

# Vedic Village

Number 17

JANUARY  
1992

Review



His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada  
Founder Acharya International Society for Krishna Consciousness



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Founder Acharya: International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

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VVR is a confidential publication, meant for devotees, friends, and other interested parties only and it is not intended for distribution to the general public. The views expressed in letters and articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors, the New Jaipur community or ISKCON. This publication is not an official ISKCON publication and it is independantly produced by the editors and publisher. Still, we feel VVR is an essential forum and aid to Krishna-bhaktas around the world. Please send us your comments, your memoirs of Srila Prabhupada (for publication), and your articles on varnashram, guru-tattva, ISKCON, Vaishnava philosophy in general and other topics related to Krishna consciousness.

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\*Srila Prabhupada, letter to Nityananda dasa, 3/16/77: "The New Talavan-Review and brochures are both very nicely done and I thank you for them...Please go on very enthusiastically developing your farming community."



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## Editorial Policy

VEDIC VILLAGE REVIEW is meant to promote a better understanding of issues and philosophy vital to Vaishnavas and their preaching work. We apologize for our errors and we hope to continue with the blessings of devotees, open to review from all quarters. Although we may unintentionally upset some by addressing sensitive issues, it is better to generate debate and an exchange of views than to be silent. Complacent and dull-headed we will not be. We want to spark healthy discussion and analysis of topics for the advancement of Srila Prabhupada's mission. We beg pardon for any offenses that may be made in this effort. We invite response to our articles, as we have an open editorial policy. We do reserve the right to edit letters and articles for brevity and conciseness, taking care to preserve the spirit of the opinion. So please, participate in this forum by writing us today!

VVR is printed by NEW JAIPUR PRESS, and attempts to promote the development of "Vedic villages" around the world as the foundation of a new Vedic civilization. God-centered, rural devotional communities such as New Jaipur are the hope of the future during the Golden Age. These villages will be based on the teachings of Lord Krishna, Lord Chaitanya and His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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## FROM THE HEART

January 6, 1992. VVR apologizes to its subscribers and readers for the long delay in the appearance of this issue. Our subscribers' subscriptions will be honored on an extended basis.

In this issue VVR has tried to broaden its range of topics and give less space to our own views and more to the participating Vaishnavas. We have not changed our positions, which we summarize here:

\*\* ISKCON is becoming a Greater ISKCON, where Srila Prabhupada's Hare Krishna Movement now includes more devotees on the outside than the inside of the official GBC-guru cartel controlled institution.

\*\* There is a great need to complete the reforms in ISKCON begun in 1985. The guru system, GBC policies and philosophical interpretations require serious reforms to conform with Srila Prabhupada's actual instructions and teachings.

\*\* The above mentioned reform can best be implemented by allowing free discussion and unrestricted debate amongst devotees in or out of ISKCON. This ISTAGOSTHI has been repressed by the GBC.

\*\* Subsequent to Srila Prabhupada's physical departure and until self-effulgent pure devotees appear, the process for diksha initiation should be by the RTVIK method established by Srila Prabhupada.

\*\* Qualified devotees who want to take Srila Prabhupada as their spiritual master may do so by the RTVIK process.

\*\* Srila Prabhupada's true glory and rightful position has been minimized and eclipsed for 14 years by a small group of GBC-gurus who have done "the greatest disservice to the movement." (quote, TKG 1980)

\*\* ISKCON must resolve philosophical differences on the basis of sastra and Srila Prabhupada's teachings rather than on a basis of political expediency. Most of Srila Prabhupada's followers have been alienated, expelled or neglected; Srila Prabhupada is the common

platform on which all Vaishnavas can unitedly work together once again for the propagation of Krishna consciousness worldwide.

\*\* To settle the past, heal wounds, reveal the truth and prevent future disasters in Srila Prabhupada's mission of preaching for the next 9500 years, an impartial and thorough TRIBUNAL must investigate and rectify the major deviations and questions that have arisen since Srila Prabhupada's physical departure.

New Jaipur has moved to South Carolina. A 250 acre farm with a large home, two running streams, excellent soil, 50 acre lake site and a second dwelling has been obtained. Gradually the project will be restored and developed to its completion. By the year 2000 we hope to have a temple, Prabhupada museum, Vedic library, Vedic University and a Vaishnava community of independent families. New Jaipur is based on the "Srila Prabhupada in the Center" theme and the Daivi-varnashram principle.

Meanwhile, back in Mississippi, the old project is winding down. A settlement was made with the state to resolve all mutual claims. A tentative settlement has been made with Uncle Sam wherein about half of our assets will be saved. The Gloucester mansion, former home of Srila Prabhupada's Memorial Shrine, was sold in September. In December the two antique stores were sold, and we expect the two remaining downtown properties to be sold soon. The Cedars is on the market.

The amount of prejudice and subtle, good-old-boy, back room persecution in Mississippi has been demoralizing. They found a defect and exploited it to the maximum to purge Mississippi of the Hare Krishnas. However, I personally made a major error of judgement in the type of products I sold, which gave them the club with which to do their damage. I apologize to all devotees for this "financial" irregularity and pledge to follow a clean path of activities hereon out. This error weighs heavily on my conscience, and I hope I will be

afforded the chance to compensate with future positive achievements. I humbly request forgiveness for my errors; I pray for the mercy of Srila Prabhupada and his followers to successfully establish New Jaipur as Srila Prabhupada's Vedic village. All Glories to Srila Prabhupada!

Failure is the pillar of success, so it is said. Actually, in devotional service there is never any failure, and any endeavor to please Srila Prabhupada is successful since spiritual advancement is the result. Thus New Jaipur was a success, not a failure. Even though the project in that location is now closed, plundered by a government which cannot appreciate minority religions, New Jaipur will live on, and its six years of existence will have a lasting and positive effect.

New Jaipur explored and pioneered many areas of varnashrama development, the second phase of Srila Prabhupada's mission. New Jaipur demonstrated that devotees CAN be Krsna conscious in the Greater ISKCON, outside the political structure of the official GBC-guru cartel. And from the New Jaipur experience we can glean lessons and realizations in the continuing attempt to build Vedic villages, devotional communities with Srila Prabhupada in the center.

There is a very great need for Vedic villages all over the world. People everywhere are looking for peace, happiness and prosperity, but can succeed only by taking up the program of Lord Chaitanya thru the mercy of Prabhupada. We remain committed to the establishment of Vedic villages, humbled, though, by our past failures. To quit now and retire to a comfortable life would be like death, however. With the encouragement of friends, proceeding cautiously in the path of advice from the devotees, and praying for Srila Prabhupada's blessings, we will try to reorganize New Jaipur once again in a new locale and based on the lessons recently learned.

We researched extensively several locations for the reappearance of New Jaipur. Jamaica excelled for a

physical setting, but the economics and transportation problems overrode any aesthetic positives there. Mexico was simply too dry and primitive; the culture was foreign, to say the least. Georgia was red clay country, Florida expensive and hot. We settled on South Carolina.

The Carolinas have a very mild climate, rich soil, good job opportunities, and a lot less rednecks or ignorant people than, say, Mississippi. Rainfall is plentiful, as is wildlife and greenery. Land runs less than a thousand an acre, as compared to California or Florida where land costs several times as much. The Carolinas are agricultural, but has developed a diversified, strong economy with many small industries in many medium-sized cities.

New Jaipur in Mississippi was a communal property; all members resided on the church's land, and qualified to receive life estates. Several such life leases were granted in New Jaipur. However, considering how the government has forfeited the corporate properties, and how devotees have perceived life leases as being insecure, we now concede that full, private ownership of land for individuals is the better policy. This decentralization protects the proposed community from lawsuits, church politics and attacks from enemies. Community devotees will sink roots and a solid stake into the project. Those who cannot afford to own land and a house may rent one from a devotee landlord.

While families will own their property, there will also exist a non-profit religious corporation to hold the tracts containing the community temple, parks, offices, cultural center, temple gardens and common lands. The community will be well-planned with wide streets, water and electric facilities, parks, temple site, markets and so on. Plots will be sold to devotees using the proceeds to develop the common facilities.

There have been too many bad experiences in our past with temple management. By a system of checks and balances most of these problems

can be avoided. It may be implausible to attempt the establishment of a Vedic monarchy in a modern world so thoroughly saturated in democratic principles, at least for now. An elected mayor who executes the policies and decisions of a popularly elected community board of directors, both advised by a council of brahmanas, will constitute the management. Community members must be heard and fairly represented.

However, if spiritual standards are not maintained, then what is the point of the village anyway? The main concern of the community directors will be to organize the management and uphold spiritual standards. The members must be among those devotees dedicated to following Srila Prabhupada's instructions, who will henceforward approve all new members as well as choose the directors. Naturally, there will be different classes of devotees, from pukka brahmanas to non-sadhana sudras. However, everyone must follow the basic principles and accept the teachings of His Divine Grace AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, as a membership prerequisite. Granted, there will undoubtedly be problems with the spiritual standards, but vigilance by the members and directors will be the real effective means to ensure that the village has a Krsna conscious atmosphere. Complex rules and regulations that cannot legally be enforced anyway are out; positive preaching and encouragement based on love and trust will carry the project to victory over maya.

We humbly request your support. Donations and orders from Vedic Village Books are very helpful and much appreciated.

BACK TO PRABHUPADA !  
BACK TO HOME !  
BACK TO GODHEAD !

Your servant,

*Kirtanananda das*

## NEW CHANTING TECHNIQUES ?

by Kirtanananda Swami

If one is serious to demonstrate his strong desire to the Lord, I would say these are the most important things to be done:

1) Sit properly. By that, we mean sit with your back straight. If possible, sit on the floor in a lotus position, or at least cross-legged, not leaning against anything. The ears, shoulders, and spine should be in a straight line, and the chin should be a little down toward the chest.

2) You should breathe properly, which means deeply and slowly, about 8 seconds in and 8 seconds out. This will allow you to say "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna" on the in breath, and "Krishna Krishna Hare Hare" on the out breath. Then again "Hare Rama Hare Rama" on the in, and "Rama Rama Hare Hare" on the out. Breathing properly, coordinated with the Holy Name, is the second step of proper chanting.

3) Third is concentration which is automatically accomplished when you listen carefully to the sound of the Name in the mind. New persons should chant out loud for awhile, at least until the mantra is firmly fixed in the mind. Persons who have chanted Hare Krishna for sometime may want to chant softly, quietly or silently, using earplugs or blindfolds or closed eyes to further limit sensory stimulus so they can concentrate all their energy on hearing the Holy Name.

### VVR COMMENTS:

Srila Prabhupada never told us any of the above. K Swami does so because he is supposedly empowered to reveal "new" transcendental knowledge as a current realized pure devotee. VVR disputes that any self realized soul would contradict Srila Prabhupada's teachings as blatantly as has been done by K Swami, much less a direct disciple as he is. Earplugs? Silently? Come on, let's read what Srila Prabhupada has taught us about chanting and the science of Krishna consciousness in Prabhupada's books. We think K Swami would be well advised to simply repeat the words of his guru, without adding sand to the sweet rice.

## APPOINTED ?

THIS IS AN EXCERPT FROM A RECENT PUBLICATION FROM MALAYSIA ENTITLED SRI GURU, DONE BY JAYAPATAKA SWAMI'S DISCIPLES, WHO APPARENTLY STILL ADHERE TO THE APPOINTMENT THEORY HOAX EVEN TODAY.

When Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada was preparing to leave this mortal world, he appointed some of his senior disciples to initiate new disciples in his physical absence. Jayapataka Swami Acaryapada is now the guru or spiritual master carrying on the tradition of the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya Sampradaya guru parampara (disciplic succession) and is accepting disciples in several continents of the world. He oversees the development of Krishna Consciousness in Eastern and Southern India, Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and parts of South America. In spite of his extensive worldwide responsibilities, Srila Jayapataka Swami Acaryapada has remained humble and simple in his lifestyle and habits, maintaining the strictest traditions.

# MWACHEY DOON: Preaching to the Druze

by Dhira Govinda das, Israel

Most academicians will claim that the Druze are a very unorthodox sect of Islam. However, if one probes into the Druze mentality, he will find that Druze, generally speaking, do not appreciate being considered as such. Actually, the term "Druze", like "Hindu", is a misnomer. Eldrazi was a heretic to the faith which would be named after him by those who wished to demean his sect. The Druze consider themselves to be a current manifestation of the "Mwachey Doon", which translates roughly to "one religion", or "sanatana dharma". When one examines this history and culture of the Mwachey Doon, it becomes apparent that the roots of the Druze are much more situated in the Vedic tradition than in any of the Mid-east religions.

First of all, the Druze speak of world history dating back hundreds of millions of years, with incarnations of God in the human form appearing at regular intervals. We have heard that their scriptures describe God as "Brahman" or "Hari", who appeared 5-7,000 years ago. The most recent incarnation, according to their knowledge, was El Hackem, who appeared as a Muslim king about 1,000 years ago. Those who could recognize his Godhead and follow his Mwachey doon teachings later became known as the Druze. (Eldrazi's mistake for which he was rejected from the mwachey doon, was that he preached the knowledge when it was not supposed to be preached.) Thus, it is believed that the eternal knowledge of the Mwachey Doon surfaces on the planet in different ways at different times, such as the current manifestation of the Druze. However, it is understood that there are presently Mwachey doon on different parts of the planet who go by different names.

When the Druze of Israel, both as a community and as individuals were presented with Srila Prabhupada's books, they were confronted with all of this Mwachey doon knowledge, which is supposed to be a carefully guarded secret. As far as I've heard, there is no really sublime, philosophical reason for the Druzes' secrecy. The main reason given is that if they reveal the knowledge, then they will be persecuted by the Muslims. Their habitation high in the mountainous areas is also explained as being the result of running away from Muslim persecution. Until very frequently, and maybe also at present, textbooks for school children in Muslim countries described the Druze as being bloodthirsty people who have tails one meter long.

A secondary reason for the secrecy of the Druze is that many people, including most Druze themselves, could not properly handle the knowledge. As a result, a great percentage of the Druze have a vague understanding of their philosophy. Thus, they can recognize that the books of the Hare Krishna movement are dealing with concepts that they accept to be true, such as reincarnation. Presently, many Druze are delving into Srila Prabhupada's books for a greater understanding of their own tradition, which is not accessible to them unless they become initiated as "sheikhs".

One of the great heroes of the Druze in modern times, Kamal Jumlat, made many visits to India and did extensive research into the Vedas. Jumlat's books, both in Arabic and English, extol the Bhagavad Gita and Krishna, though his understanding is ultimately impersonal and Gandhian, in that he used the Bhagavad Gita to support his political strategies in Lebanon. (He was also assassinated.) In any case, his work has deeply impressed the Druze psyche about the importance of the Vedas to their own culture. This further explains their receptivity to the original Vedic scriptures being presented in a language that they can understand.

From what I understand, only the Israeli and Lebanese Druze are able to boldly express their Druze identity. Elsewhere, such as Syria and Jordan, they are forced to identify themselves as Muslims, for fear of persecution. Especially in Israel, it is particularly advantageous for the Druze to be distinctly Druze, as they are enjoying a mutually beneficial political relationship with the Jewish government. Although there is a faction of Israeli Druze who identify themselves as Arabs, with all of the designation's connotations, most prefer to remain distinct from the Muslim Arabs.

In January of 1989, Salman Falach, Druze minister of education in Israel, purchased from the devotees about \$8,000 worth of books for the Druze schools and for himself personally. We now understand this as an attempt to support their position as non-Muslim, with roots stemming in India. Mr. Falach has expressed interest in doing a doctoral thesis demonstrating that the Vedas are the actual roots of the Druze religion. Some other noteworthy points of similarity between Druze and Vedic tradition include regulative principles of purity as well as appreciation of the principle of renunciation. An initiated sheikh, if he is actually following strictly, must restrict himself from smoking, drinking and gambling, and is allowed to unite with his wife for procreation. (We've also heard that this is permitted only once in three or five years for those who are serious.) Kamal Jumlat lived the later part of his life as a celibate vanaprastha and was strictly vegetarian. Generally speaking, the Druze appreciate vegetarianism as a moral and spiritual principle, although most eat meat as a result of exposure to the Muslim society. Our experience from living in their villages is that food preparations that are native to the Druze are vegetarian. They especially like vegetable filled pastries, such as samosas. Also, it seems that coffee making is a bad habit they picked up over the generations, though it is not native to their culture.

As far as renunciation, I recall a lengthy discussion I had on sankirtan with a high school principal. At one point, he stated, without any hints on my part, that it is customary in their culture to renounce material engagements such as business at about the age of fifty. Another interesting point is that according to Druze astronomy, it is not possible that man has gone to the moon. Also, their use of analogies is often identical with those with which we are familiar. When they see the BG verse 2-22, the Druze usually become delighted and amazed, as they describe transmigration in the same way. Another hero of theirs, Sultan Atrash, is the image of the saintly kshatriya. He was a strict monarch that led his country in a battle for independence. Afterwards, he lived a quiet life, not accepting any position of power.

In a recent meeting with Sheikh Amin Tarif, possibly the greatest Druze leader in the world today, he stated that he would like the Druze to work cooperatively with the Hare Krishna movement "as one race". This is quite a significant statement considering the clandestine and insulated nature of Druze society. Many Druze have difficulty believing that the Sheikh said "as one race". We're quickly being accepted as one of the Mwachey Doon.

Recently, a journalist in Rama, the village where we've been living, printed an article about Hare Krishna in "Diwali", the Druze newspaper in Israel. Practically, he let me dictate the article while he translated the words into Arabic. The response has been fantastic. Sometimes when we knock on doors, they identify us as Druze and take all of the books. We now present an eight volume Hebrew set as well as Bhagavad Gita in Arabic and a new edition of Coming Back in

Arabic. This edition has a picture of Kamal Jumlat, which they really love. We also inserted some quotes from Kalil Gibran, who most Arabs greatly admire, about reincarnation.

On April 25, we attended the holiest Druze festival of the year at the site of the tomb of the prophet, Schweib (the Biblical character known as Jethro). Thousands of sheikhs attended from Lebanon, Israel and the Golan. As a whole, they were friendly and receptive to the devotees and extremely curious about Krishna consciousness. Many took books. Many Druze are reading Srila Prabhupada's books deeply, and their lives are clearly affected. A few weeks ago, I met a woman school teacher on sankirtan. She was reluctant to speak due to natural chastity, but she managed to express that she's read the first five books in the set (BG, KB, SB1, CC, Adi Lila in two parts), is following the regulative principles, even to the point of giving up coffee (very difficult in an Arab village), and wants to learn more about chanting.

In Rama, many young men have become vegetarian. One simple construction worker named Rezek has been chanting at least eight rounds per day for more than a year and reads the books regularly. He states, "Krishna is my way. I want to go back to Krishna." Recently on sankirtan, I met a school manager who had received a set of books and japa beads a year earlier. He said that whenever he feels some anxiety, he chants the Hare Krishna maha-mantra on the beads and feels immediate relief. The children in the village of Rama chant Hare Krishna as a natural part of their play. Variations of the mantra include, "Hare Krishna, Hare Rama, Rama Krishna Allah."

It's common in talking to Druze to hear remembrances of past lives. Towards the end of one mantra, my wife heard one Druze say, "You don't love Krishna like I love Krishna." He went on to relate his past life in the Himalayas.

We have recently had some very friendly contact with Mr. Assad. Mr. Assad was one one of the top-ranking (if not the top) Druze in the Israeli military. He served for some time in New York at the UN as a representative for Israel. Currently, he is a top advisor to the Minister of Minority Affairs. Needless to say, he has a full set of books. He recently visited us in our humble abode in Rama to ask serious philosophical questions. Mr. Assad is being sent to India by the Israeli government to meet the Dalai Lama (we suspect that there are other undisclosed reasons). He plans to visit our ISKCON centers there as well.

One boy in Rama has recently completed an Arabic translation of Perfect Questions Perfect Answers, which he did voluntarily. We are currently living in Osafia, a predominantly Druze village near Haifa, with Isvara Krishna dasa, his wife Radha Madhava dasi, their daughter Jahnavi, and Parama Guru dasa brahmachari. Our landlord is Mr. Salim Zedan, an English teacher who is scholarly in both Arabic and English. Salim has expressed interest in translating Srila Prabhupada's books into Arabic. Elsewhere in Arab Israel, the Muslims and Christians are inclined to take books and give donations to the devotees out of natural piety. Recently in Tel Aviv, Guna Avatara and Devahuti prabhus had a very nice success at a big book fair.

Also, Nama Hatta preaching is going strong. The Israeli society, as a result of many years of tireless preaching by devotees there, is accepting the Hare Krishna devotees as authorities on the wisdom of India and as sincere representatives of the Bhagavad Gita. This is despite the existence in Israel of a bewildering array of bogus yoga groups and speculative scholars. Recently, the devotees were invited to give a Bhagavad Gita lecture to a group of tour guides from a big agency that tours India. Also, several university professors are requesting the devotees to address their classes.

## ELECTRIC / MAGNETIC FIELDS

### An "explanation" from a local light company

Wherever there is electricity, there are electric and magnetic fields, sometimes called EMFs. These fields are produced by lights, motors, televisions, power lines and countless other devices that carry or consume power.

Is there a difference in electric and magnetic fields? Yes. Electric fields are directly associated with voltage - the higher the voltage, the stronger the electric field. Magnetic fields are created when electric current flows through a conductor - the higher the current, the stronger the magnetic field. It is current, not voltage, which determines the level of magnetism created by a line or appliance.

Scientists have conducted many studies to determine whether electric and magnetic fields create negative health effects. Originally, most research was done on electric fields. However, scientists did not find any adverse health effects. More recently though, magnetic fields have received growing attention. While high-voltage lines carry currents which can produce large magnetic fields, common household appliances such as televisions, hair dryers and microwave ovens can produce similar magnetic fields.

Most studies have shown no correlation between magnetic fields and adverse health effects, though some have suggested a link may exist. One such study, conducted in Denver by Dr. David Savitz, Ph.D., from the University of North Carolina, indicated that close proximity to power lines and other electrical sources such as household appliances, seemed to result in a near doubling of the incidence of childhood leukemia - from one case in 10,000 per year to two cases in 10,000 per year - among children in homes which were assumed to have a higher magnetic field.

These findings were highly uncertain, however, and the researchers involved maintained that their work raised important questions but fell far short of offering any conclusions or proof. Even Dr. Savitz was unsure of his findings. "It should be kept in mind," he said, "that we have not proven that magnetic fields cause cancer. Subsequent research will indicate whether we are on the right track or whether our results are in error."

Scientists agree that more research is in order. We, at the Lighting and Power Company, are presently helping to fund a number of different magnetic field studies through the Electric Power Research Institute in Palo Alto, California. We are also attempting to track all research in this area.

In the meantime, what can the public do about electric and magnetic fields? While scientific research has not demonstrated that any electric and magnetic fields are unsafe, some would recommend that individuals increase their distance and time away from the numerous sources of electric and magnetic fields in today's world - for example, electrical equipment, appliances and power lines.

There are no clear standards or guidelines on "safe" exposures to EMFs. And there are no magic shields, special gadgets or deflectors proven to eliminate or reduce these fields. In order to avoid electric and magnetic field, people would have to return to life without television or air conditioning - to the days of candlelight, iron kettles and washboards. Even then, it would not be possible to avoid the earth's naturally occurring magnetic fields. As a society, we can return to the "good old days" or we can continue to live safely around electricity.

Editor's comment: Sounds like pooh-poohing to us. We have a photocopy tract and a hardcover book in our book listing that paint a much less rosy picture than above.

# INTERFAITH ?

From Harinam Das, Milo, HI

In regard to Kirtanananda Swami's article in VVR #16 and P.K. Swami's article in VVR #14 on interfaith preaching in New Vrindavan, Lord Chaitanya Himself as well as all mahabagavat acharyas, including Srila Prabhupad, have rejected co-operative or interfaith preaching. The main reason is that this kind of continual association with the uninitiated nondevotees is an offense to Krishna and an unwanted thing (anartha) for spiritual advancement.

The rejection of interfaith preaching is a logical one, for as long as sense gratification (karma) or philosophical speculation (jnana) is allowed in the name of religion or interfaith, no one will care for prohibitions (S.B. 1:5:15). The activities of both sense gratification and philosophical speculation are hostile to the supremacy of Sri Krishna; therefore, pure devotees are diametrically opposed to any of their religious rituals or philosophy. This uncompromising stand can be further appreciated if we analyze the inherent sins and corruption within the intellect and epistemology of the uninitiated.

The uninitiated or nondevotees practice the ascending (varoha) method of acquiring knowledge, which is of two types: namely empiric sensuous perception (paroksha) and the negation of all sensuous perception (aparoksha). Those who practice empiric sensuous perception are called karmis or those who work for their material enjoyment. They do not accept that there are four basic defects inherent in all conditioned souls in this material world, namely imperfect senses, subjection to illusion, prone to mistakes, and tendency to cheating (C.C. Adi 7:107; Bg. 7:27).

On the other hand, those who practice negation of sensuous perception are of two types: namely jnanis (monists) and impersonal (nigarbha) mystic yogis. Here is a brief overview.

The practice of empiric sensuous perception (paroksha) is further divided into two groups; either selfish materialism (artha-economic development, kama-sense gratification) or unselfish materialism (dharma-material religiosity, charity, tapasya-penance, etc.). Both acquire their knowledge through the empiric senses and thus erroneously accept the material senses and their objects as absolutely real. As a result, their goal in life is a salvation based only on material sense enjoyment either in this life (artha, kama) or the next in heaven (dharma), without knowing its transitory and perverted nature (Bg. 7:20,23).

Victimized by their material bodily identification (maya shakti) karmis inevitably compete for enjoying the false ego of lording it over the objects of the material senses and thereby become openly hostile to Krishna's supremacy. Thus they have no access to His presence (Bg. 2:44; 7:13). Eventually, the selfish materialists create horrible acts meant to destroy the world (Bg. 16:9), while the unselfish materialists are concerned only at achieving "heavenly" material sense gratification in the next life (Bg. 2:42). However, real religion is never meant for material enjoyment, but for perfect knowledge of our eternal relationship with the Absolute (sambandha-jnana) (S.B. 1:2:9-10). The religion based on material enjoyment is called kaitava-dharma, or cheating religion, and it is just another form of material life masquerading as real religion.

On the other hand is the aparoksha method of acquiring knowledge thru negation of all sensuous perception, which is made up of jnanis and impersonal mystic yogis. The

jnanis aspire for transcendental knowledge of the impersonal Absolute Brahman by philosophically repudiating and renouncing all sensuous perception (kaivalya advaitavad or exclusive monism). After much trouble and austerity, they can rise to the platform of neutralizing the material energy in order to give up their individuality (pseudo moksha) for merging with Krishna's spiritual effulgence (brahmajyoti).

Similar to the jnanis are the impersonal mystic yogis who practice sitting postures, breathing exercises, meditation and material renunciation as the means to acquire knowledge of the Absolute in the heart (indwelling Supersoul). For their severe austerities they are awarded mystic powers which are often mistaken for the ultimate goal of mystic yoga meditation. The others also prefer to give up their individuality to become one with the Supersoul.

Both these jnanis and yogis practice "passive" (aparoksha) hostility toward Krishna, because despite being able to cut off their association with the material energy, they still ignore Krishna's personal glories and refuse to serve Him. Knowingly or not, this is due to their envy of or desire to become like Krishna or God, which is the last snare of illusion. This unclear intelligence (avishuddha buddhaya) is the cause of their inevitable fall down back into the material world (S.B. 10:2:32).

