from the speculative and avaisnava philosophies and impersonalism that have contaminated New Vrindavan. But I wonder, if only more devotees had made more of an attempt to visit us and really relate to us as Godbrothers and sisters, and voice their sastrically and logically founded doubts and fears about what we were doing, perhaps a lot of us would have been spared from much of

what we went through.

So I certainly value your magazine as a genuine attempt to foster personal exchanges between devotees. Because without such exchanges, though we are undoubtedly blessed with the deepest and most personal philosophy, we remain impersonalists in our own nature, evidenced by harsh, aloof and proud words and behavior.

Third, I found Hanumatpresaka Swami's fundamental conclusion, namely that a lot of us are performing *karma-yoga* rather than *bhakti-yoga*, a little curious. Consider the following extract from Srila Prabhupada's purport to *Bhag.* 3.27.23: "... A devotee in full Krsna consciousness appears superficially to be a great *karmi*, always working, but the inner significance of the devotee's activities is that they are meant for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord. That is called *bhakti*, or devotional service. Arjuna was apparently a fighter, but when by his fighting he satisfied the senses of Lord Krsna, he became a devotee. Since a devotee also engages in philosophical research to understand the Supreme Person as He is, his activities may thus appear to be like those of a mental speculator, but actually he is trying to understand the spiritual nature and transcendental activities. Thus although the tendency for philosophical speculation exists, the material effects of fruitive activities and empiric speculation do not, because this activity is meant for the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

So while it may be true that a lot of us are not exactly in full Krsna consciousness, that does not mean we are engaged in *karma-yoga*, rather than *bhakti*. Not *raga-bhakti* perhaps, but *vaidhi-bhakti*. If we are actually attending to the basic principle of hearing and chanting the name, fame, qualities, pastimes of the Lord and His devotees, where is the question of *karma-yoga*? Even those of us who are married, and are necessarily so much occupied with loving and conscious fulfillment of our responsibilities toward "our" families: it may be that we are unable to make great advancement in the path, but if we are working for the sake of maintaining a family that we are simultaneously endeavoring to make Krsna conscious, and aside from our basic *sadhana* are also preaching directly or

assisting the preaching of others, then again, why should we feel ourselves not actually on the path of *bhakti-yoga*? Needless self-denigration can compromise the qualities of determination, enthusiasm and patience we all need.

In this regard, I might mention as my last point the letter written by John Hantz. It seems that he has become so infatuated with his sense of his own lack of qualities, that he has eclipsed the essential point for all of us, that we are the unimaginably fortunate recipients of causeless mercy. *Bhakti-yoga* is not an empirical path, scaled by virtue of our own strengths alone. We are not Vaisnavas in and of ourselves, that is true. But if Srila Prabhupada is telling us that he has made us Vaisnavas (as long as we agree to sincerely try to follow his instructions and stay with the process he has given us), then who are we to say "no, we're not, we're too fallen." Surely that is "pseudo-spiritual vanity"? Srila Bhaktisiddhanta made fun of himself sitting on the *vyasasana*, asking how it was possible that such a brute could take such an exalted position; but he answered by saying that he did none of these things on his own account, rather, he was simply acting upon the order of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Real humility may appear like pride to materialistic persons; similarly, apparent humility may be just another form of pride.

Door-to-Door Preaching

Dayananda dasa

Rockville, Maryland

Door-to-door preaching involves canvassing individual homes, following leads, and creating relationships with householders. Cultivating relationships includes follow-up contact and meetings at local Vaisnava homes. Eventually individuals are encouraged to begin their own worship, and to themselves preach door to door.

Although all Vaisnavas can participate in such a program, this is especially directed toward householders. The principle objective is to extend Sri Caitanya's movement by instilling a commitment to preaching. In other words, new devotees are taught that their primary involvement with Krsna consciousness should include door to door preaching. Thus, the entire program is self propagating.

Srila Prabhupada throughout his lectures and literatures has mentioned door to door preaching. His concept of door to

door begins literally at each and every door of a town or village, and extends city to city, country to country.

In Los Angeles in 1971 Prabhupada said that anyone can become a representative of Krsna. It's not difficult. One simply has to go door to door. Tell people to surrender to Krsna. Chant Hare Krsna. That's all. Prabhupada explains that there are four levels of surrender: one's life, money, intelligence, and words. At least one can go door to door and speak about Krsna. That is minimal.

Coupled with *sadhana*, preaching enlivens us. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, *ceto darpana marjanam . . . anandam buddhi vardhanam . . . Sankirtana* increases the ocean of transcendental enjoyment. Without spiritual enjoyment we have difficulty progressing. *Param dristva nivantante*. We need the taste to sustain us and increase our involvement.

The Vaisnava literatures encourage us to become renounced, to relinquish attachment. We often think of sannyasis as embodiments of renunciation. However, Prabhupada (*Bhag.* lecture, 1971) mentions that a householder is like a *sannyasi* when he or she becomes a preacher.

In Bombay, 1974, while lecturing on 3.25.30 of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Prabhupada quoted Sri Krsna, "give up religions and surrender to Me." Prabhupada then quoted Sri Caitanya, "*yare dekha, tare kaha krsna upadesha*." He says, go door to door and give Krsna's message of surrender to Krsna. That's it. Become a preacher. That is Caitanya's mission.

So let us pursue a door to door preaching movement. Let us call on our neighbors, and gradually cultivate Krsna conscious relationships with those who are interested. Then, we'll enjoy life like anything.

I'm always seeking good advise. Please contact me at 5111 Crossfield Ct. #11, Rockville, MD 20852.

The Old School
Mahakratu dasa
Belfast, Ireland

Recently I have been considering the statement: "He's from the old school," which seems to be used an awful lot these days. Usually when this statement is made, it has a derogatory ring to it, like he's a loner, or likes to do it all himself, can't delegate, bad manager. I know a lot of ISKCON devotees have become disillusioned with aspects of the movement, many times there is a fall out with a temple manager or GBC, which quite often may have been saved, had the pair or group falling out been

able to talk out their differences to a satisfactory conclusion for all parties. Any of us can quite easily become stubborn or fixed in a decision which may well effect someone else's life. A parent or teacher will be making such decisions and judgments almost daily, sometimes falling out with their siblings or those they are trying to educate. The emphasis must be put on the trying to educate, because that indeed must be what the prime motive is, not trying to scorn, belittle, or use the person for one's own benefit. We must always remember that there is another person and not try and reduce them down to some inanimate object or an institutionalised robot like entity, unable to think or act for it self. At the same time some authority must also be at hand. If there is a real authority, whether it be a parent, teacher or temple president or even a guru, then the tendency toward anarchy and exploitation will prevail. This age that we live in makes it very difficult for most of us to accept a bona fide authority of any sort, what to speak if we see that the individual concerned is not quite up to full par and not up to our expectations of them. If there is any fault to be found you can be rest assured that someone somewhere will find it.

