

Priti-laksanam

A Forum for Vaishnava Discussion

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

Volume 23

In the service of
His Divine Grace

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A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Founder-*Acarya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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Dear Readers,

I would like to begin by thanking everyone for their submissions to this volume (and to future ones), and for the financial support to make it all possible.

As the editor, I see my role as not dominating the agenda—but more or less being the custodian of your exchange of ideas. Still, in that position, I am affected by what is sent in. Perhaps the best way I can explain this is to relate an incident that happened a month or so ago.

We frequently get letters pointing out the deficits of various aspects of official ISKCON, as well as the occasional letter about individuals involved in official ISKCON policy. We ask people to avoid personal, mean attacks. It is our policy to not print personal attacks—but constructive, realistic criticism is healthy and desirable.

I received a letter containing allegations about an ISKCON *sannyasi* guru that were sickening to read. By the time I got to the end of the letter, I discovered that it was signed "Anonymous." I feel—and I'm sure that I can be journalistically supported in this—that it is cowardly to make heavy, criminal accusations and then not stand behind them. I won't print anything that is anonymous. That is a long standing policy. But to continue, that night, after reading the letter, I was pondering all of the various criticism that has been floating around our movement for the last year or so.

Thinking about these things, I somehow

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or other managed to go to sleep, and then around midnight I woke up in a cold sweat. At first I thought I might be coming down with something, but later realized that I had a reaction to what I had been reading and thinking. My great concern is that we run the risk of moving toward, not a culture of Krishna consciousness, but a culture of criticism. After waking up in this state, I tried chanting, hoping to fall back asleep, but was unable to. I was in extreme anxiety for some time and the chanting helped.

It is our daily practice at home to have as part of our morning program a reading from Srila Prabhupada's lectures that have been provided by the Bhaktivedanta Archives. The next morning I read an excerpt from a lecture Srila Prabhupada gave in London, and only after that did I feel reassured that there is a possibility of success, that we can get beyond tearing ourselves apart. I have included that excerpt here. I hope you will gain reassurance from it, as I have.

Also, I would like to add that none of my comments are meant to put a chill or dampening effect on any of your opinions, ideas, or observations that actually are providing a basis for constructive growth for our Krishna conscious society.

Thank you very much, and I give you Srila Prabhupada.

Sarva Satya Dasa

**Srila Prabhupada
Lecture Excerpt
London, July 25, 1976
Courtesy of
Bhaktivedanta Archives**

Prabhupada: Hiranyakasipu was against his son and Kamsa was against Krishna. Sisupala was against Krishna, also. So against Krishna consciousness movement in this age, there will be many, undoubtedly. Therefore, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has given us instruction, *trnad api sunicena*. You should always

expect some obstruction by the demonic party. That is not very astonishing. But still, we have to do our business and be tolerant. Be humble. Don't be agitated. Then your business will suffer. This is Maya's kingdom. The test is always there. Combating is always there, and Maya's party is very strong.

Especially at the present moment, Kali-yuga, the atheistic persons are almost everyone. They have been described as *mandah*. *Mandah sumand-matayo manda-bhagya*. *Manda* means bad, very bad. The general people, all *manda*—short-living, wretched, unfortunate, misguided. So *mandah sumanda-matayo manda-bhagya*. You'll find on the street so many wretched. So this is the position of the Kali-yuga. And they are not living also very many days. Still, they are against Krishna consciousness. They are suffering, but still, they are . . . dog's obstinacy.

So still, we have to do our business. Therefore Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has advised "Be humbler than the grass." We are trampling over the grass; there is no protest. And *trnad api sunicena taror api sahis*. Trees, very tolerant. You cut the tree, it will not protest. So you take fruits, flowers from the tree. Take all advantages and again cut. Just like they are taking last drop of milk from the cow and after exacting everything, then send to the slaughterhouse. So the whole world is engaged in sinful activities. You cannot expect from them any concession for Krishna consciousness. Therefore we have to become humble, tolerant, because real Krishna consciousness means good-bye to this material world, whatever you think that is improvement, advancement.

So Krishna conscious persons are no more interested. They are disgusted because it is full of danger. *Padam padam yad vipadam*. Here everything appears to be very nice, but every step, there is danger. *Samsara-davanala-lidha-loka*.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura's description of this material world as blazing fire. We see big, big cities in America, always in blazing fire. But one who is advanced in Krishna consciousness, they are no more interested. They are interested in back home, back to Godhead.

Just like they are running for the moon planet, for the Mars planet. And where the rascals run, they'll come back. But people are still busy, trying to go here, there. But we are conditioned souls, *baddha-jiva*, bound up by the laws of nature. We cannot surpass, but still, we are thinking we are advancing, we are going forward. So we can go forward, up to the limit of this universe, Brahmaloaka, but *a-brahma-bhuvanal lokah punar avartino 'rjuna*—again you have to come back. You are not free. Those who are free, liberated, so they go beyond this universe. *Paras tasmāt tu bhavo 'nyo 'vyakto 'vyaktat sanatanah, yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama*. So people have no information, no education, no culture. They are put into the darkness and working so hard without knowing what is going to happen next.

So those who by fortune have come in contact of this Krishna consciousness movement, so they are supposed to be intelligent. So try to understand the whole situation, the whole universal position, very minutely, that this material world is very, very, very dangerous for you. Nature's work will go on. So be sober, stick to the principles, read the books carefully, learn more and more about the whole situation, and as far as possible, live conveniently. But if there is inconvenience, don't be discouraged. Never mind if sometimes, occasionally, there is some difficulty. We have got examples of devotees. Haridasa Thakur, Prahlaḍ Maharaja had to face so many difficulties. They didn't care. So God consciousness means you have to face difficulty, but you should not be discour-

aged. There is a verse in this connection. *Tat te 'nukampam susamik-samano bhunjana evatma-krtam vipakam*. When there is difficulty, a devotee thinks, "It is a good fortune that Krishna has given us some difficulty to counteract my previous bad action."

So just like father's property the son gets—there is no law to check it—similarly those who are humbly, tolerantly going on with Krishna consciousness with full determination, for them going back to home, back to Godhead is guaranteed. Nobody can check. If there is some difficulty, you should tolerate and go on with our business.

**ATTN: Angry Mother
San Bernadino, CA, USA
In Response to "Yesterday,
Today, & Tomorrow"**

Please send us your name so that we may print your submission in *Priti-laksanam*.

Thank you very much.
Sarva-satya Dasa

LETTERS & RESPONSES

**Suresvara Dasa
Sandy Ridge, NC, USA**

Many thanks to Rupanuga Prabhu for his historical perspective on ISKCON and the *parampara*. We pray it won't be too much longer before our "*siddhantas*" catch up to a deepening common sense. In the meantime and for all time, all glories to Srila Prabhupada, and thanks again, Rupanuga Prabhu.

**Nanda Gopa Dasa
Alicante, Spain**

Thank you for publishing my letter in Volume 21. Please take good care of me, I am out of work, in a state of depression, and the Laksmi we are sending for our *Priti* sub is from our skin—you know what I mean. This journal, *Priti-*

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laksanam, really keeps us in contact with our big family, with which we have placed all our dreams for a nice society in which it's members are going to be taken care of and work together in relative harmony, and in a certain degree of love and trust.

Keep up the good service.

Adhi Deva Dasa
Wimberly, TX, USA

I want to thank you for printing *Priti-laksanam*. I enjoy the articles, the information, and the user-friendly format. I read letters in your publication from devotees struggling to maintain themselves and their families financially, while carrying out their *sadhana* and preaching activities.

I have some experiences and information that I would like to share. I lived in temples from 1971 until 1983, when I began my odyssey toward economic stability. I did not feel comfortable with the multi-level marketing ventures or the many-faceted forms of the pick that prevailed at that time. I had no credit and few skills, but a lot of optimism and self-discipline that I have Srila Prabhupada to thank for. I didn't leave the financial support of our temples to get rich quick, but to grow rich with experiences and hopefully enrich others with the gifts of Krishna *bhakti*. Before I began my journey, Mukunda Goswami in L.A., introduced me to a very good book entitled, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. This book taught me many lessons, the best of which was to be able to walk in another man or woman's shoes, to see things from their point of view—an invaluable insight in life and in preaching.

What Color is Your Parachute? by Richard Nelson Bolles came to me later as I struggled to find my *varna*. The author helped me analyze my experiences and skills to see where I could fit into the market place.

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I worked first for others, I worked for film companies and manufacturers; I learned how the marketing of these products takes place and where. I learned what the public wanted and how to present things nicely. When enough experience was gathered, Krishna sent me another book to broaden my horizons. This book, entitled *Growing a Business*, by Paul Hawken, inspired me to create a business and gave me the drive to continue to nurture it. Time passed, my odyssey has introduced me to many new faces and experiences that I might not have had otherwise. I feel I have grown as a person and that Srila Prabhupada's teachings found many practical applications. He told us once in Mayapur that you cannot give a hungry man spiritual direction; once fed, he will listen. I see in our society a lot of energy expended to simply maintain our families and our temples; I hope this information will help in the stabilization, balance, and peacefulness of our devotees and communities so that, with a firm foundation of sound ethical spiritual and business practices, we can grow as individuals and as the worldwide spiritual organization our spiritual master so desired.

Who is Being Presumptuous?
Reply to Rupanuga Dasa (Vol. 22)
Trivikrama Swami
Krakow, Poland

Rupanuga Prabhu has stated that I am making "a most presumptuous statement" by implying that Srila Prabhupada has approved of the fact that over 70 of his disciples are presently initiating spiritual masters in ISKCON. I fail to see how this is at all presumptuous. On numerous occasions Srila Prabhupada stated that he wanted all his disciples, "boys and girls," to initiate. Personally, I am of the opinion that all of Srila Prabhupada's disciples currently in good standing preaching in ISKCON, should be automatically open to take disciples.

Then the GBC could get out of the business of giving "warranties." As Srila Prabhupada stated in an important letter to Tusta Krishna on Dec. 2, 1975:

"Keep trained up very rigidly and then you are bonafide guru, and you can accept disciples on the same principle. But as a matter of etiquette, it is the custom that during the lifetime of your spiritual master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation. This is the law of disciplic succession. I want to see all my disciples become bonafide spiritual masters and spread Krishna consciousness very widely, that will make me and Krishna very happy."

The real presumption begins when Rupanuga Prabhu states that Srila Prabhupada "is perfectly able, by his own mercy to accept any sincere follower into our *sampradaya* anytime." Rupanuga Prabhu is forgetting that although Srila Prabhupada is "a transcendental, ever-liberated *nitya-siddha*," he sees himself, and in reality is, a humble, loyal servant of Krishna. As a servant, he is not in a position to change the principles of his master. "*Dharmam tu saksad Bhagavat pranitam . . .*" Only God can create religion. In the *Bhagavata-gita*, Krishna has established the principle "*evam parampara praptam*." He considered this principle so important that He personally came to reestablish it when it appeared to be lost. You are actually insulting Srila Prabhupada by informing us that he has changed Krishna's system and that now he is "connecting new candidates to the *parampara*." In the name of praising him, you are actually offending him.

Your attempt to place Srila Prabhupada above the system that he represents reminds us of the *sannyasis* in New Vrindavana in 1970. They also tried to elevate Srila Prabhupada in an artificial way in the name of praising

him. Because they had failed in their role as proper disciples, they tried to implicate the whole of ISKCON in their guilt by saying that we were all offensive by not recognizing Srila Prabhupada as God. In a similar way you are accusing all of ISKCON of being "counterfeit" and "unauthorized" to justify your own failings. Give up this weakness of heart by cultivating renunciation. Go out and preach vigorously, then you will gather first hand experience of the dynamic of the guru-disciple relationship. Then you will understand that this is the authorized process as Srila Prabhupada explains (SB 8.16.24):

"The guru does not manufacture a new process to instruct the disciple. The disciple receives from the guru an authorized process received by the guru from his guru. This is called the system of disciplic succession (*ivam parampara praptam imam rajarsayo viduh*). This is the bona fide Vedic system of receiving the process of devotional service by which the Supreme Personality of Godhead is pleased. Therefore to approach a bonafide spiritual master is essential. The bonafide spiritual master is he who has received the mercy of his guru, who in turn is bonafide because he has received the mercy of his guru. This is called the *parampara* system. Unless one follows this *parampara* system, the *mantra* one receives will be chanted for no purpose."