In summary, our lack of surrender to Krishna is manifested in the ascending method of acquiring knowledge through the practice of karma, jnana, or mystic yoga. We thereby attain the corresponding goals and destinations either in the hellish planets, heavenly planets, or the Brahmajyoti/Paramatma. Thus, one realizes only a perverted relationship (sambandha) with Krishna, a perverted function in that relationship (abhideya), and a perverted fruit in that function (prayojan), all according to the degree of our surrender to Krishna and the corresponding method used to acquire our knowledge (Bg. 4.11). For these reasons, pure devotees clearly do not associate very freely with the uninitiated.

In any case, it is only by acquiring knowledge through the descending (avaroha) methods of devotional service (bhakti) that one attains actual liberation from karma, jnana, and yoga by awakening Krishna prem, the fifth and ultimate goal of life. (Bg. 11:54; S.B. 1:2:7,20).

Factually, karmis, jnanis, and yogis are all fallen souls whose so-called "faith" is hostile to the supremacy of Sri Krishna. Therefore, they are never given a pulpit for spreading their hostility and cheating philosophies in the name of religion (C.C. Adi 1:90).

Simply for everyone to have faith in "what is" or "God" is to oversimplify the problem. To advocate that Christians should become perfect Christians, Muslims perfect Muslims, and Buddhists perfect Buddhists then quote verse (18:66) from Bhagavad-gita is very contradictory. The various relationships to the Absolute, the various functions in those relationships, as well as the fruits of those functions are in fact all very different and quite incompatible with each other. To say that the One Absolute is worshipped in many ways is true but bhakti is the only CORRECT method of worship.

Prabhupad wanted New Vrindavan to be a community for his disciples, grand disciples, and devotees of Krishna only, not karmis, jnanis, or yogis. Therefore, until the uninitiated are willing to give up their offensive sinful behavior and fully surrender to Krishna, by acquiring knowledge only through the descending method (Krishna and His pure devotees), they should only be invited to hear, chant, and take prasadam with us. For such offenders to be allowed to live among devotees of Krishna and Lord Chaitanya is unthinkable.



# BACK TO KIRTAN

by Dinadayadri dasi

I have recently been reading my first VVR (# 14) and have also just received the new Jan/Feb '91 BTG. I have found the excellent articles in both publications to be very stimulating. This is virtually the first contact have had with Krsna consciousness in eight years and feel like I am waking up after a very long sleep. However, I am writing to you because I sense your publication is the more open forum and more likely to respond to views from all sides.

I am a disciple of Srila Prabhupada, initiated in 1970, but I was finally driven out of the Movement for good in 1983 by acute anguish over the apparent attempts by leaders at that time to obliterate our beloved Srila Prabhupada from the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya Sampradaya. The final straw was when the local "guru" ordered his disciples NOT to attend Srila Prabhupada's vyasa puja celebration and then sat on his vyasasana gloating at the paltry turnout as if this was some kind of great victory over his godbrothers, some of whom had been banned from the temple and labeled "snakes" and some of whom simply stayed away in disgust. This and many other shocking goings on became too much to bear and the only solace I have found in material life is a respite from the heart-wrenching turmoil that had engulfed ISKCON after Prabhupada's departure (and even before), but the loneliness and isolation I suffer in separation from my godbrothers and godsisters is indeed of tragic proportions. Therefore, I am extremely happy to see that someone has had the courage to defy the "mushroom theory of management" that has plagued ISKCON for so many years and that a forum is finally being given to dissenters such as myself who have lost their way but who still cling to Srila Prabhupada as their life and soul, the only ray of hope in this dismal material world.

I must say, my head is spinning from all the intense philosophical wrangling I have encountered in your VVR! But I do think you should all (New Jaipur, GBC, gurus) get together and study tapes and videos of Srila Prabhupada chanting the Hare Krsna Maha Mantra. You should put all your misgivings about each other aside for a while and pool your considerable collective brain power into trying to understand and enter into the mood of chanting that Srila Prabhupada displayed as an example to us--the mood of a lost child crying for his mother's presence and with great awe and reverence before the Supreme Lord, as befits our neophyte status. Then perhaps the Lord will benedict you all with the ability to resolve these philosophical issues, which must be resolved quickly for the sake of the entire planet.

Once, Srila Prabhupada came upon two of his disciples embracing out of sheer joy in their good fortune at having come in contact with a genuine pure devotee of the Lord, and he expressed great satisfaction at seeing this, saying, "Yes, this is wanted--embracing mood, not quarreling mood!" As I am sure you are all aware, there is a dire need for Krsna consciousness in the world, now more than ever, as wars and atrocities are being perpetrated on all sides in the name of God. ISKCON has a vital role to play in the earth's salvation by establishing the transcendental world religion of Krsna consciousness and helping members of sectarian faiths understand the one Supreme Personality of Godhead as the source of all incarnations and avatars.

The chanting and dancing that Srila Prabhupada displayed was not fettered by any particular mundane "style". It was, of course, as was everything he did, purely transcendental, untouched by material designations. But even in the early '70's, some devotees began introducing different concocted "styles" of chanting and dancing, for what reason I never understood.

Did they think Srila Prabhupada was "too old fashioned"?!! There was a tendency to mix Indian musical styles with western "rock 'n roll", which produced a very strange, cacophonous result. One time in Mayapur in the early '70's, Srila Prabhupada heard a particularly raucous kirtan going on outside over the loudspeakers. When it was finished, he commented, quite seriously, "Thank goodness it's over!" Later he questioned the devotees about the chanting and they said, "Srila Prabhupada, that was Bengali kirtan," at which His Divine Grace frowned and said, "Why not Krsna kirtan!"

The real point is that to be safe, why not stick to the chanting Srila Prabhupada himself gave to us and considered suitable for our understanding and advancement, songs like "Hari Hari Biphale," "Jiv Jago," "Siksastaka" and "The Prayers to the Six Gosvamis"--one need only look over a list of titles that Srila Prabhupada himself recorded to get the idea. What more simple yet sublime way to show our love for Srila Prabhupada and our gratitude for what he's given us than to express our loyalty in this way? I'm not talking about false imitation or oppressive rules. The only rule I ever heard Srila Prabhupada enforce regarding chanting was the singing of the morning melody during mangala aratik--he would actually stop kirtans and insist that this melody be sung. Of course, Lord Caitanya stated in His Siksastaka prayers that there are no hard and fast rules for chanting the Holy Names, and Srila Prabhupada always explained this verse by saying that any one, any place, any time can chant the Holy Names of the Lord, "even a dog can take part in it." But he also warned, "Chanting should be heard from the lips of a pure devotee. Milk touched by the lips of a serpent has poisonous effect." Of course, we can't expect to be able to chant purely in our materially contaminated state; but how can we ever perfect the lessons given us by our teacher (not some other teacher or, worse yet, some imposter who is not well versed in the transcendental science of bhakti-yoga at all) unless we practice those lessons? Practice makes perfect.

I would suggest that in order to come more in line with the example set by Srila Prabhupada, some general guidelines for congregational chanting might be: to never intentionally turn one's back on the Deity; to use one simple melody throughout kirtan that everyone, including guests, can follow; to maintain a constant tempo with a slow, gradual increase, if desired, so that participants can meditate on hearing and chanting the Lord's Holy Name instead of being disturbed by so many fits and starts; that one's arms and hands should be either held respectfully together in a prayerful mode or above one's head in ecstatic surrender, not listlessly flopping and dangling at one's side as if jogging; to dance in the graceful side to side step that Srila Prabhupada showed us that makes devotees look like denizens of Vaikuntha; and to always remember to behave not so that you can see Krsna, but so that Krsna will see you.

We must always be vigilant that everything Srila Prabhupada did and said be given our utmost respect and attention, and never should remembering Srila Prabhupada's transcendental ways of doing things be considered simply "quaint nostalgia". I strongly believe that if we all try to remember Srila Prabhupada properly while performing the congregational chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord, all philosophical misunderstandings will eventually be cleared up, the demigods will once again shower flowers of benediction upon us, and Sri Narada Muni will again come, as Srila Prabhupada once said he did, to "laugh at all the mleccas and candalas dancing and chanting Hare Krsna!" In fact, after one such gloriously uplifting kirtan, I heard Srila Prabhupada say, "If you chant like that, this Krsna consciousness movement will spread very quickly all over the world!" This is our legacy--let's not cheat ourselves out of it.

**From: HINDUISM TODAY August 1991**

## **WEST VIRGINIA SWAMI GETS 30 YEARS**

Swami Kirtanananda Bhaktipada, 53-year-old founder of the West Virginia New Vrindaban community, was convicted March 26, 1991, on six counts of mail fraud and three counts of racketeering, including conspiring to kill a fringe member of the New Vrindaban community. US federal prosecutors said the community, under Kirtanananda's direction, had sold millions of caps, bumper stickers, pins and T-shirts bearing copyrighted logos such as Snoopy and football team insignia. From 1981 to 1985 they claim the group profited (US) \$10.5 million.

The New Vrindaban community charges the persecution is motivated by the desire to get the controversial group out of West Virginia. Only one of the trademark owners actually took legal action against the group - United Features, who own Snoopy and settled out of court for a sum reported to be in the millions of dollars.

Under US law, property acquired from the profits of racketeering can be seized, and federal officials are moving for forfeiture of most of the group's 4,000 acres. They do not intend to claim the Palace of Gold, the spectacular monument to ISKCON founder Srila Prabhupada Maharaja, because of religious rights issues.

The US ISKCON organization expelled Kirtanananda in 1987 and has made a major effort in recent years in the US media to distance itself from the renegade swami, fearing that the public will continue to associate the two. ISKCON told Hinduism Today they hope to acquire possession of forfeited New Vrindaban property from the government. The head of the ISKCON Governing Body Commission, Ravindra Swarup, testified at Kirtanananda's pre-sentencing bail hearing that devotees in New Vrindaban were likely to make a "blood bath" for protection of the swami. Because of this testimony, bail was not granted. Vedavyasa Priya Swami of New Vrindaban called the move "dirty politics" on the part of ISKCON.

ISKCON itself is pleased with the conviction. The verdict against Kirtanananda bolsters ISKCON's decision to expel him in 1987, and his followers in 1988," said Ravindra Swarup in a press release immediately after the sentencing. "He and his followers thought they were above the laws of both God and the United States."

With good behavior, Kirtanananda can be released in 26 years. His followers are appealing. Impartial trial observers told Hinduism Today the prosecution introduced testimony not directly relevant to the formal charges, testimony which made New Vrindaban out to be a dangerous "cult" and could now be grounds for an appeal to a higher court.

From Eleanor Grant, Waterloo, Ont. Canada,  
8.15.91, to Hinduism Today:

I wish to thank you for your coverage of the conviction of Swami Kirtanananda Bhaktipada, and also to register my dismay at the derogatory tone of the article and the remarks made by the Swami's former Godbrothers in ISKCON.

I am a frequent visitor to the New Vrindaban community, and I find the spiritual atmosphere there to be very rare and uplifting to the soul. I have many reasons to believe that Swami Bhaktipada is innocent of most of the charges against him and that his appeal will be successful. I enclose for your perusal an editorial recently written about the case of the

Washington-based human rights group, Religious Freedom Alert. More information can also be obtained by contacting New Vrindaban's media relations officer, Paramahansa Krishna Swami, R.D. 1, Box 319, Moundsville, WV 26041, and asking for the booklet Conspiracy in West Virginia. I urge you and your readers to take a more complete look at this attack on a minority Hindu sect.

As for the statements by ISKCON leaders, we should always be very hesitant to repeat unkind things about what people say about others. At the very least, we should try to find out how the other party views the situation. And may I suggest, with care, that we should exercise particular discrimination in accepting the statements of an organization whose preaching is so often full of criticism of other devotees of God, which is deeply wounding to the soul.

The New Vrindaban devotees are continuing to praise and worship Lord Krishna with great devotion, as well as building the great Temple of the Holy Name, and sponsoring the regular Interfaith Festivals for which they are famous. They are bearing their time of trial with grace and forbearance and with determination to use it for the perfecting of themselves and the glorification of the Lord.

They deserve our loving prayers and support.

### **VVR EDITORIAL:**

There are some who are glad to see Kirtanananda Swami and New Vrindaban in such deep trouble. We are not, however. Furthermore, we are appalled by Rabindra Swarup Prabhu's siding with the government in an attempt to finish off K Swami and N Vrindaban. It is not that VVR has any special liking for K Swami, as is clear from our past coverage of his philosophical deviations and concoctions. Yet, K Swami remains nevertheless a devotee of Krishna, whether he has betrayed Prabhupada's trust or not. And the US government is quite obviously persecuting a minority "cult"; we may their next target. As a matter of fact, New Jaipur was shut down by the government due to some alleged, relatively minor offence.

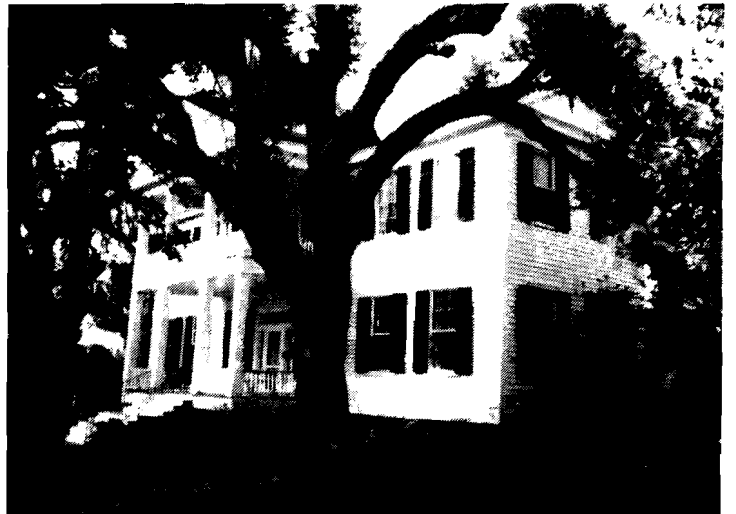
The US government has an official seizure and forfeiture program which zeroes in on those unable to arouse the public sympathy or support necessary to defend themselves. Should we be glad to see our deviant brother unfairly harassed by a demoniac government? No. We may speak philosophically about his deviations, but all devotees (and citizens also, actually) have a common enemy in a government which is godless and filled with thieves and plunderers. Whatever societal crimes K Swami committed were not proven by any measure of certitude in that sham of a trial; it is mundane politics and a personal quarrell that seems to motivate Rabindra Swarup and the GBC in their support of the government vs. New Vrindaban. With "friends" like GBC devotees, who needs enemies?

**NEW VRINDABAN NOTES**





*Entrance hall*



*Landscaping around residence*

**SCENES FROM NEW JAIPUR'S NEW LOCATION, SOUTH CAROLINA**





# A SEARCH FOR SADHUS

by Narasimha das

Four years after Srila Prabhupada departed the mortal plane, chaos was brewing in Iskcon. I, like many of my Godbrothers, thought to seek guidance from elderly Vaisnavas of significant stature. Yet I was hesitant to approach Prabhupada's Godbrothers of the Gaudiya Matha institutions for a number of reasons. Although different interpretations were being put forth regarding Prabhupada's specific instructions regarding his Godbrothers, I felt he generally would not approve of his disciples going to them whimsically, just to satisfy their curiosity or to settle some dispute or to find an excuse to not work in Iskcon. I doubted some of my own motives and some of the motives of those flocking to the Gaudiya Math branches. I didn't want to get involved.

Besides, I was stationed in South India, and I dreaded going north of Bangalore. Moreover, Srimad-Bhagavatam says that in Kali-yuga most great devotees would appear in South India. Lord Caitanya had insisted on touring South India personally and alone. He preached there for nearly six years. Dravida-desh is definitely a special area of India, and I suspected that great Vaisnava sages were perhaps hidden there in the hills. Indeed, reputable authorities say Agastya Rishi is still living in the southern part of the Malaya Hills.

One day at a remote lake at the foot of Agastya Malai, Tattva Darshan and I discussed hiking up through steep jungles to the area where Agastya Rishi was supposed to reside. We would call for him through prayer and kirtan. From time to time, people had reported seeing him, and some even left offerings of cooked food for him on stone tables. However, we couldn't convince ourselves he would be particularly eager to meet us, so we scrapped the idea.

But I was sick of meeting bogus sadhus in the streets of cities and at commercially polluted holy places. If they were educated they were usually mayavadis. If they weren't mayavadis or outright offenders, they were dull-witted, lazy sudras who had become so-called sadhus for the sake of prestige and easy eating. Rarely had I met sadhus of the genuine stamp, and even these were often hopelessly tied to the limited scope of doctrine and ritual within a particular sect.

Certainly after meeting Prabhupada and becoming his disciple, I was bound to be disappointed by the vast majority of sadhus in India. Yet I felt it would boost my morale in the difficult times and increase my faith if I could meet at least one traditional Vedic sage. I decided to head for the hills specifically to a place called Papanasanam.

Papanasanam is a lovely sacred abode at the foot of high mountains on the southeastern side of the Cardamom Hills. Lord Caitanya visited here. Above the village towers Agastya Malai, the reputed abode of Agastya Rishi. Pilgrims come here to stand under the waterfall and bathe in the river that gushes out of the lush green mountains. Most just come to bathe. They then leave quickly because this place is austere: no restaurants, no hotels, no sweet shops or soda shops, no trinket or souvenir shops. The temples and bathing ghats, the sacred stream and falls—these are the only attractions. A few austere brahmins and farmers and simple merchants live around.

I loved it. Very quiet, pure atmosphere. I gazed up at the mountains. They looked so mysterious and inviting. Maybe I would meet Agastya Rishi up there.

I bought some supplies and talked to local residents about the trails. They warned me of wild boars, elephants, leopards, and snakes. In the evening I walked over to one of the bathing ghats and noticed a family

with a nine-year-old boy bathing near me. The boy was suffering from some form of paralysis. The father told me that doctors in London and Madras had told them the boy could not live more than six months. That had been two years ago. They had moved back to their ancestral home near Tirunelveli and were coming often to Kutalam and Papanasanam. The boy had recently been showing some signs of improvement. I advised the man to add hari-kirtan and nama-japa, particularly the Hare Krsna mahamantra, to the treatment. I explained that the root of all disease is spiritual. He agreed and said his grandfather had been a great devotee of Lord Krsna.

Just after talking with this man, I saw an old man of the brahmin caste trying to force his son to bathe in the pool. The boy was about fifteen. He seemed healthy and strong but mentally deranged. Suddenly he screamed and pushed his father hard. The man fell on the rocks and just lay there, moaning in pain and frustration. A yogi with matted locks in a bun on his head was standing up to his waist in water nearby. He grabbed the boy by the hair and pulled him into deeper water. While dunking the boy several times, the yogi shouted, "Narasimha Deva! Narasimha Deva!" and other names of Visnu.

The old brahmin, and everyone else around, including myself, just stared, wide-eyed and agape. No one said a word, and no one made a move to stop the yogi. It occurred to me that this yogi was perhaps as insane as the boy and would drown him. I made a move forward, and at that moment the yogi released the boy, who went immediately to his father. People gathered quickly around the old man and the boy. The old man told another brahmin man there that his son had become insane several days before after ingesting some poison or intoxicant. He then embraced his son and walked away. I heard later that the boy was cured of his insanity.

Amazed at the yogi's apparent faith in the holy names of Visnu, I followed him to the edge of the village and up the trail that led into the forest. He walked briskly, as if leaving the scene of a crime. Doubtful and anxious about what I had just seen, I remained some distance behind him. After a while, when I tried to catch up to him, he disappeared. He must have left the trail and entered the forest.

The next day I left the tiny room I had rented from a local brahmin. I packed rice and a clay cooking pot, along with some bananas and a jar of ghee, and headed up the trail, which mostly followed the banks of the main stream. The forest was abloom, producing an incredibly sweet fragrance. After about two miles I came to a very old temple that had no full-time pujari. I had breakfast with some sadhus there and asked about the yogi. They knew of the man and warned me to stay away from him. They told me he was considered crazy by some and spiritually powerful by others. Everyone just stayed clear of him when they saw him, which wasn't often. He lived somewhere in a cave higher in the hills. No one around Papanasanam knew his history. I was intrigued.

After joining the sadhus for a bath in a lovely, crystal-clear pool, which we dived into from ledges above, I set out alone to the end of the trail, where there was another deep, clear pool in a chasm of solid stone. An ill-defined trail continued on. Sometimes I had to climb or crawl to go higher.

Rounding a bend, I came upon a large green snake poised like a cobra in the trail. Its pink eyes stared into the jungle. I chanted, "Asita, Artiman, Astika, and Sunitha." These names of great sages and devotees are mentioned in Mahabharata. Saying these names, one is protected from snakes. I assumed these names would scare snakes away, but apparently they don't always do that. The snake didn't budge.

I shouted, "Hare Krsna! Giri Govardhana!"

The snake still didn't budge. Finally, with reckless courage, a staff in my hand, I threw a large stone. The snake swayed to one side, dodging the rock. I threw another. The snake dodged again with easy grace. I left the trail and went through the forest, around the snake. It never moved or even looked my way.

Later that afternoon, high in the hills, between two large, flowering trees, I noticed some stone steps leading down to the stream. I followed them down into a small garden and saw a cave with a door. The door was locked, but I looked in through a window with bars. There was an altar at the end of the cave and grass mats on a smooth floor. Outside, I stood on a wide adobe patio. Surrounding the patio, a few herbs, spices, vegetables, beans, bananas, and flowers grew. Tulasi Devi was growing in a small area sectioned off with bamboo sticks. Beyond this small clearing, on two sides, dense jungle seemed ready to swallow this tiny abode. Behind the cave was a cliff covered in flowering vines, and in front of the patio huge round boulders formed the bank of the stream. I thought, "What a lovely retreat. I'll camp here tonight."

At one corner of the patio was a small hole surrounded by rocks. The adobe here was particularly smooth and clean. A crude mortar and pestle sat nearby on a slab of wood. A knife was stuck in the wood. I had found the kitchen.

I lit a fire, then went to the stream and washed some rice in my clay pot. After washing the rice, I put clean water in the pot and put it on the fire. I picked some beans, spinach, and spices and threw them in the pot. While the rice cooked, I made a small altar using leaves and rocks and put a picture of Prabhupada there. When the rice was done, I put it on a new banana leaf, gut ghee on it and offered it to Prabhupada.

Then the trouble began.

I had made myself quite a home here and hadn't really worried that I was intruding on someone else's turf. Preaching in India as a brahmachari, I had often walked in the front door of important pious men's homes without an invitation, and sometimes without even knocking. I had always been cordially, if not warmly, received. Also, I had twice visited sadhus in hermitages like this. The receptions had been very kind and generous. But this occasion proved quite different.

I was greatly embarrassed and nearly degraded by the events that followed. The resident sadhu here had guards. They were monkeys. About a dozen of them. The next twenty hours was a nightmare.

When I sat down to eat, they came raining down from the treetops and landed on the patio, chattering and snarling at me. I had dealt with monkeys before in Vrindaban and had never been intimidated by them. I picked up my staff, shouted, and charged. Several monkeys fled into the trees, but others went behind me and grabbed for my rice. I whirled around and swung my stick, chasing away those monkeys; but immediately the others were back and grabbing at my handbag. I whirled again and threw a stone, and the monkeys retreated. Somehow I managed to eat about half the rice I had cooked, but the monkeys broke my pot and stole the uncooked rice, my ghee, and some of my clothes. They snarled at me and showed their teeth and finally succeeded in making me angry. I started throwing small rocks at them, and I had to keep rocks with me at every moment to keep them away.

I doubted that these monkeys knew what they were up against: a martial arts enthusiast and former meat-eater. I became more vicious in my attacks, but they easily matched my viciousness and allowed me no rest.

That night I thought they had left. Then I noticed them moving on the boulders by the stream. They were

going to sleep there. I had planned to sleep on one of the big flat boulders surrounded by water, but this night I was forced to put my anti-snake mantra and my faith in Giri Govardhana-ji to a test; the monkeys forced me to sleep on the patio surrounded by dense jungle.

"I'm easy prey for anything," I thought. It took me a long time to fall asleep. I got up just before sunrise and chanted a few rounds before dawn. As soon as there was some light, the monkeys charged again. Though hungry and disturbed, I finally abandoned the thought of attaining any peace or satisfaction here or even protecting my belongings other than my beads. But I came to this point of surrender only after nearly killing a monkey.

I think he was the chief monkey. He had gotten very bold this morning, showing off for his many female concubines. He had come very close to me, snarling and showing me grotesque faces. Once when I had swung my stick hand, he had been a second too slow. The stick had knocked him over, and the contact with this lump of flesh and fur had momentarily intoxicated me with an instinct to kill.

I lunged on the beast and pinned his neck on the patio with my staff. He erupted with a shrill, human-sounding scream, and this caused all the other monkeys to flee in panic. Now the fight was between me and him alone. Here pinned was the leader of my enemies. The monkey was passing stool and urine. His eyes were full of terror. I pressed down to choke him, but suddenly his face seemed very innocent, like a child's. I let him go immediately and decided I would no longer fight. The monkey fled, and I walked upstream, jumping from boulder to boulder.

I was determined to ignore the monkeys unless they tried to take my beads or my life. They left me alone, and I finished my prescribed rounds of japa in peace.

Later that morning, I met Swami Mukta-sanga, the sadhu who lived at this hermitage. Unlike his guards, he was quite hospitable. And unlike most sadhus I had met in India, he was clean, calm, bright, unpretentious, and learned. He was a sannyasi of the Rudra-sampradaya, one of the four Vaishnava sampradayas. He wore a long black beard and had his hair neatly tied in a bun on top of his head. He had been a Sanskrit professor at a big university in Bihar but resigned after an argument with the chancellor. The chancellor had angrily said, "Go take sannyas and live in a cave!" and the professor had done just that.

We spent the day telling each other the relevant parts of our life stories and discussing Srimad-Bhagavatam and Mahabharata. That evening, after cooking a pot of kitri and having a bhajan, we sat down to eat ... with about a dozen monkeys. Well-behaved monkeys! They lined up in a row on the far side of the patio, and Swami Mukta-sanga served the rice before them on individual leaf plates. When they finished eating, they ate their plates and left. After the monkeys left, the swami served four big crows in the same manner. Two of the crows chanted, "Swami Narayana, Swami Narayana" before eating. After eating, they flew away with their plates in their beaks.

After dinner, with some difficulty and shame, I made a confession to Mukta-sanga Swami. "Overcome with anger," I said, "I nearly killed one of your pet monkeys."

He expressed no shock or surprise. He talked a while about the three gates to hell: lust, anger, and greed, saying anger was worse than lust but not as vicious as greed. He excused me saying, "Those monkeys can be obnoxious. The important thing is that you somehow controlled your anger." He then told me the story of how he had come here, made friends with the monkeys, and eventually tamed them to some extent through persevering kindness.



# BIOGRAPHY CONTROVERSY

**From Gerald Surya, Jamaica, NY,  
9.2.91:**

In your latest issue of VVR (No.16) you question the authenticity of the Lilamrta. As far as I understand, the basic charge is that the Lilamrta portrays Srila Prabhupada as an ordinary person who is subject to the vicissitudes of the material world, directly contradicting the sastric descriptions of the uttama-adhikari. This is done through the use of words such as "shaken," "turbulent," "homeless," "vulnerable," and "insecure." Although I am certainly not a sophisticated philosopher or even an initiated devotee, I think my own past experience may be valuable to share, since Planting the Seed was the first Vaishnava book I ever fully read.