Now as far as this old school business is concerned, it becomes important as to the criteria that we are using to judge. We are admittedly living in the 1990's and not the 1600's or 1800's or 1960's, so naturally many of our devotional activities must be adapted to some degree to our current environment, education and amenities. We do after all use the telephone, airplane, refrigerators, washing machines, etc., etc. whether we are in the sannyasa ashram or the household ashram. So we must admit there are some fundamental differences in practicing our Krsna bhakti (how many of us wake up to an electric alarm clock and drive to the temple program in our car?), as opposed to when Lord Caitanya was on this planet personally setting standards by traveling through out India by foot and teaching everyone Love of Krsna, by His personal example, or even Srila Prabhupada's struggle to establish a movement in a foreign country with no money or very little followers. Since the 1960's when this movement was first founded in the western world, there have been a number of changes, we can't necessarily say for the better, but we can say that they had to be made over the years to

adjust to the movements growing needs and to be able to accommodate more and more people into the Sankirtana mission of Lord Caitanya. Along with the physical changes and alterations there is also some changes on the part of many of the participants and leaders, sometimes it might have been a change in attitude or sometimes a change in managerial policy. Not always does change come easily, whether it is an individual or a managerial policy or the implementation of a new aspect of the philosophy that we may not have known about previously. When children go through school, they have to adjust to each grade that they reach, so likewise as this movement grows and individuals mature, they must learn to adjust and accept that it is in fact progress. As the Holy Name takes its effect on individuals, surely there must be some change; as we grow older we must also accept some change as well, but still we must keep hold of our foundations and never lose track of our founder acarya and his teachings. If we lose track of His teaching then all is lost. Anyone who is fixed in studying and teaching from the books of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, will probably be from the old school, but that can't be too bad.

Of course, one of the main complaints against the old schoolers is their bad financial dealings. This maybe could be rectified by the managers taking some professional guidance from experts in that field. Srila Prabhupada primarily wanted to train expert preachers of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, as this is what the world is most lacking in. But naturally along with the implementation of many of his desires, devotees had to become expert in managing all manner of different skills, to print millions of books takes a lot of good management, to build and manage a city (Mayapur) takes a lot of expert management and skillful manipulation of manpower, money and materials. From these considerations, it would probably be wise to keep an eye on the overall development and growth of ISKCON rather than excessively criticize everything from the past or to write it off as being useless. We may not be as expert as Srila Prabhupada, but he has given us the greatest gift, Love of Kṛṣṇa, and a wonderful movement to build and expand together.

Sannyasa at Fifty?
Yadubara dasa
India

Vṛndavana—one of the few places which, upon returning, I feel I've missed. I had returned this time with my eleven year old daughter to help Nṛsiṃhananda Prabhu teach a course on "Video Communications" at the Vṛndavana Institute for Higher Education.

"What's that, Pita?" she asked as she lifted the VIHE course list from my hand. I was amused watching her glance down the list. "What class would interest an eleven year old?" I thought.

"I want to take this class." I heard her say as her finger underscored "Overcoming Material Desires" taught by Jayadvaita Swami, my old friend from the Henry Street temple in Brooklyn. I was surprised, pleased and amused all at once.

"Why do you want to take this class, Amrita?" I queried.

"I don't know, I just do," came the familiar answer typical of that age.

The next morning found us both in Maharaja's class. I was amazed to see my daughter listening to every word. This from a kid who was never fond of attending class and who always had to be 'doing something.' Vṛndavana always has surprises awaiting visiting devotees and I felt there were more to come.

The class was arranged by topic. I quickly scanned down the handout sheet and stopped on "gṛhastha life." My mind reacted. "What's Maharaja going to say about that?"

Sure enough, on day two the subject came up—*sannyasa* at fifty. "We'll give you some leeway—51, not more," Maharaja said with 49% friendly persuasion and 51% dead seriousness.

Here I was, a month away from 50 with my young daughter across the room and my pregnant wife waiting for us back in Jagannatha Puri. I felt uncomfortable and it didn't stop. Maharaja went on for the next half hour—unrelenting. My mind scanned the scriptures to justify my position. 'It's not necessary to take *sannyasa* if one's Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not impeded at home . . . at 50 one should accept either *vanaprastha* or *sannyasa*. . . A *ksetra-sannyasi* lives in the holy places either alone or with his family. . . the first qualification for taking *sannyasa* is that one is fearless, not that one has reached 50 . . .," and on it went.

I felt like speaking up but didn't. Who would take me seriously? I was already a fugitive of the law, the tenets of which were being so forcefully delivered by a respected *sannyasi* in the holiest of *dharmas*. Of course Srila

Prabhupada often wrote that at age 50 one should take *sannyasa* but he also tempered it with other references. In his own life, he accepted *vanaprastha* at age 54 and the renounced order at 63. Shouldn't everyone's case be examined on an individual basis before taking that biggest of steps?

Somehow all my arguments did not pacify my mind. I flashed back to 1981 and remembered my dismay at meeting Acarya Prabakar, Srila Prabhupada's first disciple. He was 50 and holding his 1 year old baby son. Here I am today in the same boat. Not the best position or example.

Back in present time, Maharaja was still on the subject. My case aside, I thought surely someone else will speak up and balance the scales. No one did and the class ended. Amrita came over, reached for my hand and smiled as if nothing had happened.

"How did you like the class?" I asked.

"Nice!" came the reply.

I didn't attend Maharaja's class the next day. Amrita reported that he spoke more on *sannyasa* at 50. Walking through the cool sands of Raman Reti that evening on our way home, I told my daughter I wasn't going to take *sannyasa* at 50, . . . or even 51. She looked up at me and smiled.

Love Grows From Commitment

Nitai Gauranga dasa

I read Kṛṣṇa Bhajana's "Till Death Do Us Part" (Oct. '93) with interest. In all seriousness, I made this vow to my horse last year. She is beautiful, young, well trained and healthy. An Appaloosa with a good attitude. Small, but as fleet as the wind!

You may notice that a lot of her qualities are what men list in their marriage want ads. Also, you may note Tiger Lily is a horse indeed, and not a cow. In defense of horse ownership, I will say only that cars are a poor substitute for horses, as tractors and trucks are poor substitutes for oxen (few of us own tractors while many of us own cars.) An ox cart will not zip you around on passionate errands like your car does. A horse will. And as I trot and lope around the community fixing one cow's fencing, one devotee's raised beds, roof, or another devotee's sweat lodge, etc., I feel our relationship improving daily. She carries me, and I care for her.

But why, then, "Till Death Do Us Part?" Why such a serious vow? Well, a

horse is a *jiva*, and not a soul-less machine like a car. There is so much reciprocation through the day between us as we serve Vaisnavas . . . so much time clip-clopping through nature with only bhajana or bird song to hear, Tiger Lily slowly learning to read my mind and I hers; it is not something that could be honorably terminated with a contract of sale.

Because of this commitment of mine, my road stretches straight forward; no cities for us. No long extravagant trips via jet or train. My vow means my mind is also under rein, and I do not entertain scenarios that don't accommodate Tiger Lily's needs. As I daily tend her and control my mind, our love grows.

Funny, I have commitments to my children, my horse, my dog. Commitments to Sri Krsna too. Every day I serve them, my love tangibly grows. All of us. Love is where you find it. It grows from commitment.

As I write this, it's 5:22 A.M. I've just come in from watering the horses, gazing at the stars, singing "*Jaya Jaya Madhava Daitay*." I'm thinking how last night I read "Devastating Forest Fire in Vrndavana" to a sick child. In that chapter it is mentioned that the Vrndavana herd contained cows, goats, and buffalo. And this brings to mind the end of the *Mahabharata*, wherein Maharaja Yudhisthira refuses to board the celestial airplane without his dog, passing yet another test of Dharma.

Whatever animal, child, spouse we have been given—let's not be so falsely detached! Let's put this short life in perspective and do our duty to Krsna with them at our side. When this body dies, then liberty is ours. Do not be afraid to truly vow, "Till Death Do Us Part."

What is Wrong With Submission

Maha Laksmi dasi
Badger, CA

I don't think that it is a misunderstanding that as I read through issue after issue, I sense a thread of discontentment amongst some Matajis with the attitude of submission. Perhaps some feel that it has been overdone, but submission is a Vaisnava decoration, whether it be ornamenting a man or woman.