Srila Prabhupada's Warranties
Reply to Trivikrama Swami
Rupanuga Dasa
Alachua, FL, USA

The bonafide *diksa* guru in ISKCON would initiate people so they could commit themselves—to what? Most importantly, to help their *diksa* guru carry out the orders of his *diksa* guru, Srila Prabhupada. That's the essential reason for accepting disciples. As Srila Prabhupada made the order of his spiritual master his "life and soul," similarly

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Srila Prabhupada's disciples should do the same for his orders.

Srila Prabhupada is easily distinguished from the other disciples of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta because he fulfilled the orders of the *parampara* coming through Srila Bhaktisiddhanta. The Gaudiya Math was created by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta and flourished until his disappearance in 1936. That Gaudiya Math mission failed, as Srila Prabhupada explained, because his Godbrothers didn't have faith in the words of their spiritual master. Srila Prabhupada had faith in those words, and went on alone to create ISKCON. The Gaudiya Math of today is a counterfeit of the real Gaudiya Math. The counterfeit Gaudiya Math maintains its programs by the strength of ex-ISKCON devotees who themselves lost faith in Srila Prabhupada.

The history of the Hare Krishna Movement includes the continuous struggle to differentiate the real from the counterfeit, both within and without. (In this connection, I never said or will say "all of ISKCON is counterfeit or unauthorized" as Trivikrama Swami misquotes in his reply dated April, 1998. In any case, those devotees who are currently initiating disciples are not "all of ISKCON"). The counterfeit can be detected by comparing it to the real, just as counterfeit money can be distinguished from real money. But one has to know the characteristics of real money, how to detect the watermark, the tiny colored threads, etc. Similarly, a person has to know Srila Prabhupada's real orders so they can recognize counterfeit orders and counterfeit order-givers, those persons in the guise of authority who give substitutes.

As far as Srila Prabhupada's elevated position (see Trivikrama Swami's reply, paragraph four, above), what is the limit of praise Trivikrama Maharaja wants? How big can we make Srila Prabhupada? How many limitations should we place on him? Really, can we ever glorify him

enough? Unfortunately, our powers of linguistic expression are limited. For help in glorifying Srila Prabhupada, we must go to the previous *acharyas*. Krsnadasa Kaviraja explains how Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda "help one meet the two kinds of *bhagavatas*. One of the *bhagavatas* is the great scripture, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and the other is the pure devotee absorbed in the mellows of loving devotion. Through the actions of these two *bhagavatas*, the Lord instills the mellows of transcendental loving service into the heart of a living being, and thus the Lord, in the heart of His devotee, comes under the control of the devotee's love." (*Sri Caitanya-caritamrta*, *Adi-lila*, 1.98-100). Here, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* means the verses and the devotee *bhagavata* is Srila Prabhupada manifested in his purports. No one else can fit this description better than Srila Prabhupada. Let us always bow down to him with all humility.

It is not artificial to state that people can directly associate with Srila Prabhupada by studying and accepting his teachings. This does not mean that Srila Prabhupada is the same as the all-pervasive Supersoul (Lord Paramatma). It is a transcendental fact that Srila Prabhupada's teachings are non-different from Srila Prabhupada, the person. Srila Prabhupada manifested in two forms—the *vapuh* or physical form which disappeared in 1977, and the Prabhupada-*vani* form which is his teachings or orders, manifest now and for the future. The *vani* form (or teachings) is just as real as the *vapuh* form (the physical body). But now people can associate with Srila Prabhupada only in the *vani* form through his books, lectures, recordings, and instructions. This Prabhupada-*vani* association does not require initiation. It is available to anyone, anywhere, any place, any time. Right now, reading or hearing Srila Prabhupada-*vani* is the same transcendental experience as sit-

ting with him in the storefront in 1966 listening to him speak. This requires faith.

Isn't Srila Prabhupada the present *acharya* for the *parampara*? Isn't association with the present *acharya* a connection to the *parampara*? Granted, the *diksa* initiation is a connection to the *parampara*, but it is not the only connection. There are also connections through *siksa* gurus. The *diksa* initiation is supposed to be solidified by further education in Srila Prabhupada's books by the *diksa* guru and others.

Regarding the "law of disciplic succession," Srila Prabhupada wrote Tusta Krsna (quoted by Trivikrama Maharaja), "I want to see all my disciples become bona fide spiritual masters . . ." About a month later (Jan. 6, 1976 letter to GBC), Srila Prabhupada informed the GBC that he wanted a system of examinations, Bhaktisastrī, Bhaktibaibhava, Bhaktivedanta, and Bhaktisarvabhūma: "Anyone wishing to be initiated as a *brahmana* will have to pass the Bhaktisastrī exam and anyone wishing to take *sannyasa* will have to pass the Bhaktibaibhava examination as well. . . . Any *sannyasis* or *brahmanas* already initiated who fail to pass the exams will be considered low class or less qualified." Also he noted, "Factually there are numerous instances when our *sannyasis* and *brahmanas* have fallen down often due to insufficient understanding of the philosophy. . . . The problem is that not all the devotees are carefully studying the books, the result being a fall down, or at least unsteadiness." Seven years earlier, Srila Prabhupada wrote to Hamsadutta (Dec. 1968): "Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples."

The GBC says the Bhaktivedanta title is discretionary (optional). They do not list the examinations under their section for Mandatory Qualifications for

diksa-gurus. (See Chapter 6, p. 60, ISKCON Law Book, GBC Press, 1998). However, Srila Prabhupada wanted a system of examinations, including Bhaktivedanta to differentiate "low-class or less qualified" devotees. It is the GBC who has changed the *parampara* system given by Lord Krishna through His devotee *acharya* Srila Prabhupada.

Right now, anyone can take a position of *brahmana* or *sannyasi* or *diksa* guru without the qualifications Srila Prabhupada mandated. In this way, the current GBC policy is counterfeit.

Trivikrama Maharaja suggests "all of Srila Prabhupada's disciples currently in good standing, preaching in ISKCON, should be automatically open to take disciples. Then the GBC would get out of the business of giving 'warranties.'" He too rejects Srila Prabhupada's examinations.

The best solution is to accept Srila Prabhupada's warranties, the examinations, as the preliminary and mandatory qualification for *diksa* gurus in ISKCON.

Appreciating Prabhupada's ISKCON

**(Final response
to Trivikrama Swami)
Bhakti Ananda Goswami
Coquille, Oregon**

In my letter to Priti-laksanam's editors (excerpted and titled "No More Denial" with my permission in Vol. 19), I clearly differentiated between the ISKCON Srila Prabhupada founded and empowered and the Maya "ISKCON" of the abusive power-mad offenders who have harmed so many souls who came to Krishna and guru for spiritual shelter and service. I never have "vilified" "sincere devotees" or depreciated real spiritual leaders who have struggled for years in very difficult services. I have only profound appreciation for all sincere devotees, what to speak of those leaders like Satsvarupa Maharaja who have sac-

rificed their lives and health for guru and Gauranga's mission. Why would I call sincere workers "hypocrites" and "egomaniacs" posing as religious persons when they are the very people I respect? To the contrary, my entire distinction between the real ISKCON and the Maya ISKCON is that persons in or out of corporate ISKCON who are "sincere workers" embody Srila Prabhupada's mission, and thus constitute the real ISKCON.

I made no personal attack on any of the leaders Trivikrama Swami mentions. My letter addressed some historical problems in general, and offered the specific reformation and new life of a constitution as the means by which ISKCON might be "reborn" and reconciled to devotees who have been harmed and alienated. A constitution can spell out the rights and responsibilities of all devotees, including leaders, and thus protect all devotees as they struggle to give their best in service. The real ISKCON has never performed any abominable activity and has always been rightly situated.

Can I forgive repentant individuals who have abused devotees? Yes. What is the hope for abusive people if they cannot get the mercy of Lord Nityananda Rama? As a Gaudiya Vaishnava, it is my duty to deliver the mercy of Sri Nityananda Rama to all fallen sinful souls, for there is no question of getting the mercy of Sri Chaitanya without first receiving the salvific grace of Nitai-Balarama who is the original master and savior of all devotees.

I don't have some "different idea" than Trivikrama Swami. Those who have abused authority and are penitent are now rightly situated and should be forgiven and encouraged in their service. Penitent devotees should cooperate with other sincere workers to bury the old defunct proud impostor so-called ISKCON. By this I mean exactly what Trivikrama Swami says when he talks

about forgiveness and putting "aside our personal differences" to cooperate in changing the world in a significant manner. I said (previously) that if ISKCON did not do this, it would make itself irrelevant to Mahaprabhu's mission—that its divine mandate to lead would pass onto whoever else was more able to cooperate for that end.

Denial of problems only impedes growth. My words should never have been taken as an attack on the real ISKCON or on sincere devotees, or even abusers who have now repented. Rather, in the inclusive spirit of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, I want to see corporate ISKCON reformed, renewed, and revived through an inclusion of sincere devotees who desire to cooperate in Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai's *sankirtana* movement—devotees who may not at present be embraced by corporate ISKCON due to its sometimes exclusivistic non-cooperating attitude. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's mood was so magnanimous. Srila Prabhupada carried on in this same mood, reaching out to all devotees of Godhead, showing all respect to others. He lamented the non-cooperation of his own godbrothers to carry on the mission of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Maharaja. ISKCON must set the example for inclusive cooperation. My purpose is to challenge all sincere workers to reach out to each other in a spirit of mutual repentance and forgiveness to cooperate in an inclusive spirit which does not confuse the structure of an institution with the persons who occupy positions in that institutional structure, or with the spirit that animates the institution/body.

Corporate ISKCON is an institution as Trivikrama Swami has said. Its body/structure can be continually reborn, renewed, and re-conformed to the spirit of Srila Prabhupada, who brought it into being. The structure can be perfected continually. Persons in positions—all

positions within the structure—can change as they mature or as they back slide. That is the way of all living bodies. Guru and Gauranga animate the Hare Krishna Movement, which cannot be contained by the institution of visible corporate ISKCON. Corporate ISKCON—as the flagship of the armada of the holy name—has a divine mandate/leadership role to play in the Hare Krishna Movement.

But exclusivism and offenses to other Vaishnavas and devotees of Godhead disqualifies the offenders from their opportunity to lead a truly non-sectarian mission in the footsteps of Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai. During the *lila* of Gaura-Nitai, even thousands of Muslims and Pureland Buddhists participated in Their *sankirtana* movement. How can ISKCON justify exclusivity now? Gaura-Nitai united other *bhakti* movements. They did not destroy others' faith, but revived and reformed it. Some persons in corporate ISKCON have driven others away by abuse of power and alienation. It is time for today's ISKCON to create a united preaching movement by undoing these offenses of the past.

I call on ISKCON to humble itself before all devotees of Godhead and thus become the true world leader Srila Prabhupada wants to empower. He cannot use a Maya ISKCON—one that is not as humble as a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige and ready to offer all obeisances to others. This real humble ISKCON is the saints' ISKCON, which must serve Godhead's servants in creating that unity for which we all hunger. Mundane pride thrives in elitist exclusivity, but authentic spiritual humility is by nature inclusive and unifying, because people are accepted and appreciated for who they are. Humility makes it possible for us to accept both the truth about ourselves and about others. We see our own faults and deficiencies and

the virtues and giftedness of others. The more humble we are, the more Srila Prabhupada can use us.

