Vedic Village Review

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HIS DIVINE GRACE
A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA
Founder-Acharya International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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Dedicated to His Divine Grace AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acharya International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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Old South Vedic Society

FEATURE ARTICLE

New Talavan Room Conversation -- Aug. 1, 1975
DISCUSSION ON VARNASHRAMA DHARMA

Srila Prabhupada: That is time for punishment. They should build up their character, samah damah, fully controlled. When they like, they become grhasthas. Otherwise, they are controlled. That is brahmana. For brahmana it is not compulsory to marry. Ksatriyas may marry more than one wife. They can take. So all young girls must be married. That is it. They must have one husband, even the husband has got fifty wives. Then the problem of girls' marriage will be solved. And as soon as one girl is pregnant, she should be separated.

Hrdayananda S.: From the husband?

Prabhupada: At least for one and a half years.

Upendra: At the moment of pregnancy?

Prabhupada: What?

Disciple: From the moment of pregnancy one and a half years?

Prabhupada: Yes, pregnancy is understood at three months. From that month, then further sixteen months at least, she should not come to, be near her husband. That will keep her healthy, situated...And they are not inclined to come unless the man induces. So the man, if he has got more than one wife, so the man will not disturb her. And she will take rest for the next eighteen months. So after ten months she will give birth to the child, and for six months continually, she will take care of the child. Feeding the child with breast milk, the child will be healthy. If the child can take mother's milk for six months, at least, continually he becomes very healthy for life.

Upendra: Where do they send that mother?

Prabhupada: Where they'll take care.

Upendra: The man sends the woman away. Where does she go?

Prabhupada: Away means not to the hell! but generally she goes to the father's house. So you can have separate building for that.

Nityananda: Are you saying that our men should have more than one wife?

Prabhupada: I have no objection.

Satsvarupa: It's a difficult proposition.

Prabhupada: Why?

Satsvarupa: It's not allowed in this country. It's illegal. It's against the law.

Devotee: It's against the law.

Nityananda: No, it doesn't need to be known. No one knows who married or unmarried by looking at them.

Prabhupada: That is not very difficult.

Satsvarupa: Well, the other difficulty, you brought this up several years ago was that the man who takes many wives would have to be very select. Otherwise men would be attracted to join our movement for sex life, for having different wives.

Prabhupada: No. no. Unless our men are trained up, why should they be allowed to stay here and to marry? We want trained up men, not third class, picked up. We want men who will follow the rules and regulations and fully trained up, otherwise we don't want. We don't want ordinary karmis, and if he agrees to be trained up, then we take. Otherwise what is the use of bringing some useless men? He must agree to produce his own food and work, and our rules and regulations he must follow. Then it will be ideal community. Otherwise, if you bring from here and there some men and fill up, that is not good, very. This is a training institution, to become devotee.

Satsvarupa: Everything we do, we don't hide it. We show the world what we're doing. I don't see how we could hide that one man had many different wives.

Prabhupada: If you don't call "wife," you can have. The law allows you to keep boyfriend, girlfriend. Then the...instead of calling "husband" call "friend." That's all. But it is risky, and the man must be responsible to keep. To keep more than one wife by trained up man is not disallowed.

Brahmananda: But I think they thought that he could get it legally established at least in the state of California.

Prabhupada: One can go there. One can go and marry there. If the state of California allows that, then they all can go to California.

Nityananda: The general public objects to that. It's very...

Prabhupada: Public we don't care. We...what is the public? We have got our own public here. So...Pub...What is the public? All rascals. They are killing cows and drinking and topless dance, bottomless dance. What is the value of this public? All rascals. I don't give any importance to this class of public, only after sense gratification. That's it. They have no ideals of life. They do not know what is God. What is the value of this public? Mudhas. They have been described, mudhas. You know the meaning of mudha?

Devotee: Ass.

Prabhupada: Ass. Mudho nabhijanati mam abhyah paramam mama

Nityananda: The householders on our farm, they should cooperate and produce the food centrally or every householder should produce his own food independently?

Prabhupada: No, why they are living in a community centrally? Community means work everything for the community.

Jagadisa: Some men can cultivate the fields, some men can take care of the cows, some men they can take different responsible jobs.

Prabhupada: No, it is service [?]