In *Bhagavad-gita*, 4:34, Krsna says: *tad viddhi pranipatena, pariprasnena sevaya/ upadeksyanti te jnanam, jnaninas tattva darsinah*.

"Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render

service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.

In the purport, Prabhupada brings up five times, submission to a bona fide spiritual master is the key to success in spiritual life.

In volume six of *Priti-laksanam*, I especially question Sita dasi's statement, "Neither do I hope that the only other alternative is to trail sheepishly behind the so-called 'submissive' women who are silently smoldering within."

I am not advocating that injustices are acceptable. But I am saying that if a woman is humbly and submissively accepting an opportunity to serve *guru* and Krsna, and she is tolerating varying degrees of insults and offenses, committed knowingly or unknowingly, this is her glory. It is not that she has to be setting aside her natural shyness and etiquette and let the offenders, be they men or women, know that she is "smoldering within." Krsna in the heart is the one whom we must be most conscious to please. Hence, if someone on the mundane plane is not acknowledging our devotional intent, we must turn to the Lord in the heart and acknowledge His acceptance of our service. That is really what it's all about, isn't it? Perhaps it is recommended that if "you please the temple authority then you are pleasing Krsna." That's OK—but it doesn't stop there. The practice of all our *sadhana* activities is to free our heart from envy so we can take pleasure in pleasing Krsna. So we must be intelligent enough to not be discouraged by another soul's inability to appreciate us.

In my life, out here in Badger, CA., I am a little spoiled in that I am able to live in a devotee community, raise my five children with my husband in a devotional atmosphere, and not have to deal anymore with temple presidents. The community is making a temple facility and we have a smaller facility which is in a private home where magnificent deities of Jagannatha, Subhadra and Baladeva are worshiped; but it is all run as a community.

However, I did live in Boston, Phil., and N.Y. from age 14 to 20, so I am familiar with the occasional bouts of loneliness and frustration temple life affords, along with all the nectar. I consider it my great good fortune that, during that time, I took it on myself to memorize all the English translations in the *Bhagavad-gita*, thus strengthening my intelligence to deal with life in a devotional way. I mention this only

because I humbly wish to offer any personal strength and association that I can, on a pen-pal basis, to anyone who feels they need a friend. This is something I wish to do to keep myself enlivened in preaching (I distributed Prabhupada's books daily for 5 years.)

I would like to close in thanking Sita d. d. for sharing her realizations and taking the time and energy to express her feelings.

My address is Maha Laksmi Dasi, P.O. Box 274, Badger, CA. 93603. I have been endeavoring to serve Srila Prabhupada for 21 years, 14 as a *grhastha*. My husband is Ramacandra dasa, who incidentally is a black-bodied devotee. (The experience of being married to him, I feel, gives me a lot of insight into the struggles of other dark-skinned devotees.) Hare Krsna.

Assistance Through Psychology

Devi dasi

Manhattan Beach, CA

Regarding Jayadvaita Maharaja's remarks about Dr. Peck and his false assumptions about the mind and spirit, I have intensively studied psychology for the past 6 years and I, too, find his ideas very difficult to read. However, there are theories and techniques within the field that are quite compatible with Vaisnava teachings.

In my humble opinion, psychology serves a different function than the *Bhagavad-gita*. We already have our *a priori* understanding of the world around us. However, what the denizens of the Vedic age understood about psychology, human development, and relationships is sadly lacking in our present society! What to speak of differences in culture and socialization. In past ages, men and women lived with their families-of-origin until they were married; and then there were village elders to facilitate the transition for struggling newlyweds. Advice was based on Vedic teachings passed down through the generations, and years of experience with marriage and children. Men usually worked in the family business with a clear understanding, from an early age, who they would be and what they would do. Youth was for *brahmacarya*, adulthood, for *grhastha*, and old age was for *varnaprastha* and *sannyasa*. Even then, in many instances, when a man took *sannyasa*, he would gradually wean himself of familial attachment by living nearby and receiving alms from his local village.

In contemporary western society, it is assumed that humans have basic physical needs that must be met for

survival; oxygen, amino acids, vitamins, and minerals; and when insufficient nutriment exists, pathology arises. However, our culture creates an atmosphere in which it is difficult to acknowledge fundamental emotional needs, which if left unmet, also result in a failure to thrive. Just as amino acids are the building blocks of proteins that provide physiological regulation, empathic human responses required for emotional development promote the structure of the self which provides psychological regulation. The most global and enduring requirement is the need to be recognized and understood by others as an individual. This calls for responses that represent approval, confirmation, protection, soothing, and belonging. Heinz Kohut wrote of healthy self development as happening within a system of three interactive domains: possession of ambitions, utilization of talents, and affiliation with others.

We are embedded in a culture where it is not unusual, at a very young age, to move far from one's family-of-origin; to live in a community of neighbors with different values and family traditions; to decide from unlimited choices what to do for a living; and then to find a partner, based on who-knows-what to spend some time with until one or both tire of each other. There are no village elders or extended kinship system to help provide stability, negotiate a marriage, raise the children, or give support and validation for who we are. Almost daily we hear news of women's increased participation in the labor force; rampant divorce rates; and fathers being awarded custody of their minor children. We are told of highly educated women being trained to do what had previously been exclusively man's work, moving into positions of leadership and authority. The boundaries between female and male role behavior, once fairly clear, are now blurred, and new norms for behavior are gradually emerging.

The traditional arrangements provided structure and a sense of order. They also limited options and imposed constraints on what was considered possible. In the tradition of Lord Caitanya, the new norms promise more freedom and open opportunities for growth. They also close down pathways to personal identity, and are experienced, at least in part, as a loss. During this current period of transition, anxiety is high and ambivalence and conflict are inevitable as we all question who we are and what we should be

doing. This is where psychology can be of assistance: helping individuals to heal the wounds from the past and begin to understand where to direct their energies and talents in this topsy-turvy age of Kali. In some ways, it can serve the function of the village elders, and in others, it can facilitate the creation of a new order. We can learn to communicate more effectively with others; assess who will be successful college students, business executives, and the like. We can begin to understand how to prevent delinquency and self-defeating behavior, as well as how to provide conditions in a group which will be followed by increased productivity, originality, and morale. We can also learn how to establish conditions of leadership which will be followed by positive personality development in its followers. Salvador Minuchin, a family systems theorist, states that: "the unquestioned authority that once characterized the patriarchal model of parenting has faded, to be replaced by a concept of flexible, rational authority."

We have a long history of this type of leadership within our line. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura wrote: "The student is to read the facts with a view to create, and not with the object of fruitless retention. Students, like satellites, should reflect whatever light they receive from authors and not imprison the facts and thoughts just as the Magistrates imprison the convicts in the jail! Thought is progressive. The author's thought must have progress in the reader in the shape of correction or development." "While we do not pose ourselves as being capable of 'correction or development' of the thoughts of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, we pray that he will bless our attempt to present his thoughts in a way that may be more suitable for the readers of the present day."

Peck's Not That Bad

Kundali dasa

Vrindavana, India

There are a lot of points I would like to address in my letter, but time and space will not allow, so I will limit my response to Jayadvaita Swami's article which criticizes Scott Peck's book. The book he is knocking is one of those rare achievements of a nondevotee where we may learn something that is of practical use in our mission of personal development and growth, which is undeniably part of our pursuit of Krsna consciousness. What is the difficulty to learn about some of the tools for doing so from a person experienced in his

field in a well articulated book such as *The Road Less Traveled*?