This is the general problem I was addressing when I mentioned the World Vaishnava Association and the transcendental competition ISKCON should have with other devotee groups (including the WVA). If all devotee groups strive to be more genuinely humble servants of each other, who will lose? None. All will be winners and the sorrowing of the world will be drowned in an ocean of ever-increasing ecstasy! Humility serves, it does not lord-it-over others, even the wretched. Humility means speaking the truth—revealing our hearts honestly as Trivikrama Swami has done—and being willing to accept the truth when it is given to us. The truth is that my "article" was excerpted by sincere devotees from a much longer personal letter I wrote to them. I was also pouring out my heart and exposing my raw nerves. I only allowed it to be published in *Priti-laksanam* because it is not a "public forum" (as Trivikrama Swami calls it), as noted on page 1 of each issue: "This is an internal publication, not intended for the public."

Priti is meant for revealing our hearts in confidence. If devotees cannot reveal their (sometimes broken) hearts to each other, when and where can they reveal them? I thank Trivikrama Swami for the honesty of his letters and I apologize that I am not a better communicator, and thus my words could be taken by him as "vilifying sincere devotees." If my words were perfect, he could not have misunderstood me. I have spoken the truth imperfectly and thus caused him pain. For this I am very sorry and offer my sincere apology. I say again, there are saints in corporate ISKCON. They embody the spirit of guru and Gauranga and personify authentic humility and service to the servants of Godhead. They have the power to give the whole world love of God. We can only run after them

shouting Krishna! Krishna! Ohe!
Vaishnava Thakuras!

We are simply praying for your mercy!

**In Response to
Trivikrama Swami
Radhanatha Dasa
LaJolla, CA, USA**

Thank you, Trivikrama Swami, for responding to *Priti-laksanam*. More GBC members should respond and reveal their minds in confidence. I remember a letter you wrote several years ago. It said that you didn't want to join the GBC because it might ruin your effectiveness in helping ISKCON fix its problems. After reading your response to Bhakti Ananda Goswami (Vol. 20), I see a definite change in your attitude since you joined the GBC. Just see the power of association.

Bhakti Ananda Goswami had trouble more than once with the *gurukula* system. After the first time, the administration apologized and asked for another chance. He returned his children to *gurukula* and again they suffered. Your idea was that it was his fault because he trusted the *gurukula* system. When I was a teenager, the camp I went to was closed because two children drowned. Your idea was that it was the parents' fault for sending the children there to begin with. So who is in denial, Maharaja? In fact, the money that the GBC vowed to collect to help those who were abused in *gurukula* is still short of the vows. How responsible has the GBC been in helping these *gurukula* children who are now adults?

Other organizations have been sued many times for the abuse their children underwent. The great love of Krishna and Prabhupada is the only reason ISKCON hasn't been bombarded with lawsuits. But if someone does try to sue us, you can represent the GBC and tell the judge that it was the parents' fault for sending their children to the *gurukula* in the first place.

10 *Priti-laksanam*

**Hare Krishna Directory
& Resource Guide
Langaganesa Dasa
Dallas, TX, USA**

To glorify the devotees requires that you are aware of their activities—that is to say, without having a list of names, addresses, phone and other contact numbers, without knowing their activities, personal interests, and long-term goals, who, what, where, or how do we glorify or encourage one another? How do you participate in the “six loving exchanges between devotees” if you don't have any information about them?

In this Kali-yuga, Srila Prabhupada warned us that neglecting the association of devotees is a “subtle trick of Maya” through which we fall into a “comfortable feeling” of independent capability. “Therefore,” he chastised us, “you are not afraid enough of Maya!”

Because of the dilemma of this mindset, we are at a disadvantage, despite our Krishna conscious exposure. If, by circumstance, we are “discovering” our precipitous position to be “hopeless,” we have lost everything already! However, if we can leave a “marker” along the path we have taken, it is possible to be rescued when lost.

Here are some ideas and presumptions about the *Hare Krishna Directory & Resource Guide*: 1. ALL the devotees will be listed. Not true! Many prefer to be “inaccessible” to the general mass of devotees [or simply don't know about the project]. Srila Prabhupada recommended we accept our position as that of aspiring devotee, so we can properly cultivate our devotional creeper and develop the humility necessary to glorify our god-brothers and sisters as truly successful devotees of Krishna. This requires association. 2. The devotees who are listed in the Directory should be accepted as pioneers in Lord Chaitanya's 10,000-year mission. This is because they are taking His mission seriously enough to partici-

pate, and I want their association. 3. If personal data is published about my “interests,” I will be exploited by countless hooligans. Not true! The people who used the first Directory were seeking like-minded devotees to network with in their services. Without some kind of open forum listing individuals' interests, how do you identify who is of like mind for you to associate with?

With these things in mind, I pray to Lord Chaitanya for His mercy and patiently await His associates listed in the upcoming *Hare Krishna Directory & Resource Guide*, for it is in their hands that my future lies.

I pray for Krishna's blessings upon the publishers to clear the path to His devotees and therefore, to Him.

**Response to Langaganesa Dasa
Kunti Dasi
Alachua, FL, USA**

Thank you, Langaganesa Prabhu, for personalizing one of the benefits of having a Directory of devotees that indexes their interests, activities, and location. Thanks also for the encouragement to get the long-awaited and embarrassingly late book out of my computer and into your hands. We offer to you and everyone else who is waiting for this book our most humble apologies for it taking so long.

What's the problem? First of all, the production of this second edition of the *Hare Krishna Directory & Resource Guide* was not well organized nor followed through on properly. The person who did most of the work on the first one (and did a good job) basically dropped the project with it less than half done and turned over only a fraction of the funds collected for it. This left our already stretched office staff with more work than they can handle and without the funds to get it done.

The Directory naturally came about out of the functioning of the *Hare Krishna*

World newspaper office (formerly called *ISKCON World Review*). Every day, someone calls us for someone else's phone number, or address, or “How do I get this?” or “Who do I contact to find out about that?” The newspaper has collected so much information about our movement over the years, we naturally concluded that we should make it available in a directory that includes personal listings, as well as temples and projects, with a guide to resources our members need and desire. It worked. The first book was a success—it helped devotees as intended and it even paid for itself.

It has been suggested that in the meanwhile we could post the listings on the internet. This is a good idea to consider, as long as the people who have given us their personal listings don't mind. Would anyone care to offer feedback on that?

Besides the newspaper, this office produces *Priti-laksanam* and an annual community Srila Prabhupada Vyasa-puja book, plus trains work-study students (youth and welfare mothers), manages databases and mailings for various centers, collects and maintains an ISKCON archive, and does other services for devotee businesses and projects—all out of a small office in our home with two part-time paid staff. My husband, Sarva-satya dasa (a disabled veteran), and myself volunteer our time and use our personal credit to invest in necessary equipment, software, and supplies to cover those things that there just isn't capital to pay for. This has left us deeply in debt. We have been looking into getting a second mortgage and consolidating our loans, but we feel like we have already been pushed about as far as we can go financially and physically in supporting these wonderful endeavors.

So we are looking at the whole matter as a corporate organizational challenge and are finally getting our tax-exemp-

Priti-laksanam 11

tion application filed so that we can apply for grants to get into a real office and hire full time staff to do all the things we need to get done better and more efficiently. In the meanwhile, we have collected for the Directory hundreds of personal listings and a lot of ads and resources (all last updated one year ago). All of it has been edited and much has been typeset. But where do we get the \$5,000 to print it? Should we use our last bit of available credit? What if the car breaks down or the roof leaks? Why are devotee projects like this always poor? Are we bad managers? Lazy bums?

We feel so badly about asking for peoples' patience eternally on this Directory, and have refunded any advertisers' and book purchasers' money who have requested us to do so.

I am looking for suggestions on how we can raise the funds to get the Directory finally done, printed, and mailed, and pay the staff to do the many hours of work remaining on it.

As part of our "Jaya Om" prayers at our home every morning, we pray for the completion of the Directory. This time, someone, I pray with all my heart, please turn us on to the right connection!

HKDRG, Attn: Kunti Dasi

P.O. Box 238, Alachua, FL 32616, USA; 904-462-5054; hkw@iskcon.net

ARTICLES & ESSAYS

Less Than a Bird Nikunjvasini Dasi Alachua, FL, USA

Since the recent scandal of child abuse in our Alachua community [Vaishnava Academy for Boys headmaster and long-time ISKCON educational leader Murlivadaka dasa verbally confessed to allegedly molesting some male students years ago, and has been removed from his positions—Ed.], I have rekindled my interest in the subject. As part of a larger

writing project, I wish to offer some different points of view on this subject in relation to our movement. This is my service in the child protection effort, which has recently developed in our community, as well as in ISKCON worldwide.

In the process of researching, I have become aware of a particular aspect of this phenomenon that I hadn't first considered: the role that women (mothers) play in the scenario of abuse and neglect of children. Ironically, it appears that issues brought up for discussion at the Women's Conference, recently held by the Women's Ministry in L.A., tie in directly with the subject of child protection.

Because I spend a lot of time in my car driving to and from work, I often listen to my favorite nationally syndicated radio talk show host, Dr. Laura Schlesinger. She is famous for her psychological, religious, moralistic, and straight-forward approach to problem solving. On one occasion there was a caller with a complaint about her sister who was more concerned about her own happiness than the safety of her children. The sister was willing to subject her children to abuse by an uncaring, live-in boyfriend. Dr. Schlesinger's comments were so telling. She said, "In every other species on the planet, the mother will fight to the death to protect her young, even a bird will fight to the death to protect her offspring. Apparently this mentality is missing in many human women."

This got me thinking about how abuse happens. It seems that if somehow a woman concludes that her responsibility to protect her child is less important than some other needs or desires she may have, then the child becomes at risk. I believe that when women (and men) surrender their responsibility to directly raise and protect their own children and when they, the children, are

removed from the watchful eye of the parents (sent far away), that is when and how the opportunities for abuse occur.

I found by researching some of the children's (now young adults) own stories and looking at the bigger picture of *gurukula ashram* life, if the parents lived locally there was less chance for abuse and neglect to occur than when parents lived at a distance. An almost certain degree of some form of abuse was present when parents were discouraged from contacting or visiting the child. If a child had a single mom or naive parents, the risk was higher. Most of us were naive about the risk and reality of child abuse and neglect in our movement in the past, so many of our children suffered, especially in the earliest days. It is so important in this situation however, not to merely blame others for the problem, but to assign responsibility to all parties involved. Part of the responsibility rests on the heads of the mothers.

In her eloquent and historical speech at the Women's Conference, Radha Dasi enlightened us about the concepts held in International Law of rights and privileges. She explained how, at a particular time, systematically the rights and privileges of the women of ISKCON were diminished. This brings two questions to mind. One, was this the time of the onset of abuse to our children? And two, could we women have prevented this from happening at that time if we had adamantly protected our children by keeping them by our sides? I suspect that the answer to both of these questions would be yes.

In Jyotirmayi's presentation she pointed out that in the early days of ISKCON there were many wonderful examples of strong women role models for the new devotee women to look up to for guidance and character. She observed how these women were pushed to the background and not allowed advance-

ment within the ranks of ISKCON management. Consequently, returning here to Radha's theme, when a segment of society has no representation in government (GBC), their rights and privileges are diminished. If women's concerns had no representation in ISKCON, correspondingly children's concerns were given little consideration, as well.