Upendra: One question I have, Prabhupada. When I heard about New Vrndavana-I have not been there myself, so I cannot say first hand, but talking with devotees who have been there.

Prabhupada: Near.

Upendra: One would think because there is land and room for vegetables and there are so many cows that there would be a plentiful supply of milk, but I understand that they use powdered milk. The devotees use powdered milk there.

Prabhupada: Why?

Upendra: Because they make all the milk into ghee and distribute it. And vegetables...I heard that at the temple that they use powdered milk. In Philadelphia I questioned the...that carpenter who made your table. He...

Prabhupada: Why powdered milk if there is sufficient milk?

Upendra: I don't know. I can't say firsthand, but from the man who lived there, one of the householders who lived there, he said powdered milk...

Prabhupada: I don't think so.

Jagadisa: I have heard that.

Prabhupada: No. This is not good. Ghee should be prepared where there is no more use. The Indian village, simply by keeping cows, they...Just like Nanda Majaraja was keeping cows. Similarly, there are many villages. So the system is they have got a big pan, and whatever milk is collected, put into that pan. It is being warmed. So they drink the whole family members. They drink milk whenever they like. So whatever milk remains at night, they have to convert it into yogurt. The next day they use milk and yogurt also, as he likes. Then, after converting the milk into yogurt, still, it remains. It is stocked. So when there is sufficient old yogurt, they churn it and then butter comes out. So they take the butter, and the water that is separated from the butter, that is called whey? Whey, yes. So they...instead of dahl, they use this whey for chapati. It will be very healthy and tasty. And then the butter they turn into ghee. So where is the loss? You require...

Satsvarupa: Only after the whole milk is consumed, then the other...

Prabhupada: Milk you are collecting. So put in the pan. I have already explained. From milk stage to yogurt, yogurt to old yogurt, from old yogurt to butter, and then water, that whey. Then butter convert into ghee and whey. Remaining, instead of drink the water, drink whey. Not a single drop of milk will be... if you know how to do it. And you can take as much milk as possible. Ultimately, it is going to be ghee. So if you start in the cities, nice restaurant, so ghee can be sold there. They'll pay for that. And they can prepare nice preparations: kachoris, samosa, sweetballs. Or milk, if you don't convert into yogurt, then naturally it will become...what is called?

Brahmananda: Curd.

Prabhupada: Curd. So curd you can send to the city. They

will convert into sandesh, rasagulla and other preparations and ghee. That is being done. In India the villagers, they do that. They are, keep cows. convert the milk into curd or ghee and then send to the city where they have arrangement ...There is no question of waste of milk at any stage. One must know how to do it. So you can keep as many cows as possible and collect as much milkas you can utilize. And if some of the villagers are trained up, they can open a nice restaurant in the city, utilize the ghee and curd in making nice confectionary. People will purchase like anything. Just like in our Rathyayatra festival, whatever sweets they prepared, all sold at good profit. Your countrymen, they did not see such nice things. And when they taste it -- "very nice".

Brah.: They were selling one gulabjamin for 75 cents.

Prabhupada: Just see. (laughs) It may cost two cents. And you have got your sugar also. In this organize. Avoid machine. Keep everyone employed as brahmana, as ksatriya, as vaisya. Nobody should sit down. Brahmanas, they are writers, editors, lecturers, instructors, worshiping Deity, ideal character. They have no anxiety for food, for clothing. Others should supply them. they haven't got to work. Sannyasi is always preaching, going outside. In this way keep everyone full engaged. Then it will be ideal. Otherwise people will criticize that we are simply eating and sleeping, escaping, so many, so many. And actually that is the position. Unless one is fully engaged, oh, that is not good. That is tamo-guna. Tamo-guna, and rajo-guna - very active, and sattva-guna - intellectual activity. Both of them, active - only tamo-guna, not active. Tamo-guna means sleeping and laziness. These are the symptoms of tamo-guna. Every saintly man can avoid these two things--laziness and sleeping. Of course, as much as you require, sleeping allowed, not more than...And keep everyone active, man or woman--all. Then it will be ideal society.

Nityananda: Without a machine how can you make sugar from the cane?

Prabhupada: Hand machine.

Nityananda: Hand machine?

Prabhupada: Yes.