Previously I had skimmed through Bhagavad-gita As It Is and regarded Srila Prabhupada as an austere and pious swami but also as a somewhat obstinate scholar promoting his particular sectarian doctrine. Then years later after I read Planting the Seed my impression of Srila Prabhupada transformed into one of respect. I came to see him as a person with unparalleled wisdom and compassion for humanity with which no Sanskrit scholar, Mayavadi sannyasi, or humanitarian can compare.

My reactions to the "mundane" descriptions of Srila Prabhupada allowed me to relate to him, but the spiritual descriptions, which were just as frequent, kept me from completely considering him to be like myself or anyone I knew.

That was five years ago in the fall of 1986. Since then I have increased my rounds to sixteen as well as my involvement in Krishna consciousness, while also continuing with my career goals as a medical student. Although I don't live in any temple community, I hope one day to take initiation from a qualified representative of Srila Prabhupada and assist in the mission in some way after earning my degree in medicine.

I'm sure complete spiritual descriptions of Srila Prabhupada with no relation to his apparent material circumstances would cause nondevotees to confuse him with their own preconceptions of transcendence: namely a vague, formless idea of God. Therefore, acceptance of mundane descriptions of the spiritual master is certainly dangerous as is the acceptance of one with no perceivable form at all.

In regard to the criticism of Professor Hopkins's description of Srila Prabhupada, I took the words "very human" to plainly mean sensitive and compassionate as opposed to aggressive and arrogant, which is probably one of the first assumptions people have of the founder of a controversial movement such as ISKCON. This is the obvious connotation since practically all the other reviewers who have written introductions to various volumes of the Lilamrta as well deal with the fact that ISKCON should not be misconstrued as a "cult" especially after considering the personality of Srila Prabhupada.

Furthermore, the use of the words "very human" are meant to highlight Srila Prabhupada's personality as a major factor in the success of this movement. Most scholars, as indicated in the review, merely consider pre-existing social and political climate in explaining its success. In Hopkins's interview with Subhananda, he elaborates: "Bhaktivedanta Swami's personal example of devotion was not only impressive, but it was compelling..." and "the association of genuine devotees can exert a powerful effect upon one's consciousness...No one ever seriously expected to reach his level, and yet he never set that level so far beyond where people were that they would view it as unattainable. He was a master at making that kind of contact." Therefore, in the

The next day, the swami took me high in the forests to meet other sadhus who lived in a hermitage with many caves. Just before reaching the area, we saw a lady coming down the trail. She was young and attractive and wearing a sari. Her hair was loose and uncovered and she had her sari pulled up to her knees. When she saw the swami, she looked scared. Swami Mukta-sanga spoke to her in Tamil, almost shouting sometimes, and she left in tears without replying.

He explained to me that she was a barren widow who had come here to get an illicit son from one of the sadhus. She had approached Mukta-sanga Swami first, one evening at dusk when it was too late to return down the forest trail. He had gone inside his cave and shut the door, covered his head with his shawl, and chanted continuously until dawn. At dawn, he had chased her away with a stick. Hearing this story, I was reminded of the story of Haridas Thakur. I told the story, and the swami admitted that Haridas Thakur's example was immensely more profound and beneficial.

"As I mentioned before," he said, "anger is more degrading than lust."

"But isn't anger sometimes necessary?" I asked.

"Not for a sadhu. I could have chased her away without anger, or with feigned anger. Like I just now did."

"At least you were angry and not flattered, like I might have been."

The swami laughed and said, "You are a ksatriya. You should marry."

"I want to be a brahmin sadhu," I replied.

"Oh, yes, like Visvamitra. But it took him a long time. He went against his nature. That's not the Vaisnava path to want something artificially, something beyond our easy reach."

"That lady could find a good man in any town. Why did she come here?"

"She wants the seed of a sadhu. She wants the best possible son. But good sons are not usually born illicitly, unless the sadhu is very great."

"Are there any such sadhus in these hills?"

"Maybe. Why does that concern you?"

"I would like to meet one."

"For what?"

"Sadhu-sanga."

"You told me your guru-maharaja has seventy volumes of books."

The swami's voice was stern now, almost like when he spoke to the girl. "You read all those books and have sanga with him. That's your path. Be patient! That's all you need!"

His conviction awed me. I wanted to explain that I had no intention of ever looking for another guru. Yet I said nothing, thinking Prabhupada had just spoken to me through this man.

After seeing the hermitage of caves and eating lunch with Swami Mukta-sanga and three other sadhus, I returned to Papanasanam and began my journey home, back to Trivandrum and my service to Srila Prabhupada. I was glad to have met at least one real sadhu on this trip, but I realized such trips are unnecessary for Srila Prabhupada's disciples.

reviewer's context, the description of Srila Prabhupada is very appropriate.

**From Laksmikantha devi dasi,  
Montréal, Canada, 8.23.91:**

When I came to Krishna consciousness I was fascinated by the philosophy but Srila Prabhupada was a stranger for me. Although I appreciated his mercy for having delivered this science of Krishna consciousness I had no special love for him and this until I read the Lilamrita of Satsvarupa Maharaja. I will never forget the pleasure of seeing my love being awakened and growing more and more as I was reading the series. I was struck with wonder by the love Srila Satsvarupa Maharaja had for Srila Prabhupada. I could feel he was transparent and very humble. Most of all I appreciated his rendering of the personal feelings of Srila Prabhupada. This was actually what made me love Srila Prabhupada: to know the joys and pains he was feeling while serving Krishna.

In my eyes, no doubt Satsvarupa Maharaja had been empowered to deliver love of Srila Prabhupada in the same way Krishna dasa Kaviraja Goswami delivered love of Lord Sri Caitanya and Vyasadeva love of Sri Krishna. This is the perfection of the book. There may be some discrepancies which can be corrected like the section about the appointing of eleven gurus as successors of Srila Prabhupada, but the gift of love for the pure devotee Srila Prabhupada makes it perfect and fit to be part of the Vaishnava literature.

When God or His pure devotee descend on earth, they perform both extraordinary and ordinary activities and except for a few devotees knowing their real nature, everybody else thinks they are ordinary human beings with special qualities and power but no more. So no doubt that there will always be people who will never accept the spiritual position of Srila Prabhupada in the same way that they think that Sri Krishna, Sri Caitanya or the Christ are ordinary men. But a devotee should not be bewildered by what seems to be material feelings and activities of the pure devotee (they eat, sleep and evacuate also). A devotee like Srila Prabhupada never rejects feelings like impersonalists do. He has no material feelings because he doesn't act for himself but he is full of transcendental feelings of joy and pain for Krishna.

For example, when Sanatana Goswami was struck by a disease which made his body itch he thought of committing suicide by throwing himself under the cart of Lord Jagannath. At first we can think Sanatana Goswami could not support anymore the suffering of his body as if he was on the material platform but actually his feelings were spiritual because what he couldn't stand was his inability to perform the service he wanted to do for the Lord. In the same way, Srila Prabhupada may have been sick and tired, may have felt fear or anxiety but his feelings were transcendental because they were based on his desire to serve his guru and Krishna.

We should analyze if the idea of not acknowledging the ordinary activities and emotions of a pure devotee, for rather putting emphasis on his power and glories is not due to a personal desire for name and fame. The mind thinks if I make my guru glorious and well known, by following my guru I will also become glorious and famous. The example is what the Christians did with the Bible. They changed it to show the powerful position of Jesus Christ, they even say he is God. In this way they thought he would be more attractive which would help them spread their movement. But actually they have been successful in creating fanatic, dogmatic, arrogant people who only accept Jesus Christ as the only saviour avatara for all times and reject anybody else as a pagan. We should be careful not to make the same mistake.

Actually, we are ordinary conditioned souls trying to get out the clutches of maya and we need the example of a pure liberated soul we can relate with. Srila Prabhupada as we know him in the Lilamrita is a perfect example we can relate with, love and follow. To see his humble and simple attitude in his feelings and dealings doesn't diminish him but is very attractive. It encourages a devotee to develop the same qualities which are necessary for advancement in Krishna consciousness and it helps uprooting the corruption of the desire for power and glory. For example, Srila Prabhupada in his straightforwardness said that once married, he did not like his wife, so he was considering getting married for a second time because at that time it was allowed in India. All this does not seem to match with a stereotyped "renounced" superhero devotee that one could have in mind, but it was all part of Srila Prabhupada's pastimes as a pure devotee, thus being worth writing about.

Yet I understand devotees who think there is something missing in the Lilamrita. When I was a new devotee I was hearing a lot of extraordinary pastimes about mystic powers of Srila Prabhupada or his special meetings with demigods and Krishna Himself or miracles he did in reading and changing the heart of devotees. I have been wondering why they were not included in the Lilamrita. If there was a special book collecting all of these extraordinary pastimes so often heard about, that would complete the Lilamrita and certainly enliven all the devotees. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and to all the assembled devotees. Hari bol.

**PRABHUPADA SANKIRTAN CENTER**

*At New Raivataka*

2768 Harland Ames Rd.

Bolivar, New York 14715

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna,  
Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare,  
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma,  
Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

**HIS DIVINE GRACE**

**A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA**

*Founder-Acarya and The Spiritual Master*

**CHALLENGE COW**

Note from the Editor:

Cow protection is one of Srila Prabhupada's programs for the spiritual advancement of human civilization. However, devotees have found many difficulties in establishing cow protection for various reasons. To discuss and analyze the problems and solutions thereof, we offer to feature a regular column on the subject, provided we can receive material, articles and whatnot that will be helpful. Cow protection is a real challenge - challenge cow!

The following is from Save The Cow, a newsletter by Brajendranandana and Kamra Prabhus, Bx 1289, Alachua FL 32615. Subscriptions are \$12/ year; donations go to support the many beautiful cows under their protection. Write for more information!

October 1, 1991: Our newsletters to date have focused on many points of cow protection ecology, economy, health and diet, and current issues concerning the role of the cow and bull in society. But we were recently asked, "What is the difference between a Krsna conscious cow protection program and a modern dairy?" so we decided to go "back to basics" for those of our readers who may desire to be refreshed on these fundamentals.

There are two modern industries involving cows the beef industry and the dairy industry. The beef industry will not be included in this discussion as the points to be made do not involve it.

The dairy industry which provides all milk products available through standard means only houses replacement heifers (young females being raised to join a milking herd) and milking cows. About 1 in 100,000 males born is raised for possible breeding purposes, and the rest of the bull calves are raised for veal, either at the home farm or elsewhere, to be slaughtered at approximately three months of age. All "retired" cows are sent to slaughter, and the meat product is called "dairy beef." So who's alive in the way of bovines at the commercial dairy farms? The young females and milk cows, that's it. The breeding bulls are kept at specialized facilities, where they provide semen for the artificial insemination industry.

A Krsna conscious cow protection facility is based on sound spiritual and material practices. A society based on cow protection and the knowledge offered in the Vedas is a society progressing from material values towards the spiritual world. Thus at a cow protection center, the cows provide dairy, the males are raised either for natural breeding purposes or for working in the fields, and the retired animals, male or female, out of the affection that has developed for them by a natural interdependence, are allowed to live their last days peacefully with good care. When cows and bulls are properly protected and used, all the animals are important, and the economy that ensues, based on simple living and consciousness of the Lord, is viable and sustainable.

The question about dairies came about in a discussion of economics. The challenge was, "How come Save-the-Cow is not making money like a commercial dairy?" (Note: Most commercial dairies are not at present making money. They are, in fact, losing money, and many are going out of business.) The systems being compared are very different, as we noted. The cow is our mother she is not to be exploited for earning purposes, but the truth is, a Krsna conscious cow protection program is not for making money. It is for demonstrating a simple, self-sufficient lifestyle based on the cow and bull. But why do we need money if such a program is supposed to be sustainable? Because in the Western countries we have yet to experience a cow protection program that has developed to the point of self-sufficiency.

A viable program requires that the oxen are used to provide all field labor for cow and human food production, transportation, and energy production for other uses. It requires that no foodstuff needs to be purchased for any of the animals. We cannot blame anyone that the programs are not fully developed, but it needs to be said that all of us must take more responsibility for developing this example of cow protection that is so dear and important to Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada wanted cow protection, especially ox power, instituted as a priority.

# Govinda

## ACADEMIC EXCHANGE

From Nityananda das, New Jaipur

To E. Burke Rochford,  
Middlebury College, Vermont:

Hare Krishna. I received a copy of your questionnaire from a friend in New Talavan, the farm in southern Mississippi. It is interesting to see the study you are going on ISKCON, its devotees both "in" and "out", and your particular focus on gurukula. I am sending herewith some copies of our Vedic Village Review and a book, Living Still in Sound, which I thought might interest you.

I am involved with a reform movement within the Hare Krishna movement. The reform efforts are worldwide and have the support of many of the "outside" devotees. You will see that we were expelled from the official institution and that there remains widespread dissatisfaction with the past actions and present policies of the GBC, or ISKCON's leaders.

If there is any way I can help you get a broader cross-section of devotees' viewpoints on various subjects, please let me know. I could include a short blurb in our next VVR requesting interested devotees to write you for the survey forms. I also know some of the original gurukula devotees who are now on the "outside" but still very much devotees. Perhaps I could refer them to you if it would be helpful.

Awaiting your reply, I remain, yours sincerely,

Reply from Mr. Rochford,  
12.12.91:

Dear Nityananda das,

Hare Krsna. Please excuse my delay in getting back to you. This is a busy time of year, and my duties as chair of the department seem to have a way of taking up my time. In any event, I was extremely pleased to hear from you.

Yes I would be delighted if you could help me gain a broader cross-section of response to my devotee questionnaire. My interest is in the larger movement rather than simply ISKCON. Given the changes that have taken place over the past dozen years or so it is important that I take an inclusive view if I am to understand Prabhupada's movement. Obviously you and New Jaipur represent a significant aspect of Prabhupada's movement. I would like very much to survey the views of those devotees tied directly to New Jaipur or who otherwise follow the VVR. I have read many of the back issues you sent me and am very impressed with the substance and level of discussion found in the pages of the VVR. I was also distressed to find out about the recent legal troubles that have resulted in the disruption of the community. I would like to hear more.

Would you mind including a request in the next VVR asking devotees interested in sharing their views about educational issues and the larger future of the movement to contact me. I can be reached at the:  
Dept of Sociology, Middlebury College  
Middlebury, Vermont 05753  
802 388 3711 X 5303/ 802 758 2363

If anyone likes, they may call me also, at work or home. You also mention having contacts with some of the original gurukula students. I am very interested in making contact with them. The next phase of my project includes doing many more interviews with former gurukula students. I am also working now with Raghunatha, the young man in Hawaii who put together the ISKCON YOUTH VETERANS newsletter, on a survey for



young adults who have grown up in the movement. The questionnaire should be ready by February.

Thanks for sending me a copy of Living Still in Sound. I plan to use various articles/ essays appearing in the book for a course I will be teaching in January on the Hare Krishna movement. I am presently involved in a major study of the movement. This represents my second research project. The first culminated in the publication of my book Hare Krishna in America (Rutgers University Press, 1985). Some devotees may even remember my early field research in Los Angeles, or my 1980 survey of six ISKCON communities in the US. My current questionnaire, available upon request, represents part of my ongoing attempt to understand the views and circumstances of devotees, in the 1990's, for my next book on the movement. My sincere hope is that VVR can help me gain partners in this study by filling in the confidential questionnaire.

Again my thanks for your kindness and willingness to help me in this project. It's a big task, but one made easier by people such as yourself. The issues are both important and complex. If I am to fully understand this complexity I must gain the views of devotees throughout the movement. The present study deals in large part with ISKCON's coming generation of young people. All best wishes. Sincerely,



## WHAT HAPPENED TO ISKCON ?

By Madhuvisa das (Australia)

Thank you very much for your work with your VVR; it is certainly causing ISKCON to change much, much more quickly than would otherwise be possible. I have written a small booklet, "What Happened to ISKCON." The only resources I have allowed me to make forty copies, and I was hoping that you might like to reprint it and send it out with your next VVR. If you could do this I would be eternally grateful.

(Editor's note: due to space limitations, here are some excerpts:)

### The "Zonal Acarya" System

Before Srila Prabhupada left his body he named twelve men who would take the responsibility of initiating new devotees. He allocated each of them a geographic zone to manage. He followed the same practice as his spiritual master by not naming an acarya. He instead recommended cooperative management by the GBC. After Srila Prabhupada left his body Tamala Krsna and Sridhar Swami (Gaudiya Math) devised the Zonal Acarya system and presented it to the devotees. It is interesting that the devotees went to Sridhar Maharaja for advice after Srila Prabhupada had clearly warned them about associating with his godbrothers, what to speak of taking their advice on such a crucial matter as future initiations in ISKCON. The Zonal Acarya system they came up with elevated the twelve men selected by Srila Prabhupada to a status equal to Srila Prabhupada. They took on suitable names, sat on vyasasanas (seats) as high as Srila Prabhupada's and accepted the title of paramahansa (the topmost devotee). Overnight these devotees became pure, unalloyed devotees and were to be worshipped on the same level as Srila Prabhupada. There was no question of any of Srila Prabhupada's other disciples ever reaching the status of Zonal Acarya; in fact, Srila Prabhupada's disciples were generally expected to worship these Zonal Acaryas; if they refused there was no future for them in ISKCON.

Any new devotee who came to ISKCON had no choice but to take initiation from the Zonal Acarya in his area. There was no room for questioning. If anyone did question the "pure devotee" Zonal Acaryas, it was considered blasphemy and he didn't have much chance of staying in ISKCON.

From the beginning an intelligent person who had studied Srila Prabhupada's books could see some flaws in this system. Because speaking out against the system was considered blasphemy a devotee who could see the problems had to either keep his mouth closed and take initiation from the Zonal Acarya or leave.

"... our leaders should be careful not to kill the spirit of enthusiastic service, which is individual and spontaneous and voluntary. They should try always to generate some atmosphere of fresh challenge to the devotees, so that they will agree enthusiastically to rise and meet it. This is the art of management: to draw out spontaneous loving spirit of sacrificing some energy for Krsna. But where are so many expert managers? All of us should become expert managers and preachers. We should not be contented. There must be always some tapasya, strictly observing the regulative principles--Krsna consciousness movement must always be a challenge, a great achievement to be gained by a voluntary desire to do it, and that will keep it healthy." [to Karandhara, Dec. 22, 1972]

Many sincere and intelligent people were attracted as a result of preaching by the devotees and reading Srila Prabhupada's books. These devotees came to ISKCON and accepted the Zonal Acarya system without question and took initiation from one of the authorized "gurus." They were not aware of the poisonous effects which by now were spread throughout the entire Society. The result was that many of these sincere devotees gradually lost their taste for Krsna consciousness. This was, in many cases, a result of them hearing the preaching and associating with devotees who were not strictly following Srila Prabhupada's instructions. These devotees either left ISKCON or became unhappy and frustrated within ISKCON.

The emphasis was on pleasing the Zonal Acarya and Srila Prabhupada was put into the background. It was considered offensive for a devotee to directly worship or approach Srila Prabhupada. He could only please Srila Prabhupada by pleasing the Zonal Acarya. Even disciples of Srila Prabhupada were expected to follow this procedure.

"You have written that the devotees here say that you cannot know me, but only Kirtanananda Maharaja can know me. But if Kirtanananda is a disciple and he can know me, and you are also a disciple, why you cannot know me? [To Satyabama dasi and Paramananda dasa, July 20, 1974]

### The New Guru System:

With the Zonal Acarya system in tatters the GBC came up with a new system which allowed practically any disciple of Srila Prabhupada to become a 'guru' if the GBC and the local authorities thought he was qualified. We have seen a number of unwise decisions made by the GBC in regard to authorization of such 'gurus' and many devotees have suffered as a result.

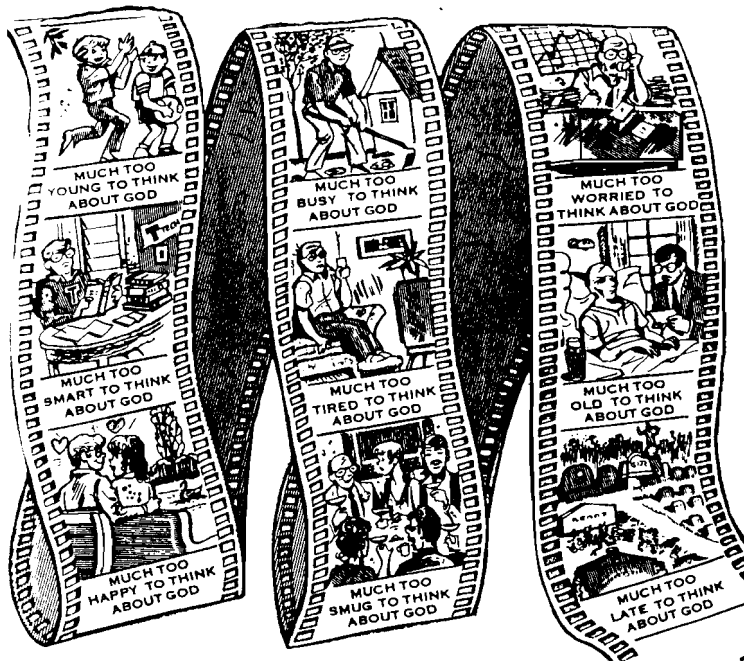
"Another examination will be held in 1971 on the four books, Bhagavad Gita, Srimad Bhagavatam, Teachings of Lord Caitanya, and Nectar of Devotion. One who passes this examination will be awarded the title of Bhaktivedanta. I want all of my spiritual sons and daughters to inherit this title of bhaktivedanta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate and increase the numbers of generations. That is my program. So we should not simply publish these books for reading by outsiders, but all of our students must be well-versed in all of our books so that we can be prepared to defeat all opposing parties in the matter of self-realization. (To Hansadutta, Dec. 3, 1968)

There are now many ideas on the guru issue and the most controversial is rtvik. The proponents of this system say that the original 12 'gurus' were not meant to be accepted as full gurus, rather they were to take disciples on behalf of Srila Prabhupada and connect them to the disciplic succession this way. The initiated devotees would be Srila Prabhupada's disciples and they could take instruction from his books, tapes and letters. The GBC is opposed to this proposal as it would mean that devotees could directly take shelter of Srila Prabhupada, eliminating the need for physically present pure devotees. There are already many ISKCON approved 'qualified' gurus whose disciples are expected to worship them on the same level as Krsna and there are many, many more wanting to join the club. The rtvik proposal would mean dismantling the 'guru club' and that is unthinkable to the GBC at present. There is extensive discussion on this issue at the moment.

"This is the function of the GBC, to see that one may not be taken away by Maya. The GBC should all be the instructor gurus. I am the initiator guru, and you should be the instructor guru by teaching what I am teaching and doing what I am doing. This is not a title, but you must actually come to this platform. This is what I want. (To Madhudvisa, Aug. 4, 1975)

Currently the GBC have no answer to the guru problem, and they are unlikely to come up with anything universally acceptable. The effect of years of preaching of the economic development philosophy coupled with the fall of so many pseudo-gurus who had falsely presented themselves as liberated souls qualified to take their disciples back home, back to Godhead, has been devastating within ISKCON. Many devotees have lost their service attitude or left the movement altogether and it is becoming very difficult to find devotees willing to become temple presidents, worship the Deities, cook for the Deities, collect money, and even to attend the morning spiritual program and to follow the principles established by Srila Prabhupada.

This mood in many temples is not favorable for making new devotees. New devotees read Srila Prabhupada's books and find that Krsna consciousness means being transcendental to the problems of the mundane world and that devotees enjoy ever increasing bliss by engaging in the service of Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When they come to the temple they find something different.



# BHAGAVAD GITA AS IT WAS ?

## NEWS STORY: Scholar Disputed On "Discovery of Lost" Verses

Bombay (PTI) - A Sanskrit scholar's claim of discovering 45 missing verses of the "Bhagavad-Gita" appears to be heading for an anti-climax after creating a flutter in academic and religious circles. The claim, made late in August by a senior officer of Andhra Pradesh, Dr. Vedavyas, has been challenged on the evidence of two published books by a banker and a Gujarati novelist here, Dinkar Joshi.

Vedavyas had said he had found the missing verses in a rare palm-leaf manuscript in the royal collection of Gondal, a former princely state in Gujarat. The verses were significant as they would restore the Gita to its complete form, as currently the sacred book in standard publications was known to contain only 700 verses.

Producing the books as proof, Joshi pointed out that the complete Gita of 745 verses in Gujarati, translated by Acarya Charantirtha, was published back in 1941 by the royal Sree Bhubaneshwari Peeth of Gondal town. Three decades later, P.H. Sant published the book in Marathi entitled "Adya Gita Sahitya Sanshodhan" that contained the Gita verses.

The 45 verses had been dropped over the years "probably because" they were akin to the teachings of Gautama Buddha while Adi Shankara wrote the "Bhasyas" (commentaries) on Gita consisting of 700 slokas only. This probably resulted in the 700-sloka edition that late came to be accepted, Joshi explains. Moreover, Joshi states that the complete Gita verses were known to scholars as they had appeared from Persian translations by Abdul Fazil and Faizi, currently preserved in the India Office Library in London.

A book in Arabic entitled "Al Beruni in India", originally written by the historian Al Beruni, of the 11th century, was translated and published in English in 1912. And it contains some slokas not incorporated in the traditional 700 sloka version. Joshi also contested Vedavyas's statement that the German Sanskrit scholar, Otto Sehrander, searched in vain for the missing verses. In fact, Acarya Charantirtha in a foreword to his Gujarati Gita has said that Sehrander published all 745 slokas in English in 1912, Joshi said.

Meanwhile, religious circles are of the view that the verses must be compared to eliminate the possibility that Vedavyas, who has earned a doctorate in Sanskrit, and Joshi are talking about different verses.

## NEWS STORY: Discovery of 45 "Lost" Sacred Verses

Hyderabad (PTI) - Dr. Vedavyas, a senior official in Andhra Pradesh, claims to have discovered the 45 "lost" verses of the "Bhagavad-Gita", the most sacred book of the Hindus. Vedavyas, who has a doctorate in Sanskrit for his work on the astronomical dating of the Mahabharata war said the Gita had 745 verses, but only 700 were known to the world. He said that during his research he had made the "astounding discovery of a rare palm-leaf manuscript (tala patra) in Gujarat which has the remaining 45 slokas (verses) intact."

Vedavyas, who has written several books, said he was preparing the manuscript for publication. He said a German Sanskrit scholar, Prof. Otto Sehandor, had suspected as early as 1934 that an original Bhagavad-

Gita existed and had set out to discover it, but his efforts were in vain. Vedavyas stumbled upon a sloka in the Bhishma Parva (chapter) in the epic "Mahabharata", which said that the Gita had 745 verses of which 620 were recited by Lord Krishna, 45 by Sanjaya, 20 by Arjuna and 1 by Dhritarashtra. This made him suspect that the Gita as known today was without 45 original verses.

He found that an old Persian version of the Gita, translated in the times of Emperor Akbar, mentioned 745 stanzas, but did not reproduce the original 45 verses for which he was searching. Finally, he found the missing verses in a rare palm-leaf manuscript in the royal collection of Gondal, a former princely state of Gujarat. He studied over 150 commentaries on the Gita in his search to see if the ancient commentators knew of the lost verses. He found that saint-scholar Vedanta Desika did mention the lost slokas, but did not reproduce them.

Vedavyas is preparing a standard edition of the "original 'Bhagavad-Gita'" with the lost poems duly annotated and critically edited.