This is a wake up call to all of ISKCON, men and women alike. I believe a person has only as much power over one as one gives them. Please, mothers everywhere, find your lost or missing personal power and use it in Krishna's service. Protect your children by injecting your God-given, inner womanly wisdom into Srila Prabhupada's movement. Find your inner strength that may have been hidden or silenced long ago, and uncover it for the benefit of all of society.

As Visaka Dasi did, in her presentation at the conference, look to the very strong women role models in the *Bhagavatam* and the *Mahabharata*, such as Queen Kunti, Gandhari, and Draupadi for inspiration. There are times when men need another point of view to see things clearly and with balance. But before they can hear your voice, you must be able to hear your own inner voice. Devotee women, please gather together and discuss among yourselves how you, as valuable members of society, can regain the rights and privileges needed for the spiritual survival of yourselves and your children. Let us be at least as intelligent as a bird!

Business & Varnashrama From Conversations With Srila Prabhupada, Vol. 9 (Rome 28, 1974) Akhilesvara Dasa Alachua, FL, USA

I hope you find the following a positive contribution to your dialogue on social organization:

Yogecvara: The manager of a large

factory comes to us and says, Well, here is my problem. My workers are striking for higher pay and no one is satisfied So what can I do?

Prabhupada: Yes, you take to Krishna consciousness.

Yogecvara: Well, he wants to know, How can I apply that in my factory?

Prabhupada: You make us in charge of the factory, we shall do it, and see how we can deal. You can do it. We shall introduce immediately *kirtana* and give them *prasadam*. It will be solved. And give them lecture and philosophy. We can take. Let us have the charge. Then see how we can do. Or you follow our instruction. But that you will not. You want to exploit these poor fellows, and you are coming to us for solution. You first of all give up the spirit of exploiting. Then it will be solved. You have come to take our advice how to exploit them.

And give them good *prasadam* and have chanting for one hour. They will be all submissive. Is it not? Will they not agree? At least, they will see that, "We haven't got to spend money for our food at home. We shall get nice food here. Let us chant. What is the harm?" And as soon as he chants, he becomes a gentleman. That's all.

Yogecvara: So because we will have cut down his expenses, he will be satisfied with the pay that he has. We would not have to give him more money.

Prabhupada: They will not take any payment. Just like under me so many Europeans and Americans work daily. I don't pay them a farthing. When they become Krishna conscious, you haven't got to pay anything. But you cannot take also anything. You cannot, you do not expect that I don't have to pay anything, so it is very good profit. No, sir, you cannot take also anything. If I would have taken all the sales produced of the book selling, then you would not work. Because although it is my books, I do not take any profit or any sales proceeds,

therefore you work. Similarly, these rascals, the proprietor of the factories, if they do not take anything, they will also agree not to take anything. Everything belongs to Krishna. Then the solution is there.

Yogecvara: So in other words the workers are unsatisfied because they see that the managers are exploiting them, but if they see the managers are giving the money to Krishna, they will feel satisfied.

Prabhupada: Yes, and they will also give. Krishna becomes the proprietor. Everyone is satisfied.

Dhanajaya: Jaya. This is *varnasharam* institution.

Prabhupada: Yes. This is above *varnasharam*. *Varnasharam* there is give and take, but here there is simply give, no take. That is above *varnasharam*.

Dhanajaya: So the workers are giving to the devotees and the devotees are giving to Krishna.

Prabhupada: Yes. They become devotee, they will give to Krishna. You also become devotees. Not that they become devotee and you exploit them.

I Have a Question
Akhileswara Dasa
Alachua, FL, USA
afn03486@afn.org

A visiting *sannyasi* was giving the class. Not any *sannyasi*. One from the early years, famous for his orthodoxy, articulate indeed, one who commands respect by his appearance. The lecture, scholarly and systematic, was on taking *sannyasa* at 50, we are not this body, and control of the senses. "Any questions?"

No one raises his hand. He waits patiently.

"We are not the body." How many times we've heard it and preached it? While the speaker was elaborating on the subject, a vision from the Bible came to my mind: the dead corpses of the Christians coming to life and ascending

into the sky. And that one of the beautiful Jesus. And Hanoch, and Elie, carried alive into the sky.

Of course, I had a question. I raised my hand.

There can be different intentions in doing so. 1) You know the answer but you want to test the orator. 2) You are inquiring for the welfare of the audience. 3) For challenging. 4) For enlightenment. This last one was my case. I formulated the question simply and respectfully: "The *Vedas* insist on the fact that we are not the body, but how is it that some saints went back with theirs to the spiritual world?"

He is quick to reply, with an unpleasant smile: "Therefore we can be attached to the body!" which prompted one of the *sannyasis* amongst the audience to laugh, followed by others devotees. I felt cheated, or to say less, misunderstood. A few years ago in Mayapur during the festival, I went through the same experience. I was trying to understand the role of a particular language, like Sanskrit or Bengali, in worship, to what extent it was crucial to use them or know them. "Don't worry, exclaimed the devotee on the *vyasasana*, Krishna knows also English." And that was it! Hundreds of devotees burst out laughing.

In this more recent case, the orator went on explaining why we are not the body. Then he conceded that somewhere along that ascension of the body there was a transformation he was not aware of, but kept challenging me. I had to explain myself, which I did not expect, at least in that intimidating manner. It was not too difficult to do so, but I did not want to appear offensive by arguing. "Anyway, it is all part of my purification, I thought, don't try to avoid it when superiors confront you. It is my karma."

"Well, we say that the guru has no material body," I replied. "He is completely spiritual. Srila Prabhupada said in many occasions that actually every-

thing is spiritual; it is our material vision which turns spirit to matter. I had just read about one devotee asking Prabhupada what was the difference between the sound of an automobile horn and the sound of Hare Krishna. None, he said, it was the same sound, transcendental. Just like a flower, the same one when used for sense gratification is material, and when used for Krishna it is spiritual." (*Prabhupada conversation* 13.170)

He is not satisfied and keeps pressing me with an intricate logic. By chance I caught up with its overall meaning. I had another explanation: "From your presentation, it seems that the problem was not the body being spiritual or material, since it is a relative phenomena, but the attachment to it, in other words, not using it for Krishna's service. That's what makes it material."

At that point he let me feel that my queries were founded, but went on and on explaining how the body is horrible. Then devotees began asking questions, all related to mine: "Yudhistira didn't want to enter the other world without his dog; Druva asked for his mother to go with him, etc." Another *sannyasi* wanted to know: "How is it that spiritual masters, *nitya siddhas*, manifest in this world and leave a body at the time of departure from this world?"

I was relieved to see that my question was not awkward for everyone.

The lecturer ended asking if I was satisfied, which I appreciated, but he added: "We should not make arrangements to go to the spiritual world with our body." Note that he began and ended his explanations with a preoccupation which was not mine at all. Or he was doing so, like Srila Prabhupada, seeing the profound motif, a sickness lurked within me. Or, not able to answer, he could not say: "Yes, it is a rather strange phenomena."

A few days later, getting to my regu-

lar reading, Prabhupada writes: "Brahma returned to the spiritual world with his body," and rereading some passages: "I think I have said many times that there is actually no material existence." But aren't the impersonalists saying the same thing? That the material world does not exist, it is all false? And I remembered one of Prabhupada's lectures in BTG during the polemic on the origin of the soul, where he was saying that the material world does not exist, it is like a mirage. In one of the latest BTG's: "What is the difference between spiritual and material? Everything is spiritual. But when something is covered by Maya, it is material. That's all. And what is Maya? Forgetfulness of Krishna." (Sept./Oct. 97). Earth, water, fire, etc., my skin, my voice, are only immaterial, forgetfulness of Krishna. When someone suffers, smiles at me, robs me, it is just an illusion. Nothing is really happening. Now, if these incidents were to happen for Krishna's pleasure, they would be real.

After so many years, I found myself puzzled by this *acintya-bhedabha-tattva*.

Are the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* lectures appropriate for deepening our comprehension? If so, at this one I lost the opportunity. During the assembly of Sukadeva Goswami and Maharaja Pariksit, the audience and the speaker were highly qualified, which allowed such debates. This is an important fact. It is quite amazing that we did not regulate or teach a method for devotees to exchange during these moments. No doubt, questions and answers are an art to learn if we are to master our philosophy or to preach effectively. Right now we don't endure much opposition. But a day will come when scholars and critics will really get on our case and it will be different. They can cause us great damage if we are not prepared.

What about my question?

Report from the GBC Mayapur Meetings Compiled by Premarnava Dasa and Bhagavat Dharma Dasa

As you may have heard, there were some important decisions made at the GBC meetings this year. We include a short overview of what happened.

Taking on board concerns from many devotees, the GBC began a process of questioning some basic assumptions as to its method of executive management.

The meetings this year included the first annual appraisal of members by the GBC deputies. The Executive Committee (EC) was enlarged and empowered with the mandate to further the mission of Srila Prabhupada by facilitating the leadership of ISKCON at the higher levels.

It was agreed that a fundamental principle of this change should be decentralization.

As part of this exercise, we have been asked by the Executive Committee to gather ideas and comments about the needs of devotees and the problems that exist in ISKCON. Imagine, if you will, a global brainstorming session. The executive members want to employ the enormous brainpower, energy, and practical experience of devotees on the front line. Please see below for details of how to take part.

Both of us are looking forward to playing our small part in these developments.

GBC Executive News No. 1, April 1998

Organizing ISKCON Government

The question of making the GBC and the management and leadership of ISKCON more effective has been debated widely for years. The meetings in Mayapur this year, chaired by Madhusevita Dasa from Italy, directly addressed this question.

One important new idea was the introduction of GBC appraisals by the GBC

deputies. The deputies carried out objective appraisals of the work of GBC members, based on Srila Prabhupada's standards. This service was conducted in a mood characterized by Madhusevita Dasa as "respectful and humble, but frank and open."

Perhaps the most important decision that the GBC made this year was to empower an Executive Committee (EC) to facilitate and strengthen the management of the society. The members of the EC are elected for three years at a time, and the GBC reviews the work of the EC at the annual meeting in Mayapur.

The following devotees were elected to the EC: Harikesa Swami as Chairman, Ravindra Svarupa Dasa as First Vice Chairman, Badrinarayana Dasa as Second Vice Chairman, Sesa Dasa, and Akhandadhi Dasa.

The already existing Continental and Divisional Councils are to play an important role in the government of ISKCON. They will deal with critical issues, develop strategies, and provide leadership on a regional level. They were created for the simplification of management on the regional and local level, but in some areas, for various reasons, did not function efficiently.

The EC will ensure that the regional bodies act in the manner for which they were created. The Continental Committees are listed as follows: North America, Europe, India, Australasia and S-E Asia. South America is divided in two Divisional Councils, Northern South America and Southern South America. The EC will facilitate the work of these regional bodies with the help of the GBC deputies and local leaders.

The first task is a worldwide feedback exercise to hear from devotees. The GBC accept that communications between the ISKCON leadership and the rank-and-file devotees needs work.

A small secretariat in Sweden and a communications office in London have

been established. Sesa Dasa has begun to plan how to facilitate the ISKCON ministries to become important educational institutions and thus assist ISKCON to accomplish its goals. The EC is working with the Health Ministry to research the possibility of establishing a global health insurance program, an ISKCON pension program, and old age facilities in the holy *dhamas*.

The EC members do not see themselves as a crisis control center or a problem solving bureau, but as a body to facilitate and empower already existing regional and ministerial entities. Much of the decision making that has before been ineffectively centralized in the GBC body will be returned to the local regions. According to Harikesa Swami, "We are trying to bring the management of the society down into the regions where it belongs and not in the hands of some centralized bureau." The GBC deputies, regional committees, and ministries will all focus on strengthening regional government in ISKCON and empowering devotees to solve problems on a regional and local level.

The EC is primarily concerned with education and the welfare and protection of devotees. The executive members have a great deal of practical experience serving Srila Prabhupada's mission. They intend to help ISKCON to achieve its goals by effective application of Srila Prabhupada's teachings and examples.