Maharaja points out that Peck uses language in a different way than we do, thus attempting to undermine the basic assumptions of the author, discredit the entire book and thereby discourage devotees from reading the book. But I have benefited from reading this book and I find that many devotees will benefit from this book. Jayadvaita Maharaja may say that all we need is devotional service, but over the years it is so abundantly clear that so many of us are not mentally healthy and responsible individuals. We bring a lot of excess mental baggage to the process and keep that baggage for a long, long time. So many devotees lack integrity. From the topmost circles all the way down to the ranks. This has a negative effect on the integrity of the whole society. At this stage of the game to deny this is much like the rabbit covering his eyes when cornered by the fox.

And the varieties of dysfunctional symptoms—lack of discipline, unrelenting oneupmanship, etc., keeps us perpetually in the mode of passion. This in turn prevents us, individually and as a group, from taking the best advantage of the process. So many devotees are insecure persons, for example. If they would get a grip on these things there would be a lot less petty, yet irksome problems from our managers, husbands, fathers, leaders, etc. A lot less problems from them and a lot less problems for them as well. In this connection, many illuminating points are brought out in Peck's book. Why not take the gems out of the stool?

We may think it a great sign of devotion to do everything that is not written by Rupa Gosvami or Srila Prabhupada and use our intelligence to negate all other comers. But isn't it a better use of intelligence to wean out the things of value and throw out the chaff? It is taxing to discriminate, but it is our responsibility to do so if we desire to be the head of the social body. Sure it is simpler to categorically throw out the whole package, but in this case simpler is not necessarily more Krsna conscious. It is false renunciation. To incorporate those things useful for Krsna consciousness is real renunciation. If our movement would function on a wholesome platform of dealings, then I say, "Yes, books like the *Road Less Traveled* would be unnecessary for us. *Priti-laksanam* is all we need." But from reading *Priti-laksanam* I think it is clear that we need to learn the art of taking

responsibility for our lives and Scott Peck can set one moving in that direction.

I wish Jayadvaita Maharaja would have told us how to use Peck in Krsna consciousness, how to see beyond his jargon and cull out the useful parts. That developing and expressing love takes work is a Krsna conscious point and it is one of the major, major points Peck makes. Too true. Romantic love is a myth. But hundreds of devotees—initiated, chanting Hare Krsna, preaching Krsna consciousness—are still chasing the myth of romantic love. And not getting it and getting fried with spiritual life, the universe, and everything. It explains the unrelenting divorce rate and broken family rate in ISKCON with unerring accuracy.

And isn't it a fact that love is symptomized by service (work) and that in *sadhana-bhakti* we are really doing nothing but working toward this awakening of love in the ultimate sense—for the spiritual master, for Krsna, and for each other?

Government Sponsored Asramas, The Best Revenge

Dennis Archer
San Pedro, CA

Picture this: Prisons turned into government funded *asramas*. How would the staff ever explain all the happy inmates?

Remember, the world is itself a prison; without *sat-cit-ananda* we are all lost into the endless cycle of births and deaths.

We in prison must turn this time into spiritual advancement time. We are not responsible for certain mundane pursuits such as working for a living, because such things are provided. Our energies can be directed elsewhere.

Granted, prison is not the best place to seek solitude, privacy will not be found easily there, and strong illusion is difficult to fight. Millions may not even consider how to begin to do so. By focusing on Krsna however, and by resisting material thoughts that try to cloud our minds, we can overcome these obstacles. You see, we know the golden secret: chanting, chanting, and more chanting.

Let them hold our material bodies in bondage, but we will never give up our minds or souls. Those belong to Krsna, and no one can take them from Him.

So unite, brothers. Ecstatic *kirtanas* and chanting are our weapons. Let us chant away our chains and leave this illusory world behind.

The Role of the Feminine

Bernard (Bud) Konowitz
Charlotte, North Carolina

I just received issue #8 and was somewhat disappointed by the anonymous individual who wrote the column titled "In My Opinion." What truly got to me was the comment: "Is this a lesbian-run paper?" In my personal opinion this type of mentality is almost pure fanaticism. *Priti-laksanam* is a great resource, and I for one would like to take this time to speak in defense of this most worthy publication, and on the topic of the role of the feminine.

I think the Anonymous should wake up and smell the lotus blossom! As for women being less intelligent than men, let me make a blunt statement from the work-place. I have held positions where I have had both men and women working in departments that I had managed. When the time for employee evaluation arrived I noticed that women excelled with reference to problem-solving, customer relations, and so on. At one company I was requested to name an individual who would be trained as my assistant. After reviewing all of the employee files, three candidates out of eight in my department were listed, all were women. As a matter of fact more and more women are gaining positions of high rank in the business world.

Now for women in religion. This area is with reference to the *sanatana-dharma* as a whole. In case Anonymous does not realize it, ISKCON is a member of the *sanatana-dharma*. No women Guru's, where has this individual been? There is a large religious order based in upstate New York called SYDA. The presiding Sat Guru of this organization is a woman. This particular Sat Guru is a Kashmir Saivite which is one of the six schools of Saivism. I should also add that there are members of the "renounced order" who are women. I also highly recommend that Anonymous study the Sakti sect. So as one can see, Anonymous is quite wrong when he states that there "are no women Guru's."

If there is one thing I wish to get through to Anonymous it is the term *sanatana-dharma*, *sanatana-dharma*, *sanatana-dharma*! A member of our faith, regardless of sect, does not pass judgment on another. It is unfortunate, but I see Indians who smoke or drink beer. When these individuals see me they get this look of guilt on their faces. I do not however criticize such persons. There is only one judge and that is

Godhead. I most certainly do not think I am Godhead. This philosophy holds true of one's choice of sexuality. If a person is a lesbian or homosexual who am I to criticize? We are not God and should not try to elevate ourselves to such a status.

As for *Priti-laksanam* having GBC approval, that is not the issue. The issue is, does *Priti-laksanam* have the support of devotees and the answer is yes. If this publication benefits the devotees of ISKCON it benefits ISKCON as a whole. As for *Priti-laksanam* being a "lesbian-run paper" the answer simply is no. *Priti-laksanam* is pointing out the fact that women are not meant to be abused in marital or religious relations. In short, *Priti-laksanam* is upsetting certain individuals who must face the fact that they are not as advanced as they think themselves to be.

On another note, there is a major festival called Navaratri. This is "nine nights of The Goddess." Here in Charlotte at The Hindu Center, both Vaisnava and Saivite members of the Sanatana Dharma attend this rich and beautiful festival. The power of the feminine is considered to be Supreme to many members of the *sanatana-dharma*.

In my personal opinion women are not inferior, rather they are told that they are, and if you tell someone this long enough then you erode their self dignity and this is without a doubt the most shameful act any person can perform. This is a great publication, keep up the great work!

Simply Love Krsna
Gauranga dasa
Vancouver, Canada

The following are some thoughts and realizations as I pursue personal growth and Krsna consciousness. Several devotees have encouraged me to write them down. I am feeling inspired to write and communicate with sincere seekers of the truth. It is really up to us to find the means and association that will make that vision and process of being Krsna conscious, a reality of love and bliss and not a process of fear, guilt, shame or abuse either at the giving or receiving end.