Nityananda: Metal?

Prabhupada: Yes. They manufacture, hand. Hand in the sugar cane, two men. Even we can prepare hand machine by cutting the root. They do that. We are not against machine. You can utilize machine. But we should not allow others unemployed and use machine. This should be point. You can use. Use machine - that's good, but not at the risk of keeping others unemployed. If you have got many men, then why should you engage machine? These rascals, they do not know. They're taking machine and keeping so many men unemployed. And the welfare department is paying them. They do not know how to organize society. And therefore hippies are coming out. Crime, criminals are coming out. The meaning is that the government is paying for becoming criminals and hippies and prostitutes. And how you can be happy, a society full of prostitutes, hippies and criminals.

Brah.: In New York City they now have one million people who are receiving welfare.

Prabhupada: And all criminals.

Brah.: Yes. All criminals, prostitutes and hippies.

Prabhupada: Because they government is paying for that, and they are now thinking, "What to do about crime?" This is rascaldom. You act in such a way, then repent later on.

Brah.: There was one boy from Sweden, he was our devotee. And then he fell into maya. He returned to Sweden. Now he's getting from the government $50 a week. So he's using that money to buy drugs. So now he's completely trapped.

Prabhupada: Yes

Brah.: He gets money regularly, and he can never get out of the habit.

Prabhupada: In your country also. One keeps a girlfriend, the girl's getting welfare, and he is purchasing drugs, and then their husband goes. I have seen. Some of our students have been...I have seen them.

Sats.: That's very prominent.

Prabhupada: And making trade. That is going on.

Brah.: So this varna-asrama system that you are...

Prabhupada: Yes.

Brah.: This varnasrama college...

Prabhupada: Yes. Varnasrama means everyone must be engaged. There will be no, I mean to say, ill demand.

Jagadisa: Srila Prabhupada, what exactly do the...Do the vaisyas cultivate the fields or the sudras cultivate the fields?

Prabhupada: Hm?

Jagadisa: Is it the duty of the vaisyas to cultivate the fields or...

Prabhupada: Actually, it is the duty of the vaisyas, but the sudras can help everyone, the helpers. The sudras will help the brahmanas, the ksatriyas, as well as the vaisyas. Those who have no brain--simply they can carry out order--they are sudras. And those who have got brain, they can act as brahmana, ksatriya or vaisya. They have got brain to take the initiative. First-class brain, they should be engaged in studying sastras, writing books and in the worship of the Deity, lecturing enlightened people. This is brahmana. They haven't got to work as ksatriya, as vaisya. They are simply intellectuals. This is brahmana, with good character.

Devotee: Distributing books?

Prabhupada: Yes. And the distribution [of] book can be done by the vaisya--trade. It is a trade. Krsi-go-raksya-vanijyam. Krsi, agriculture, giving protection to cows, and distributing or trading. If you have enough grains you can trade. Make money. If you have got enough vegetables, you can trade. That is the business of vaisya. So vaisya does not require any university degree or any...Nobody requires university degree. That is a false thing. And brahmana should be very highly learned scholar. So the brahmanas will give advice to the ksatriya how to rule, and the ksatriyas will levy tax, and vaisyas will produce food. Then the society will be perfect.

Sats.: What kind of tax?

Prabhupada: Hm? Tax means...Everyone must have some income for maintaining. So, brahmanas, they don't require any... They will live on the contribution of society, because they are giving for free-service, so valuable service: knowledge, so they are provided by the ksatriyas and the vaisyas. So they have no anxiety for earning livelihood. Things are coming. Just like we are maintained. At least people give to me contribution. So, similarly, brahmana will live at the cost of others' contribution. That is source of income. Ksatriyas they'll levy tax. Ksatriyas, they'll levy tax. Ksatriya is given land. Now he divides the land. I have got, say, 2000 acres of land. So I divide to the vaisyas one thousand, this man one thousand, this man, one thousand. So on condition that I give you this land. You produce foodstuff or utilize any way. You give me twenty-five percent.

Brah.: Twenty-five percent of the produce?

Prabhupada: Whatever you have produced.

Brah.: Not necessarily money...

Prabhupada: No.

Brah.: But the produce.

Prabhupada: Yes.

Brah.: The grains or the milk or whatever.