The EC is well aware of the many present needs and concerns of the devotees, and is dedicated to addressing these needs as soon as possible. Obviously, as many things have been neglected in the past due to the unfortunate mode of crisis management, it will take some time before everything is done to the full satisfaction of all ISKCON members. The EC humbly requests the devotees to offer it their support and patience while the work of administering and breathing new life into the worldwide organiza-

tional structure is underway. The EC hopes to make a significant difference in the lives of many devotees within its three-year tenure.

We invite you to get involved in this brainstorming, either through COM or to the postal address below. A new conference has been created on COM called The GBC Executive Committee of ISKCON for your responses. Please mark your input "Brainstorm" in the title line, and please try to succinctly state your points. Generally, one can present a point in a cohesive manner within one paragraph. As this is a brainstorming mode, we are looking for topics to address, and not essays on the subjects. If what you have written requires more explanation, we will get back to you for further input.

We will structure all the data we get and analyze it. We will make these results available publicly. This exercise will allow the EC to understand the needs of the devotee community and begin solving the problems that face the movement.

Contact: Brainstorm, The GBC Communications Office, Mayapur House Radlett, WD7 8JX, England; fax: 44-1923-858014. If you have issues you would like to deal with more personally or confidentially, please write to Bhagavat Dharma dasa at the English address above or bhagavat.dharma.mg@com.bbt.se or bhagavat@netcomuk.co.uk

We have available all GBC minutes from 1975 to 1998, and all position papers issued in recent years. We are going to build a library of all public GBC documents, including minutes and position papers. An online library will grow in three places: on COM in the file area of the conference "The GBC Executive Committee of ISKCON," and on the FTP site on the internet at ftp.bbt.se. Look for the sub-directory called "GBC."

There is already a great deal of information at the GBC site run by

Vipramukhya Swami. We will be working with him to put new information up in the next few months. (<http://www.swami.simplenet.com/gbc/products.htm>)

Net address of the conference - gbcec@com.bbt.se

For hard copies, by post or fax, contact Bhagavat Dharma at the GBC Communications Office. We may make a small charge for copying and posting.

Women in ISKCON in Srila Prabhupada's Time Part Two (continued from Vol. 22)

Jyotirmayi Dasi

Fax (in France): 33-04-67-31-34-85

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Stories To Remember

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Many of the changes brought in the movement, whether concerning the women or other vital elements in ISKCON, have done great damage to the beauty and the greatness of Srila Prabhupada's contribution to the world. Having known to a certain extent the movement almost from its beginning (from 1969), and having had the privilege of knowing a number of the first devotees and Srila Prabhupada personally, I feel responsible to share this experience with other newer devotees in order to help correct the faults and give back to ISKCON its original wonderful nature.

Convinced at heart and by practical experience that Prabhupada was not at the origin of the negative changes in women's position in ISKCON, I asked Satsvarupa Maharaja and had someone ask Brahmananda Prabhu—who both associated very intimately and for long periods of time with Srila Prabhupada—if they had ever heard him personally give instructions for these changes to occur. Both said no, that the changes

were instituted by the leading men of the movement.

After a lecture I gave on the subject during a Communication Seminar held by Mukunda Goswami, he told me to take as a special mission the re-establishment of the women's proper situation in ISKCON.

Param Gati Maharaja, the GBC for France, fully supported my effort to inform devotees about the way things were when Srila Prabhupada directly managed the temples and trained the devotees and about the wonderful spirit that he created.

Our subject here deals with the social application of Krishna conscious principles, not with philosophical knowledge. Therefore many of the arguments given here do not come from Prabhupada's books but from conversations between Srila Prabhupada and his disciples in daily encounters, many of which did not get recorded. Many devotees do not trust these "Prabhupada said," but Prabhupada himself gave his opinion about these "Prabhupada said." In a reunion in Mayapur in 1975, the GBC told Prabhupada: "There are so many 'Prabhupada said,' better only accept what is in the books and tapes." Srila Prabhupada answered: "No, what I say in talks also, many things I say are not in my books." (From Himavati).

My information comes from a notebook I kept over many years. I noted the anecdotes recounted to me by devotees who lived closely with Prabhupada, or by devotees who received these stories from these first disciples. Unfortunately, sometimes I noted the name of the devotee and the year of the anecdote, sometimes I did not. My other sources, which are irrefutable, are from Srila Prabhupada's letters.

Many devotees are puzzled by the many seemingly contradictory statements appearing in Srila Prabhupada's books and talks, while others choose to

quote and act only upon those fitting their own desires and conditioning and avoid considering the counterparts. But devotees must learn by analyzing scrutinizingly Srila Prabhupada's teachings as a whole to understand how Prabhupada, in his great intelligence and love, knew how to change or adapt an instruction according to the spiritual need in a particular time and place. In the following list of anecdotes or quotes showing Srila Prabhupada's attitude towards women in ISKCON, this kind of apparent contradiction will sometimes occur.

Here are some of Prabhupada's reactions when women started to be rejected from their rightful place in the temple room:

When women were made to stand behind men in the back of the temple room instead of side-by-side as previously done, women went on different occasions to see Prabhupada about these changes. He commented simply, "Why these changes?"

When the women were made to offer flowers after the men during *guru-puja*, instead of simultaneously, Srila Prabhupada, informed by Ekayani, gave the same answer: "Why? The men from one side, the women from one side." (Ekayani)

A devotee woman recalls that she was once in Srila Prabhupada's room for *darshan*. There were hundreds of visiting devotees from neighboring temples. Before lecturing, he insisted that the women (who were all at the back) come and sit up front to one side of the Vyasasana. At least five *sannyasis* and about 20 men had to move to make room for the women. Srila Prabhupada sat quietly for about five minutes while everyone relocated themselves and got situated.

One challenger argued, criticizing Srila Prabhupada for his application of the principle of spiritual equality: "If

men and women chant together, then why don't they sleep in the same room together?" Srila Prabhupada replied that, although men and women in ISKCON have equal rights, there is a clear line of demarcation indicating where intermingling of the sexes should end. (Manasa Ganga)

"I do not know what these things inventions are going on. That is our only business, to invent something new program? We have already got our Vaishnava standard. That is sufficient for Madhvacarya, Ramanujacarya, it was sufficient for Lord Chaitanya, six Goswamis, for Bhaktivinoda Thakur, for my Guru Maharaja Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, for me, for all big, big saints and *acharyas* in our line. Why it shall be inadequate for my disciples so that they must manufacture something? That is not possible. Who has introduced these things, that the women cannot have chanting *japa* in the temple, cannot perform the *arati* and so many things. That is not possible. Who has introduced these things, that women cannot have chanting? If they become agitated, then let the *brahmacaris* go to the forest. I have never introduced these things. If the *brahmacaris* cannot remain in the presence of women in the temple, then they must go to the forest for not seeing any women, if they become so easily agitated, but then no one will either see them and how our preaching work will go on?" (Letter to Ekayani, 1972)

On a morning walk in Nairobi in 1975, the same question came up. Being told that sometimes devotees leave the temple room to chant their *japa* elsewhere, Srila Prabhupada replied: "Why should they walk other places? Who says that you go or walk other places? No, you should chant in the temple room. Why should you go to other places? Why should you go outside? Who has allowed him to go outside? There is no need. That is the chance of falling down. Why you should

go outside? We are arranging the temple, for the food, why? Because everyone should stick to the temple and the principles. Why should you go outside? That should be stopped! They cannot go outside." Later in the same conversation, the same devotee further explained: "What I mean to say is that he says he does not want to chant with women in the temple room. I have seen this before. He says, 'I do not want to chant in a room with women. I'd rather be away from women.'" Srila Prabhupada answered, "That means he has got distinction between men and women. He is not a *pandita*. *Pandita sama darsinah*. He is a fool. That's all. He is a fool. He should always consider, 'There is a woman. That's all right. She is my mother.' That's all. *Matravat para daresu*. Suppose you sit down with your mother and chant. What is the wrong? But if he is not so strong, then he should go to the forest. Why should he live in the Nairobi city? On the street there are so many women. He'll walk on the streets closing his eyes? This is all rascaldom. They are rascals. They are not devotees. Simply rascals." (Walk conversation 10/30/75)

Often pushed by his male disciples to minimize ISKCON women's spiritual position, Srila Prabhupada reacted for example in the following way. Srila Prabhupada: "You dance, she dances. You sing, she sings. You cook, she cooks. There is no difference. You are the same in Krishna's eyes."

While during a *darshan* Srila Prabhupada had a *bramacari* distribute a little *prasadam* to everyone present. The boy gave *prasadam* to all the men and sat down. Srila Prabhupada noticed that he did not serve the only two girls present and said, "Give them also *prasad*. Why don't you serve them?"

Srila Prabhupada often stressed that women take up traditional womanly roles: "Girls who are living in New Vrindavana should be engaged in the

following activities: 1) "taking care of the children, 2) cleaning the temple, kitchen, etc., 3) cooking and 4) churning butter." (letter to Labangalatika, 1969)

"A women's real business is to look after household affairs, keep everything neat and clean—the women should be sewing . . ." (letter to Chaya Dasi, 1972)

Undoubtedly householder women, inside ISKCON or outside, recognize that cooking, cleaning, sewing, and taking care of children are basic activities. As a mother, I myself spend a good part of my time in these matters. But the point is that a woman is not limited to these activities if she has abilities for other activities, as will be shown in the following quotes and anecdotes: Bhibavati asked Srila Prabhupada, "Should I live like in the Vedic times and simply serve my husband and child?" Srila Prabhupada answered, "No, you have a talent as a writer, you should write articles for newspapers and propagate Krishna consciousness." (Bhibavati)

"You have good writing capacity and good artistic ability. Now devote you life to chanting Hare Krishna and if possible write articles on Krishna consciousness, as many as possible with your own paintings, and send it for publication to *Back to Godhead*." (letter to Govinda Dasi, 1974)

"The nursery school program is very good. That is good that the mothers are being freed to increase their devotional service." (letter to Jayathirtha, 1975)

"All the wives of our students should be trained up for Deity worship and cooking, and when possible they should go on *sankirtana* party with their husband and others." (Letter to Hansadutta, 1970)

"I am very glad to know that you are engaged as *pujari* there. Try to learn this art of *arcana* very nicely . . . I wish that all our girl devotees be expert in the matter of *arcana* . . ." (letter to Kancanbala, 1970)

When the service of Deity worship was being taken away from women, Srila Prabhupada wrote, "Regarding women worshipping the Deity, in the *Bhagavad-gita* it is stated: *striyo vaisyas tathasudras, te 'pi yanti param gatim*. The idea is that everyone who is properly initiated and following the rules and regulations can worship the Deity." (letter to Uttama Sloka, 1974)

"So far your question regarding women, I have always accepted the service of women without any discrimination, so I have no objection if Yamuna Devi contributes her ideas on this construction project. Nothings should be done without group consultation." (letter to Guru Dasa, 1972)

Many men were opposed to women being given posts of responsibilities and refused to work under them.

Atreya Rsi asked Srila Prabhupada if women could be given great responsibilities. Srila Prabhupada answered, "Yes, if they are Krishna conscious." Then he gave the example of Jahnavi, the wife of Nityananda Prabhu, who took charge of the whole Vaishnava community after His departure. (Atreya Rsi)

"Canakya Pandita said not to trust those who do not control their senses, politicians, and women. But this applies to non-devotee women, not our women, because they do control their senses." (class in Los Angeles, 1972)

When a male devotee refused to be instructed by Jadurani, the head of the art department, because she was a woman, Prabhupada called him in and ordered him to accept her instructions.

"A devotee should have the courage of an English officer and the heart of a Bengali mother," used to say Srila Prabhupada.