## NEWS STORY: ORIGINAL GITA SANS MYSTICISM

Washington, Jan. 19 (PTI) - A book titled "The Gita As It Was - Rediscovering the Original Bhagavad-Gita" has been published in the US. Dr. Sinha who authored this book says that the book is the cumulative result of altogether 15 years of thought and labor. Dr. Sinha felt the need to rediscover the original content of the Hindu religious text after studying the works of ancient thinkers and philosophical systems in India, including the teachings of Kapila, Patanjali and Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira, which he compared to what was today regarded as the Gita and its teachings.

The net result of his "detective work" - trying to find out what was original and what was revision or addition to suit ulterior purposes - was that while the Gita today was generally regarded as having 700 verses, he found that 616 were interpolations which were not only not justified but were perverted, what he regarded as the original content of the Gita enshrined in 84 verses.

The more he read ancient writings, the more he became convinced that somehow, deliberately, Indian thought had been perverted by alien conquerors and cabals of priests for their own ignominious ends - to turn a great, active, achievement-oriented people into passive, otherworldly men and women who regarded the world hereafter as the supreme reality and not the world in which they were living.

Dr. Sinha said though yoga was practiced during the period of the Harappa and Mohenjodaro civilizations (generally dated around 3000 BC), there were no deciphered writing on yoga from that period. The first known and comprehensively discussed book on yoga was Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, dated about 400 BC. In Yoga Sutra, Patanjali accepted everything taught by Kapila in his Sankhya philosophy and added more to make a comprehensive system for achieving a healthy, happy and creative life.

Yoga reached its highest and most glorious stage in the work of Vyasa about 400 BC. He incorporated all the basic theories and concepts of Kapila and Patanjali and added much original thought of his own. Thus, by 400 BC, India had matchless philosophical work presented in the simple form of song. This philosophical work was the Gita.

In the post-Vedic period, up to about 890 AD, the thinkers and writers of India were men of rational outlook. They did not accept the idea of a single, almighty deity. These concepts were non-existent in India prior to about 800 AD. Until that time, philosophers and writers accepted man as the supreme being. There was no place for mysticism and superstition.

Later came the corruption of thought aimed at making the Indian passive, accept foreign rule and colonialism, leave the fruits of this world to others and make the natives focus on the world hereafter.

He contended that a revival of the "original Gita" would once again transform India into one of the most powerful and prosperous nations of the world, leading in science, industry, culture and every other field of human endeavor.

## REJOINDER FROM: BHAKTIVEDANTA INSTITUTE:

Sir, - This is in response to your news item, "Original Gita Sans Mysticism" (January 20/21). The report does not state to which university or authorized institution Mr Sinha belongs, nor does it mention the name of the publisher of his book. It seems very likely that he is yet another purveyor of unsubstantiated speculations.

Mr Sinha's alleged research claims that the Gita originally contained only 84 verses. All the acharyas of this land, including Sri Sankaracharya, Sri Ramanujacharya and Sri Madhvacharya, have written bhashyas to the Gita, and they have commented on all the 700 verses. These acharyas, whose spiritual and scholarly credentials far outstrip Mr Sinha's have accepted the Gita in its entirety as spoken by Lord Krishna.

Additionally, the figures for the dates of various Vedic literatures attributed to Mr Sinha are wildly off. According to the Hindu calendar, we are now over 5,000 years into Kali-yuga, and Bhagavad-Gita was spoken by Sri Krishna to Arjuna just prior to the advent of Kali-yuga, on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Thus, the age of the Gita is about 5,080 years, not 400 BC as Mr Sinha speculated. In addition, Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita states that He spoke the Bhagavad-Gita to Visvasvan some 200 million years earlier also.

Quite apart from these points, the general thrust of the report, equating mysticism with superstition or hinting that the Gita propagates passivity and corruption of thought, are extremely unfortunate and unsubstantiated. The message of Gita, on the other hand, is to learn how to work - not for the limited and selfish goals of humanity, but for the ultimate pleasure of Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Indeed, after hearing Bhagavad-Gita, Arjuna did not lapse into passivity but fought, now not out of personal considerations but for Krishna.

Certainly, throughout the world the Bhagavad-gita (with all its 700 verses) is revered as a remarkable exposition of man's relation to God. Even in modern times, men such as Mohandas Gandhi, Thoreau, Emerson, Einstein and others have based their lives and outlook on the teachings of the complete Gita. Additionally, the spiritual transforming power of the Gita, when it is properly understood and applied, has been demonstrated in present times by the teachings and the missionary work of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. It is indeed sad that Mr Sinha has tried to cash in on his work by echoing the title of the famous Gita translation done by Srila Prabhupada:



"Bhagavad-Gita As It Is", by calling his book,  
"Bhagavad-Gita As It Was."

Rasaraja das, International Secretary, Bhaktivedanta  
Institute  
(Printed: Times of India, Bombay, February 13, 1988)

## BOOK REVIEW: by Satyaraja das

### THE GITA AS IT WAS: REDISCOVERING THE ORIGINAL BHAGAVAD-GITA

by Phulgenda Sinha (Open Court,  
1987)

The Bhagavad-gita ("The Song of the Supreme Lord") is one of the most important scriptures to come out of India. Although widely published and read as a separate text, Bhagavad-gita originally appears as an episode in the Mahabharata, a great historical epic consisting of some 100,000 couplets (The epic was recently popularized by Peter Brooks' nine-hour dramatization on stages around the world.).

The Gita occupies chapters 25 through forty-two in the Bhishma-parva section of the Mahabharata. As it begins, Lord Krishna is standing in the midst of the Kurukshetra battlefield-- as a charioteer- for His friend and devotee Arjuna. The dialogue that ensues is the gita, or "song," of Bhagavan, "the Supreme Lord." He sings His song because His devotee, Arjuna is in need of instruction. Bewildered by the mandate to fight, Arjuna hesitates to engage in the fratricidal war before him. Lord Krishna, however, elucidates the implications of His devotee's reluctance. He points out that, as a warrior, Arjuna's specific duty is indeed to fight on behalf of the righteous. At his hesitation, Krishna adds, though superficially noble, is actually based on illusion, a misidentification of the body with the self. The opposing party is, after all, guilty of many atrocities and already doomed, even if many of them are Arjuna's relatives. Krishna has sealed their fate or, rather, they have sealed their own fate, and Krishna is encouraging Arjuna to act as His instrument in meting out the appropriate reaction. The Gita's 700 verses embody Lord Krishna's arguments in this regard and Arjuna's ultimate acquiescence.

What does this overview of the Gita have to do with Phulgenda Sinha's book? It appears that Arjuna's work was left unfinished. While he definitely did Krishna's work on the plains of Kurukshetra, there is a new enemy of his Lord's Gita--but this time the battlefield is academia and the weapon is independent research. To be sure, the Gita has been assaulted by unnecessary commentaries many times in the past, the earliest being the great Shankara commentary in the eighth century A.D. While important in its own right, it missed the essentially theistic nature of the Gita's overall message. Shankara's forced interpretation opened up a new school of scriptural hermeneutics for the Gita, and less worthy renditions soon flooded the market. Sinha lists them in his own work and doubtless refers to them as authorities: Aurobindo, Huxley, Hartmann, Steiner, Tagore, Schroder, Isherwood, to name a few. While these men may enjoy a certain distinction in their respective fields, they are hardly authorities on Bhagavad-gita.

The more important commentaries are hardly even mentioned by Sinha, but they should be known to our readers: The Anugita, The Gitamahatmyas, Jayatirtha's commentary, the work of Vedanta Deshika, and even the more or less monistic interpretation of Bhaskara. More important still are the commentaries of Ramanujacharya,

Madhvacharya, Vishvanath Chakravarti Thakur, and Baladeva Vidyabhushana; Sinha refers to them only superficially, for they do not support his view. Interestingly, Sinha mentions every contemporary and popular edition of the Gita--save and except Bhagavad-Gita As It Is by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. And it is this definitive edition, it may be noted, that is ridiculed in the title of Sinha's work.

The premise of Sinha's book is not new. His obvious lack of respect for the traditional Gita (shown in the fact that he is ready to change its contents) is due to the influence of foreign invaders in India--Muslim fundamentalists and Christian missionaries who denigrated the sacred scriptures of Indian antiquity. They had for centuries misled the Indian people. The British, for instance, had convinced nearly the entire Indian subcontinent that they were illiterate because they could not read English, and that they were irreligious because they did not know the Bible. These ill-informed foreigners had no idea of the highly sophisticated Sanskrit language or the comprehensive Vedic scriptural tradition. Due to ignorance and cultural isolation, they felt that Vedic culture was backward and even barbaric. Many academics were and are weaned on this sort of misinformation. Sinha is clearly one of them.

His discovery of "the original Gita" is presented like a detailed detective mystery. Unfortunately, Sinha more resembles a bumbling Inspector Clouseau than a more competent Sherlock Holmes. He cites authorities that were discredited years before his birth. As if to add insult to injury, he further cites Richard Garbe and even Weber, originators of "the Borrowing Theory," which states that all theistic notions found in the worship of Krishna are attributable to, or "borrowed" from, Christianity. Sinha takes this notion even further, saying that there was no concept of a "One Almighty God" in India prior to the ninth century A.D.

What Sinha doesn't mention, however, is that these scholars who propounded the borrowing theory were eventually made the victims of their own misconceptions when the evidence of Megasthenes was brought in. This evidence engendered undeniable archaeological conclusions, proving once and for all that Krishna worship is not only not derived from Christianity but that in fact it is the other way around. Moreover, the Megasthenes evidence made clear that the worship of "One Almighty God," as Sinha states it, was indeed accepted by early worshippers of Krishna--before the Christian Era (What to speak of the "ninth century A.D.!!").

Now let us get to the heart of Sinha's erroneous contention: All of the great commentators and the time-honored Vedic tradition are wrong. The Gita does not include 700 verses as is normally supposed. Rather, says Sinha, the original Gita is composed of a mere eighty-four, and he kindly enumerates these carefully chosen verses in his book. But the problem is this: After going through his 250-page work more than four times, I still could not see exactly how he came to his conclusions. His evidence is poor; his clues are lacking. For anyone even moderately aware of Vedic culture and theology, Sinha's detective mystery falls short of even a grade B movie.

In fact, his book lacks so much substance that a discerning reader might naturally question if Sinha had possibly embarked upon his project to receive financial backing. Using ancient religious texts to obtain a grant for further research is not uncommon. According to a recent article in India Abroad, scholar Vedavyas (not to be confused with the compiler of the Vedic literature, who has the same name) discovered forty-five "missing" Bhagavad-gita verses. "The original text of the Gita," says Dr. Vedavyas, "had 745 verses, and

now I will reveal the missing forty-five." Hailed as a big scholarly breakthrough, Vedavyas' claim won him a grant and notoriety--for about two weeks. Then, in the same newspaper that acclaimed his discovery, came the startling counter-claim from another scholar, nullifying the forty-five verse theory. And so it goes...

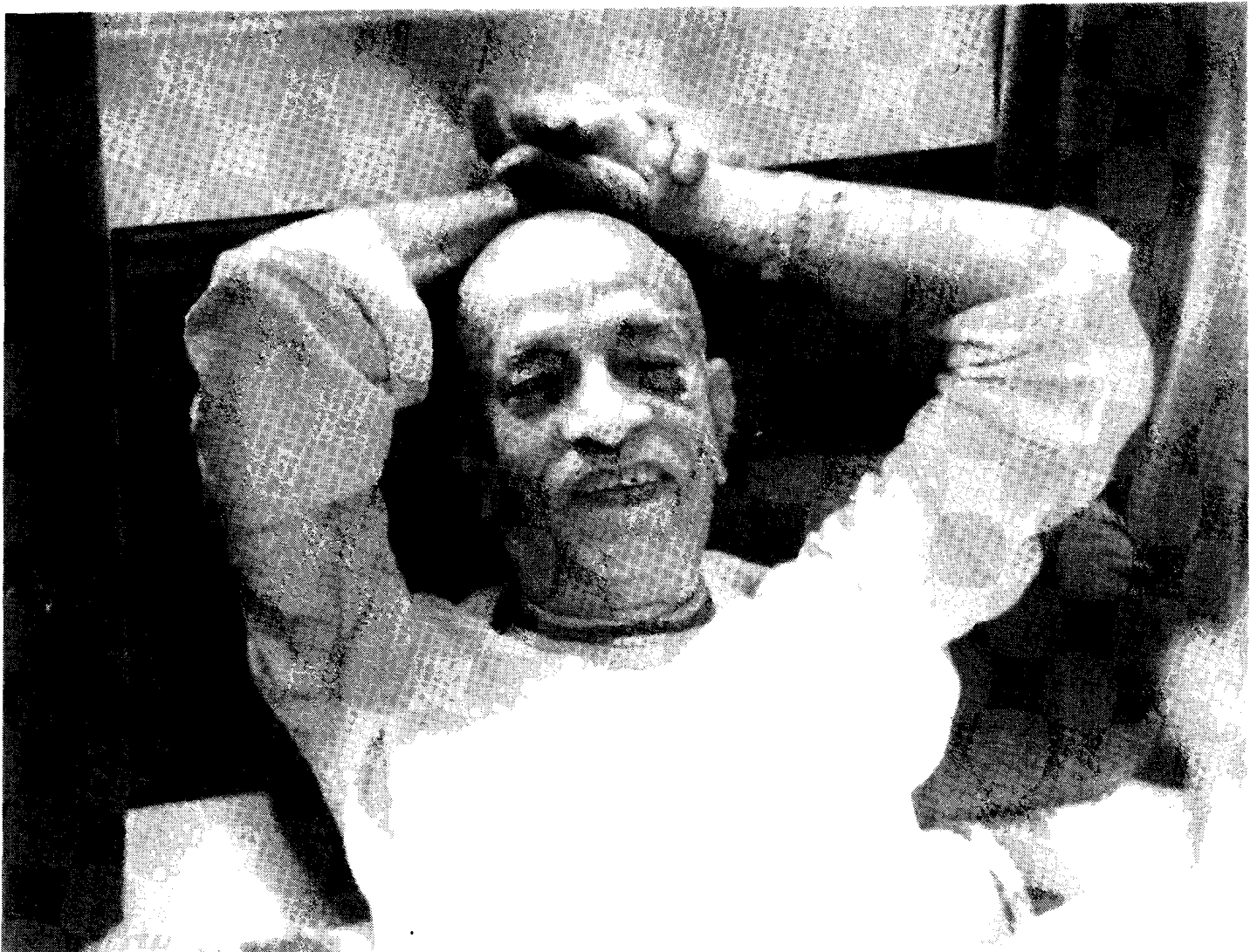
Almost as if in anticipation of such deviant interpretations, the Gita itself gives information as to how one can know the truths contained in its very pages. The fourth chapter sings loudly: "evam parampara praptam, imam rajashayo vidhu." This is the original Sanskrit, and it says in essence, that one must approach a spiritual master in disciplic succession (parampara) to know the truth of the Gita; it will not suffice to approach an academic research scholar. The mysteries of religious literature are best left to religious mystics, and scriptural hermeneutics are best left to those whose lives embody the scriptures. In this regard, the Gita's message is crystal clear: approach a self-realized soul. He can give you knowledge because he has seen the truth. By contrast, a mental speculator, however adept he may be, can only teach one how to speculate. One who studies Bhagavad-gita clinically--from a distance--can never enter into its deeper understandings. One who lives the Gita, however, can resolve all philosophical, historical, and hermeneutical problems, both for himself and for those he teaches.

Sinha is in the former category. His approach is academic, speculative. And it is a poor academic and speculative approach at that. Sinha's publishers, Open Court, have published other, more worthy Gita-type books for scholars and layment alike. The Universal Gita by Eric J. Sharpe was Open Court's first attempt in this area. This delightful book gives an accurate overview of the story behind the Gita and documents its journey West. The reader is introduced to important western Transcendentalists who found more than a little merit in the Gita's teaching: T. S. Elliot, R.W. Emerson, H.D. Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and even Albert Einstein are included.

After the success of The Universal Gita in 1985, Open Court released an even more ambitious work: Arvind Sharma's The Hindu Gita. This scholarly book picked up where Sharpe's book left off, detailing the traditional Indian commentaries from Sankara to Madhva. Sinha could have greatly benefited from reading these two books.

Since The Hindu Gita did as well for Open Court in 1986 as The Universal Gita did the year before, the logical conclusion was to keep the Gita material coming. Unfortunately, they took too big a risk with Sinha's work. Scholars reject it as untraditional and lacking evidence. Believers denounce it as sacrilegious. I just felt it was a waste of paper.

**(VVR comment: Amen!)**



# GURU SCANDALS

## An inside view

by Puranjana das & Jagajivana das

### Are Gurus Involved in Scandals?

The Hare Krishna "guru scandals" have generated considerable publicity. But, were the persons involved ever gurus at all? Were people who proved themselves to be unfit as ordinary church ushers - "as pure as God"?

First, we must understand that within the entire 5,000 year history of factual Krishna gurus (in India) there have never been any instances of scandals whatsoever. Quite the opposite is true. The factual gurus are always found to be completely free of all mundane attachments.

The Hare Krishna movement, with its lengthy history of fully impeccable gurus, was brought to the U.S. in 1965 by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami (Prabhupada). And, up to his death in 1977, it was a strict teaching in his movement that gurus are never subject to the illusions of the common man.

This is also clearly evident by reading Prabhupada's books. For example, he writes: "Actually a guru cannot be bad, for if someone is bad, he cannot be a guru. You cannot say 'bad guru'. That is a contradiction. ...A guru cannot be bad. There is no question of a bad guru anymore than a red guru or a white guru. Guru means 'genuine guru'." (SSR p.63)

Nonetheless, some of his leading secretaries formed a guru party and maintain that gurus are subject to abominable contaminations of every description. They assert the eternally pure gurus become "bad", criminally insane ...demons.

### Origin of "Bad" Gurus

After the passing of Prabhupada in 1977, a coterie of leading secretaries declared themselves his "appointed successors." But all along Prabhupada had said he would not appoint any successors: "All of my disciples will take the legacy... It is not that I (will) give an order, 'He is the next leader.' Anyone who follows the previous leadership is the leader." (Conversation 2/11/77)

Despite numerous statements by Prabhupada criticizing the entire concept of appointed gurus, the secretaries, now self-styled gurus, circulated an edited tape recording of their purported appointment. Ordinary followers noted apparent clicks (cuts) on the guru party's first version of that tape. The tape is rarely circulated. Perhaps this is due to the questionable interpretation required to find an appointment of successor gurus.

In 1980, one guru named Tamal Krishna admitted, "Actually Prabhupada never appointed any gurus. He didn't appoint eleven gurus. He appointed eleven ritviks (priests). Myself and the other GBC (Governing body) have done the greatest disservice to this movement for the last three years because we interpreted the appointment of ritviks (clergymen) as the appointment of gurus (Christlike). ...We made a great mistake. I can definitely say for myself, and for which I humbly beg forgiveness from everybody, that there was definitely some degree of trying to control ... 'Guru, oh wonderful! Now I am a guru, and there is only eleven of us.'"

But, in 1981, he mysteriously recalled all copies of his admissions tape. Then he altered his admissions and went back to posing as an infallible guru. Although he formerly admitted that gurus are never appointed by anyone, he currently appoints "gurus" himself at the annual guru elections.

For three years, one of Tamal Krishna's guru party members had been spotted, in the middle of the night, at homosexual bars and so on. Repeated and detailed reports came in regarding various homosexual activities. Despite many protests, Tamal Krishna insisted on retaining this "guru" as "a direct successor to God." Because of the guru party's open policy of deceiving the disciple, Tamal Krishna reasoned, they should retain their homosexual "guru" as absolute purity "to keep the faith of the followers".

According to Tamal Krishna, Bhavananda was "the most enlivening associate" he could find amongst the entire guru party. This policy contrasted to Prabhupada's teachings; persons engaged in illicit sex are not even considered bona fide neophytes.

In 1977, Tamal Krishna forbade followers such as Guru Kripa and Satsvarupa from seeing Prabhupada when they wanted to clarify the guru questions. Tamal Krishna told them he already knew whatever they needed to know from Prabhupada.

Another guru named Hansadutta explained to us that the 1977 guru party "did not know what they were doing" so they concocted their "guru" status in a series of meetings, held immediately after Prabhupada's departure. The "eleven successors" held mock debates to establish their "guru appointment" arguments. It was here that they also decided that anyone who would not agree with them had to be branded as a dissident and cast out of Prabhupada's movement. In practice, thousands of Krishna devotees were removed from ISKCON in this way.

Why didn't the mass of followers protest the guru party from the beginning? The party members hold most of the legal powers. So followers who question the guru party or the appointment dogma are excommunicated, while others have been threatened, or worse, by some "gurus".

Many intrigues developed. For example, the guru Satsvarupa dasa wrote a so-called Authorized Biography of Prabhupada. He writes his own words into a purported transcript of the "appointment tape", as if they were Prabhupada's words. He also paints the realized guru as defective in various ways, to cover up the defects of the guru party.

Although most of the original guru party members have been exposed in wanton behavior, the remaining members refuse to abdicate their post. This will give you a glimpse of the origin of "bad gurus".

### "Appointment Tape" Altered

Many suspected the 1977 "appointment tape" had been altered by the "gurus". This was confirmed in 1985 when a "more complete version" surfaced. On this version, Prabhupada clearly says that the leaders are not realized souls. Moreover, he expected leaders would deviate, and have to be replaced. In short, the deleted parts of the tape establish the leaders as unqualified to be eternal gurus.

Another 1977 tape, rarely circulated, warned that the guru party's "advisor" was a "severe offender". Hardly a reliable source of "advice". Modified or disappearing tapes are not new to the gurus. Lectures on tape made by gurus themselves are sometimes issued and then mysteriously recalled. Their tapes - and the previous



"absolute truth" vanish to make way for their new philosophical muddle.

The annual reports of the gurus also contain considerable shuffling. We cannot give extensive examples herein. But here is one: in 1978, the gurus established their "conclusions" in conjunction with their controversial outside advisor. For the next two years he had to be considered "the senior-most advisor on the planet." Anyone who would not accept the conceptions presented by the advisor was shunned or excommunicated from ISKCON.

Then, in 1981, the guru party boldly declared that their advisor was actually a "polluting source of knowledge". Everyone was banned if not excommunicated from seeing him. But, in 1990, the party re-established this advisor as an infallible guru; a pure successor to God Himself.

#### Deceive the Followers

Prabhupada warned followers not to duplicate the history of infamous guru factions in India. But in early 1978, the secretaries went directly to the architect of one deviant sect for "advice". Some of the "advice":

-Nonrealized neophytes should be honored as if they were realized gurus. How? He recommended, "...It will be to deceive the disciple."

- "Gurus" exposed with illicit sex, intoxication, philosophical deviation, and so on, were advised to continue sitting in the guru seat. When they are finally removed, due to blatant scandals, they are still "former gurus".

\*Gurus should be "added and eliminated by votes annually." Now, eternal gurus are voted in or excommunicated. Of course, none of the gurus in the factual disciplic succession, going on now for 5,000 years, has ever been voted in or excommunicated. Following their advisor, the guru committee suddenly claimed to have the ability to empower pure gurus. Yet according to Prabhupada, gurus are only empowered by God Himself. Similarly, Prabhupada condemns the idea of a bad (excommunicated) guru as a concoction.

Obviously, deceitful gurus are not always appreciated. A large number of followers deeply resent the guru party. Most of the original followers of the movement have left to live outside. From more than 5,000 original members, less than 500 remain. Attempts on the lives of three, by members of their own flock, have already occurred. The stress of a life of deceit has given gurus: chronic headaches, heart conditions, paralysis, physical weakness, drug addictions, and so on. Sometimes these mysterious ills have been cured by concocted exorcisms, heavy doses of tranquilizers or other intoxicants, sex, new-age healing and so on.

While cheating the disciples is an active principle of the guru party, all adherents of Krishna consciousness are advised to never pose as advanced devotees or gurus. "If one is not factually detached from material attachment ...but still proclaims himself advanced in devotional service, he is cheating. No one will be happy to see such behavior." (CC Antya p.179) Thus, although the guru party continues to maintain that criminals, deviants, even active homosexuals "were gurus in the pure succession (parampara)" no one is happy to hear this.

#### The Sinful Voting for the Pure?

Many contradictory ideas develop when contaminated neophytes artificially pose as fully pure. For example, as the first wave of gurus crashed on the beach,

(exposed in wanton sinful activities) followers were told their guru's potency to give them initiation was invalid. Followers would need to be reinitiated by the second wave of gurus.

But who appointed (voted in) the second wave of gurus? The first wave! (?) So the first wave was impotent (invalid) for newcomers - but they were fully potent to empower others as pure, perfected gurus? There is no evidence in Prabhupada's writings where conditioned souls - what to speak of extremely degraded souls - can empower others with the purity of God. Perhaps the gurus borrowed some of this idea from the Vatican's papal voting system.

Former gurus are sometimes described as persons who were never gurus (for initiating) while at other times they were gurus (to appoint their replacements). Of course, Prabhupada would never agree that a person who engaged in abominable behavior, such as engaging in sex with disciples, "was a guru". This is merely one of hundreds of similar guru party inventions.

#### Reform School Gurus

So many abominable deviations were spawned by the guru party that it was about to collapse entirely as early as 1984. To attempt pumping credibility back into the project, in September 1984, they started a Guru Reform Movement. The idea of the reformed pure devotee, as in "reformed sinner", is consistently refuted in Prabhupada's teachings.

Again they borrowed from ecclesiastical history, diluting the powers of elected pure devotees with a kind of guru (papal?) reformation. A major process devised to fill vacancies created by degraded failures was to "vote in" such a large number of gurus that losses would not be so prominent. They went on to vigorously "appoint" another fifty gurus.

Similar to the papal schism of the Middle Ages, "excommunicated gurus" might reject the guru council's authority and form separate factions. After all, what impudent council could question God's living spokesman? In other words, some of the gurus (rubber-stamped by the council) become hardened delinquents, so they are replaced. None of these dealings - amongst bona fide gurus - can be found anywhere in Prabhupada's writings.

An unwritten rule amongst guru reformers is to protect former gurus, even when they are exposed in criminal activities. You would not want to prosecute the person who just voted you into office? Despite being clearly implicated in personal use of the mission's assets (and so on), most gurus are given protection from legal prosecution, even if they substantially misused their position.

Although reformers claimed - loudly - to be champions of the down-trodden, one of their first executive orders was to excommunicate a dissident devotee - adding considerable fuel to the attitude which resulted in his murder in 1986. The reformers still excommunicate doubters.

Clearly, the "guru reform" stage is merely another smoke-screen for guru parties. Prabhupada cautions people of their philosophy: "They (unauthorized gurus) declared, 'Come on, unfit person - become acharya (guru).' Then another man comes, then another, and another. As soon as it was announced, 'Guru Maharaja is dead' - Now I am so advanced that I can kill guru and become guru. Nonsense." Thus the guru reform idea; "another man comes, then another and another," is unauthorized. But the guru leaders went immediately to the architect of the exact "unfit persons as guru" movement, as mentioned by Prabhupada above, to establish their own philosophy - of unfit gurus.

### You Just Wanted to be Cheated

What advice is given to those unfortunates who have accepted the party's contaminated gurus? They are oftentimes chastised (by leaders of the "guru" party) for being so foolish for accepting a cheater as a guru." But who told them to accept the cheating guru in the first place? ...The guru party! Indeed, those who will not accept their false gurus are shunned, excommunicated and so on.

According to the guru party's reasoning:

- They are fully authorized to produce counterfeit currency (contaminated gurus).
- Everyone must accept their false guru currency or face various pressures.
- When it becomes evident their currency is false, those who accepted their phoney money "wanted to be cheated".