Prabhupada: Whatever, yes. Give me twenty-five percent. You can utilize the land. So that is the resource of land.

Devotee: How does the ksatriya build a palace for himself or something like that?

Prabhupada: That will be done. That income...to keep a prestigious position they'll have building, servant, soldiers. Otherwise, how they will fear? How they'll have respect.

Devotee: So the ksatriya is the predominator of the land.

Prabhupada: Yes. Ksatriya is the owner of the land.

Devotee: And he can take the stones and men and build a big, nice palace.

Prabhupada: Yes. They...sudras are there. Give him his eating, and some hand, pocket expense, hand expense, regular. If one eats, then he has no demand. So the laborer has to be given to eat sumptuously. Eat and work, take some

pocket...They will be very...Not that you call professional laborer and you have to pay twenty-five dollars per hour. That is nuisance. They'll drink. That's all. And not that everyone should have nice house. Why? What is the use? Go in the village, live simple, produce food. That's all. Eat. Why this electricity and three hundred story building and...And then you don't produce anything, eat fish. And let me eat...artificial. It is very easy to take the animals in the city and slaughter. A little vegetable and milk, they are satisfied.

Jagadisa: Even in the culture of Europe they had kings who had a certain territory, and then they would appoint men called vassals to take care of the different sections, and then the serfs sould work on the land.

Prabhupada: Yes. That is system, whole world. They were called...in India they were called zamindars, Mohammedans, and the Hindu zamindars, small kings. The zamindars are called king also. Anyone who owns land, he is called king.

Devotee: Just like Nanda Maharaja, he also had land. Nanda Maharaja.

Prabhupada: Yes. He was therefore called king. But he was a vaisya. He engaged his land for agriculture and cow-keeping. And Krsna took charge of the cows, the calves, although still calf He...This is the system. He was going with the calves whole day, playing with the boys and taking care of the cows, in the evening come back. Mother then washes and bathes and gives nice food. And immediately goes to sleep. And Krsna is clever. At night He goes to the gopis. (laughter) Then Mother Yasoda did not know, when she thought, "My good son is sleeping." And the gopis also would come at a place and they'll dance. This is called life, childhood life. And when He was grown up, then He was brought to, I mean to say, Mathura, and He fought with His maternal uncle, killed him, and then His father, Vasudeva, took care, sent him to, what is that...Sandipani Muni. He was educated. He was learning every subject every day. Then He was taken to Dwaraka, married to so many queens and became king. In the Krsna's life, He's always busy. Krsna...You'll never find from the very beginning of His life he's busy killing Putana, Aghasura, Bakasura, and His friends, they are confident. They'll enter into the mouth of Aghasura. "Oh, Krsna is there. He will kill." This is Vrndavana. There is no need and I don't find in Bhagavata big factory and all these slaughterhouses, no. Nothing. The whole atmosphere is surcharged with sinful life. How people will be happy? Now they are coming to crimes and hippies and so many other things, problems, diplomacy, CIA, and what other? So many...unnecessary waste of energy, time and money. Vicious condition. Better give up city. Make Vrndavana like this. City life is abominable. If you don't live in the city you don't require petrol, motor car. It is no use. They may criticize that you are going to a farm in a car. So for the time being, there is no vehicle. Otherwise, bullock cart--it takes--where is the difficulty? Suppose you are coming, one hour, one day. And if you are satisfied, such life, there is no question of moving. Maybe local moving, from this village to that village. That is sufficient, bullock carts. Why motor car? Drive here and park -- problem. Not only park problem, there are so many other things. There are three thousand parts motor cars. You have to produce them. Big factory.

Sats.: Insurance.

Prabhupada: Insur...So much! Everyone is being idle. We do not decry, but we point out: in this way our valuable time of life is being wasted. They say it is primitive life, but it is peaceful life and save time for Krsna consciousness. That is not primitive. That is intelligent life.

Sats.: In order to evidence this, should we consider that we have to act as ksatriyas or shall we just preach and try to get others...