"Women are better than men because they can accept any position." (Bhavatarini Dasi)

An important apparent contradiction comes from a statement in the scriptures

that a *sannyasi* and a *brahmacari* should not hear a woman's voice. But Srila Prabhupada had men and women chant *japa* together, women led *kirtanas* in the temple and at public engagements, and the women gave classes.

Srila Prabhupada had Yamuna (one of our best singers) lead *kirtanas* in front of crowds of guests and devotees, which included *sannyasis* and *brahmacaris*.

Yamuna, Lilavati, Kausalya and later Parijata, Jyotirmayi, and many others used to routinely lead *kirtanas*.

"I want to organize a women *kirtana* party singing the Gita-Gan. Can you help me?" (letter to Gargamuni Maharaja, 1974)

In France, when he noticed that Jyotirmayi could pronounce the Sanskrit better than others (she had been taught by Nitai, his personal Sanskrit secretary), Srila Prabhupada said that from then on she should lead the recitation of the Sanskrit verses before class. (Jyotirmayi, 1972)

During his massage Prabhupada heard a letter from Jayasacinandana in Los Angeles written on behalf of a group of *brahmacaris*. In every ISKCON temple of the world the assembled devotees offer their obeisances to the Deities in the morning as the Govindam prayers loudly play. George Harrison recorded it, and Yamuna sings the *mantras*. Disturbed by this custom, Jayasacinandana quoted Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura (as well as Srila Prabhupada) that if a *brahmacari* hears and is attracted to a woman singing, it is a subtle fall down. "In light of this," he wrote, "many of the *brahmacaris* approached the temple president to see if it would be possible that when the Deities are greeted in the morning, instead of listening to Gurudasa Maharaja's former wife singing the *Brahma-samhita* prayers, we could listen to Your Divine Grace rather than hear a woman sing. He did not want to change the tape because it has been a

standard thing in ISKCON since 1970. So requested by many devotees, I am inquiring from Your Divine Grace if we could play a tape recording of your singing instead of a woman when the Deities of Rukmini-Dvarakadhisa are greeted in the morning. I am sure that all the devotees would be enlivened to hear you instead of electric guitars, the London symphonic orchestra, etc., etc."

Prabhupada was not pleased. He said that constantly changing things is "our western disease." His reply was short and direct: "No! You have made some discovery. All along you have been hearing the recording of Yamuna Dasi and now you want to change. It is not ordinary singing, it is concert. Many people are singing, so it is not bad. Just like *sankirtana*. I approve of it. Here in the Krishna-Balarama temple we are hearing the same recording every morning. So if it is good here, why not there?" (Hari Sauri, Dec. 1975, Vrindavana, *A Transcendental Diary*)

For a long period of time, women in ISKCON have been considered unfit for real spiritual advancement. Their only hope was to become men in their next life and start spiritual life from that point.

"Regarding your question, yes, a woman can certainly reach the perfectional stage of devotion to Krishna." (letter to Krishna Devi, 1969)

Srila Prabhupada said about Yamuna in the early 70s that she had reached the stage of *bhava*.

"In the *Bhagavad-gita* we find that women are also equally competent like the men in the matter of Krishna consciousness movement." (letter to Himavati, 1969)

"We are Vaishnavas. We are not concerned with male or female position in life. That is simply bodily concept of life. It is not spiritual. Whether one is male or female, it does not matter, simply chant Hare Krishna and follow the four regulative principles and your life will be per-

fect." (letter to Jennifer, 1975)

"It is not that women should only produce children, but they are meant for advancing in devotion." (letter to Jayathirtha, 1975)

Many men in the movement have used various scriptural statements on women's faults to rebuke and humiliate them, hinder their service and advancement, or even try to drive them out of the movement.

When Srila Prabhupada first said in a class that for a man, association with a woman is dangerous because she makes him lose control over his senses, the male devotees started acting very nastily toward the women of that particular temple. The ladies expressed their pain to Prabhupada who then called in all the men and said, "I was talking of materialistic women, not of the women of the movement. These are angels."

Srila Prabhupada also said in another instance, "When we talk of women, we do not talk about those of our movement, because by associating with these women, if they are Krishna conscious, you will be liberated." (Madhavananda Dasa)

A disciple of Swami Narayana said to Srila Prabhupada, "My spiritual master said to avoid all women and to never go where there are women." Srila Prabhupada laughed and said, "That is impossible, there are women everywhere." Then, coming back to the temple and watching two women devotees bow down to him, he said "By association with these women, you will be purified." (Madhavananda)

On various occasions, *brahmacaris* complained to Srila Prabhupada that they were agitated by the presence of women in the temple, and Srila Prabhupada replied that if they could not restrain their senses, they should go live alone in the forest.

"Regarding the disturbance made by the women devotees, they are also living

beings. They also come to Krishna. So consciously I cannot deny them. If our male members, the *brahmacaris* and *sannyasis*, if they become steady in Krishna consciousness there is no problem. It is the duty of the male members to be very steady and cautious." (letter to Gargamuni Swami, 1975)

For years men were always given the best facilities (as far as living quarters, chanting *japa*, sitting places in a van or at festivals, taking *prasadam*, etc.) while the women got what was left. But Srila Prabhupada was always concerned that the women be well protected and cared for. During the Gaura Purnima festival in Vrindavana, Yamuna got sick. Srila Prabhupada had her stay with him until she got better. (Yamuna)

In 1974, Palika lived in India with Prabhupada, her husband having taken *sannyasa*. While she was taking care of Prabhupada in his office, Srila Prabhupada noticed that her sari had a hole and said, "I am going to buy a sari, yours is all torn." As she protested, he continued, "Your husband Bhavananda has now taken *sannyasa*, therefore I shall give you money." (Dinatarine)

Srila Prabhupada was informed that there was no running water in the women's living quarters in Bombay for a long time, as the plumbing needed repairs. Srila Prabhupada called in the leaders and said, "You are always talking of big, big things, and you do not see that these simple things are being taken care of."

Srila Prabhupada wanted that on *sankirtana* (chanting in the street), women stay in the middle to be protected.

Statements both in scripture and by Srila Prabhupada's regarding the "lesser intelligence" of women has caused much misunderstanding and prompted often ruthless behavior by men toward their godsisters. But what does "less intelligent" exactly mean?

Kalau sudra sambhavat: in the age of Kali, everyone is *sudra*. In the Vedic times, women were considered on the same level as *vaishyas* and *sudras*. The *brahmanas* and *ksatriyas* of those days were so elevated that women were no doubt on an inferior level. But in Kali yuga, men have degraded to the level of the women, everyone being a *sudra*, and have no grounds for asserting high superiority.

In *Bhagavad-gita* (3.42-43), Krishna says: "The working senses are superior to dull matter, mind is higher than the senses, intelligence is still higher than the mind, and he (the soul) is even higher than the intelligence. . . One should steady the mind by deliberate intelligence. . ." According to this definition, an intelligent person is one who is able to control the mind with intelligence. The mind's activities are thinking, feeling, and willing. Therefore it can be concluded that a woman is less intelligent if she has a harder time than a man in the control of her thinking, feeling, and willing.

Feeling refers to the emotions. It is more difficult for a woman to control her emotions than for a man. But it does not mean that a woman is totally deprived of intelligence, as has unfortunately often been asserted in the movement. There is no "superiority chart" indicating that the highest plane is occupied by intelligent men, then stupid men, then intelligent women, and then stupid women. If we rate men and women's intelligence on a scale, it is not that men's intelligence occupies the highest section and women's the lowest, but the two overlap. Of course, it is certainly true that if one takes the most intelligent men in the world and the most intelligent women, the men might be on a higher level than the women.

There are various facets to intelligence—intelligence as controller of the mind, material intelligence, spiritual

intelligence—and various definitions. Srila Prabhupada once defined it as: "sharp memory and good discrimination." The following examples illustrate its different meanings:

Srila Prabhupada said to a lady disciple, "Well, if you think you are a woman that means you are less intelligent, because you are supposed to understand that you are a spirit soul and that your real identity is transcendental to these bodily designations." (Sadaputa)

When Srila Prabhupada was asked if Jyotirmayi should finish her studies in Ethnology (study of religions and cultures) in order to teach Vaishnavism in universities, he answered "Yes, she is very intelligent girl, she can do it." (Yogesvara)

"Another examination will be held sometimes in 1971 on the four books, *Bhagavad-gita*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, *Teaching of Lord Caitanya*, and *Nectar of Devotion*. One who will pass this examination will be awarded the title of Bhaktivedanta. I want that all my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples. Maybe by 1975 all my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the number of generations. That is my program." (letter to Hamsadutta, 1968)

"Regarding your questions about the examination to be given, the girls will also be able to take these. In Krishna consciousness there is no distinction between girls and boys. The girls also may become preachers if they are able." (letter to Himavati, 1969)

"Now I see that in our society the girls are more intelligent than the boys." (letter to Krishna Devi, 1970)

For many years, women have been forbidden to give classes to all devotees in the temple room and to give Sunday

lectures to guests. Yet those were common practices from the beginning of the movement until about 1973-74.

"Regarding lecturing by women devotees: I have informed you that in the service of the Lord there is no distinction of caste or creed, color or sex. . . We require a person who is in knowledge of Krishna, that is the only qualification of a person speaking. It does not matter what he is. Materially a woman may be less intelligent than a man, but spiritually everyone is pure soul. In the absolute plane there is no gradation of higher and lower. If a woman can lecture nicely and to the point, we should hear her carefully. That is our philosophy. But if a man can speak better than a woman, the man should be given the first preference. . ." (letter to Jaya Govinda, 1968)

"Jadurani has now become a nice preacher, I have report from Satsvarupa that she gives lectures very nicely. If we open a pavilion, I shall take Jadurani also at that time so she will deliver nice lectures." (letter to Mahapurusa, 1968)

"So far as girls or boys lecturing in the morning, that does not make any difference. Either girl or boy devotee may deliver lecture if they choose to do. We have no such distinction of bodily designations, male or female. Krishna consciousness is on the spiritual platform. As such, anyone who is a devotee of the Lord following in this line of disciplic succession can deliver lecture on the teachings of *Bhagavad-gita*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, etc." (letter to Syama Dasi, 1968)

Srila Prabhupada had Himavati give public lectures in front of crowds of people in India.

From 1973-74, when stopping women from giving classes began to spread from temple to temple, country to country, different women went to Prabhupada for help. ". . . you can also keep giving *Bhagavatam* class if you like. Women in our movement can also preach very

nicely. Actually, male and female bodies, these are just outward designations. Lord Chaitanya said that whether one is *brahmana* or whatever he may be, if he knows the science of Krishna, then he is to be accepted as guru. " (letter to Malati, 1974)

Excerpt of a conversation about *varnashrama-dharma* between Srila Prabhupada, Yogesvara, and Jyotirmayi, 1974, France:

S.P.: Woman is to help her husband.

J.M.: So the duty of the *brahmana* is to preach. It is to learn the philosophy.

S.P.: Yes, to learn and to preach.

J.M.: And to teach the philosophy. So in our movement, the women have always preached philosophy, given classes, given lectures.

S.P.: Oh yes, oh yes. With the husband. She is always helping hand-to-hand the husband. . . Assistant.

J.M.: Does that mean that the girls should not give lectures and not give classes?

S.P.: Why not? If she is *brahmana's* wife, she can give lecture.

J.M.: Jadurani, for example, now she is no longer with her husband any more, but she is giving classes, she is giving lectures. So is that good?

S.P.: Yes, yes. Why not? This *varnashrama-dharma*, woman is according to the husband. That's all. Jadurani is supposed to be a *brahmana's* wife. Her husband has taken *sannyasa*, so she can preach.

J.M.: So women can preach. They can give classes. They can give lectures.