Suppose one tells a high court judge that the citizens who accepted his bad checks or phoney money wanted to be cheated? Thus, the store owner who accepted the bogus money should be prosecuted, and the criminal who printed the bogus bills should be free?

Another oddity is: while newcomers are considered fools for accepting an initiation certification from bogus gurus, the guru party leaders (branding the misguided newcomers as fools) just received their own guru certification from the same exact bogus gurus who were exposed.

For example, while the guru party maintained the bogus guru Kirtanananda as a "pure devotee", they excommunicated those who would not accept him. Kirtanananda certified many others as guru by voting them in as pure devotees. After Kirtanananda was exposed in sordid affairs, the persons who Kirtanananda voted in as guru told his followers that they were "fools and rascals" for accepting Kirtanananda as an authority. But they did not relinquish their certification as guru, given to them by Kirtanananda's votes.

"Yes, you were a fool for accepting that person as an authority, but you must accept my authority, and I just received a certification from the cheater that you were so foolish to accept..." Say what?

### God's Successors - Contaminated?

After "guru" party members were exposed in behavior more degraded than any church layman would perform, they began to "explain away" their activities - by accusing historical pure devotees and gurus of contaminations. But Prabhupada consistently states that it is strictly forbidden to view such pure devotees as contaminated.

The pure guru should never be considered as a contaminated soul. Prabhupada's writings on these subjects are stunningly clear and can hardly be misinterpreted:

\*"The sahajiyas (false Krishna devotees) ...consider the gurus to be mixed devotees. Thus they clear their path to hell." (CC. Adi. 7.72)

\*"(A famous devotee's mother) ...stayed under the protection of (the guru) Narada Muni without fear from any direction. Similarly, Narada Muni, in his transcendental position, stayed with the young woman without fear of deviation. Narada Muni, Haridas Thakura, and similar acaryas (gurus) especially empowered to broadcast the glories of the Lord cannot be brought down to the material platform. Therefore one is strictly forbidden to think that the acharya is an ordinary human being (gurusu nara matih)." (SB 7.7.14)

The verse gurusu nara matih actually says that persons (such as the "guru" party) who maintain that the guru is contaminated like an ordinary human being, are residents of hell (naraka).

### Who is that Rascal?

In August 1980, the "guru" party wrote a criticism of the historical lead guru of the Krishna movement, namely Lord Brahma. He was criticized for his apparent failings. This criticism of Lord Brahma has continued up to the present. To degrade the position of such exalted souls has become a standard trademark of guru party philosophy.

The following exchange will show us what Prabhupada actually thought of persons who would dare to criticize Lord Brahma:

Disciple: "I was recently told by one devotee that the (guru) acharya does not have to be a pure devotee."

Srila Prabhupada: "What!?"

Disciple: "That the acharya does not have to be a pure devotee."

Srila Prabhupada: "Who is that rascal? Who said? ... Who is that rascal? The acharya does not require to be a pure devotee?"

Disciple: "Nitai said it ... He said that Lord Brahma is the acharya of the Brahma-sampradaya (guru succession), but yet he is sometimes afflicted by passion. So therefore he is saying that it appears that the acharya does not have to be a pure devotee..."

Srila Prabhupada: "He manufactured his idea. Therefore he's a rascal. Therefore he's a rascal. Nitai has become an authority?"

Disciple: "No. Actually he said he thought..."

Srila Prabhupada: "He thought something rascaldom, and he is expressing that. Therefore he is more of a rascal. These things are going on. As soon as he reads some books, he becomes the acharya, whatever rascal he may be..." (12/10/75)

Because Nitai dasa maintained such controversial ideas, he was eventually asked to leave ISKCON, by Srila Prabhupada himself. Yet, the guru party now openly presents Nitai's arguments as "truth" and they try to excommunicate those who defend Lord Brahma.

### Process Undermined

The gurus assert that contaminated neophytes must imitate the perfected guru "to continue the disciplic succession". Their degraded gurus are a normal by-product of the bona fide process. But Prabhupada says the exact opposite. "One should not imitate the behavior of an advanced devotee of maha-bhagavata without being self-realized, for by such imitation one will eventually become degraded." (NOI p.58)

The gurus distorted the pure devotee's position to say that "bona fide gurus fail by preaching to the sinful." But Prabhupada says, "There is no possibility that a first-class devotee will fall down, even though he may mix with nondevotees to preach." (CC Madhya 22.71)

Prabhupada counters the "guru" party theory of "failed gurus" by saying the bona fide guru will "never become (fallen) like that." Instead, the unauthorized, self-appointed guru falls. (NOD p.116)

### Guru by Edict?

The entire 5,000 year history of bona fide Krishna consciousness shows it to be at odds with ecclesiastical outcroppings, such as the guru party. The idea that you must have a "living father" (a papa or pope?) - who is voted in by guru (rubber-stamp) council (the College of Cardinals?) and so on, has no

Vedic equivalent. Gurus are never established by councils, votes and legislation.

Neither does Prabhupada ever mention excommunicated pure devotees. According to Prabhupada, there are never contaminated souls in the bona fide guru succession or parampara.

The entire history of the bona fide Krishna movement shows the authorized leaders to be opposed to artificially established gurus. Whether the unauthorized guru is established by caste (birth) or ecclesiastical votes does not matter.

Unfortunately, the non-liberated guru thesis of "gurus" is common. In the West, the history of the Middy Ages documents such ideas. In modern times as well, there are sometimes scandals surrounding evangelical preachers who artificially assume to be almost equal to Christ. Prabhupada used to say that Krishna consciousness was meant to save people from such calamities.

#### Demon Gurus?

The "guru" party always comes up with more and more convoluted realizations to keep their imitative guru project afloat. For example, In 1987, they concocted a set of "rules" for the "guru", which obviously are never to be found anywhere in Prabhupada's books.

Articles of these resolutions state:

66. "That if the ("guru" party's elected) Spiritual Master takes on demoniac qualities and becomes inimical to ISKCON, he should be rejected, and the disciple may take re-initiation."

As we pointed out earlier, Prabhupada said, "There is no question of a bad guru." According to these thinkers, he can be bad, very bad, even a demon.

67. "That if it is ascertained ... the guru was fallen at the time of giving initiation, then the disciple has legitimate reason to reject him and take re-initiation."

First of all, if the person was fallen he was not a guru, according to Prabhupada. Second, the re-initiation conception is not valid. "A devotee must have only one initiating spiritual master, because in the scriptures, acceptance of more than one is always forbidden." (CC Adi 1.35)

The guru party has an endless stream of gurus to give you as their first, second or third guru fails. Each time one is expected to be "fully surrendered" and "worship the (current) guru as if he were as pure as God."

#### Prabhupada Attackers - Gurus?

In 1990, more debates were developing about the addition of the guru party's bad gurus. The party had a good opportunity to correct their stand on many issues, for example, their stand that active homosexuals and deviants were gurus or voters on the pure succession. Instead, they took an even more radical stand, adding persons who were directly inimical to Prabhupada as "God's pure representatives."

The guru party produced their annual Journal and pronounced (the leaders of deviant Krishna sects) Tirtha Maharaja, Madhava Maharaja and Sridhara Maharaja as acharyas (pure gurus). But Prabhupada openly expressed that he did not agree that these particular individuals were gurus, not only that these "gurus" oftentimes caused Prabhupada major problems in India. While we cannot give a very comprehensive account of

the activities of these men in relationship to Prabhupada, here are a few examples:

\* "Bhaktivilas Tirtha is very much antagonistic to our society, and he has no clear conception of devotional service. He is contaminated." (11/14/73)

\* "Sridhara Maharaja is responsible for disobeying the orders of (our) Guru ...and unauthorizedly selected one (guru) acharya, and later it proved to be a failure. The result is that now everyone is claiming to be (guru) acharya, even though he may be kanistha-adhikari (low-grade devotee).

"In some camps, the guru is being changed three times a year. Therefore, we should not commit the same mistake in ISKCON.

"Actually, amongst my Godbrothers, no one is qualified to become guru (acharya). So it is better not to mix with my Godbrothers very intimately, because instead of inspiring our students, they may pollute them. This attempt was made previously by them, especially Madhava Maharaja and Tirtha Maharaja and Bon Maharaja, but somehow or other I saved the situation." (4/28/74)

\* "Both the Bagh Bazaar party (Sridhara Maharaja) and the Mayapura party (of Tirtha Maharaja) have unlawfully usurped the missionary institution of Srila Prabhupada." (9/30/69)

\* Madhava Maharaja objected to Srila Prabhupada's obtaining property in Jhansi, and thus prohibited one devotee from assisting Prabhupada. (\*66/6/3)

\* "He (Tirtha Maharaja) has purposefully not mentioned even a single line about the preaching work now going on in Europe, Canada and America under my direction." (\*69/2/22)

\* "I am sorry to learn that there is a sort of conspiracy by some of our Godbrothers (such as Tirtha Maharaja, et al) as not to allow me to get a place in Mayapura." (\*70/5/23)

\* Influenced by Tirtha Maharaja, Prabhupada noted that "a great clique" was "spreading contamination" in ISKCON. (\*70/5/41)

\* "We have actually seen that one of the disciple of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura (Tirtha Maharaja) wanted to enjoy the property of his spiritual master...

"The story of the demon Ravana illustrates this point. Although Ravana tried to abduct the goddess of fortune Sitadevi from the custody of Lord Ramachandra, he could not possibly do so. The Sitadevi he forcibly took with him was not the original Sitadevi, but an expansion of Maya or Durgadevi. As a result, instead of winning the favor of the real goddess of fortune, Ravana and his whole family were vanquished by the power of Durgadevi." (SB 5.18.22)

It is hard to imagine how persons compared to one of the Vedic history's greatest demons, Ravana, should now be considered "as pure as God." (?)

Prabhupada summarized his relationship with this "guru" group by stating, "All along, my (guru) Godbrothers gave me only depression, repression, compression - but I continued strong in my duty." (72/8/47) But the guru party wants persons who directly attacked Prabhupada's efforts to be recognized as gurus.

#### Minor Problem ...or Serious Offense?

The guru party oftentimes says that their fallen so-called gurus are basically sincere, and the Lord will give them the benefit of the doubt for their ersatz pure guruship.

As usual, this view is not supported by Prabhupada. He says that the imitation of pure devotee gurus is a

serious offense: "By a false display of religious sentiments, they present a show of devotional service while indulging in all sorts of immoral activities. In this way they pass as spiritual masters and devotees of God. Such violators of religious principles have no respect for the authoritative acharyas, the holy teachers in strict disciplic succession. To mislead (deceive the disciple?) the people in general, they themselves become so-called (guru) acharyas, but they do not even follow the principles of the acharyas.

"These rogues are the most dangerous elements in human society. Because there is no religious government, they escape punishment from the laws of the state. They cannot, however, escape the law of the Supreme, who has clearly declared in the Bhagavad-gita that envious demons in the garb of religious propagandists shall be thrown into the darkest regions of hell." (ISO p.68)

But the guru party maintains that the fallen guru party members (who indulged in all sorts of immoral activities) are "former gurus" who are "qualified voters" on the pure succession. Generally, they are also protected by the guru party from "the laws of the state."

#### Is Jesus Dead?

The philosophy of the "guru" party is to artificially substitute a "living guru" for someone like Lord Jesus Christ. The fact that they have a "living" personality that one must worship means that the worship of Jesus is somehow "dead." Thus, their "living person" should be worshipped as Jesus was. Quite the opposite concept was given by Prabhupada. He never encouraged anyone to worship conditioned souls, especially artificial "pure gurus."

In 1971, Prabhupada was asked if modern Christians should still worship Lord Jesus Christ, even though 2,000 years have passed. Could Christ still take their sins? Prabhupada said that Christ is still the guru for the Christians, and if they follow his instructions, Christ will still purify their sins.

We can also consider the following exchange between Prabhupada and some of his disciples to help see this idea more clearly:

Disciple: "Is there any way for a Christian to ... without the help of a spiritual master ... to reach the spiritual sky through believing in the words of Jesus Christ and trying to follow his teachings?"

Srila Prabhupada: "When you read the Bible, you are following the spiritual master. How can you say 'without'? As soon as you read the Bible, that means that you are following the instructions of Lord Jesus Christ. That means you are following a spiritual master. So where is the opportunity of being 'without a spiritual master'?"

Disciple: "I was referring to a living spiritual master."

Srila Prabhupada: "Spiritual master is not a question of (a living body) ... Spiritual master is eternal. So your question is 'without a spiritual master'. You cannot be 'without spiritual master' at any stage of your life. You may accept this spiritual master or that spiritual master. That is another thing. But you have to accept.

"As you say 'by reading the Bible' - when you read the Bible, that means you are following the spiritual master, represented by some priest or clergyman in the line of Lord Jesus Christ. So in any case, you have to follow a spiritual master. There is no question of 'without a spiritual master'. Is that clear?" (10/2/68)

The formula for following a bona fide spiritual master (guru) is; the scriptures (shastra) and the priest (sadhu) guide one's spiritual life. Prabhupada therefore also instructed his leaders to act as priests (ritviks). But they tried to establish themselves as some kind of "living guru" (pope?) or infallible, worshipped personality. This was not Prabhupada's instruction.

#### Worship the Bona Fide Guru

To worship a conditioned soul's "physical presence" is not Prabhupada's philosophy. One is instructed to worship the pure guru, even if he is not physically present. These are some examples of Prabhupada's instructions on this point:

Rukmini: "I feel so far away from you when you are not here, Srila Prabhupada."

Srila Prabhupada: "Please do not think like that. There are two conceptions - the physical conception and the vibrational conception. The physical conception is temporary. The vibrational conception is eternal ... we should associate with the vibration and not the physical presence. That is real association.

"Therefore, we give more stress to the sound vibration, of either Krishna or the spiritual master. Then we'll feel happy. No separation ... Whenever we feel separation, the best thing is to remember the teachings. Then it will be very nice.

"Never think that I can be absent from you. Physical presence is not essential. Presence by message is the real touch." (8/68)

Another example:

Narayana: "So, those disciples who do not have the opportunity to see you or speak with you..."

Srila Prabhupada: "That he (a bona fide spiritual master) was - vani (words of instruction from the guru) and vapuh (the physical body of the guru). Even if you don't see his body, you take his words, vani...Even if the guru is not physically present, if you follow his vani, then you are getting help." (7/21/75)

There is no substitute for worship of a bona fide pure devotee. "One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of uttama-adhikari (complete perfection)." (NOI text 5) Neither is the follower advised to accept a neophyte as if he was a pure devotee: "Therefore, a disciple should be careful to accept an uttama-adhikari as a spiritual master." (NOI text 5)

Only the factual pure devotee should occupy the post of guru, not some imitating neophyte: "The guru must be situated on the topmost platform of devotional service. ...When one has attained the topmost position of maha-bhagavata (perfected stage), he is to be accepted as a guru and worshipped exactly like Hari, the Personality of Godhead. Only such a person is eligible to occupy the post of guru." (CC M.L. 24.330)

If these instructions are not followed, we find degraded behavior surfacing, as in the guru party. "One should not imitate the behavior of an advanced devotee of maha-bhagavata without being self-realized, for by such imitation one will certainly become degraded." (NOI p.58)

Although the guru party constantly tries to present the idea that Prabhupada never gave clear instructions regarding his "successor," here is another telling exchange:

Reporter: "What will happen to the (ISKCON) movement in the U.S. when you die?"

Srila Prabhupada: "I will never die."

Devotees: "Jaya (wonderful)! Haribol! (laughter)"

Srila Prabhupada: "I shall live from my books and you will utilize." (Berkeley, 7/16/75)



Prabhupada's books have consistently proven to be the saving grace for the fallen guru syndrome, the so-called gurus simply fail to meet the qualifications he gives in his books.

Prabhupada thus instructs that one can associate with the pure devotee through his instructions (vani). And he gave his instructions in his books, knowing full well that his followers might deviate. Thus anyone can have access to his bona fide directions from his books.

Prabhupada even predicted that his "leaders" might very well ruin the ISKCON movement, and if that happened, people would still be able to benefit by reading his books. "Books will remain. That was the view of my Guru Maharaja, and I have also taken it. Therefore, I have started this movement with books. The temples will be maintained by book sales, and if there are no more temples, then the books shall remain." (letter 8/11/73)

#### Practical Steps

The word guru is used in India to apply to schoolteachers, big industrialists and so on. Thus, in the liberal sense of the term, all Krishna devotees might be called gurus (teachers), just as all Christians might be called "witnesses."

But the neophyte devotees are not supposed to be "viewed as infallible" as maintained by the guru party. The duty of the neophyte is not to promote himself, rather he is supposed to promote the bona fide guru, namely the founder guru of the Krishna consciousness movement, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Although every Krishna follower is directed to become a pure devotee, situated on the platform of perfection (uttama-adhikari), this does not mean that such a platform can be cheaply imitated. In India, the followers of one Krishna movement followed much stricter rules than Krishna followers in the West could dream of following. Still, Prabhupada said that even from that elite group, "no one is qualified to be (recognized as) acharya."

Prabhupada also condemned the process of "word jugglery." Thus, the idea that contaminated souls, such as drug takers, homosexuals and criminals and so on must be recognized as persons who "were gurus" or "voters" on the pure disciplic succession are not approved.



## LOVE AND TRUST

from Alanath Swami Berlin,

10.9.90

My Beloved Godbrothers:

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All Glories to Srila Prabhupada. Once again I address you to rectify a lie which some motivated persons have tried to spread.

Srila B.R. Sridhar Maharaja never promoted or supported any zonal acarya system as wrongly proclaimed. I am very surprised about the low type of bickering going on amongst us these days. I read VVR simple to know a little more about the current feelings of my beloved brothers. Some writeups are excellent and some are sad. All in all, we suppose the majority of the writers are well-intentioned, but often obviously very ill informed. Nityananda Prabhu is right when he claims that VVR is the only publication where anybody can raise a complaint against the rigid GBC style of management and communications, but only if the complaint makes it through the VVR censureship of cutting, omitting or distorting the message. Thus VVR fails to be really unbiased, open to the discussion they claim to present to save ISKCON from similar monopolisation of authority and information.

For that reason I had stopped to go on answering VVR since my answers were cut to the level of meaninglessness. There is always space to repeat the VVR Editor's opinion over and over, but not always opposing expositions. So there isn't no true debate. Just like the GBC. They vote over people's life without them having a chance even to speak. This is the system of debating somebody with 3,000 Watts who has no mike of his own. But today I will try again to make this offering to all of you with a straw between my teeth. VVR was one more of the great judges and critics of Srila Sridhar Maharaj just like so many famous ISKCON GBC leaders.

But let us come to facts. What did Sridhar Maharaj promote to ISKCON after he was consulted in 1978 by the GBC following that recommendation Srila Prabhupada personally gave them? (From a recording) He said:

...Those who are going to accept disciples should go out of the temples and start new temples...especially the bigger centers of Srila Prabhupada should be kept for the disciples of Srila Prabhupada. Nobody should occupy those temples for the relationship with their disciples. Like a married man needs his own room, the disciples need at least one place where their guru is appreciated. A group photo should be kept of those devotees accepting disciples in Srila Prabhupada's temple so that newcomers can find out that some devotees accept disciples. Don't impose on anyone a guru against his will, what to speak to oblige Godbrothers to work for a particular guru.

Then Jayapataka Swami asks: Which ones of the gurus is the most important one- siksa, diksa or sannyas guru?

Sridhara Maharaj: The one who has helped you the most to come closer to Krishna- he is the most important guru.

(Additional information: The group picture was actually taken and published in a Vyasa Puja book of Srila Prabhupada.)

Sridhar Maharaj instructions are basically that we have to follow our heart. That means we have to decide individually how to go on serving and preaching to others with full enthusiasm and conviction after the

departure of our beloved guru. If the GBC does not contradict Guru, Shastra, Sadhu and what your heart tells you there is no harm to follow such a GBC. Otherwise following a GBC's order without their sacred consent turns ISKCON into a cult.

What he clearly promoted was UNITY IN DIVERSITY and LOVE AND TRUST. The very cause of the success of Srila Prabhupada and what he promoted amongst all of us seems to be the most difficult to understand. Centralisation, bureaucracy, endless Guru arguing over issues that cannot be understood without love and trust. Those who proudly proclaimed that everything is in Srila Prabhupada's books, now they are exposing ideas which the Saktyavesa-Avatar never happened to write about. Of course, there is a loving answer to all questions. No doubt, that is the claim of guru parampara, but I am sure that unless the true principle of love and trust and unity in diversity is understood you will not find any living Guru and you won't understand any shastra Guru either. Guru is always there but who can understand him. Srila Prabhupada writes.. If the disciple is seriously aggrieved after the departure of his Gurudeva then the Chaitya Guru from within his heart will guide him onwards. We, the disciples of Srila Prabhupada do need each other. But not to argue, neither to fight for positions. Not to envy nor to flatter. Much less to threaten or to impose upon. Just to learn from each other to lovingly remember and to serve our Gurudeva Srila Prabhupada.

Often many of us think that we are the only truly sincere, even though we are not pure devotees and don't know how to continue, what to speak of to increase that original enthusiasm to surrender we experienced when we were with Srila Prabhupada.

Never forget that we are all in dire need for help and we will never get that help if we just offend others in the same of arguing the superiority of our sectarian views. Sridhar Maharaj is generally looked down upon by my ISKCON Godbrothers and even by many who left the GBC rule. Truly the defamation was well done. My heart is crying. If they cannot even love their great Vaisnava uncle, if they cannot appreciate that Srila Prabhupada was great amongst even the great, if they cannot understand that in a Vaisnava family you have to accommodate everybody and their FEELINGS, then there will be no big Vaisnava family. How do you expect them then to appreciate the work Tripurari Swami is doing, or the work Padmapani Prabhu was doing, or Trivikarma Swami, or of VVR, what to speak of a worm like being as myself. We cannot argue our way out of this material world, nor will our ecclesiastical ISKCON position give us an entry card for the spiritual world like the Prasadham Hall entry card at the Mayapur festival.

Nityananda Prabhu's challenge horse is well decorated and loaded with far fetched arguments as well as with a lot of sad evidents. But the horse is proud and arrogant, starving itself of love, characteristics we know only too well always fail in approaching the absolute. And those who are challenged have not much love either. That's why they are happy when critical people just disappear, so that they can ignore them or defame them as traitors of their interpretation of what Srila Prabhupada wanted to happen on earth. But if any good whatsoever should come from all that, then let us change all together the approach to this issue. Let us learn to truly appreciate the fact that there are more people than just me who try to get the grace of Krishna. How wonderful. That is the first step to Unity in diversity.

The faith of a newcomer will always be influenced by the people he met by the will of providence (Krishna), thus some newcomers are joining ISKCON, some the Chaitanya Sarasvat Math, some join with a Ritvik system believer and some with New Vrindavan. So are we to feel

sorry for all the other poor misled fellows who did not join our camp, or are we to denounce them as big fools without even knowing them? Krishna is the Supreme Lord and nobody else should foolishly think that he is going to become some big controller to remove the misunderstandings of others by executive force. Only by love and trust may we be accepted as a servant of the Vaisnavas. And that way we may even become eternal servants at last.

I would like to present the following proposals as a service to Srila Prabhupada.

#### MY PROPOSAL TO CREATE A LOVING SOCIETY OF ASPIRING VAISHNAVAS

1. Nobody should work under the authority of any Guru or GBC that he considers impure in his purpose.
2. Everybody who wants to participate in Srila Prabhupada's family should be welcomed, no strings attached, except that he should accept the basic rules of Vaishnava life and he appreciates the others.
3. Every temple should be able to choose their own GBC.
4. There should be no limits on how many GBCs there are. There should be no limit to how many GBCs may function in one city or country.
5. A GBC's zone should be all the temples who love him and trust him.
6. The faith of a searcher alone should decide who are his Gurus.

The real problem in our line is the lack of love and trust, and all true servants of Srila Prabhupada should come together to find out how to create such a wonderful environment that others will feel deprived from the highest privilege if they cannot be with you and all of us in a united Vaishnava family. Then we will have no difficulty to find solutions which will convince everybody about any Tattva in question. We must create a Vaishnava society which will accommodate everybody and openly exchange transcendental sound for the sake of maintaining the proper Guru, Sadhu and Sastra understanding.

#### VVR RESPONSE:

There is little doubt by reading the above, and even less when meeting in person, that Alanath Swami is sincere and has much to offer to the society of devotees in terms of how to heal the wounds and problems that persist. Yet, we cannot forget one letter from Srila Prabhupada to Rupanuga in 1974. For us, this one letter settles in a FINAL way whether or not followers or disciples of Srila Prabhupada should be involved with Prabhupada's godbrothers, Sridhar Maharaj included. "NOT MIX WITH THEM. THAT IS MY INSTRUCTION TO YOU ALL." Very clear indeed.

Many devotees went to the "Sridhar camp" when ISKCON went awry with the guru scandals from 1978 to 1986. They were looking for shelter, away from the madness in ISKCON. But VVR thinks the "Sridhar solution" was a mistake, and it would have been better, albeit more difficult perhaps, to take direct shelter of Srila Prabhupada, regardless of the cause of distress. Prabhupada is LIVING STILL IN SOUND; He is not dead, He remains available to anyone anywhere! Prabhupada followers had no need to find a "living" guru; Prabhupada remains the all in all and a complete shelter for those of proper understanding and faith. "I will live forever in my books!"

The letter reads: "You are right about Sridhar Maharaj's genuineness. But in my opinion he is the best

of the lot. He is my old friend, at least he executes the regulative principles of devotional service. I do not wish to discuss about activities of my Godbrothers but it is a fact that they have no life for preaching work. All are satisfied with a place for residence in the name of a temple, they engage disciples to get foodstuff by transcendental devices and eat and sleep. They have no idea or brain how to broadcast the cult of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

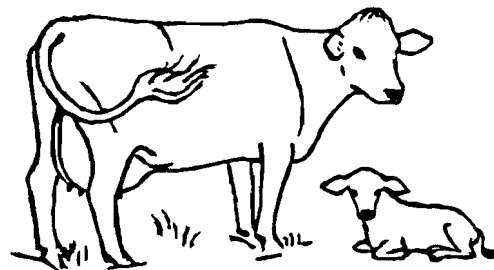
"My guru maharaj used to lament many times for this reason and he thought if one man at least had understood the principle of preaching then his mission would achieve success. In the latter days of my guru maharaj he was very disgusted. Actually, he left this world earlier, otherwise he would have continued to live for more years. Still he requested his disciples to form a strong Governing body for preaching the cult of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He never recommended anyone to be acarya of the Gaudiya Math.

"But Sridhar Maharaj is responsible for disobeying this order of guru maharaj, and he and two others who are already dead unnecessarily thought that there must be one acarya. If guru maharaj could have seen someone who was qualified at that time to be acarya he would have mentioned. Because on the night before he passed away he talked of so many things, but never mentioned an acarya. His idea was acarya was not to be nominated amongst the governing body. He said openly you make a GBC and conduct the mission.

"So his idea was amongst the members of GBC who would come out successful and self effulgent acarya would automatically be selected. So Sridhar Maharaj and his two associate gentlemen unauthorizedly selected one acarya and later it proved a failure. The result is now everyone is claiming to be acarya even though they may be kanistha adbhikary with no ability to preach. In some of the camps the acarya is being changed three times in a year.

"Therefore we may not commit the same mistake in our ISKCON camp. Actually amongst my Godbrothers no one is qualified to become acarya. So it is better not to mix with my Godbrothers very intimately because instead of inspiring our students and disciples they may sometimes pollute them. This attempt was made previously by them, especially Madhava Maharaj, Tirtha Maharaj and Bon Maharaj but somehow or other I saved the situation. This is going on.