Prabhupada: No...Ksatriyas, I have already explained who is brahmana and ksatriya according to guna-karma-vibhagasya, as you work, as you are fit for. If you are fit to become brahmana, become brahmana. If you are fit to become ksatriya, become ksatriya. If you are fit to become vaisya, do it. Three...then...and a man who cannot become fit for any other purpose, he is sudra. That's all. Help. Help the brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya and take your food and little pocket expense. That's all. Little pocket expense. But in our society we don't require [pocket expense -ed.], but even if it is required, we can give.

Brah.: So eventually we should divide up our society in this way? Our members...

Prabhupada: Yes, just to show people how to...the first class men, brahmana; second-class, ksatriya; third-class, vaisya; fourth class...

Sats.: But all in our society are Vaisnavas.

Prabhupada: That is our real position. This is for management.

Nityananda: How many ksatriyas can I have on this farm? How many ksatriyas can we have on one farm?

Prabhupada: I told. Find out who is going to be ksatriya. Then...take your time.

Nityananda: You can have more than one?

Prabhupada: No. no. Why not? There is no rule. As according to the work. If people are interested to work as vaisya, let them be vaisya. If he is intelligent, if he wants to work as brahmana, let him work as brahmana. Let him work as ksatriya. And the fourth-class, let him work as sudra. So the management should see that nobody is unemployed or not engaged, men, women. Woman can take care of the milk products or spinning, spinning. And sudras can be engaged for working as weaver, as a blacksmith, a goldsmith. There are so many things.

Jagadisa: Cobbler?

Prabhupada: Cobbler is less than sudra. Yes. Cobbler means when the cows die the cobbler may take it. If he wants, he can eat the flesh, and he can utilize the bone, hoofs. He can prepare...he gets the skin without any price. So he can make shoes and he'll make some profit. And because he is cobbler, he can be allowed to eat meat, fifth-class. Not that "Professor such-and-such" and eating meat. This is the degradation of society. He is doing the work of a brahmanad--teacher means brahmana, and eating meat. Oh, horrible! So make, organize. I can give you the idea, but I'll not live very long. If you can carry out, you can change the whole...especially if you can change America, then whole world will change. Then the whole world. And it is the duty! Because they are kept in darkness and ignorance, then the human life is being spoiled. These rascals, because they do not know how to live...andha yathandhair...They are blind, and they are leading... Others are blind, and they are leading, and they, all of them, going to ditch. So it is the duty! Then, Caitanya has explained, para-upakara. Save them. If it is not possible to save everyone, as many as possible. This is human life. This is Krsna consciousness, to save others who are in the darkness. It is not a profession. "Now, Krsna consciousness is my profession. I'm getting very easily food and shelter." That's all. Just like in India they are doing [as] a profession, say another means of livelihood. Not like that. It is for para-upakara, actually benefitting the others. That is Krsna consciousness. Then Krsna will be very much pleased: "Oh, he is trying." Krsna personally comes for doing this benefit to the people, and if you do, then how much Krsna will be pleased. Then? Just like I am traveling in my centers, and if I see that my students, my men are doing very nice, everything is going nice, how much pleased I will be, that I'll save my labors and now write books for the rest of my time. Similarly, if Krsna sees that you are, on behalf of Krsna, you are trying to save these rascals, then He'll be very pleased with you. They are rascals. The leaders are rascals and the followers are rascals, and they're all going to hell. Nature's law is very strict. Daivi hy esa gunamayi mama maya duratyaya. You cannot avoid it. Nature is all-powerful. Krsna has given, "You work in this way." She'll work. She'll punish. As soon as there is little discrepancy, you have eaten, eaten more than is necessary - indigestion. "Indigestion. Starve." This is nature's law. Nature will act. But you have to [educate] them with knowledge that "You don't do this." Otherwise, you

will be under the control of nature, life after life, simply miseries. Para-duhkha-duhkhi. Vaisnavas qualification is para-duhkha-duhkhi. He is unhappy by seeing others' distress. This is Vaisnava.