The soul along with the higher forces of the universe (*daiva-netrena*) chooses one's parents prior to coming into this world, for the reasons of both personal growth and fulfilling a special purpose (the reason why we came here), our purpose in life. Sure we have an understanding, by the grace of Srila Prabhupada, that the goal is to serve

and love Radha and Kṛṣṇa. But what is it that we can do in this world for Their pleasure and at the same time have a real sense of being personally fulfilled? Prabhupada gave us a clue, by using whatever talents and abilities we have and somehow or other connect it with serving Kṛṣṇa either directly or indirectly. The leaders of the society were meant to facilitate us in achieving just that. But at times, instead of lovingly facilitating souls who came to Kṛṣṇa in trying to help them find or develop their individual purpose, it was in part, replaced by control, manipulation and abuse by either some sincere dysfunctional aspiring devotees or persons who were materially motivated dysfunctional aspiring devotees. In the end only chaos could prevail. In using the word, dysfunctional devotee, I mean those souls who came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and had not yet balanced out their psychological conditioning. It is not a negative or condescending term. And some have more of a dysfunctional personality than others. And when one is not aware or is not trying to correct their dysfunctional nature, one either leads a personal hard life or can either subtly or grossly abuse others on many levels. This applies to everyone.

But the way I see it, is that Kṛṣṇa is giving us another opportunity to look at ourselves. Are we still giving our power away to others? In other words, are we allowing others to make decisions in our life for us? Or are we, 100%, making our own choices and decisions? Sure we can listen and solicit advice from others, if we so desire. But the ultimate decisions should always be our own? Are we not taking responsibility for our own personal growth? If we don't then we are giving our power away. And what usually happens is that we end up blaming others when things go wrong or are different than we expected. Don't blame others. We should instead take back our power and be responsible. Then we have nobody to blame, since it was our decision. You should not blame yourself either but accept the fact that at the time, you did the best you could have. Learn from the experience and grow from it. By blaming others we give away our power to blame. It doesn't resolve anything or help anybody. We simply allow ourselves to be vulnerable to the control and manipulation of other individuals or groups.

The Vaisnava guru is meant to be a representative of Kṛṣṇa, a guide, a facilitator, a friend to all living beings to

help the conditioned souls become empowered so that they have the opportunity to become fully self-realized Kṛṣṇa conscious beings. A person who manipulates, controls, exploits or abuse any other living being on any level is definitely not a guru and not even a well balanced person, even on a material level. A person who takes the position of guru is not suppose to be our crutch or codependent person. Nor should he act in any way so that leads us into a co-dependent situation with himself or anyone else. He is there to lovingly assist, guide, teach us how to become a spiritual loving empowered self-realized individual who is experiencing bliss by engaging in loving devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

My humble request is, that all the devotees within and outside the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement should make an effort to examine whether or not they are empowered or are in the process of empowering others or manipulating others. For to control, manipulate, exploit or abuse others is a sign of being a dysfunctional person, a psychologically unbalanced individual whether he is a devotee of some sort or not, whether one be in a high spiritual or material standing or not.

Because the soul chooses to be in dysfunctional families for both reasons of growth and purpose, at different times in life, one will seemingly run into a brick wall. At that specific time the soul will have the opportunity to re-exam the goals, beliefs, attitudes and the processes that one follows for self-realization. We may have run into this brick wall when we were living with our parents. We may have came to the conclusion that we could not live with them any longer. So many of us decided that it was time for us to grow as an individual spiritual person. And therefore we left home in search of ourselves and happiness.

The same thing can happen in a large spiritual family. If many members or leaders of this spiritual family are dysfunctional, then it is very likely that one day we may come to a point and say, I'm leaving. This happened to many of us within the Kṛṣṇa conscious society.

But let's look at the positive side of it. This does not in anyway condone the wrong doings that are going on within the institution in the name of spirituality, in the name of surrendering, etc. But realize that Kṛṣṇa is giving us another opportunity to empower ourselves to take back our power that

we may have given away in the false name of surrender. He is giving us an opportunity to become empowered individuals who can make a positive contribution to this world and our own spiritual development. Kṛṣṇa is giving us the opportunity to examine the ways we would like to serve Him. If at any point in your life you feel that you cannot decide what to do next, please listen to the following suggestion and see that there is great truth in it. Just take a moment and with honesty, look deeply within yourself. Ask yourself, what would I really, really like to do for Kṛṣṇa. What is it that I get most excited about and would really like to do for Kṛṣṇa or His devotees, and as long as what you think you would like to do, has integrity and responsibility, then do it. That I firmly believe is the guidance from your higher self. That is what you are meant to be doing, until the next time when you are undecided as to what to do next, follow the same procedure as above. The spirit soul is pleasure seeking (*ananda-mayo 'bhyasat*), by nature. So follow your bliss and then you will be happy. How can you not be? You are doing what most excites you. Anyone can apply this process. And you can apply it to make all of your decisions.

Some of the terminology that I use to express my realizations may sound a little different to some devotees but the essence of becoming spiritually aware and Kṛṣṇa conscious is the same. When Srila Prabhupada was asked by devotees what he wanted us to do, his reply was, "Simply love Kṛṣṇa." I think that says it all. So that is the goal to love and serve Radha and Kṛṣṇa in whatever way possible. And if we can't find the means to serve Kṛṣṇa with others then we can do it by ourselves, but please realize my dear devotees that you are never alone, the whole Gaudiya Vaisnavas and all saintly people are backing you, either visible or invisible to your external eyesight. They are with you, and when you call on them, they will assist you. Just try it, it works like magic.

At present I am attempting to write a book. It will explain what truly can be is a healthy spiritual civilization, a healthy spiritual Vaisnava society, a psychologically balanced individual or Vaisnava, and the beautiful theistic precepts of Gaudiya Vaisnavism and devotion to Radha Kṛṣṇa. For know that there are many levels of spiritual realization and that I believe for me and many others that the Kṛṣṇa conception is the most beautiful spiritual reality.

The book will try to elucidate, that by creating a synergy of being both a balanced psychologically individual and a Vaisnava that one can achieve a blissful existence in this world and eternally. It will also explain the importance of respecting and understanding the feminine principal within society and within ourselves and what happens when it is not. If any devotee would like to share their realizations on any of these matters, I shall be very happy to correspond.

Childless Couples Are Also Glorious Anonymous

We're all hearing these laments from the couples forced to choose to give up their good service 'cause the babies all need shoes

Some childless couples are wise they pointedly serve the Lord they have noneed of offspring in service they're never bored

No, we should not stigmatize them as failures for we see the whole world is their family from distractions they are free

Collaborative Couples they're called they're kind of a new type of pair they thrive in productive service which we now can all admire

Please consider, dear devotees, when you serve as man and wife, there are more ways to please Krsna than a baby-burdened life.

IN RESPONSE TO ARTICLES IN PREVIOUS ISSUES

In Response to: Hare Krsna dasi

Teresa Oregon

Suppose you were in the kitchen discussing the cooking results of a certain preparation, what should it be like and how to achieve it? And someone came in and reproached you for questioning the author of the recipe ... that would be a little strange. But that is what Hare Krsna d.d. did in her response. She hints that it is wrong to question, but Prabhupada recommended intelligent scrutiny. He welcomed sincere questions and did not want blind followers.

A devotee who read her response remarked that she had somehow missed the point of my piece. In any case, she failed to deal with the issues I raised, on my terms. And I am utterly baffled why anyone of either gender would find it necessary or appropriate to insist, as she has done, that women have less spiritual intelligence. (I see no way that it is true or can ever be true. If someone proves to me that Prabhupada really held that women innately and absolutely have less spiritual intelligence, which means less interest and aptitude for serving and surrendering to the Supreme, I will lose interest in ISKCON.)

First Hare Krsna d.d. states that the relevant intelligence is body based, then in the very next sentence she says it is spiritual. (This is the crux of the matter—the contradiction that there can be a spiritual intelligence that is based in the body.) Nowhere does she explain the whys and hows of this putative inferior intelligence. She chastises someone who she says has dared to question Prabhupada, but she doesn't explain or instruct about what she thinks his position on woman's being and "role" is. It is all nebulous and slippery. The hint that being or pretending to be shy and submissive are parts of the process of devotional service is very strange and mysterious. Obviously one sees why and how spiritual consciousness does involve eschewing something like meat-eating.