"We shall be very careful about them and not mix with them. This is my instruction to you all. They cannot help us in our movement, but they are very competent to harm our natural progress. So we must be very careful about them."



## NATURAL PRODUCTIVITY:

### The Art of Farming

The following is an excerpt from a speech Trauger Groh gave in 1985. He now lives and works on a cooperative biodynamic farm in Wilton, New Hampshire.

As I stand here before members of the Cornell Agronomy Department, I feel a bit like Daniel entering the lion's den. I have no degree in agronomy and the only authority I can speak out of is twenty-seven years of biodynamic farming. I am describing what I know, and what I have learned during those years concerns the effects of plant and animal diversity on the farm. I have learned that plants and animals can be combined to form an inner harmony, a symbiosis, in which productivity will arise naturally, while input will tend to go toward zero. It is a system where economics and ecology will eventually meet. The farm can become self-sustaining when the manure necessary for sufficient plant growth comes from the farm and when these animals are fed exclusively from the farm's own crop production. This is an ideal which is put into practice by about 80 farmers in the area of Northern Germany where I live.

To give a bit of practical background: I farm with five families on 210 acres of land, which is big in Germany, but small in America. We deal with over 70 plant species and 7 different animals. We grow herbs for the cattle and have an extensive vegetable production within the farm rotation. We use 12 different grasses and 8 legumes. Having been brought up with the concept of the survival of the fittest, you learn something quite different when you actually work with nature. You find mutual help is far more prominent. Very quickly you see that in natural systems the greater the variety, the higher the production. This is the basis of the low-input productiveness of our farm.

If you look at the Serengeti park, for example, and count the animals per hectare, you find the highest amount of weight you could expect on the best dairy farm. It's amazing how much animal material is possible where this variety exists! We work with variety a great deal on our farm. Our productivity arises out of this. We are looking for an indigenous, natural productivity. This concept has been lost in modern agronomy, which considers only what need to be added by way of extra fertilizer.

Of course, if we look back in farming history to the old three-field system- of grain, then grain and roots, and then fallow - we find very low yields. Yet, because the population was low as well, not much more was needed, But when the population grew, and at the same time they reached the point where no more land could be cleared,

they had to acquire insight into how to raise the natural productivity of the land. The first thing they did was to introduce legumes, and they got tremendous results. They used red clover on the fallow ground, and so momentous was this event that the first farmer to introduce clover into middle Europe was knighted! He was given the name Schubert von Kleeefeld, or Schubert von Cloverfield! I always consider this the golden age of farming. They raised the natural productivity of the land by four times. This meant not only four times the yield per acre or per animal, it meant the farm as a whole! Since then, there is an enormous progress in yields, but it is actually far lower than at that time. Now one part of the farm raises its production at the expense of the ongoing fertility of the whole.

The biological impulse of 18th and 19th century farming has been deserted. Liebig (the father of chemical agriculture) found that soluble minerals could be added to enhance fertility and that the key function lay with nitrogen. Since then, the use of nitrogen has increased in Germany from 30 to 300 kilos per hectare! We find that modern agronomy has actually lowered the natural productivity of the farm. This starts with the use of nitrogen, which lowers the potential for nitrogen fixation in the legumes. This is important because a natural layer of clover or alfalfa and grass can fix nitrogen from between 30 to 500 kilos per hectare. This is really the art of farming. I certainly don't claim to have achieved this to a full extent. Much remains to be learned about how to treat the alfalfa-lay so that it leaves an ample amount of nitrogen for the next crop.

Increasingly we experience that what really builds the plant is not so much the available nutrients, but the special condition which the humus is in. For the plant lived in symbiosis with the soil, and it makes a difference whether the plant really penetrates the soil or whether it is fed by liquid nutrients. Soil conditioning is the most important thing we deal with on our farms. When we lack nitrogen, we approach the solution through the condition of the humus. So it is the carbon process - the processing of the organic matter - that is our primary concern. We never take the direct approach. We need nitrogen as much as any other farm, but where do we get it? The art is to achieve this naturally, through healthy soil.

We have an enormous degradation of natural productivity in husbandry today. We want to have very high yields, which are achieved with concentrated protein, but that is just what cattle are not built for. The cow is built for forage, and for us, the foraging cow is an essential aspect of our method. We have to have cows on every farm, because the influence of the cow manure - if it is properly treated - helps to stir and give incentive to the grass and clover lays to draw down nitrogen.

In the best soils of the world -- some in America, some in the south of Russia - we find the same carbon-nitrogen ratio of 1 to 7 which is found in fresh cow manure. When we were developing our farm system, we always looked at these black soils and had them as a goal. This can only be done with cow manure. At the beginning of the Soviet regime, there was a lot of research done with the very fertile soils of South Russia. At first, they thought they could keep up the fertility just by growing continuous wheat. But they discovered that this was not possible, and they introduced grass and clover lays after every fourth year, then every third year, but they could not keep up the fertility. What was lacking was the animal. There are 17 metric tons of nitrogen above every square meter of the field, but the animal impulse is needed to stir certain faculties of the plant, so that it comes into contact with this cosmic nitrogen.

The depression of natural fertility has also been caused by the misuse of breeding. Cattle - as well as other animals - have a special ferment pattern. This derives from digesting the local forage they get from a

particular place. Anything you bring in from another area disturbs the ferment pattern. This is especially so in the case of high-protein concentrates. It shows up as mastitis and sterility, but until the animal is slaughtered, you cannot see the enormous damage that is done to the liver. Why is this happening? The answer is this: our cattle in Germany are grazing for 30% of the time on the banks of the Missouri River.

I have spoken to farmers in Nebraska who are aware that their humus levels are going down. They raise nothing but soybeans and corn, and export most of it to Japan and Europe. What they are really exporting is the fertility of their soils. They have no animals to replace it.

In Europe, we feed far too many animals on these imported foodstuffs, far more than is really needed, and we get unnecessarily high yields. But our animals also deposit a surplus of manure on our poorer soils. For this reason, I think the European soils will last longer. It is almost as if American cattle were manuring European farms. The result is mountains of powdered milk and butter that no one wants. In the end, we export it at a very low price at the expense of the German taxpayer. This is an example of a terribly absurd theater that is going on in the economy of the world.

It is quite different on a farm where natural productivity is raised. The animal adapts itself to the specific flora of the farm. We have figures from biodynamic farms where we can see that the protein that is needed to produce one kilo of milk goes steadily down if we build up a self-contained farm organism. I figure it goes down 15%. What does this mean? It means that once animals become adapted, they can make more of their food. Perhaps the yields go down, but the input per kilo goes down as well. This kind of indigenous production is really what the world is living on.

In Germany, a cow can produce 4,000 kilos of milk per year on forage alone, without any grains or concentrates. You have a long living, very healthy animal. Surprisingly, when you raised production to 7, 8, or 9,000 kilos per year, as is done today with the help of concentrates, what cows make of their forage goes down dramatically. They can make only 500 kilos of milk out of their forage!

These yields are raised to increase profits. But this confuses profit with economy: because if the farmer does make profit by these methods (and fewer and fewer are doing this!) it means a loss for the whole, a loss of natural productivity, a loss of fertility, a loss for the whole for society. At present we use 15 times more phosphorus on our fields than is needed to produce food. The animals can give back 80% of the phosphorus they take with their food, but only if they are connected to a piece of land. In California, the average dairy herd is 300 animals. The average farm is 30 acres. Everything they feed comes from outside. The manure, on the other hand, and they ship it out dried to Europe for home gardeners. This is very clever, but again we have the exportation of humus and fertility!

In our farms, we take an entirely different path. We wouldn't dream of shipping our manure off the farm. We try to assemble the greatest diversification of animals and plants and bring everything we need within the borders of the farm, so that an inner harmony is created between the different species, a harmony which activates the productivity of the soil. We have found that natural productivity will be far greater when outside influences do not intrude. The combined diversification of animal life - of course including the protection of birds, hedgerows, creation of microclimates, even the inclusion of astronomical facts for sowing and breeding - together form what is itself an organism, a self-supporting organism. It arises from two observations: 1) animals are healthier when fed exclusively from the plant growth of the farm, and 2) these same animals will provide manure



exactly tailored to the humus requirements of plants used to feed them. It is a highly complicated symbiosis, a natural productivity, in which input always tends toward zero.

Though there are many aspects that I might mention in connection to our farming approach, I would like to conclude with a word concerning silica. We consider this the missing element in modern agronomy. Liebig was very aware of the importance of silica to plant growth. Had it been soluble, he would have made it part of the artificial manure. The silica intake, however, only goes via the micro-organisms off the soil. If you want a high silica metabolism, you need a very living soil. If you compare the analysis of grain and straw from the 1880's to now, you will find that silica in grain has gone down 30%. What we eat today as bread is a completely different grain from then. The old thatch roofs used to the last 30 years. Now they only last three, because the silica content has gone down so much.

Silica enables the plant to make better use of the soil, so that you don't need to manure so frequently. Through silica, the plant makes a better contact with the elemental rock. On the other hand, it enables the plant to connect with forces above the soil. We have about 90 elements in the air, and the plant breathes in far more than nitrogen alone. The whole question of trace elements would be superfluous if we could condition the plant to connect to the air and deeper elements of the soil.

Russian scientists have published a beautiful book called the "Monography of Silica in Agriculture". They have worked a great deal with silica bacteria, which can be isolated. These creatures can "digest" silica. This is a sort of creature that has to be present if silica is to be taken up into the plant. It only occurs in soils with sufficient humus.

## Hare Krishna



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Vishwa Ranjan, New Delhi, 5.13.91:

I have received 16 copies of VVR & 1 copy of the book "Still Living in Sound". Eight VVR's have been distributed by me among ISKCON devotees in New Delhi's Sri Radha Partha Sarthi Temple at the Sunday feast and preaching program during last 2 Sundays. One was given to Sri Narmada Swami, Temple President & remaining 7 copies also among prominent devotees and Temple office bearers. The balance will be distributed in Vrindaban, when I visit the place next. The book "Still Living in Sound" is being circulated among the Vaishnavas and devotees of Delhi.

Sometimes there is talk among devotees about your New Jaipur Village and your good self and magazine. The opinion is mixed. There is criticism of present official set-up. It is felt some self-seeking persons, who are not true Vaishnavas have captured seats of authority and are misusing vast funds, resources and goodwill of ISKCON movement. But still ISKCON is doing very useful work. In India, the Gov't is completely oblivious of the need of spiritual & moral development. As a matter of fact it is considered unsecular and bad to teach or talk about these things. In these circumstances, the role of ISKCON becomes the more important.

There are about 40-50 wholetime bhaktas in the temple. They go out in the town to preach, do kirtan, sell books, solicit donations both in cash & kind. All this work will stop, if the present set up is disturbed. However, several devotees feel that your magazine is acting as a watch dog and gives useful suggestions. When I visit Vrindavan, I shall send further news.

From Jahnava dasi, ISKCON Alachua, 5.23.91:

Although so much has happened, I now wish to communicate to you my deep gratitude that you protected me when I beseeched your help. To this day I am terrified of my husband and have no hope for his recovery. However, due to your assistance, now I have legal custody and protection (my children). Without your having taken the risk to protect us--my whole life would be very perilous today. At least now I have the law to rely on! Please do not doubt your choice (to help me).

Despite the avalanche of your losses, surely you will be amply rewarded by Srila Prabhupada in due course of time for such great contributions as establishing the Ritvik Conclusion & communicating the importance of homeschooling. To this day, all the former residents of New Jaipur are grateful for your having facilitated our coming together for the purpose of endeavoring towards Srila Prabhupada's jagat-Gurukula and Daivi Varnashram. We recall the morning program nostalgically--it was very sweet.

I, for one, remain indebted to you for these gifts and pray that all spiritual good fortune be yours. Lord Sri Krishna is, after all, the Supreme Benefactor, and His greatest benediction is Krsna prema. Yours in the service of Srila Prabhupada.

From Karnamrita das, somewhere in UK, 4.9.91:

Something came between us that prevented us from being unconditioned friends. But I have been your friend, in actual fact, and as we are sons of the same father that friendship will eventually be manifest in purity & perfection. I do not really want to leave New

Jaipur, and wish that we could have worked co-operatively for the rest of our lives. But I am incapable of living always on a battlefield & must therefore withdraw & take the line of least resistance in my attempt to stay in Krishna consciousness.

If there is some service I can render in the future, when everything has become clearer & we have realised more about our individual inebrieties, and have begun to take them to task, then let me know.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati has said that the spiritual path is beset with thorns. So don't be discouraged by difficulties that arise. As conditioned souls, we inevitably have to learn the hard way. For my part, I feel I can better rely on the Lord by being more self-dependent. I know the ropes in England, & although I would rather not go there, I know I can survive. I hope things do not become too rough for you. I pray that you will find what is best for you when you come out the other end. If it ever becomes possible for me to return to lovely New Jaipur then I definitely shall do so. I am leaving as a very last resort.

Thank you, sincerely, for all the generosity & kindness you have shown me & my family. I wish I could be of more use to you than I have been. Your humble servant.

From Radha Damodara das, Burnaby, B.C., 5.21.91:

One project I have in mind is a book of short Classic ISKCON Playscripts. I've collected 216 play scripts over the years, from all over North America and I could rework them into good short plays. I would concentrate on the plays built from Srila Prabhupada's analogies and used as entertainment at Sunday Feasts and in Street Theatre. These have delighted thousands and been a good laugh for the devotees. I know that many young devotees and the devotees of foreign countries have never seen or even heard of these wonderful skits. I would especially publish these: The Drowning Man, The Bird in the Cage, Dr. Frog, Liquid Beauty, A Fish is just a Fish, Coming of the Age of Kali, Lust, Anger and Greed, The Boatman and the Scholar, Narada and the Cobbler and the Bhogi Yogi play. What do you think? Do you foresee any obstacles? Will you publish this on your press?

Also I have begun to put my Srila Prabhupada memoirs on disk and have several more pages of Vaisnava jokes (I sent some in March) ready to send you and a couple of articles when I know that you are still regularly publishing.

From Serge Baranov, Moscow, 5.20.91:

Thank you very much for your devotional replys. Now I am aside from any official ISKCON activities. Also, I have no confidence to so-called leaders and senior devotees here in Moscow, not including Ananta Santi, initiated disciple of His Divine Grace. I don't want to enumerate here these unpleasant events.

Maybe in Moscow I am the only truly well wisher of your journal. Overwhelming majority here have full faith into present ISKCON leaders-system. So, my question is if gurus are bogus, is it possible to accept gayatri chanting from Srila Prabhupada's books without any initiation? I think a person can chant gayatri if he situates on goodness-guna level and feels inner necessity and inspiration. Gayatri--Srimad Bhagavatam 5.20.46 purport, C.C. Madhya Lila talks with Ramananda Raya, kama gayatri. Brahma-samhita, His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati. Please clarify this important item! Another one. Sometimes I feel sharp pains. So, what medicines are forbidden as intoxicants and which are not? If possible maybe to print a list or an article on this topic. I appreciate

and enjoy by your scientific journal very much. Sorry I am unable to subscribe officially, because it's impossible in Russia to convert our money into U.S.\$.

From Haripada das, Penn Valley, CA, 6.10.91:

With varying degrees of intensity, all of us disciples, followers and admirers of Srila Prabhupada undoubtedly feel indebtedness and love for him for the mercy he has shown us by so kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanya throughout the world. In doing so, he has been powerfully instrumental on a global level in ushering in the 10,000 year Golden Age which began with the appearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Individually we all have experience of how his words opened our darkened eyes and filled our hearts with transcendental knowledge, giving us a life full with spiritual meaning and purpose.

As the 100 year anniversary of Srila Prabhupada's appearance rapidly approaches I am happy to be able to offer to the worldwide community of devotees an opportunity to fondly remember him on a daily and ongoing basis. I recently felt a strong and overwhelming inspiration to draw portraits of Srila Prabhupada. With great pleasure I spent hours and hours working on large charcoal drawings of His Divine Grace which was a wonderfully enthusing and inspiring meditation.

The enclosed flyer will provide you with information concerning the first of a series of fine quality lithographic prints of Srila Prabhupada now available to devotees through-out the world. I have titled this print "VAISNAVA THAKUR" which appropriately describes Srila Prabhupada as a compassionate, God-like pure devotee of Lord Krishna. It is produced as a Limited Edition print with each one being individually signed and numbered.

The reproduction of the portrait shown on the enclosed flyer hardly does justice to the actual print itself. The local devotees here in our community have been extremely enthusiastic in encouraging me to produce the prints so that many other followers of Srila Prabhupada could have the opportunity to have them in their temples and homes and feel transcendental pleasure and inspiration. I am hopeful that this portrait of our beloved Srila prabhupada and the subsequent ones of him to follow in this series of prints will be to all who receive them, the source of a renewed and heightened sense of dedication to assisting him and his followers in the divine mission of spreading Krsna consciousness to every town and village of the world.

My humble request to all of you who receive this letter and flyer regarding these prints of Srila Prabhupada that are now available is that you kindly post the flyer in an appropriate place in the Temple and/or make copies and distribute them to other devotees who may be interested to receive one for themselves. We want that everyone get the opportunity to visually meditate on Srila Prabhupada and ultimately hear transcendental knowledge from him and go Back to Godhead.

From Mahesh Raja, Lancashire, UK, 6.20.91:

There are many rumors about New Jaipur closing, but whatever the case may be I have come to appreciate your endeavor in this attempt to reinstate Srila Prabhupada at the centre of our movement. As with our Guru Maharaja's order, I have great hope that you will continue to print this brochure, VVR in any other name even if it is one page. (Krishna has many Names.)

Your attempt to disclose the truth that Srila Prabhupada wanted Ritvik system has not gone in vain. At least I am convinced.

P. 270 vol 33 conversations "Prabhupada: who is initiating . "He is grand disciple." Correct words are: "Prabhupada: Who is initiating; his grand disciple". So we know it is Srila Prabhupada who is initiating that, therefore makes others position as clearly ritvik.

It is a thankless task to convince others: but if it was not for Srila Prabhupada we would have given up. The result is this fight for Srila Prabhupada--let us simply do our duty without attachment. One moon is better than so many stars. It is not expected in this maya's kingdom everyone will listen. But the fight must be there.

From Krsna Katha das, Wicklow, Ireland, 7.6.91:

I heard rumors that you'd closed down? Assuming that its not the case, I'd like to place the following ad:-

THE CITRALEKHA INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGE BUREAU, for devotees and congregational members. Are you looking for a Krsna-conscious marriage partner? For more information, contact:- Krsna-katha das or Bhagavata devi dasi, Bawnogues, Rathdangan, Co., Wicklow, Ireland. Phone 0508-73330. Please let me know the rates for advertisements. By the way, I still haven't received the latest VVR.

From Dravinaksa das, Naples, FL, 7.8.91,

It's unfortunate your community dissolved. Something must have been amiss as Krishna would not have kicked it to smithereens. He does that to protect His devotees. I admire you. You have guts and an ability to get things done. You are willing to put your money and energy into serving Prabhupada rather than creating a comfy life for yourself. Our society needs men like you. If you are in the area please visit.

From Rasamanjari dasi, Culver City, CA, 3.18.91:

I have heard a rumor regarding Nityananda getting into trouble with the law. I would like to know the truth. I also would like to say that he has enlivened me through the VVR and the standard set at New Jaipura. I pray to Lord Krishna to protect you and excuse you if there's been some wrong-doing. Due to respect for his service and sincerity, I offer my support in your difficult times.

From Kundali dasa, Malaysia, 2.10.91:

I have just received VVR #15, and it is very nice indeed. I especially liked that you got hold of Pradyumna's "Early Doubts" letter to SDG. The tone of this issue is not as confrontational as previous issues. This I think is a forward step for your journal. It is simply not enough if only the ISKCON disenchanting read VVR. Somehow you must attract the ISKCON enchanted to read it as well and read it with a sense of respect for the opinions and philosophy aired in its pages.

I believe it is possible to increase your readership by such a shift in tone, without compromising your purpose, which is to have the GBC first accept VVR as loyal opposition. Then only they give careful consideration to the different questions raised in VVR. I don't think it's too late to achieve that status, but a gentle, yet consistent prodding will be more effective for increasing readership, and ultimately for getting any sort of favorable response from the GBC.

I am cited in VVR #15's "Short Notes", as verifying claims of Gouridas Pandit Prabhu's recall of unrecorded talks and statements by Srila Prabhupada in his last days, but I categorically deny this.

In Vrindavan, in his last days, Srila Prabhupada requested Narayana Maharaja, "You please help them

(meaning us) after I'm gone." Narayana Maharaja replied, "You have given them everything. My only advice is that they become a little humble, that's all." Did we take that advice? I'm sorry to say, no, we did not. Unfortunately, up to now we have not on any large scale heeded his advice to become "a little humble".

I believe with all my heart, that after all is said and done, after some of my guru Godbrothers give up the conception that because I initiate I also hold all the Krishna conscious realizations, after they give up the paramahansa posturing and after the novelty of fawning disciples wears off, the meek shall inherit ISKCON. That day cannot come soon enough.

From Krishna-kirtan das, Wheatfield, IN, 12.10.90:

In regards to the idea that Srila Prabhupada is not capable of giving shelter to devotees who's guru has fallen down and that they need to be reinitiated, I thought I should share my experience in this matter.

After reading about how different spiritual masters had given diksha initiation to their disciples without any necessity of physical presence, and since taking complete shelter of Srila Prabhupada in 1986 I was totally satisfied and didn't have any desire to have anyone else as my spiritual master, I decided to pray to Prabhupada for diksha initiation. I got some inspiration from his Divine Grace and in August of '89, I placed my chanting beads in front of his picture and made my vows, and after that placed a brahmna thread there and read the mantras off of the sheets that contains them. I felt some genuine reciprocation from Prabhupada and also noticed that Lord Krishna was definitely more manifest in His name while later chanting japa. I therefore concluded that Prabhupada had given me first and second initiation.

Then at the end of May 1990 a doubt arose in my mind while chanting japa. Maybe Prabhupada didn't give me initiation. Maybe it was all an imagination. And as this doubt grew I began to realize that I had better find out the truth, otherwise my spiritual life could be in serious jeopardy. So I began to pray to Srila Prabhupada very intensely to please reveal the truth. It even got to the point where I was praying to Srila Prabhupada to please send me a bonafide spiritual master if he was unable to give that shelter. As soon as I got to this level of utter desperation some intelligence came from within that Prabhupada had indeed given me first initiation but not second, and this intelligence was accompanied by spiritual bliss felt within the heart.

So at first I wondered whether this was actually true or if it was just imagination. I prayed to Srila Prabhupada and Krishna that I really wanted to know the truth and not be tricked by maya and I soon saw that as my faith grew in this idea so did the transcendental bliss. In no time I found myself immersed in spiritual ecstasy and this lasted for about one hour confirming that the experience was genuine. A few days after this I again placed a brahmna's thread in front of Prabhupada's picture and read the mantras off of the sheet. As I repeated each word of the different mantras the chanting was experienced within the heart, and from that moment on by the mercy of Srila Prabhupada I have felt completely under the shelter of his lotus feet.

I am writing this account not with a view to criticize gurus in our movement. There probably are some devotees in ISKCON who are qualified, and others although not completely 100% liberated, because new devotees desire to take shelter of them and because they are sincere in the attempt, that Prabhupada is empowering to be guru according to their purity. I am writing this from the point of view of a devotee who

surrendered to Prabhupada's ISKCON and went through the process of initiation, and who has had the divine revelation of Srila Prabhupada being able to transmit mantras through disciplic succession and complete an initiation process that had been started almost 12 years ago.

In conclusion, I'm offering this account up to the lotus feet of all the Vaisnavas as a testimony of Srila Prabhupada's unbounded mercy, and humbly pray to the devotees that make policies in our society regarding reinitiation that they please take this and other similar experiences into account. Falling at the lotus feet of all the Vaishnavas.

From Sri Nandanandana dasa, Detroit, Michigan, 7.91:

I wanted to inform you that if you are looking for paraphernalia or books to market in your area or for your shop, I have just completed a revision of my book, "The Secret Teachings of the Vedas: The Eastern Answers to the Mysteries of Life," Volume One. The flyer included tells a little about the book.

The first edition of the book sold reasonably well. As long as it was displayed where people could see it, it continued to sell week after week. In this revised edition, it has been professionally typeset, has a high quality color cover, and many black & white photographs within. This second edition is geared more towards the New Age market, as well as bookstores and libraries. Of course, temple gift shops can also carry it with good sales to be expected. Such companies as Baker & Taylor have taken up distributing it to libraries and other outlets, with sales expected to increase with this new edition.

In any case, this is something you might like to consider adding to your line of products. (Editor's note: We did add the two books below to our line; refer to our book listing in this issue. We are always supportive of those who want to distribute transcendental knowledge through book publication & distribution.)

The Secret Teachings of the Vedas:  
The Eastern Answers to the Mysteries of Life

This is a book that gathers information and uses many quotes from dozens of Vedic texts to clearly summarize such topics as the science of the soul and consciousness, our real identity, attaining the highest happiness, achieving individual and world peace, the cause of suffering, the law of karma, karma of a nation, reincarnation, the real process of evolution, a description of heaven and hell, where the modes of nature take us, determining our future life, the history and source of the Vedas, Vedic influence on the West, the nature of the Absolute--personal God or impersonal force, description of the spiritual realm, why we exist at all, and much more. It also has a special section describing a pilgrimage to the important holy sites of South India with over 75 photographs of art, sculptures, architecture, Deities, and some of the most amazing temples you can see anywhere. This is a must for anyone who would like to know more about traveling through this area.

"The author authentically and ably presents the ancient Indian thoughts and insights in dealing with numerous questions regarding life. This book is a welcome introduction to the teachings of the Vedic and Puranic literature on the various topics of metaphysical and spiritual interest." Professor Mahesh Mehta, University of Windsor, Canada.

"I can't thank you enough for producing such a nicely written and practically presented book on Krishna Consciousness. Your "Secret Teachings of the Vedas" presents all the major points of Vaishnava philosophy



in a clear way that even a 'so-called' older aspiring devotee like me can derive great benefit by reading. Very often I consult your book before giving temple or public lectures." Mahanidhi Swami, Vrindavan, India.

**The Universal Path to the Absolute:  
The Eastern Answers to the Mysteries of Life**

This is another book that contains more information than can be described here, but includes a description of the many levels of knowledge the Vedic literature contains. It also analyzes the different paths of yoga and Eastern philosophy, as well as the major world religions to show their development, controversial histories, and their spiritual effectiveness. It also examines philosophical, archeological, and linguistic evidence that shows a common source of all major religions, which in most cases can be traced back to the original Vedic culture. The book also explains the basics and performance of the path meant for this age, bhakti and mantra yoga, which is the essence of all principal religions of the world: the universal path. Once again many quotes from several Vedic texts are used to verify the topics of discussion. Other topics include the Vedic teachings found in Christianity, the origins and spread of the early Vedic culture, the real purpose of yoga and religious systems, the qualities of a real spiritual teacher, the mystic powers and chakras, attaining the Absolute, and more. A special section on traveling to the holy places and important temples of East India and Nepal is also included with many photographs of some of the most sacred places on earth. This book is guaranteed to be a thought provoking and enlightening study.