S.P.: Oh yes.

After receiving the confirmation from Srila Prabhupada, Jyotirmayi went on giving classes in France. But the pressure from the American men became stronger and stronger (such as telling the *brahmacaris* not to attend the classes), and Jyotirmayi wrote to Prabhupada for his renewed support. At that time, Srila Prabhupada did not write

his letters himself anymore but dictated his answers to his secretary. As it happened that both Jyotirmayi and Bhagavan had written to Prabhupada at that time, each for a particular question, Srila Prabhupada had his secretary, Brahmananda, answer them both a common letter. The letter that Srila Prabhupada sent was confirming her right to give classes in the temple. (Jyotirmayi)

As women were being demeaned, householder men and household life were also heavily put down, to the point that householders were in great numbers trying to convince Prabhupada to give them *sannyasa*.

"Regarding your separating from Nandarani, nothing should be done artificially. Nandarani is no different from you. She also seeks Krishna consciousness. Your household life is not repugnant: it is favorable. Do not separate artificially. When everyone is engaged in Krishna's service, there is no question of Maya. I have got good estimation about Nandarani." (letter to Dayananda)

"If you have taken a wife for *grhastha* life, why are you neglecting? That is not Vaishnava. Vaishnava means he is very much responsible, and if he is householder, then he must be responsible. I cannot give *sannyasa* to any devotee who has not proven himself to be responsible in all respects. Better you prove yourself first by being ideal householder and forget all this nonsense." (letter to Mahatma, 1972)

"This taking *sannyasa* should not be a whimsical proposition, and should not be an excuse for becoming irresponsible, have no responsibility of *grhastha*, *brahmachari*, etc." (letter to Danavir, 1973)

"We are supposed to take husband or wife as eternal companion or assistant in Krishna consciousness service, and there is promise never to separate. Of course if there is any instance of very

advanced disciples, married couple, and they have agreed that the husband shall now take *sannyasa* or renounced order of life, being mutually very happy by that arrangement, then there is ground for such separation. But even in those cases there is no question of separation, the husband, even he is *sannyasi*, he must be certain his wife will be taken care of nicely and protected in his absence. Now so many cases are there of unhappiness by the wife who has been abandoned by her husband against her wishes. So how can I sanction such thing? But if it becomes so easy for me to get married and then leave my wife, under excuse of married life being an impediment to my own spiritual progress, that will not be very good at all. That is misunderstanding of what is advancement in spiritual life." (letter to Madhukara, 1975)

If I usually write "many men" and not just "men," it is that a certain number of them, especially among householders, objected to the way women were being treated. But their effort to protect the women was always quickly stopped as they ended up being ridiculed by their godbrothers, who would call them "hen-pecked husbands."

The arguments presented here, as well as the anecdotes and letters referred to, are certainly already known and approved by most of the devotees who have sincerely and objectively tried to understand the matter of women in ISKCON. I have only tried to compile as many of them as possible in a structured way to inform those who never thought over the matter, and those who are reluctant to make the necessary changes, being adverse or insufficiently convinced.

Many of the wrongs done to women for so many years have now been corrected, and ISKCON women have recovered some of their rights. Unfortunately, they have been rehabilitated only to higher or lesser degrees according to the different leaders in different places. Much

is still to be done for men to recognize fully women's dignity, and for women to assume again that dignity everywhere.

Congregational Outreach

Vasu Murty
Oakland, CA, USA

According to the ISKCON public relations guide, *Who Are They?*, congregational outreach is now reality. Mukunda Goswami introduces the reader to the Hare Krishna Movement in strictly congregational terms:

"You'll probably be surprised to learn that you don't have to wear traditional robes or change your hairstyle or religion to be a part of the Hare Krishna Movement.

"You'll discover that Krishna consciousness is much more than a religion. It's a spiritual movement; a universal, time-tested process for achieving inner happiness, satisfaction, and higher awareness. And you'll meet people from all walks of life who are applying their knowledge, skills, and resources to bring about a better world, beginning with the all-important realm of consciousness.

"The Krishna consciousness movement is a transcendental outreach program unparalleled anywhere in the world."

In the section of *Who Are They?* entitled "A Worldwide Congregation," Krishna's congregation—legal secretaries, surgeons, biochemists, ordinary folks—are depicted. ISKCON's Southwestern US Regional Membership Director, Rose Forkash, writes:

"With a worldwide congregational membership of well over six million, the Hare Krishna Movement has a growing responsibility. We are committed to both our rapidly expanding membership and to nonmembers in all walks of life.

"Whatever you do, whatever your age, race, sex, or religious affiliation, the Hare Krishna Movement can offer you many benefits. If you do nothing more than

chant the Hare Krishna *mantra*, you're already closer to spiritual success."

On page 31 of the November-December 1991 issue of *Back to Godhead*, Ravindra Svarupa Dasa observes: "In commenting on the twelfth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gita*, Srila Prabhupada makes it really clear that the Hare Krishna Movement is in principle made up of three groups of people. Krishna says, 'Surrender to Me.' So first are those who are spontaneously attracted to surrender to Krishna. Then Krishna says, 'If you can't do that, follow the regulative principles of devotional service.' And in the purport Srila Prabhupada makes it clear what this means: rising early, taking a shower, going to the morning program, and so on, under the supervision of the spiritual master. So those who do this are in the second group. Then Krishna says, 'If you can't do that, then work for Me.' And Srila Prabhupada says that this means that at least one should be sympathetic to the propagation of Krishna consciousness. Every organization requires land, capital, labor, and organization, so you can contribute one of these things. Those who do this are in the third group.

"These three groups make up the Hare Krishna Movement. So there's absolutely nothing wrong with the movement's having all kinds of people who aren't following the strict regulative principles.

"Where we have a problem is with people who have at one time or another taken formal vows to follow the principles of the second group and then found themselves unable to keep them."

Choosing Devotion
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If, after becoming a devotee of Krishna, what would you choose if you were given a choice—developing loving, devotional service to the Supreme Lord,

or cultivating superficial, dry knowledge about Krishna that is tinged with speculation of those who have not yet experienced the platform of spiritual love?

Many devotees from many different religious orientations have unconsciously chosen the latter by not clearly understanding this important *sastric* truth regarding the way pure devotional service develops within the heart of a conditioned soul. One of the *bhagavatas* is the great scripture *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and the other is the pure devotee absorbed in the mellows of loving devotion. Through the actions of these two *bhagavatas* the Lord instills the mellows of transcendental loving service into the heart of a living being, and thus the Lord, in the heart of His devotee, comes under the control of the devotee's love. (Adi 1.99-100) If one wants to develop loving devotional sentiments, one has to surrender himself and worship both the book *bhagavata* and the devotee *bhagavata*, who are both directly related to Krishna. If one interprets this verse to mean that one can worship the all pure and blissful book *bhagavata* and a not so pure devotee *bhagavata*, one is following the path of devotional service tinged with mental speculation. It will take a longer time with much suffering to get the ultimate result of pure devotional love for God.

The tree of pure devotional service springs from a seed that can only be sowed by a personality who is engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. A guru who does not yet have the seed of *bhakti* sown in his own heart cannot place it into the hearts of his disciples. Many mistake the subtle material boons given by such spiritual masters, like superficial knowledge of revealed scriptures, dry austerity, *brahminical* qualities, power to control the minds of others, or temporary fame and fortune, to be the holy grail of the *bhakti* potency.

One can tell the nature and qualities of a tree by examining the fruit it produces. In other words, if one is a spiritual master, one can tell how powerful he is by closely examining the qualities that are developing in his disciples that have been sincerely following him for some time. If love for the Lord and broad-minded, compassionate, friendly dealings with others is developing in his disciples, he is the touchstone of the pure devotee *bhagavata* that is being described and glorified here in this verse by the book *bhagavata*. The seed of loving devotional sentiments are being implanted in the hearts of his disciples and many nectarine fruits of godly qualities gradually are beginning to develop.

The sublime, loving glorification by the book *bhagavata* of the pure devotee reveals the devotee *bhagavata*. The glorification of the book *bhagavata* by the pure devotee *bhagavata* illuminates the real path or essence of pure devotional service outlined by the transcendental books of revealed scriptures. This is an eternal pastime performed by these two *bhagavatas*, performed for their own satisfaction and for the liberation of the conditioned souls who simultaneously take shelter of both of them.

One can be confirmed to be a devotee *bhagavata* if he is able to illuminate the holy scriptures in such a way that make them relishable and understandable to the hearts of those who are sincerely in quest of finding the narrow gateway to the Absolute Truth in this dangerous but glorious age of Kali Yuga.

Prabhupada Meditation Thakor Topiwala Pineville, NC, USA

*ascary-vat pasyati kascid enam
ascarya-vad vadati tathaiva canya
ascary-vac cainam anyah snoti
srutvapy-enam vedaq na caiva kascit*
"Some look on the soul as amazing,
some describe him as amazing, and some

hear of him as amazing, while others, even after hearing about him, cannot understand at all."

(B.g. 2:29)

The above truth certainly can be applied to Srila Prabhupada's Krishna consciousness mission, also.

At the advanced age of 70, when most people retire and spend their time with grandchildren or playing golf or fishing without even thinking of the ultimate goal of life or spiritual well being of the self, Prabhupada started his worldwide mission. He did it practically single handedly, traveling at risk, writing books, collecting funds, training devotees who absolutely had no back ground or understanding of Vedic philosophy, answering questions on the basis of Vedic literature to scientist, professors, news media, and politicians.

In many instances he collected discarded food from a farmers' market and prepared wonderful *prasadam* for aspirant devotees to change the total direction of many, many fallen conditioned souls. Sometimes it seemed like he created a world mission from total waste.

It is amazing to know that in many instances he practically had to fight with the people of India where the original roots are for Vedic philosophy. I like the analogy a devotee told me that "Vedic philosophy is like a dead elephant, but even a dead elephant has greater value. To revive Krishna consciousness, or Vedic *dharma*, in India and to spread it amongst the western world, how much sacrifice and trouble he must have had to go through!

On the basis of Vedic authority, he challenged the world on current issues, such as economics, crime, pollution, women's rights, education, racism, space exploration, and so on. He practically had answers to each and every issue of the world, and on the other hand, he was fully aware of the effect of Kali-yuga, with a dismissive "What can we do!"

Everything is constitutional. Even if somebody wants to implement, it is not easy.

Despite facing challenges with the conditional souls, he had a tremendous task to even keep his own disciples united for the spiritual and material well-being of the world. Many unfortunate incidents happened, and although he saw so many problems in the society, Prabhupada took it as Krishna's mercy. Either way, he fought until his last breath. Somehow or other because of his own purity and empowerment and Krishna's grace, he designed his mission in such a wonderful way that even today, despite many, many obstacles, his mission is progressing remarkably well. All glories to all those sincere devotees who are serving him selflessly.

Analyzing all these remarkable achievements, we can conclude that the above Sanskrit statement perfectly applies to Prabhupada's mission—that some look on his mission as amazing, some of them are even describing as amazing, but many of them after hearing about it, do not understand at all.

All glories to His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada!

Positive Affirmations Are They Good or Bad for Our Spiritual Life? Caitanya Lila Dasi Alachua, FL, USA

I am very healthy, happy, and strong.

With every breath I take, my immune system gets stronger every day so that I can engage in Krishna's service.

I let go of all negative energy and I only let good healing energy into my body, mind, and soul. Krishna's energy is flowing through me, healing me spiritually, physically, and mentally.

There are so many positive affirmations that we can say. And are they really Maya or bad? I have heard so many devotees say, "Just chant Hare

Krishna and depend on Prabhupada and Krishna and everything will get better." "Why do you need these other types of healing when you have Krishna consciousness?" This is so true, especially if we are chanting purely. And how many of us are really chanting purely? If we keep chanting we will one day become pure, but for now why not use everything in Krishna's service as Srila Prabhupada has taught us?