Since the basic idea of *sanatana-dharma* is you are not your body, it seems contrary to spiritual advancement to stress gender generalities. We should try to attack body consciousness, not reinforce it. And even if it were true, for anyone to explicitly stress the idea of lesser intelligence would be pernicious. This should be obvious. It is widely known that words and thoughts etc., can affect plant growth and behavior, so clearly words about one group of people will create effects and reactions. Sometimes devotees imply a thought pattern that seems remarkably gross, static and materialistic/mechanical; the proper attitudes about what people are and can become should be more fluid and dynamic. To ever say anything implying limiting or clouding one group's spiritual development should be totally taboo, whether or not the subgroup are devotees. The karmic reaction is to immediately limit and cloud one's own consciousness. It would be less harmful to eat meat than to destroy someone's spiritual aptitude.

If someone wants to offer a

rationale for stigmatizing women that is more persuasive than the piece preceding Hare Krsna's, I'm willing to listen, but until persuaded otherwise, I'll believe that writer's explanation that men like to lord it over the women. I'm told that some women defend the status quo of the stigma because they are afraid the men devotees will become disaffected. I think that this implies an unwarranted insult to the men—they aren't devotees just so they can lord it over others; most of them are more sincere and mature than that.

By Krsna's arrangement, I heard Yamuna devi speak the day before the newsletter arrived. She spoke eloquently about how Prabhupada saw beyond form to the spirit soul. I simply don't believe that his mood was to impose rigid and artificial and body based restraints on his western disciples. He took pains to study the mentality of Americans and he accepted a lot of the qualities and guided his disciples to dovetail their tendencies (to be free spirited, passionate and competitive, etc.) in Krsna's service. The idea that an American devotee can somehow leave off being a westerner is very strange. We have to be honest about what we are and try to use it. (And if we had been the type of people to passively conform to the customs of our elders, a hallmark of all traditional cultures, clearly Prabhupada's mission in the West never would have made a dent.) Out of respect for him and his tradition, the devotees adopted some external trappings of Indian things, but to think that one becomes "Vedic" after a few years chanting in a temple is a pathetic and unrealistic fantasy that can sabotage the clear thinking and integrity one needs for the holy war in the heart. Anyway, it would be very simple-minded to think that we really know what Vedic culture is, or that we can embody it. It is wiser to realistically acknowledge our contamination by western consumer culture so that we can be better equipped to deal with our tendencies. For example, ISKCON's divorce rate (someone told me 90%) shows that devotees share the western tendency to trade in one's spouse for a new model when there is trouble. The thought patterns that encourage this are part of the very air we breathe. To deny it or resist bringing this syndrome out of the dark into the light to look at it, will only make it worse or prolong it. If devotees were really embodying or manifesting Vedic culture, their marriages would be stable. We have to focus on the ideal and the real. The

three pieces on marriage were all germane and constructive.

Out of all the pieces on the women's issue, a general picture of possible resolution is emerging. Many devotees feel it is a serious problem and intolerable discrepancy and the way of rectification is becoming clear. Stress the parts of the philosophy that undermine body consciousness, not reinforce it. Realize that almost all the negativities about women in the scriptures reflected the effects of a vastly different social system. Lastly, for men to presently try to stigmatize women would both harm their own spiritual life and also cripple ISKCON.

In Response to: Non-alcoholic Beverages & Women Gurus

Hare Krsna dasi
Brunswick, Maine

Caturatma Prabhu's letter was informative. I think non-alcoholic beverages can have some place as we try to integrate more people into Krsna consciousness. Three couples were married in a beautiful outdoor ceremony at Gitanagari several years ago and the parents of one of the devotees getting married—in the mood of honoring ISKCON's abstinence from alcohol—contributed one of these non-alcoholic beverages for the occasion. It was graciously accepted and offered with the rest of the feast. Thus, the parents were made to feel welcome by the devotees on the occasion of their child's marriage.

So I feel there is a place for this kind of thing, however, I'm not sure how far individual devotees will want to carry it. If our ultimate goal is to transform the world into a self-sufficient *varnasrama* society, products like this could be taking us a step away from the direction we want to go.

A little-acknowledged benefit of our prohibition against intoxicants—including coffee, tea and chocolate—is that it is an act which encourages localized self-sufficiency. In different statements, such as one he made in Mauritius, Prabhupada revealed that the first priority of devotees should be to produce food to meet their own needs first, and only then should they produce something for the market. No group of people can be really peaceful as long as their existence depends totally on the ups and downs of the market economy.

People who work on coffee, tea and cocoa plantations are so exploited they may have difficulty feeding their

own families, what to speak of pursuing spiritual realization. Generally speaking, why should we become karmically entangled in this oppression, especially when Srila Prabhupada has already discouraged it? So this is another kind of test we can apply: Is the consumption of this product going to lead toward the simple living that Srila Prabhupada wanted us to work for? What does it take to make non-alcoholic beverages? If it's a very simple process, perhaps there is no problem. If we can't imagine having someone make these beverages in the context of simple rural villages, then maybe it's something we don't want to encourage in general.

Women Gurus in ISKCON

We have many highly qualified women devotees in ISKCON. There are several to whom I personally feel very indebted. However, I think we need to be careful before we propose that they can initiate disciples. I'm thinking in particular about Srila Prabhupada's instructions in the *Bhagavatam* as he describes Dhruva Maharaja going back to Godhead with his mother: "Dhruva Maharaja's mother, Suniti, was his *patha-pradarsaka-guru*. *Patha-pradarsaka-guru* means the *guru* or spiritual master who shows the way. Such a *guru* is sometimes called a *siksa-guru*. Although Narada Muni was his *diksa-guru* (initiating spiritual master), Suniti, his mother, was the first who gave him instruction on how to achieve the favor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is the duty of the *siksa-guru* or *diksa-guru* to instruct the disciple in the right way, and it depends on the disciple to execute the process. According to sastric injunctions, there is no difference between *siksa-guru* and *diksa-guru*, and generally *siksa-guru* later on becomes the *diksa-guru*. Suniti, however, being a woman, and specifically his mother, could not become Dhruva Maharaja's *diksa-guru*." *Bhag.* 4.12.32 purport

It seems to me that Srila Prabhupada is indicating here that in ISKCON, we will not have women as *diksa-guru*. I would like to hear how others understand this passage. (As an aside, for those who haven't read it for awhile, Prabhupada's purport to the next verse, *Bhag.* 4.12.33, is a moving example of his own personal humility.)

"Near Beer" is Beer Dasaratha-suta dasa

Atlanta, Georgia

It is completely astonishing that devotees of Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha and Krsna would actually have a discussion in the

Priti-laksanam newsletter over the popular worldly food addictions known as "Near Beer," so-called decaffeinated coffee, and other such deplorable items. Even "veggie burgers," although certainly offerable to the Lord as palatable legume patties, have been masquerading as all-beef hamburgers by garnishing with pickles, mustard, (garlic-laden) ketchup, (vinegar-laden) relish, and also onions in some cases. Those who are fond of justifying their pitiful backsliding into mundane materialistic sense-attractions are posing a disgusting example for those who are fond of remaining free of such blatant contaminations. Since all of us are initially trained in the philosophy of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gita*, we are told that to cherish a sense object in the mind is exactly the same as committing the deed. Thus a sin is committed every time you even think about it, and you think about it every time you indulge in these questionable so-called food items. Therefore: Near beer is beer, coffee is coffee, burgers are burgers.