From Anonymous, 7.91:

This inter-faith type of idea has become such a fad all over ISKCON (not just New Vrindavan) that I thought Prabhupada must have said something about it. So I scanned all the letter books and found out he did. A lot as a matter of fact. And Srila Prabhupada didn't have too much to say in endorsing this type of interfaith preaching NV or others are trying to practice. But rather he goes to great length politely forbidding it.

Everytime his disciples brought up this idea, Srila Prabhupada handled it in such a way as if he was plucking weeds from their devotional creepers. It's significant that when a disciple brought this idea up once or twice Prabhupada compassionately kills it and the disciple never brings it up again. It's clear Srila Prabhupada has no intention in implementing any interfaith programs in ISKCON ever. At most Prabhupada gives one disciple (69-7-73) permission to scholarly gather some facts about other faiths so we could more effectively present the sankirtan movement to them and not appear ignorant. But he clearly forbids us against taking any part in deeply understanding or helping others take part in other faiths. New Vrindavan's claim that Prabhupada ordered this kind of preaching is refuted by Prabhupada himself.

In 68-6-36, Prabhupada does not allow or endorse a suggestion by Kirtanananda to let NV grow along an intersect theme. Last year, I heard Ratujava Svami speak in Cleveland, and he said he witnessed Srila Prabhupada personally face to face not permitting Kirtanananda to start an interfaith program in NV.

To Rayarama (71-10-21), Prabhupada forbids him from preaching the Bible according to the Bhagavad Gita. And instructs that this kind of preaching can never be successful. And he cannot stay in ISKCON if he continues to do so.

To Hansadutta (69-11-2), Prabhupada elaborately and gravely forbids interfaith for all time in ISKCON, and

also states that it's definately forbidden by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. So NV quoting the Janardana letter (4/13/69) to vaguely endorse their interfaith program is definitely not Prabhupada conscious at all. There's many, many more and Prabhupada reveals everything about the noncomparative relationships of other faiths with Krishna Consciousness.

In Bhagavan (70-3-1), Prabhupada reveals that even a strict Christian cannot be delivered to the transcendental world by even strictly practicing his own faith. The highest perfection he can attain in the Christian faith is the heavenly planets in the material world.

As for the statement made by NV in VVR 15 that they're just making a "Christian a better Christian" as desired by Prabhupada. I think they have a misunderstanding of Prabhupada's plan. This following letter illustrates Prabhupada's actual desires along that line.

Srila Prabhupada's desire for preachig KC is that we follow strictly and faithfully the program he already laid down for ISKCON. And he wanted his disciples to carefully carry out these instructions sincerely and obediently and hoped soon that Krishna consciousness would be the world's only religion.

NV should study more carefully Srila Prabhupada's instructions in regards to other faiths and also his will on how he wanted NV built and stay within those guideline. And hopefully root out this recent reappearance of weeds which are trying to choke ISKCON again.

On chanting, in a letter (69-10-1) describing the beliefs of ISKCON. In point #8, Prabhupada says, "It's not recommended that a Krishna conscious devotee go into seclusion for chanting by himself thereby gaining salvation for himself alone. Our duty and religious obligation is to go out into the streets where the people in general can hear the chanting and see the dancing." Why doesn't NV quit cleverly misrepresenting Prabhupada's will and do what he actually instructs for preaching KC instead? Including dhotis, sikhas, no beards, saris, etc. Yogesvara (71-12-47), "Our process is to show Krishna consciousness as it is, not as others want to see it. It is not that we should change, but that we should change the public to accomodate us.

It is interesting to read the story of Pradyumna dasa in VVR 15 because here at the Cleveland temple, they defend and glorify Hridayananda dasa Goswami because he was the devotee specifically appointed by Prabhupada to continue the Bhagavatam. They claim.

From Bhakta Damion, Manchester, England:

Thanks for your tremendous efforts in exposing the hypocrisy in ISKCON. You are revealing the truth that will break through the darkness of the Age of Kali. May Prabhupada shelter us all for the next 10,000 years. The article in VVR #8 "Feature Article - Varnasrama System must be introduced", is so inspiring. I photocopied this article and sent them to a few friends.

Presently, I am now back in Manchester in a bedsitter (room/bedroom/kitchen all in one) and I have a morning program and try to read Prabhupada's books as much as possible. Association with Prabhupada through his books and with Krsna through the Holy Name is keeping me going. I visit the local ISKCON centre every Sunday. Ramanuja and his wife are there. They now think you have gone "way off the rails". His wife says, "I wouldn't even look at the cover of a VVR." Sounds like paranoia. I appreciate "Nrsigha appeals to Badrinarayana - a response to the ISKCON Journal", it sums it all up for me. I have read VVR #1-14 and the

ISKCON Journal. The debate is strengthening my intelligence, this is what we all need.

I have a few questions to ask, if anyone in the readership can supply the answers:

1. Did Prabhupada want his devotees to try and prove the authenticity of the SB and Vedic culture from an historical, scientific, archeological point of view?

2. What are the exact Sanskrit verses from the Matsya Purana, etc., that refute the idea that the Bhagavatam is a recent creation by someone called Vapudeva? Also, who is Vapudeva?

3. What are the Sanskrit references for the appearance of Jesus and Mohammed?

4. Did Bhaktivinoda Thakura say that Jesus has his own planet in the heavenly kingdom? If so, where, and is there more information on this?

I hope to get a good reception for my programmes. I already have 2 guests coming around here. They have taken prasadam and some of Srila Prabhupada's books. There are people I've met on my travels. My friend and I were getting a flat near the temple there. He wants me to send him a VVR. I hope he comes down here and helps me. There is another devotee from Bhaktivedanta Manor who hopefully will be coming down to help. There is a nice place near Manchester called Oldham. Manchester already has a temple but Oldham doesn't. Oldham was famous for the export of cotton to India. I heard that Prabhupada had said that he hopes Oldham becomes famous for Krishna consciousness as it was for cotton. I have an altar Gaura Nitai on it and the pictures of all the acaryas of our beloved siksa lineage up to the Panca-tattva. I just need association. I find the atmosphere in ISKCON temples very unpalatable so I prefer to keep a distance. I go every Sunday and that is about it.

I read a letter in VVR by the Manchester temple president, Krishna Dharma, in VVR #10. It seemed like he was a Prabhupada-nuga, but he must have been intimidated or pressured because recently I overheard him talking to someone saying VVR is "off". It seems that devotees accept Prabhupada but are scared to accept him directly, and when they give class, everytime "surrender to Krishna" comes up. Their concept seems to be "surrender to the GBC".

Everything seems to be contradicted around this concept, so with me not having much faith in the "transparency of the GBC" my natural tendency is to remain aloof to protect my own sentiments and feelings towards Krishna and Prabhupada in a positive way. If as soon as Prabhupada passed on to Krishna-loka his disciples were "immediately" to become guru because "this is the etiquette and law of disciplic succession", why did Prabhupada bother stressing qualification? Why can't any of his disciples who follow the 4 regs, chant 16 rounds, and follow the morning program take disciples? It is obvious that they have to be qualified. Why do they misrepresent you saying that you say "no one is qualified", when the whole debate is "what are the minimum and maximum qualifications of the diksa guru"?

Prabhupada always stresses the guru as liberated, unbound, and beyond the three modes of material nature. He says that his disciples have to be qualified - the training complete. Complete means knowing one's relationship on Krishna-loka. If that is not complete then what is? Good-standing can also refer to your mental outlook towards Krishna - do you have enough faith, is Krishna the same God that the Christians, Muslims, all the world faiths revere, realizing this, being equal to all, loving, compassionate, etc. Not just the 4 regs/16 rounds/morning program with bhakti

and its different levels of advancement - Krishna-prema is the end, the process completed. Why don't the GBC say (if what you say is bogus), "Ritvik is used under these conditions - and list them, not under these conditions - and list them", instead of saying, "completely bogus, deviant philosophy, demoniac", if they have used this system before. You would think they would have done this straight away in the ISKCON Journal. Where is this proof Gauridas is lying? Yasodanandana is lying?

From Rasananda das, Radhadesh, Belgium, 2.1.91:

Thank you for the last VVR. I didn't expect it because I had heard that you couldn't send any VVR for those who don't pay. Unfortunately, I left Brussels, for many reasons. I think it's a pity to leave this place. Everybody says it's a good place for preaching activities (sure it is because it's right in the centre of Bruxelles and this city is the capitale of Europe now) but nobody wants to take care of it.

At least, when I was there, one young boy became a full time devotee. He is in sankirtana in Anvers since that time. Another boy came to me to have some information about our movement. You know his name because he orders you a lot of things- Bhakta Daniel. He is very nice.

Actually, he preached to his mother and sister who now are very favorable to us. They became vegetarians also. I am very happy with the way I encouraged Daniel in his Krsna consciousness. Some devotees tried to convince him to join the temple (Radhadesh) but he does not feel it yet. So, instead of that, he made his own apartment a temple. When we went to India last year together, he bought some murtis (Gaura-Nitai) and now every morning he worships them. Because of them he gets up at 5 o'clock, chants his rounds, reads and goes to work. Like this, he is very happy.

The devotees in France are very sincere, and they work very hard to maintain and save the temples from being lost. They did a good marathon. I told one devotee one time that I read VVR 13. He told me: They are finished. We just smashed them. They don't want to hear us because of false ego. So I said no and tried to explain about TKG. He answered: You should not criticize senior devotees who did so much for ISKCON. Who are you to do this? And Nityananda, he had so many problems with ISKCON in the past, in suspicious affairs. And Rupa Vilasa, he went away. We stopped the conversation because we were in a car and we arrived at our destination.

I can understand his position because he was initiated by Bhagavan prabhu and now wants to become re-initiated from TKG. As he was trained by Bhagavan, he had and always had the mentality of controlling people and as he was sankirtan leader, he was very heavy with his men and women.

He always defended Bhagavan, even after his departure. Now he defends TKG. The mentality is just to smash everybody, in a way we cannot discuss. They are right, we are wrong. Until now, I was always skeptical about ritvik or not but now I am more and more convinced. In Paris, I had the opportunity to read a photocopy of the book "Monkey on a stick" which describes all ISKCON past crimes. It gives me a better understanding of how dangerous it is to have people non qualified guru in this position. If they had acted as ritvik, they would have been more humble.

Jyotir Mayi devi dasi (Prabhupada disciple since 1970) told me that Srila Prabhupada gave this position of ritvikacarya to those eleven persons because they had the biggest false ego. Now the situation is a little bit complicated. Those from the past who are

still gurus and the new gurus, they have disciples and cannot be detached from this position like this.

And what if some disciples want to stay disciples of such gurus? I think the GBC will be forced to adopt this solution officially because now of the VVR, there are many devotees in and out of ISKCON temple who like this idea. Because of you, so many old devotees want to preach again, at least follow regulative principles and chant sixteen rounds again. Those devotees who left the temples because of this politics. So there will be a majority of "agent of Kali", as Bhakticaru Swami treated you but they will preach also Prabhupada glories.

"The agent of Kali" were inside ISKCON and almost destroyed the movement. What I find funny is that, here, in Radhadesh, almost everyone read VVR even though it's forbidden in the temples. Even Hridaya Caitanya, temple president. Perhaps it will change in the future because of the control of the GBC. I heard Ireland, most of the devotees do not want to cooperate with the GBC. That means something.

I have another feeling with this ritvik problem. For ISKCON, it's a big thing but personally, I don't think we should meditate on this all our life. In any case, I feel in connection with Prabhupada and so many devotees are like this too. We just have to continue our mission.

People like you can fight like this (by writing and speaking) because you have the ability. We just can support your point of view and preach new people in the same way. If some new devotee wants to become initiated by Srila Prabhupada (by ritvik system) It's not allowed in ISKCON. How can it be done? Then he will not be able to live in any ISKCON temple.

From Srila Prabhupada, Letters 69-6-21:

"Another thing is although I have brought this sankirtana movement to the Western world, we cannot make it copyrighted. The sankirtan movement is not my invention. So how can it be copyrighted? Besides that, as you will find in the album of my previous recording, the chanting of Hare Krishna is going on since time immemorial. So Hare Krishna cannot be copyrighted. Although the tune in which I sing with my disciples that may be copyrighted. I have no objection to sign this agreement, but don't be misled that the chanting of Hare Krishna or Lord Chaitanya's movement can be made copyrighted."

From Nancy McCauley, Brockport, NY, 7.1.91:

I really enjoy ordering from you, but most of all I love getting "Vedic Village Review". I have #'s 6 - 15, and I never tire of reading and re-reading them. Even though I'm not a full time devotee, I feel the pulse of the ISKCON movement more through your publication than any other. You people talk issues. Keep up the great work. Haribol!

From Ted Willi, 7.14.91:

I hope you are well. I've enjoyed getting VVR. The turmoil within ISKCON is amazing. I think all devotees would be better off if they stopped fighting for power and influence, renounced the organization, and got back to a personal relationship with Krishna -- chanting Hare Krishna.

From Marilyn Freeze, Dallas, 7.9.91:

I haven't really heard what is going on with Vedic River other than you are involved in some kind of court case, but I wish you luck and hope it is resolved soon. I also hope you will be able to continue publishing

your magazine. I always look forward to receiving it as it is so interesting.

From Satyahit das, Ashcroft, B.C., 7.7.91:

We feel indebted to you for this inspiring book describing the life of Gaura-Kisora Das Babaji. We have been greatly enriched by this info and inspired to share it with others in S.B. class and otherwise. 20 years ago I heard their names but never knew about them until your book was loaned to me by Yamal Arjuna. I would like all other literature available. If acceptable, I will pay you in installments. All glories to your scholarly output prabhuh. Hare Krishna.

One question we have about your words concerning their departures (bodily) and their subsequent "entrance into the eternal pastimes of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna". Did they then enter into or were they already absorbed in the eternal pastimes of the Lord? Are they Saktavesha avatar or otherwise? Please clarify this point for us.

From Eleanor Grant, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 8.16.91:

Hare Krishna! Please accept my obeisances. And please accept my condolences and my outrage over the seizure of your properties and Deities. As you know I am not in agreement with your teachings; I am a supporter of New Vrindavan. But at a time like this, when all branches of the Hare Krishna movement are facing legal pressures and the loss of the temple property, we can ill afford to be at one another's throats. Perhaps Lord Krishna is sending these trials to see whether we are capable of learning to "cooperate nicely together." So often it seems that devotees, because of our constant feuding, are our own worst enemy in this godless world.

From Ameetma das, Oak Run, CA:

My advice about your future handling of the Heavy Guru Issue... enough said; enough "challenging" of the GBC. Now why not simply go on with more of the sort of preaching that can center everyone on serving Krishna's Lotus Feet. Just go on about our business of serving Krishna and let our actions become the light that will guide others out of darkness.

From Mahadevan Iyer, Carrollton, TX, 8.28.91:

I am deeply grieved and distracted at the onslaught launched by the demons against your society and the virtual destruction of everything that you have painstakingly nurtured all these years. I am confident that this will not deter you from fighting for what you have considered right and proper. With Lord Krishna and Srila Prabhupada's blessings, you will emerge stronger and more glorious and a bigger, brighter and much greater New Jaipur Varnashrama Village will come into being.

The Lord always tests His devotees. The more you are attached to Him, the greater the tribulations that He subjects you to. Please remember Srimati Kuntidevi and Prahlad Maharaja. "My devotee is never vanquished. Na me bhakta pranasyati."

From Muralivadana dasa, Santa Cruz, CA, 8.19.91:

As the inconsistencies of their morality and their reality begin to weigh more and more heavily on the minds of the controlling classes, the more a need is felt to find and ritually execute (or disgrace) obvious dissidents.

The minority religions often feel the heat during such "reigns of overzealous cultural protectionism". People generally act like wolves in this reign. They tend to pick on someone who can't or won't bite back. I hope the effective means to bite back is found soon.

Serving as scapegoats for the tyrannical majority is not the American Way.

But you are right. It is ultimately Krishna who is the Fifth Factor of Action. So He must be held responsible. He has just thrown you a bigger Test. You must have passed all the ones He gave you previously. Congratulations!

I thought that Satsvarupa's Lilamrita was fine. I do not think it is complete as a documentation of either Prabhupada or the movement. But that is not an intended criticism. It was written as a selfless task by Satsvarupa. Others had asked him to do it. He probably never would have done it on his own. But however it got here, it is here: The Gospel According to Satsvarupa!

I originally thought it painted too narrow a picture of Prabhupada, but I've changed my mind. It is a valid volume. Hopefully there will be more. I challenge any who criticize it to write something better. I have seen it create a transcendental effect in the heart of at least one person coming newly to Krishna consciousness. I accept it as transcendental literature.

From Madhusudana dasa, Bombay, India, 8.14.91:

I have been meaning to write for quite some time. Service though has been such that my mind has not been settled enough. So please accept my support, and if I can be of any service to your "Greater ISKCON" please let me know. Though if you correspond with me, don't use VVR letterheads on envelopes please, as they will be destroyed. Radanatha dasa Brahmachari (now in USA) told me that you devotees sent him twenty copies of VVR which he shredded or some he gave to Giriraja Swami, who loathes VVR. What Giriraja did with them is anyone's guess.

Today, Mahamantra dasa told me that you had ceased to print VVR. This was during one of our arguments. I took this to be a demoralizing tactic on his behalf. Actually they can't refute these arguments which are presented so nicely in your magazine. Although I have not fully studied all the points raised in all the issues. I have read issue 12 at least 5 times, and glanced through other issues up to No. 13. So is there a No. 14? I am generally on travelling sankirtan, so I don't get to hear what's happening, within or without ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada was first to open my eyes with the torch light of knowledge. The VVR is my second eye opener. So I am eternally indebted to VVR, without which I would surely be led into illusion and ultimately suffering. In fact I regard VVR as a manifestation of Srila Prabhupada's desire to set things on the right course in ISKCON.

From Puranjana dasa, Badger, CA, 8.26.91:

We were sorry to hear of your misfortunes. As you know, many devotees (even gurus) have had various problems--generally over-looked--unless you happen to be a critic of the gurus. There is a very hypocritical double standard.

But we should credit the efforts you have made as very substantial in making a genuine impact of establishing Srila Prabhupada's prominent position. A very strong wave of opposition was developed under your direction, and it will have a lasting effect on the future development of the society.

I am interested to know what your current plans are. We have also heard various rumors about the situation there, which should be settled, if it will have a positive effect especially, it might help. Whatever happens though, we are still trying to form up a ritvik coalition, and we would consider you a good candidate to continue such an effort. There is a fairly good

community here in the Badger-Three Rivers area which is very much focused on Srila Prabhupada.

Perhaps you might even consider re-locating your operation to a fresh location if it becomes a useful option. I will try to help you in whatever way possible, should you ever consider this area especially. I pray that Krishna will guide you through these rocky times and you will be able to find a more stable footing. I do not have a phone at the moment, but you can always write to the above address to contact me.

From Bob Roberts, Union Lake, MI, 8.27.91:

I'm shocked and saddened to hear and read of your legal difficulties. You are handling such events with more equanimity than I'd be capable of.

From Riksaraja dasa, Efland, NC, 9.3.91:

Enclosed is final payment for the Mahabharatas. Thank you again for getting them for us. I am very sorry to we delayed in getting you the money - we were very uncertain of your circumstances and did not want to take a chance that you would not get the money if we sent it. It appears from your latest VVR #16 that you are up and running, so we decided to go ahead. I wish you well in your endeavor.

From Stoka Krishna dasa, Gainesville, FL, 8.21.91:

All glories to Srila Prabhupada! All glories to the Vedic Village! All victory to you in your struggle with the "authorities"!

From Rupacandra dasi, 8.22.91:

It was interesting that VVR did not print my editorial letter regarding male chauvinism in ISKCON, but did find the room to print three of Urdhvaga's letters (taking up three pages) and three of Gauri's. No doubt you preferred their subject matter and maybe thought me offensive, but you printed Urdhvaga's letters which I found so offensive, as I read on and saw his name, I did not want to read it. You know how it is in Kali Yuga, you speak what you see as truth and you're bound to offend someone. My statements were nothing we have not heard before. Since VVR is a confidential publication meant for devotees, I am bewildered by this exclusion.

Women feel uncomfortable in temple environments; male devotees are unable to find devotee wives; female devotees are marrying non-devotees; we see practically all-male temples; and there are men and women who are so turned off by the chauvanistic attitude in ISKCON, they can't get beyond that to the philosophy. This has all been said before. It appears to me, ISKCON men need to start hearing these women's concerns instead of sweeping this all under the rug.



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# FEATURE LETTER

## From Nicolas Parkhurst, Boston:

I am very happy to hear that the "authorities" have returned your devotional paraphernalia, and that Vedic River will continue to serve the needs of devotees. I also trust that VVR will continue to be a strong voice for returning Srila Prabhupada to the center of the true -not the corporate- ISKCON, the House that His Divine Grace built for all the world.

Although I never met Srila Prabhupada's physical form, His vani has been my constant companion, and I have a personal relationship with His Divine Grace. This is not some "new age" tomfoolery; it is the simple truth of experience. We either accept that Sri Sri Radha Krsna and Their Lordships' empowered representatives are omnipotent, or we might as well pitch our tents in the camp of the Carvakas of yesterday and today.

I do not claim to know even one thousandth of a thousandth part of Srila Prabhupada's glory, nor can I venture to speculate on His exalted position as an intimate eternal associate of Their Lordships. I do know that He has power enough to personally guide each and every conditioned soul on this planet into the Presence of Sri Sri Radha Krsna, now, before and after engaging in the pastime of His disappearance.

Our historical proximity to His Divine Grace has blinded us, and in that state of momentary blindness induced by His unlimited effulgence, we seek for that which we believe lost, but has ever remained with us: the unequivocal guidance of the Nitya Jagat Guru, Om Visnupada Paramahansa Parivrajak Acarya 108 Sri Srimad His Divine Grace Abhaya Caranaravinda Bhaktivedanta Svami Prabhupada Maharaja. May we all accept His potent leadership, His love, and His fathomless mercy. May the children of His munificence, the vapuvadis who today claim for themselves the dignity which is rightfully His, come to realize their folly and once more come into His house. Jaya Srila Prabhupada.

From Dinadayadri dasi, Ferndale, MI, 10.18.91:

I hope you are continuing with your magazine, it is very important. If I could be of any service to you with typing input or proofreading or whatever, I would gladly donate my services. I have just within the past year begun associating with Vaishnavas again after an absence of almost 10 years, thanks in part to having the good fortune of reading some back issues of your magazine. Some of the startling, bold articles are like a slap in the face and certainly have an awakening effect!

One subject that I feel I must comment on that I've seen discussed in your magazine is that of some people going over to the Gaudiya Math, and in particular Sridhara Maharaja's camp, for shelter and instruction. Perhaps what I am going to say has been said by others but this matter is of such grave importance that repetition can't hurt.

I was present in Mayapur in 1972 for the temple cornerstone laying ceremony and first Gaura Purnima festival of ISKCON there. Many of Srila Prabhupada's Godbrothers were invited. Some of them came to chastise Srila Prabhupada very severely, saying that he was an "upstart" and should immediately turn over ISKCON and all his disciples to them. There was even a fear that Srila Prabhupada's life might be in danger. It was very weird. Despite this, Srila Prabhupada observed perfect Vaishnava etiquette. He tried to generate a mood of cooperation with his Godbrothers in service to their Guru Maharaja and even had a wonderful feast of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's favorite preparations prepared by one of his Godbrothers named Anand, a naistika-brahmacari who had been a cook for Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati and who was very

loving towards Srila Prabhupada. But the inimical Godbrothers refused to partake of the feast and left. So thus we can trace the origin of the insidious poison that eventually infiltrated ISKCON, this attempt to undermine and diminish Srila Prabhupada's tremendous stature in Vaishnava history as the Great Deliverer of the Western World from Voidism and Impersonalism.

This experience instilled in me what I consider a healthy mistrust of the Gaudiya Math. We all knew that we must be respectful to Srila Prabhupada's Godbrothers, but from a distance. Some of the Godbrothers seemed to recognize the great service Srila Prabhupada was doing for Sri Guru and Gauranga, and they stayed and accepted the opportunity offered them to speak at the festival. But I still say we disciples of Srila Prabhupada are being foolish and naive not to scrutinize anything coming out of the Gaudiya Math very carefully before accepting it because of this heavy history.

Srila Prabhupada in those early days also forbid us to read Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's *Brahma-Samhita* published by the Gaudiya Math because he said some of the wording had been changed after Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's departure which gave it an impersonalist meaning. I sure hope somebody is doing something to ensure this doesn't happen with any of Srila Prabhupada's books!

Another significant way the Gaudiya Math infiltrated ISKCON in the early 70's was through Acyutananda Maharaja. He had been in India for quite some time by himself and had been associating a lot with Srila Prabhupada's Godbrothers. When the Western devotees started coming over to India, he was very glad to have our association but had an attitude of looking down on us for the "unsophisticated" way we had of singing kirtan and bhajan. We chanted the way Srila Prabhupada taught us, which was simple, sublime, and straight from the heart, "like the genuine crying by the child for mother."

However, mainly by Acyutananda's influence, many devotees got caught up in the hypnotic beats and melodies they had never heard before and the kirtan degenerated into a sort of forum for showing off one's musical prowess. Srila Prabhupada was not pleased with this, and there is much more I could say, but maybe another time. I very strongly feel we devotees need to make a conscious effort to go back to performing kirtan the way Srila Prabhupada taught us, and try to understand and enter into the mood of separation from Krishna that His Divine Grace displayed as an example for us. I am convinced that if large groups of devotees gathered for this purpose, the full-strength potency of the Holy Name as heard from the lips of the pure devotee would wash away much of the confusion that plagues ISKCON still.

A devotee recently told me about another occurrence, in Mayapur 1974, when Sridhara Maharaja of the Gaudiya Math invited all of Srila Prabhupada's disciples to his place for kirtan and a big feast. According to this devotee, a good time was had by all; but Sridhara Maharaja in those days was very angry that Srila Prabhupada had not made him the acarya of ISKCON. The next day, there were articles in some Bengali newspapers about the big gathering at Sridhara's place, identifying the devotees as Sridhara's western disciples. Then, to top it off, a bill was sent for the prasadam the devotees consumed! Needless to say, Srila Prabhupada wasn't very pleased with these events. The conventional wisdom at the time was that Srila Prabhupada's apparent warm, friendly relations with Sridhara were actually a diplomatic move on Srila Prabhupada's part to protect his Movement, something to the effect of placating a detractor with sweet words so that he would not cause problems, etc.

Ten years later, around 1982, I was living at the Los Angeles temple and the devotees had just returned from Gaura Purnima in Mayapur. Several of the "new gurus" and other leading devotees were very enthusiastically giving

class on all the "nectar" they had heard from Sridhara Maharaja. Apparently, the Maharaja had been filling their heads with very intimate, detailed information about Srila Prabhupada's rasa with Krishna, about how Srila Prabhupada was a cowherd boy, etc. I'm ashamed to admit that I was also caught up in the craze for a day or so, but then suspicions started coming forth from the back of my mind first because this information was coming from a member of the Gaudiya Math and second because it seemed odd that someone of Sridhara's position would be espousing such intimate details to such neophyte devotees as ourselves about their spiritual master. Something about this just wasn't proper.

Then came the big bomb, and I kicked myself a thousand times that I had allowed myself to be duped. It was next revealed that Sridhara Maharaja was claiming that he himself is a gopi in relation to Krishna! Then I realized how it could be interpreted, if we were not advanced enough to truly understand the transcendental nature of rasa in the spiritual world, that he was in a "higher" rasa with Krishna than Srila Prabhupada, then we would naturally go to him for "higher knowledge" or to get on a "higher path" than that afforded us by Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada many times explained how the material world is a perverted reflection of the spiritual world, how mundane concepts of hierarchy with regard to relationships do not apply in the spiritual world.