Srila Prabhupada said in his books and tapes that if we are not happy we won't make any spiritual advancement. Throughout the years I have seen so many devotees who are performing devotional service, including myself, and were not happy. Maybe we were performing the devotional service in the wrong consciousness or out of duty, or because we were told by the authorities—or forced to—because we were living in the temple.

But just think how different that service would have been if that same devotee had the knowledge to use positive affirmations to get over the bitterness or problems that they were going through so that they could perform their service in a blissful, happy way.

This actually happened in my life. I was so unhappy because I was being mentally and physically abused by my ex-husband and different authorities. I allowed this to happen to myself, so I'm not blaming anyone. I didn't have the knowledge at the time and I thought that if I didn't follow my authority I would go to hell! That was the understanding in the early days of ISKCON.

When I found out about different types of healing and positive affirmations, what a difference it made in my life, and I have seen how it has changed many devotees' lives. I don't think this is Maya. If our bodies are the temples of our souls, then why would it be Maya to take care of them?

Healing along with Krishna con-

sciousness is so complete.

Srila Prabhupada was a perfect example for us. He was very positive, very regulated, and very health conscious. He would only eat things that were *prasadam* and things that were good for his health at regulated times of the day in a practical, utilitarian way. If Srila Prabhupada didn't feel positive and good about himself, how could he accomplish so much?

I personally feel that women in ISKCON especially need this kind of upliftment, because unfortunately we too often don't get the encouragement that we need from husbands or authorities within ISKCON.

If something can improve our relationships with others in Krishna consciousness, then how can that be wrong? By feeling better about ourselves and being more positive, this will actually help us with our relations with others. Then as we become more purified and in better consciousness, we will be able to think more about Krishna and our real eternal position as part and parcel of Him, and eventually go back to the spiritual world as Srila Prabhupada desired.

Please let us try to change our consciousness a little and open ourselves to the idea of using everything in Krishna's service. If something is going to improve our spiritual life, then how can it be wrong?

POETRY

Morning Musings Dinasanga Dasi Tallahassee, FL, USA

Why are these glaring street lights
interfering with my view of sunrise?
Why do I have to look at these utility
poles and wires?
Your radiant effulgence is coloring the
morning sky.
The people still sleep with their artificial

lights on.

Through this auspicious, beautiful time
of morning.

Here you are again, faithfully coming
each day,

giving light, eye, and understanding.

Thank you Lord for a new beginning and
another chance each day.

Daytime Confusion Dinasanga Dasi Tallahassee, FL, USA

What am I doing in this world?

I don't feel like I belong here,

not permanently, thank you, Lord.

This planet is way too noisy with non-
sense sounds

too polluted with meaningless sights and
activities.

What are these people getting out of it?

Oh Lord, help me to spread Your name
and fame.

Help me do some good, to pass along the
gift I've been given!

Help me bring someone to You.

With a Glance (Honolulu, 1975 or so) Vegavati Dasi Port Royal, PA, USA

With a glance

that great soul showed me

things about myself

I didn't care to see.

Pettiness of a thousand varieties
more shameful to me than sin.

In that glance he showed me also

myself, pure soul, never before touched.

I turned my head from the shame trea-
suring the revelation.

Kirtana pulsing, gaining courage,

I looked back this time to see,

yes he sees my myriad faults,

yet this deep soul loves deep me.

Embarrassed, I looked away again

but chanting *kirtana* kept going on—

one only in a crowded temple,

how many more he touched that day?

A Hare Krishna hippie girl

discovered the most amazing truth
in his third glance:

herself as pure soul, knowing only,

"Prabhupada loves me!

knows and loves me."

We Cannot Imitate Vegavati Dasi Port Royal, PA, USA

When I was walking and chanting and
seeing

the blue-gray clouds above the blue-gray
road

I thought of Prabhupada answering chal-
lengers in Mayapur, who queried his

move to put devotees

on the floor above Radha-Madhava. He

said, "The road is also Krishna, so why
do you walk

on the Krishna road?" He was so bold, so
bold.

We cannot imitate him and say, "It's all
right

if I criticize my godbrothers, Prabhupada
also . . ."

First we have to change the hearts of
demons,

pick up scum from the gutter and teach
it to sing,

before we can try to imitate

everything Prabhupada did.

Preaching Is the Essence Prahlada Dasa Troy, Jamaica

Before I go today,

Please here me pray.

Oh my eternal Vaishnava guru,

I beg this one boon from you.

That wherever I go and whoever I meet,

In the market or in the street,

The holy name of Krishna will be heard

and sung,

In the demons' hearts and on their wicked
tongue.

Killing the dirt of lust, anger, and greed,

Please oh master, help me to plant that
seed.

And if I must come back to this world of sin,
The shelter of your feet please take me in.

Let it be in the home of the Hare Krishnas.
This world and everything is Krishna's.
And until the whole world is chanting
His holy name,
No rest for me, there is no rest for me to claim.



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email: hkw@iskcon.net

PERSONALS

ISKCON Life Member, 34 years old, single, college-educated male seeking Krishna conscious wife. I have been in the association of devotees for over 12 years. I follow most of the principles of devotional life and chant on a regular basis. I'm into astrology, Krishna conscious rock & roll, FOLK programs, interfaith discussions, as well as writing and preaching Krishna consciousness at the introductory level. I have many plans for services, and need a wife (partner, not a servant) to help me. Please write me: Vasu Murty, 30 Villanova Lane, Oakland, CA 94611, USA. (27)

Indian Life Member of ISKCON for over a decade, active, in good health and spirit seeks Hindu or Hindu convert wife—young, healthy, loving, obedient, sincere, devoted, and complimentary. I am 49 years, divorced, in export/import business, financially independent, seeking relocation, and the most dharmic lifestyle as a householder in creative fulfilling and mutually beneficial relationship for the benefit of all beings, sentient and nonsentient. I have varied interests in the arts, media, and social work. Correspond with returnable photograph to Dhruv Dalmia, 199, Golf Links, New Delhi 110003, India. Tel/Fax 91-11-4617515. Every letter will be answered. Haribol! (25)

Male, 44, 5ft 10in, 125#, in ISKCON since 1972. Never married, 4.5 years in India. Adventurous, playful, philosophically minded. Seeking compatible girl for marriage. Address: Ron Porterfield (Kamalasan Dasa), 2649 Benvenue Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704 (24)
Friendly relationship desired. I am a male disciple of Srila Prabhupada seeking a serious relationship and female friend. You are intelligent, attractively dressed, and sincere. I am, but don't wear dresses. Reply to Joe Masters (Jitamrtyu Dasa), P.O. Box 91005, San Diego, CA 92169, USA. (23)

Male disciple of ACBSP, 49, single parent with 15-year-old daughter, seeks spouse/partner to pursue serious Krishna consciousness and pioneering of self-sufficient rural communities. For exchange of information and correspondence to determine compatibility, write Prabhupada Dasa, RR1 Box 848-B, Port Royal, PA 17082, USA. (23)

LINE ADS

ISKCON Communications Journal is a forum, or "market place," for preachers in ISKCON. Each issue has more than 60 pages and is full of dynamic and enthusing articles, written by ISKCON's preaching experts, to inspire and assist you in your preaching work for Srila Prabhupada. We invite you to subscribe! Just drop your name, address, and your check or money order in an envelope and mail it to: ICJ, 6 Quarry Court, Helens Bay, BT191TY, North. Ireland. Annual subscription (2 issues) \$18 or, 25DM, or £10.

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Stay in touch with the continuing progress in Mayapur. *The Mayapur Journal* is published quarterly and available by writing P.O. Box 4742, 6304 Zug, Switzerland. Subscription

cost is US\$15.00 (1 year) or US\$25 (2 years).

Krsna Culture devotional paraphernalia mailorder has moved to Hare Krishna Dham, Houston. Contact us at P.O. Box 926337, Houston, TX 77292, USA; 800-829-2579 or 713-290-8715; fax: 713-290-8720; email: krsnacultr@aol.com (25)

ISKCON Lawbook in Print. The ISKCON Lawbook (An Up-to-Date Compilation of All ISKCON Laws from 1975 to 1997), published by the GBC Press, is finally out. We are printing 1,000 copies for this first run. The book is 9" tall and 6.5" wide with 208 pages, softbound, costing US\$ 2.50 or Rs. 90.00 per copy. The book will be available for purchase in Mayapur.

House for Sale: 3 bdrm, 2 bth house, 1,200 sq. ft. on 7 acres, 2-car garage, fireplace, deck, fruit and nut trees, majestic view. \$94,000. Madhusudan Dasa, P.O. Box 119, Badger, CA 93603, USA; 209-337-0035; GoldenMtn@compuserve.com (23)

Free Room & Board for devotee willing to relocate to NE Iowa. Devotee recuperating from hospitalization for mental illness needs association. Help establish Vedic programs on 4 local campuses (Harinama, *prasadam* and book distribution). Available immediately. Write to Narahari Dasa c/o Pat Lockhart, 1455 Main St., Dubuque, IA 52001, USA. Or call 319-582-3097. (23)

To List Weekly Sankirtana Parties as Chanting for Unity Connection Sites, send routine day, carpool gathering location, and punctual departure time to Hare Krishna World Marketplace Events, P.O. Box 238, Alachua, FL 32616, USA. (23)

Chanting for Unity Needs participant party stories (with action photo) about efforts to increase public chanting and unification on Harinama in America. Send to Hare Krishna World, P.O. Box 238, Alachua, FL 32616. (23)

SERVICES

Adopt-A-Child is currently seeking stable couples with or without children to adopt or foster devotee babies and children. Please contact us if you are interested in serving Krishna by opening your heart in this way, or if you or someone you know needs to find a good home for a child. Radha Pessin Selvester, P.O. Box 1090, Alachua, FL 32616, USA; 904-462-7475; fax: 904-462-7909

...

Project Future Hope is the job and apprenticeship network for Vaishnava youth worldwide. Contact us with details: a) you can offer employment or training in employable skills; b) you are a Vaishnava youth seeking to learn employable skills and work in a devotee environment. Project Future Hope, P.O. Box 209, DeKalb, IL 60115, USA; email: krsna@niu.edu

Announcement

The ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection is accepting cases of child abuse to be investigated and adjudicated.

If anyone knows of an instance of child abuse that happened under the jurisdiction of ISKCON, please report it to: Dhira Govinda Dasa

ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection
P.O. Box 1438

Alachua, Florida 32616-1438
Tel: 904-418-0882 FAX: 904-418-0982
email: dgovinda@aol.com

Reports will be kept confidential, within the parameters of the investigative process. Please include with the report as much detail as possible, as well as contact information of the reporter, the alleged victim(s), and the alleged perpetrator(s). Our goal is to resolve past and present cases of child abuse in Srila Prabhupada's movement, and we thank you for your assistance.

FESTIVAL OF INDIA 1998 SCHEDULE

June 20	New Jersey	Ratha Yatra
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July 11 & 12	Montreal	Ratha Yatra
July 18 & 19	Toronto	Ratha Yatra
July 25 & 26	Denver	Ratha Yatra
Aug. 2	Los Angeles	Ratha Yatra
Aug. 9	San Fran.	Ratha Yatra
Aug. 14	Vancouver	Janmastami
Aug. 15	Vancouver	S.P. Vyasa Puja
Aug. 22 & 23	Vancouver	Ratha Yatra
Sept. 4, 5 & 6	Seattle	Ratha Yatra
Sept. 19 & 20	Boston	Ratha Yatra
Sept. 27	Wash. D.C.	Sri Ram Vijayotsav

*Tentative schedule confirm with local temple.

*The dates in bold are confirmed

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