The point is: if you think you are drinking beer (and you do) by drinking so-called Near Beer and similar beverages, then you are actually drinking beer. It doesn't matter *whatsoever* that it only has .05% of alcohol in it. You are actually drinking beer with every ice cold foamy sip. Why don't you just go out and get a six-pack of Budweiser or Miller Lite—the packages and bottles look the same anyway. It's exactly the same sin. Your mind is thinking "beer" as you taste and relish it, so it is exactly the same sin. No difference. No difference whatsoever. Not even the *slightest* difference in any way, shape or form. Besides, such "cereal beverages" are simply rotten—all fermented foods are clearly labeled by Lord Krsna in the *Bhagavad-gita* as being in the mode of ignorance. Find out this verse. Are these *karmi* food addictions something to be proud of?

Likewise, when you drink decaf coffee—you are actually drinking coffee. No doubt about it. Looks like coffee, smells like coffee, tastes like coffee. It is coffee. Our ever well-wisher proudly announces to the world that his students do not drink coffee. Who are you fooling?

Similarly, if a foodstuff looks, smells and tastes like stool (yes I said stool), can you offer it to the Deities merely because the ingredients are vegetarian? Thus, how can you justify dressing up bean and veggie burgers to exactly resemble hamburgers? Just go to MacDonalds and get a real hamburger. There's no difference. They're exactly the same, because you are thinking "hamburger" —you are actually eating meat. We are alarmed at this

deviation, particularly because as you train your devotee children in these *karmi* food standards, they may grow up and simply eat a hamburger at the first opportunity because it looks, smells and tastes just like Mataji's veggie burgers. This may sound a bit wild or paranoid, but it is happening on this very day that you are reading this. It is true and we all know it. Some recipes actually call for cooking techniques that form imitation gristle, and even red liquid that oozes like blood when you squeeze them—I have seen this abominable culinary disgrace offered to ISKCON temple Deities by a Govinda's Restaurant cook; when I was offered the remnants I had to spit it out into the trash can. I couldn't even chew or swallow it due to its striking and shocking resemblance to actual dead flesh. I don't think the Deities thought very highly of the preparation either. All in the name of "preaching"—"So the *karmis* will be attracted" ... as if Srila Prabhupada had not given us wonderful and attractive Vaikuntha foods to nourish and sustain our journey back to home, Back to Godhead. Gimme a samosa!

SPECIAL FEATURE

Iravan Dasa and the Bag Lady

A tale from the days of street distribution

Mathuresa dasa

Alachua, Florida

By ten o'clock the bus stop at the corner of College Avenue and Prince Street was nearly deserted. Rain drifted out of the windy November night, showering through the incandescent domains of street lamps, headlights, and traffic signals, tapping against the corrugated fiberglass roof of the stop shelter.

Iravan dasa stood by the curb just out of the rain, rocking on his heels, waiting for his ride, which was already half an hour late. Since late afternoon he'd been at the bus stop selling *Back to Godhead* magazines to students boarding buses for the airport and train station, going home for Thanksgiving break. They had been a friendly bunch for the most part, willing to talk for a moment with Iravan dasa. Short stout outgoing Iravan dasa with his bright blue jacket, orange dhoti, and cleanly shaven head.

Along about seven, with the vacation flow of passengers still fairly steady, Iravan had been feeling particularly satisfied and at home with the student crowd. He'd been talking with them about *karma*, reincarnation, *mantra* meditation, vegetarianism—whatever might capture their interest in

the few minutes before their busses arrived. He liked the logic and authority of the Krsna consciousness philosophy and he liked to see them like it. After all, didn't the *Bhagavad-gita* say that Krsna consciousness was the "king of education" and the "most confidential form of knowledge"? What more could a student ask for?

Iravan's contentment, however, had been upset by a young man with dark curly hair and wire-rimmed glasses, a graduate student possibly, a handsome, intelligent-looking fellow with a serious expression. He had ignored the BTG Iravan extended to him, ignored the simple come-on Iravan used ("like to see a magazine about spiritual life?"), looked Iravan straight in the eye and said loudly "No, I do not believe that God is a blue cowherd boy," then disappeared aboard a bus, leaving Iravan shaken and embarrassed.

"I shouldn't be embarrassed," Iravan thought. The guy must have met us before and read our books. It's too bad he didn't give me time to speak. He kind of ran away. It takes time to explain and to understand Lord Krsna's spiritual body. That's why I don't walk up to people and say, "Hi. God's a blue boy. Take a magazine." It's true. Krsna is blue. But first things first. If you don't know arithmetic, calculus looks strange. The guy made it sound so silly, and in a loud voice. As if he were accusing me of hiding an irrational feature of the Hare Krsna movement.

Iravan had returned to selling magazines and some who had heard the loud "I don't believe" seemed reluctant to listen to him, to latch on to his talk of spiritual life. But he had kept at it and by 8:30 his two hundred copies of BTG were gone and the crowds had disappeared. Only a few students had been left, waiting to board a last airport bus, and one middle-aged lady, sitting at the end of the bus stop bench. In fact, Iravan had realized, she'd been sitting there the entire evening, while the crowds came and went. He now noticed that her hair and clothes, though clean enough, were a little unkempt, that the shopping bags at her side were worn, and that she was muttering to herself.

With the "I don't believe God is a blue boy" still ringing in his ears, Iravan still wanted a chance to reply to the young man, and knowing he'd most likely never get one, he looked forward to talking with his Godbrother, Visnu dasa, who was to pick him up in about an hour. In the meantime Iravan stood at the curb just out of the rain, chanted

on his beads, and thought to himself.

The bottom line, he reflected, is everyone thinks God, or the absolute truth, is not a person. He, or it, is too big, too all-encompassing, to be personal. Persons are small, limited, temporary, relatively powerless, hopelessly fault-ridden and prejudiced, while the absolute truth must be unlimited, supreme, perfect, impartial, and eternal.

But the *Brahma-samhita* says, Iravan countered to himself, that God, although the origin of all, although the oldest, although perfect and supreme, is yet a person who always appears as a fresh youth. *Adyam puranam purusam nava yauvanam ca*. How could age, which turns us gray, it's true, do likewise to the supreme? And why should perfection and supremacy preclude personality? Personality, the greatest of all assets, cannot be absent in the greatest Himself. The Absolute is a person, and we are persons because we come from Him. Electric light, say, is impersonal energy because its source, the light bulb or the power plant, is impersonal. We, however, are individual, personal energy and therefore our source is personal. Our source is Krsna, the supreme person.

Iravan stepped back from the curb and away from the rain. The bag lady, who had been rummaging through a wire trash basket, looked over at him. In her hand was a crumpled BTG, salvaged from the waste. Iravan had noticed the magazine there earlier, without much alarm. In his experience as a BTG salesman he'd seen that a few were always thrown away on the spot. No more than that, unless he *gave* magazines away, which he'd tried once last summer at City Park. It had been easy to give them away, but dozens had quickly found their way into the park's refuse containers. Free evidently meant worthless, so now Iravan always charged at least a dollar.

Since the bag lady, holding a BTG, was looking at him, since she was now the only one left in the bus stop, and on the outside chance that she was someone to talk to about the Absolute's personality, Iravan nodded to her and called out "Wet night, isn't it?"

The lady looked away, pointedly dropped the BTG back into the trash, and salvaged two soda cans instead, packing them into one of her bags.

Iravan returned to the curb and to his chanting and thinking while the cars and yellow cabs swished by towards the intersection. It's not really, he reasoned to himself, that they object to

the Absolute's being a blue cowherd boy, but that they object to his being a person at all. If He is a person (and He is) then, as the *Bhagavatam* describes, He naturally has not only color (blue), occupation (cowherd), and age (boy), but also name, address, family, education, physique, and all the many other individual attributes, qualities, and characteristics that make a person a person.