In other words, you can't say one rasa is "higher" than another, and I believe to even approach this subject with regard to Srila Prabhupada is highly inappropriate and offensive. Srila Prabhupada was very expert in introducing us to the higher subject matters of Krishna consciousness in the Krsna Book, 10th Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam, Nectar of Devotion, and Caitanya-Caritamrita in such a way that we could not possibly impose our mundane concepts into this most elevated sphere of knowledge. This Sridhara situation is a perfect example of why it is so dangerous for us to hear from anyone but our own Founder Acarya Spiritual Master about subject matters far beyond our realization. If we do this, we end up committing grave offenses to our beloved Srila Prabhupada and falling off the path back home, back to Godhead, which he so expertly chalked out for us.

The sad truth is that after a few days of the "Sridhara madness" that gripped New Dwaraka, finally some devotees came to their senses about this mistake and started denouncing everything they had said in the past few days. Unfortunately, the denouncements were not nearly as enthusiastic as the bogus preaching it was more like, "Oops, we goofed - sorry. Let's sweep this under the rug and forget it ever happened." So I have no doubt that many who were caught up in the serious maya that was unleashed were never properly reclaimed to the truth. In fact, it is obvious this is the case since there are many Prabhupada disciples who repeat the above misinterpretations about higher knowledge, etc.

You are right that when these deviations occur, they must be more vigorously rectified. I am reminded of the big maya that occurred way back in 1970 when ISKCON "lost its innocence." Four original sannyasis were going around saying Srila Prabhupada was Krishna. This came to a head at the big gathering of devotees in New Vrindavana for Janmastami when Hayagriva and Rupanuga Prabhus and several others exposed this as mayavadi philosophy: If we say our guru is God, then when we become guru we become God. The four perpetrators were actually captured, locked in a room at the Detroit temple by Bhagavan dasa, and severely chastised by Srila Prabhupada and were all given individual forms of atonement by His Divine Grace. This was not just swept under the rug and forgotten about it was all anyone talked about for months. (I remember hearing that Srila Prabhupada said the illusion of these four sannyasis was caused by powerful ghosts sent by the Gaudiya Math to disrupt ISKCON can any VVR readers corroborate this?) There is always a tremendous need for

philosophical "watchdogs" to prevent this kind of serious maya from getting a foothold in our fledgling spiritual movement. Thank you for letting me have my say. Hare Krishna.

From Janajanmadih Dasa, Huntsville, TX, 9.17.91:

I am very happy to receive VVR 16. I like the dynamic challenging spirit of VVR. I hope you do not change the content of VVR. You may be interested to know that I expressed my well wishes towards you to anyone who wrote me about your troubles.

Have you seen the new book Tatastha-Sakti Tattva (T-S-T) "Deliberation of Proof About the Marginal Potency of the Lord" (175 pages) by Sripad Bhaktiraghava Sadhu Swami? T-S-T explains & reconciles the few instances where Srila Prabhupada's statements appear to conflict with all the previous acaryas' writing that jivas fallen in maya originated from the tatastha area of the brahmajyoti. T-S-T shows, from the writings of the Six Goswamis, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, that the Gaudiya-sampradaya siddhanta on this point is that nitya-baddha jivas originate from the tatastha-sakti portion of the brahmajyoti.

Editor's comment: We may have been in the material world for so long that we have gone back and forth to and from the brahmajyoti many times as mayavadis, but (and I say this just out of a heart feeling, not a volume of sastraic references) I cannot but believe in Prabhupada's words that we are fallen from the spiritual world. Upon perfection of our Krsna consciousness, we will return to our original constitutional position as servant of Krishna in the spiritual world. I did not originate from the brahmajyoti! I am the eternal servant of Krishna, I am from the spiritual world and I will return to Krishna. "Back to Godhead", not just "To Godhead"! Vedic Village Books will not be carrying this new book.

From Swami B.K. Giri, Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, Cherry Hill, NJ, 6.6.91:

In VVR 15 you mention Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math as a "small center in Miami [which] mixes the instructions of Srila Prabhupada and Sridhara Maharaja." I would like to state clearly that Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math is under the exclusive direction of Pujiyapada Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaja the successor acharya to His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Deva Goswami Maharaja. It is not an outlet for the mixture of the instructions of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Sridhara Maharaja. In his own words Srila Sridhara Maharaja has described the meaning of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math as: (paraphrasing) "an institution to propagate the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as expressed through Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur".

My objection to the idea that Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math is a mixture of the instructions of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Sridhara Maharaja is that it implies a difference of purpose between these two acharyas or perhaps worse a "hodgepodge" of differing ideologies. Although there are certainly differences in the methodologies employed by Srila Sridhara Maharaja and Srila Prabhupada, the institutions they founded namely ISKCON and Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math were intended to serve the mutual purpose of satisfying the desire of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada. No doubt due to their common sense of purpose a bond of mutual affection and regard developed between these two great personalities which naturally spread amongst some of their disciples. As a result we now find many disciples of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Sridhara Maharaja serving together either under the banner of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math or the banner of a number of other institutions founded by Srila Prabhupada's disciples who have accepted Srila Sridhara Maharaja as their shiksa guru.

I'd also like to express at this time my disappointment that so many devotees have misunderstood the actions of some of Srila Prabhupada's disciples that have taken shelter of the guidance of Srila Sridhara Maharaja. It is wrong to assume impropriety in allegiance to two masters when the two masters are serving a common master. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta considered Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur to be his guru and even encouraged his disciples to think of themselves as Bhaktivinoda parivad or followers of Srila Bhaktivinoda. At the same time Srila Bhaktisiddhanta was initiated by Srila Gaurakisora das Babaji Maharaja and considered himself the most humble servant of Srila Babaji Maharaja. We would be offenders to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta if we concluded that he was unfaithful to either of his gurus due to his devotion to the other.

Furthermore there was considerable difference in the activities of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta from both Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur and Gaurakisora das Babaji. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta accepted sannyasa and vigorous preaching activities in contrast to the example of Babaji Maharaja who had a tendency to avoid such activities. Bhaktivinoda Thakur encouraged the practice of Krsna consciousness in the association of family members while Srila Bhaktisiddhanta reinstituted and encouraged the order of Vaishnava sannyasa. Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami concludes each chapter of Sri Chaitanya Charitamrta with "sri-rupa raghunatha-pade yara asa/caitanya-caritamrta kahe krsnadas". "Praying at the lotus feet of Sri Rupa and Sri Raghunatha, always desiring their mercy, I, Krsnadasa, narrate Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, following in their footsteps." Popular opinion would have us believe that we are unchaste if we are devoted to two gurus, but vox populi is not vox dei (the voice of the people is not the voice of God). Sri Rupa and Sri Raghunatha are not only distinctly different gurus but Sri Rupa is considered the superior of the two. Still Srila Krsnadasa is praying for the mercy of them both.

Our gurudeva is not alone in the land of Vrndavan. He is amongst his friends, his servants, and his superiors and we would do well to remember that we are the servant of each of them individually as well as collectively. Of course there is much more to say on this matter but it would make this letter too lengthy. I would, however be happy to discuss these things with anyone who cares to contact me at the following address or phone number. Suite 207, 883 Cooper Landing Rd, Cherry Hill, NJ 08002: (609) 541-5452.

#### Editor's comment:

Srila Prabhupada's superiors? I hope no one pretends to know who they are? And if Prabhupada warned us about two masters, as he did, then no amount of argument will justify it.

From Tirthakara das, Brainerd, IL:

Thank you for sending me the latest VVR. I'm sorry to hear of the problems you're facing there with the government. Yesterday I sent \$25 for the yearly subscription. Anyway I hope New Jaipur will reappear again, as long as you all remain sincere, honest and pure I'm sure Krsna will give you all facility.

From Anthony Chambers, Chillicothe, OH, 8.24.91:

I received the VVR for the first time and I wish to continue getting it. I would like to be sent some of the back issues as well. Until receiving your publication, I hadn't known that there was a different point of view in Krishna Consciousness. It is my belief that there are two sides to every coin and I have always believed in objectively examining both sides of every issue. I had thought of initiation at some point (and I still may be initiated). But I had a natural question that has always been with me. I thought, "With all of the volumes of

literature and tapes that Prabhupada left as his legacy to this world, is there really a need to be initiated by anyone?" He left behind so much. It would take a lifetime to study and absorb it all. Through his books and tapes he lives. I am not knocking anyone but I see that you have a point concerning the Guru issue.

I am sorry to hear about the problems you've had with the state.

From Dharmananda dasa, Kingston, MI, 9.24.91:

Hare Krishna! I hope that this letter finds you in the best of health and that the difficulties of New Jaipur are now a thing of the past and that you and the Vaishnavas are now able once again to do the work of Lord Krishna. The purpose of this short note is really two fold. The first is to commend VVR magazine for providing a worthwhile method of spreading the word of Lord Krsna. The second purpose is the \$20 enclosed for my sub and one for any other devotee whom you may select.

From Swarup Das, Fairfax, CA, 9.3.91:

I was just in L.A. for the Janmastami/Vyasa Puja celebration and I found your VVR 16 issue lying around in the back of one of the buildings of the community. This is my first exposure to your publication, although I noticed the publisher is Nityananda. Is this the same Nityananda who once distributed some kind of newsletter from a farm called New Talavana? Anyway, except for Rathayatra and Janmastami, I've been pretty much out of touch for the past 12 years. I became a devotee in 1969 and worked with ISKCON Press (later the BBT) for 10 years. I got a mailorder dept. going as well as a membership program through the mail and I corresponded with many people throughout the world in the capacity of ISKCON's secretary.

Anyway, to make a short story longer, I left my service and drifted away from the Movement for two reasons. One was that I was having problems with the regulative disciplines and the other reason was that I could not, in good conscience, continue inviting people to participate in, join or even support the ISKCON Movement anymore. Around 1979 it occurred to me that something is wrong with the concept of appointing spiritual masters. The more I pursued the question and the more I ran into others who had problems with it (and back then we were few and far between) the more I became convinced that something was terribly wrong.

I remember reading in a BTG a little advertisement that urged people to come join our movement and that before departing in 1977, Prabhupada, to ensure the future growth of ISKCON, appointed 11 disciples to initiate people. The ad continued to suggest that wherever one joined up, there was a regional, zonal, initiating guru just waiting to give him a name and a haircut. When I read that in our monthly magazine I realized that the wonderful ISKCON I had joined in 1969 had transformed into something silly and corny. It was heartbreaking. I tried to talk to some people but I quickly got the reputation as being a victim of maya and spreading poison. I had become a demon and a blasphemer. The point is that I am glad to see from your magazine that this issue is being raised, scrutinized, kicked around, studied and hopefully in the process of finally being resolved. Quite frankly, I'm still a little confused about all the logistics. I know now and knew then that there was no way that Srila Prabhupada appointed gurus. Had he done so, he would have contradicted everything he talked and wrote about.

But about this ritvik thing...I always thought that ritvik was a situation where a diksha guru was using an authorized agent to officiate at an initiation ceremony on his behalf. But I thought the term was contingent upon there being a living diksha guru who just couldn't physically be present for the ceremony and so gave power of attorney to someone. Yes, Prabhupad did say that he

was initiating on behalf of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta. But I took that figuratively, i.e. he was doing everything on behalf of his guru maharaja. But whatever the case..I do know that a guru is a pure devotee and a pure devotee is a guru and one does not become a pure devotee by election, selection nor appointment. It's not an ecclesiastic thing like the electing of a pope by some ecumenical council. Three puffs of white smoke and hooray, we have a new pope. No way, Jose. That's the antithesis to the concept of sampradaya.

There are many schools of thought about what should be done and how it should be done. But I'm really glad to see such a consensus among by Godbrothers and sisters that the appointment theory was ludicrous. I especially read with interest the apology from Jayadvaita Swami. He gave me such a hard time when I was bringing up the subject way back then. He had me on the phone for over an hour telling me what a rascal I was being. So to Jayadvaita Swami from Swarup das---Ha Ha, I told ya so. Jayadvaita is a terrific devotee, I love him, and I know his heart is full of love for Guru and Gouranga. My obeisances to anyone and everyone who has been attracted to the Krishna Consciousness Movement.

Editor's comment:

Yes, it is clear there were no appointments of new gurus by Prabhupada. That was a lie. It is also clear gurus cannot be elected by votes. That remains a farce today. So what is the method of initiation Prabhupada intended for ISKCON after his departure? VVR contends that Prabhupada provided for a rtvik system, but not excluding the appearance of QUALIFIED new gurus, that qualification being far more than what is offered by the GBC-guru cartel. VVR is working on a condensation of all available evidence for an upcoming book: BACK TO PRABHUPADA: The Case For Rtviks. All that has been presented on the subject to date are a few articles in VVR, spread out over two years in a disjointed and confusing manner. Living Still In Sound concludes a series of guru tattva essays with some rtvik information, but the book is long and incomplete. We will put it together in a coherent way soon.

From Raghunatha Bhatta dasa, Roswell, NM, 9.25.91:

Thank you for your continuing efforts to promote adherence to the direction of our spiritual master. No. 16 was interesting and illuminating as always, particularly the articles by Mahesh Raja and Harinam Das, on guru and audible chanting. Certainly your contributions to the movement are valuable, and continue regardless of location.

From Bhima das, East Malaysia, 9.30.91:

At last the final volumes of Srila Prabhupada's Conversations have arrived in Singapore, two sets, as ordered from you. So many rumours have been circulating lately about the demise of New Jaipur and VVR that I had begun to resign myself to the idea that probably I would not receive the final installments from you after all. Thank you very much for coming through. It is not every day one can find someone honourable in business.

Please let me know whether it is fact that New Jaipur is more or less finished. What about your mail order business? What happened, actually? What are your plans? If you still have books, please send me an updated listing of what is available, because I would like to purchase more again from you. In early August our Singapore centre burned to the ground, and our entire library, quite extensive, was lost. I am looking to gradually replace most of it, although some books were very rare and are no longer in print, unfortunately.

I hope you are well and not disturbed by all the goings-on. When fire destroyed our small quarters here recently, it occurred to me that devotees seem to experience more turmoil and upheaval in life than the

non-devotees. Perhaps our business down here is accelerated by the mercy of Krishna just to finish it off once and for all before the end, so that we can be free from attachments. In any case, it's a good sign when we are shaken up from the status quo (aka rigor mortis). At least we know we have another chance to redeem ourselves at the feet of the devotees and Krishna. For myself, when everything is running smoothly, lethargy seduces me into thinking I'm in control of the situation.

From Rupa Vilas dasa, Tallahassee, FL, 10.12.91:

I have not had any real breakthroughs in my thinking about varnasrama. It seems that for devotees to feel confident, they need to own their own land, otherwise there is a fear spawned by some of the movement's histories that causes many to think they'll be cheated in some way. Whether or not such ownership is classical varnasrama or not, still ownership may be unavoidable for there to be trust.

Regarding the guru issue, my current thoughts are these: It is clear that Prabhupada originally appointed some rtviks. He made it clear that his disciples could become gurus, after his disappearance. Now whether or not it is legitimate to continue to use the term rtvik for one who does the work of guru after his guru's departure is unclear. I have read nothing definitive that says you can and nothing that says you can't. We also know that guru generally indicates a self-realized soul. But sometimes that term refers to any teacher. Clearly, a teacher is not necessarily a self-realized soul, but at least he must show how to act by example. This example may serve as inspiration for a neophyte disciple. A guru's importance is further established by his level of spiritual attainment and his capacity to deliver others.

Therefore, if we allow that our Godbrothers can be called gurus, still their importance is not at all equal to Srila Prabhupada's or other self-realized empowered acaryas. If one is not fully capable of delivering his disciples from the clutches of birth and death, how can he possibly claim to be the deliverer of that person? This appears contradictory. It makes more sense to place the stress on the empowered acarya, so that no sense of duality or deception will enter the heart of the disciple. If he can think, "My diksa-guru has set a good example, and he has placed all his stress on the teachings of sad-guru, Srila Prabhupada and other empowered acaryas. This gives me more confidence in him." The problems we have encountered seem to stem from a lack of humility and a vitiated sense of reality on the part of some Godbrothers, although not all, which has at times led to pride and falldown. Still the movement, even as it stands, is capable of affording great benefit to the world, due to the emphasis on book distribution, chanting and prasada distribution.

I do feel, though, the desire to be guru and the idea that one is a guru is very dangerous and continues to create doubt, fear and occasionally disaster in our ranks. Nonetheless, I am retired from the field. In the course of my raising doubts and strongly worded opinions, I have caused pain in the hearts of many sincere persons. I have offended devotees, despite having sincere intentions, and I am through with fighting. I pray for the best result possible, and I offer my respects to all devotees who are sincerely trying to fulfill Prabhupada's desires and apologize to anyone I have offended, repeatedly offering respects at their feet.

From Narasimha das, Pepeekeo, HI, 10.6.91:

I heard from Abhirama and Drstadhyumna prabhush that you will be relocating. Let me know something of what you're planning and which areas you're interested in. Any thought of the Caribbean? Oregon? North Carolina? Hawaii?

I intend to move to India and spend most of my time there writing and preaching directly. I may also invest in a project in the West if someone gets something interesting organized. Tattva Darshan, Sauri, and I, along with others, will be looking for land near one of the innumerable holy places of South India. We will find a place on a sacred river or stream and with mature orchards. Our idea is to cultivate a few quality people in a very sattvic and Krishna-conscious environment. We will build a temple, goshala, and ashram buildings--all of traditional design--and try to create an actual Vedic hermitage where advanced sadhu-sanga can gradually take root and thrive. Devotees with the travel itch, we'll send village to village with books on bull cart.

Your idea of trying first to provide facilities for devotees dedicated to brahminical pursuits and lifestyles was a good one. I feel this is our first order of business in expanding varnashrama culture. Real brahmins will be able to figure out how to implement the entire Vedic scheme in a particular time and place. Srila Prabhupada said a unique feature of India is that varnashrama can be established there at any time. As for South India, it's the birth place of bhakti and, according to Srimad Bhagavatam, a special refuge in India where many great devotees will appear in Kali-yuga.

Have you been to South India? If you can visit us there, we'll show you some amazing places. Enclosed is one of the stories I promised you a long time ago. BTG was supposed to print at least one of some others I wrote, but if I don't hear from them soon I'll send those to you.

Regarding your ongoing campaign to establish the ritvik system in ISKCON, I think you should give it a rest. One thing to consider is this: Srila Prabhupada never hammered on the Gaudiya Math, though he was certainly of spotless character and thus immensely more qualified to reform a spiritual movement than we are. Trying to be heavy with devotees who aren't hearing is useless. We may rile some discontent in the troops, but then the effort becomes more political than spiritual and produces contrary results. Gurus who falsely claim to be pure devotees or claim they don't need to be pure devotees can only cheat those who aren't conversant with Prabhupada's books--or those who are themselves dishonest and looking to be cheated. What can we do?

Our aim should be to gradually educate innocent devotees about the qualifications of a bona fide guru and the standards of pure devotion. And example is better than precept. That's why Prabhupada said, "But the higher duty, the highest duty, is to save oneself." In any case, I feel it will serve no useful purpose to go on challenging the GBC and hammering them on this one issue. Lord Caitanya will rectify His own movement in His own time and in His own way. This faith must be there; it's our solace and our inspiration to show a better example of pure devotion.

From Clayton O'Claerach, Berkeley, CA, 9.13.91:

Your misadventures with hostile authorities point to a contention of mine, viz. utopian sub-societies within a greater society of a quite different character do not work. The whole social structure needs fundamental change, i.e. a social revolution is called for.

The more I consider this matter of "initiation", the more I tend to think that I am "initiated" enough. I've seen Prabhupada, I served in the Temples when he was personally running the movement, and, having seen real gold, I consider I can't get much benefit from iron pyrites, i.e. assorted "successor gurus".

So we do not want to be among those who "worship their rabbis and monks as lords besides Allah, when they were commanded to worship only One God." (cf. Repentance 31, Qu'Ra'an). The position of an actual pure devotee is

another story. I am coming to think generally that the Prophet Mohammed (on whom be Peace) had a better idea; although the Companions considered him worshipping, and animals were observed to offer obeisances to him, the Prophet never allowed worship of himself.

"What is ISKCON" reminds me of the "visible" and "invisible" church idea I learned about in Lutheran High. If you are a heathen, I may explain that the "visible church" means the organization, with officers, a constitution, that owns property, admits members, etc. The "invisible" church is the sum total of everyone who is actually "saved", and nobody knows who this is. They are inclusive or exclusive of each other depending on your personal and denominational philosophy about it. Prabhupada used another phrase from time to time, "Our Krsna Conscious Society". This would be suitable also to denote a Greater ISKCON.

From Rukesh, 8.29.91:

I was also both shocked and disturbed after reading your VVR 11. I don't yet get the truth but I feel your voice is sincere. Anyway I don't want to get into the issue because I am just a neophyte and I already accept Srila Prabhupada as my spiritual master. But as I felt your voice is sincere I would like to ask you your opinion about the Srimad Bhagavatam of Srila Hridayananda Dasa Goswami (Canto 10 to 12). I would also like to ask you whether there are any books that are not spiritually correct or which may possibly mislead me.

From Brian McCord, Wheeling, WV, 9.24.91:

Don't ever back down from the stance you have taken; God is not a commodity. One need not pursue the glories of God through a religious "monopoly." Those who have begun to renounce material poisons and follow the path to illumination by the way of the Vaisnava comprise the true Society for Krishna Consciousness. We can all work together on a more grass-roots level, espousing the glories of God in a humble and earnest manner; there need not be room for "corporate Krishna consciousness." Nor need there be room for sectarianism; the tenets of our faith are clearly and uncompromisingly set down by the acaryas. If we follow God's word, we transcend mundane labels such as "ISKCON", "ILOC", et. al. We are one in Krishna. Hari bol!

From Parvati Devi Dasi, 9.21.91:

Thank you Srila Prabhupada for having the patience, intelligence, compassion, dedication and love for your disciples to come to America to help save fallen conditioned souls like me. And thank you to VVR, for helping me develop real love for our eternal Spiritual Master by making available Srila Prabhupada's tapes, books & other articles. I pray that one day soon, everyone will know how great Srila Prabhupada is! P.S. Hang in there Prabhu!

From Narayani dasi, Goa, 10.4.91:

We are devotees living in Goa in our own house, but we are not near any ISKCON temple. On a recent visit to ISKCON Bombay we got a copy of your VVR. I was especially interested in your mail order section.

I have been wanting to get the complete Conversations with Srila Prabhupada for a long time, but have not been able to get enough money. We will be visiting the USA, most probably from May-August of 1992. At that time I will try to get some kind of part time job so I can get these books. Please reserve a complete set of books for me as I am afraid they might be sold out. Please also reserve the New Printing Bhagavatams Canto 10-11-12. We were also interested to note that you are printing a condensed version of Mahabharata. When we visited the USA in 1990, Brahmananda prabhu informed us that the Mahabharata which you are printing was written



by my husband, Purnaprajna das. If it is so, then please keep a couple of copies for us.

From Gauridas Pandita Das, Seattle, WA, 10.20.91:

Nice to see you back in Krsna's business. You can't keep a good man down! Got some great news. We have secured a new temple in the university district and after I signed the lease I found out from Anantatma that this was the original temple in Seattle where Srila Prabhupada himself opened and stayed for two months (Sept-Oct '68). All the guests were commenting on the "good vibrations" of the building and I said it's Srila Prabhupada's mercy and it really is. Nice sincere people are coming. Prabhupada's vision is eternal. When we try to focus on his vision, then we are successful.

History was made on Radhastami when Kapindra Prabhu performed a ritvic initiation for Srila Prabhupada in New York. Fourteen years later finally Srila Prabhupada's instructions in this crucial matter are being carried out. Now they are on a "Prabhupada's Mercy Tour" around the country. Letting all know that Srila Prabhupada is alive and well and his mercy is still available for those who want it. One GBC that I know of, although he officially tows the G.B.C. party line, it seems in secret he supports the ritvic system. He even performed a ritvic initiation after consulting with Kapindra Prabhu!

I hope everything is going well for you all there in your new location and the VVR keeps on coming. Devotees were amazed to see that you are still trying to serve Srila Prabhupada.



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Once peacefully situated in your grhasta ashrama, may you be blessed to cultivate spiritual life, raise beautiful Krsna conscious children and go on to ascertain your varna and engage in those particular activities for the pleasure of Srila Prabhupada and Lord Sri Krishna. Good luck!

Information provided will be held strictly confidential except in cases of selected compatible inquiries which we screen to ensure seriousness and maturity.





\* Prabhupādāṣṭakam \*

- 1) *jaya jaya guru-deva śrīla prabhupāda  
parama mohana-rūpa arta-vimocana*

Jaya jaya Guru-deval! Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda! All glories to you! Your very form is supremely enchanting, and you liberate us from all kinds of miseries.

- 2) *mūrti-manta śrī-vedānta aśubha-nāśana  
bhakti-grantha śrī-vedānta tava vighoṣana*

You are the personification of the most auspicious secret of divine Vedic knowledge; you nullify all inauspicious situations; indeed, you are celebrated far and wide for manifesting many devotional literatures that expound on the highest absolute truths.

- 3) *ISKCON-samāja-dīpe śrī siddhānta-jyoti  
ārati tomāra tāhe haya niravadhi*

You have established the brilliant torchlamp of the ISKCON society, which radiates the effulgence of truth (that you have gleaned from your own spiritual master, Śrī Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī); therefore, we incessantly offer the āratī ceremony unto Your Divine Grace.

- 4) *śrī-vinoda-dhārā-taile dīpa prapūrta  
rūpānuga-dhūpe daśa-dik amodita*

You have filled the ISKCON torchlamp with the oil which is the current of devotional service passing through Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura, and you make the ten directions fragrant with the incense of adherence to the path of devotion established by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

- 5) *sarva-sāstra-sugambhīra karuṇa-komala  
divya-bhā-susobhana vadana-kamala*

You are most grave, absorbed in the deep knowledge of all the scriptures. Your merciful compassion is so soft, and your lotus face glows with a divinely splendid aura.

- 6) *svarṇa-kānti vinindita śrī-aṅga-śobhana  
yati-vāsa paridhāne jagat-kalyāṇa*

The complexion of your divine form puts to shame the luster of pure gold, and you have donned the dress of a wandering mendicant just for the benefit of the entire universe.

- 7) *nānā-jāti-sajjana cāmara dhulāya  
gaura-jana ucca-kaṇṭe sumadhura gāya*

Saintly persons from many different types of births and backgrounds are fanning you with cāmara whisks, as other devotees of Lord Gaurāṅga sing your glories very sweetly with upraised voices.

- 8) *sumaṅgala nīrājana kore bhakta-gaṇa  
dura-mati dūra hoite dekhe dīna-jana*

Thus, all your devotees are engaged in the most auspicious worship of Your Divine Grace; but alas! This very lowly servant of sinful mind simply watches from afar.



# Challenge Horse to the GBC!

VVR's Challenge Horse remains on our page! The GBC has not yet replied to the following challenges, and until they do, the Challenge Horse remains on the loose in their territory:

1. Substantiate the present ISKCON Guru System with reference to Srila Prabhupada's teachings — especially in regards to the appointment and qualification issues.

2. If unable to do so conclusively, abandon the present system as unauthorized and institute the Ritvik Acharya System authorized by Srila Prabhupada in 1977. This would not preclude the appearance or recognition of new Diksha Gurus who are qualified as described in sastra.



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