Iravan was beginning to feel not only inspired by his philosophical meditation but restless as well, and even irritated—though he knew he shouldn't be—at the loud-mouthed student who had jumped on a bus without stopping to talk. Iravan too began muttering.

"If He's not a blue cowherd boy," he called out softly but firmly after the "don't believe" bus that had driven away in the rain three hours earlier, "then what is He? A purple cabbie? A green policeman? A chartreuse graduate student? You have an age, a color, an occupation, and God has none?"

"Sure God could be other colors like yellow or red or white, and the *Bhagavatam* says he does in fact appear in different-colored incarnations. And He could and does have other occupations and activities besides cowherd boy. As the Supreme He can be or do anything He likes.

"But the Vedic literatures affirm that His original self happens to be a blue cowherd boy. *Isvarah parama krsna . . . sarva karana karanam*. And in any case, for sure and certain, one thing He absolutely cannot be is a non-person. So if you don't believe He's a blue cowherd boy then you tell me, what is His color, age, and occupation?"

Iravan stopped muttering. The bag lady, back at her bench seat, was looking at him again, an eyebrow raised, fingers drumming lightly on her folded arms. Feeling sheepish and jolly at once, Iravan nodded to her and said, "Chant Hare Krsna."

A few minutes later Visnu dasa pulled up in a beige station wagon.

"How was your day?" he said as Iravan jumped in.

"Not bad" said Iravan. "Really good to see you. Sold two hundred magazines. I gotta tell you about this guy I met . . ."

The bag lady, after watching the station wagon drive off down Prince Street, dug out the two soda cans, took them back to the trash container, and exchanged them for the crumpled BTG, which she folded under her arm. Then gathering her bags, she stepped to the

curb, pulled a five-dollar bill from her coat pocket and, waving it above her head, hailed a cab.

PERSONALS

Please send \$4.00 per ad to run in 4 issues. Only ads seeking marriage partnerships will be considered for publication; please word your ad carefully to show intent for marriage. All new ads will have the first few words in bold; ads run previously will not.

15 year devotee lady, 37 years old, employed. Interested in personal growth. Seeks gentleman devotee for mature relationship, wanting to build a family. Child OK. Please reply to my friend C. Jimenez Visado. 10 rue de Chartres 92200 France.

ISKCON Life Member, 30 years old single, college-educated, male, seeking Krsna conscious wife. I have been in the association of devotees for over ten years. I chant regularly. 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.

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

I am seeking Krsna's mercy in finding a suitable wife. I am down to earth, Japanese-American, 5'5", never married, Prabhupada disciple, but not the strict devotee I was in the temple. I chant my 16 rounds and offer my food. I am still trying to be some kind of devotee. For money I would like to set up a small business and pursue a screen and writing career. I have a great interest in films and literature. Contact Jaya Madhava dasa c/o Koval, 10701 Aurora Avenue North #5, Seattle, WA 98133-8813. Tel: 206-365-3527.

8 year old French devotee is looking for a husband for her loving, beautiful mother. She's 36 years old. We like to live not very far from a temple. Mum is a teacher and we live in a nice apartment in the city. We also

like country life. Since 1978 Mum has been so many things: *pujari*, *sankirtana* devotee, BBT worker. We also travel a lot. Please reply to my friend, A. Laboire, 27 Rue de la Goulette, 51100 Reims, France.

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

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

Male devotee, 38, employed, seeking marriage with attractive, healthy female who loves to preach. We're opening a new preaching center near ocean. Astrological compatibility a plus, good communication skills a must. Send photo and information to Gd, P.O. Box 2381, Clearwater, FL 34617.

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

Box 4109, Keaau, HI 96749.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Worthless, wretched, fallen, (but cute) uninitiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada seeks devotee lady for committed relationship with Krsna in the center. Kids OK. I want a partner, not a servant. Am financially stable, spiritually trying. A masseur, writer, marketer, former actor. Send note, picture, and a small container of hing to: S. Aminoff, P.O. Box 341703, Los Angeles, CA. 90034.

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

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

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

Seeking compatible life companion. About me: 41-male, joined ISKCON 1972 (NY City temple), never married, affectionate, max. open minded, within basic rules. Philosophically minded, 3 years in India. Probably a slender Asian, energetic, independent, not too pretty would be best. Send questions and define your acceptable parameter to: Ron Porterfield, 2649 Benvenue Ave #1, Berkeley, CA 94704.

My obeisances. Would-be servant of the devotees, 2nd initiated 1977, male, 38, seeks better-half, late in life. Professional in health field, self-employed, doing well in business, and attached to the attempt to serve Srila Prabhupada, but currently somewhat over-endeavoring and under-associating. I love: Krsna-kirtana, Krsna Book, krsna-prasadam,

the holy *dharmas*, *sankirtana*, and Radha-Krsna's devotees. I have a desire for a Prabhupada-centered home life, perhaps to share and increase these loves. I am far from perfect myself, so don't feel unqualified. Let's work together toward our ideals. Astrological data available. Please write: c/o Hare Krsna dasa, 1115-C Austin Ave., Coquitlam, BC Canada, V3K 3P4, or call: 604-931-8484. Hare Krsna.

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

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ADS

JOKES FOR KRSNA: Tired of complaining? Want a new perspective? Laughter is the best medicine! Heal through humor! I am compiling a collection of humorous stories, jokes, cartoons and anecdotes about devotee life. They may be slightly irreverent but affectionate. They may be about what it's like to be a devotee from the inside, or how we are perceived from the outside. They can be about situations you have experienced in the movement or what it was like "growing up in ISKCON". Your name will appear with your entry. Please specify anonymity if desired. Let's laugh our way back to Godhead! Please send to: Nikunjvasini Krueger, Rt. 2 Box 350 A, Alachua, FL 32615.

Beautiful, hand-made wood puzzles. BBT art (used with permission) and Brijbasi pictures. Low prices. Write Wood Works, P.O. Box 274, Badger, CA 93603 or call Maha Laksmi or Rama (209) 337-2477.

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 "Srila 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

Selling preaching center collection! 3 altars, Deities (up to 25 inches), sets of books, outfits, videos. Too many items to list. Wholesale or will sell as needed. Looking for PC Notebook 486 DX-33 MHZ (will except trade-ins!) Khanjanalocana dasa, 150 Louise Dr. 33, Newport News, VA. 23601, (804) 595-2868 (call after 8pm EST)

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

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

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

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

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

New tapes from Mahatma dasa. *Heart & Soul*, beautifully orchestrated melodies for the *maha-mantra*. *Sikastaka* and other prayers. *Higher Dimensions*, live modern

melodious *kirtanas* with KrsnaFest band. Plus other tapes from Sounds Divine: *Our Only Shelter*; *Your Life Will be Sublime*; *Brahma Samhita: Isopanisad*; all with Mahatma dasa. *The Magic is the Chanting* by KrsnaFest; and *Eternal Bliss* by Lokanatha Swami. Digitally recorded and mastered. \$5.95 each. \$6.95 overseas. Payable to KrsnaFest, 5430 Gurléy Avenue, Dallas, TX 75223. Phone (214) 827-6330.

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

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

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

Krsna conscious prisoner seeks like-minded individuals to correspond with. Please write: Dennis Archer, Fed. Reg. #28083-004, 1299 Seaside Avenue, San Pedro, CA 90731.

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

Chant

Hare Krsna
Hare Krsna
Krsna Krsna
Hare Hare
Hare Rama
Hare Rama
Rama Rama
Hare Hare

and your life
will be sublime.