(Editor's note(Nityananda): at this point Prabhupada was visibly moved and in tears; He got up and left the room, leaving us dumbfounded. Prabhupada later decided against polygamy as an official ISKCON policy, and devotees must see the difference between ancient Vedic culture and how, when and where to institute it in the modern world)

SRILA BHAKTIVINODA THAKURA ON VARNASRAMA DHARMA

Excerpts from SRI CAITANYA SIKSAMRTA

A HISTORY OF VARNASRAMA

The varnasrama system was established at the beginning of the Tretayuga, at a time when a great, scientific culture prevailed. At that time, it was the rule that a man would adopt a particular varna according to his inherent nature, and he would perform the duties of that varna when he was competent to do so. With this division of labour, and the determination of mens' natures, the functions of the world were carried out very beautifully. One whose father had no varna was given a varna solely by reason of his nature. The Vedic histories of Jabali, Gautama, Janasruti and Citraratha are examples thereof.

One's varna was determined according to the varna of one's father and one's inherent nature; both criteria were employed.

In those days genuine reformatory measures were employed, and for that reason Bharata-varsa was possessed of the greatest glory and was peopled by men as resplendent as the sun. At that time the whole world respected the inhabitants of Bharata-varsa as the most ideal persons in all respects. Egypt, China, and other countries looked to the residents of Bharata-varsa for proper guidance.

Varnasrama-dharma was thus observed with great purity, but gradually, from the time of Jamadagni and his son Parasurama, who had the nature of ksatriyas, but counted themselves as brahmanas, malice and discord was generated between brahmanas and ksatriyas. We find therefore, that much was made of one's birth in a particular family in determining one's varna, and it so happened that this conception, which is not based upon one's svabhava, was introduced into Manu's lawbook and elsewhere.

The ksatriyas, being unable to elevate themselves to the higher varna, manufactured the Buddhist-dharma with a view to destroying the brahmanas. The brahmanas for their part, reacted by laying great stress on their lineage. On one hand, the brahmanas fell from their high pedestal, and on the other, the ksatriyas lost their patriotism, and the noble residents of Bharata thereby brought about their own destruction.

The brahmanas, bereft of their brahminical qualities; composed dharma-sastras devoted to their own interests, and thereby neglected the other varnas. The ksatriyas, bereft of ksatriya courage, endurance and so forth, were defeated in battle and lost their kingdoms, and began to propagate the insignificant Buddhist creed. The vaisyas, bereft of vaisya svabhava, propounded the Jain-dharma and thus Bharata's extensive trade diminished. The sudras, who were previously good servants, took to dacoity and other types of criminality, & gradually people forgot the lessons of Vedic culture.

When such was the condition, the mleccha kings invaded, and brought India under their dominion. Little by little the vices of Kali-yuga began to prevail. Alas! The people of Bharata-varsa, who were once examples and preceptors to the whole human race, were reduced to the most contemptible state. This was not due to the divisions of caste, but to the establishment of casteism contrary to Vedic principles.

Their only hope now is that the Supreme Lord, who is the sole propounder of scriptural injunctions, and the guide of all living beings, and who alone looks for the well-being of everyone, if He so desires, may send some empowered personality to reestablish the pristine glory of the varnasrama system. (Second vrsti, third dhara)

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VARNASRAMA AND VAIDHI BHAKTI

sadhana-kale ye paryanta, hrdaya kama ache
se paryanta varnasramadi dharmera apeksa thake

TRANSLATION

At the time of practicing sadhana bhakti, so long as there is material desire within the heart, one should remain within the confines of the varnasrama system.

The relationship between the aforementioned varnasrama-dharma and vaidhi bhakti ought now to be examined. The question is, is the varnasrama institution negated, or should it be abandoned when one takes to the process of vaidhi-bhakti, or should the rules and regulations of varnasrama be followed in order to properly cultivate vaidhi-bhakti?

As we have said, the main reason for the cultivation of varnasrama is that maintaining the body in good health, improving the faculty of the mind, promoting social well-being, and learning the science of the Self are all conducive to the practice of pure devotional service.

Who can deny the necessity of the varnasrama institution as long as the living being is bound up in the human body? If it is abandoned, and the above-mentioned four principles are lacking, the jiva will go astray and no good whatsoever will accrue to him. One should, therefore, strictly adhere to the rules governing varnasrama for the sake of the body, the mind, society and one's advancement in Krsna consciousness.

But the observance of varnasrama-dharma is not the sole business of the jiva. Therefore, with the assistance of varnasrama-dharma, one must cultivate pure devotional service. The purpose of the varnasrama institution, is to facilitate the practice of devotional service.

The question may arise that since the practice of varnasrama is a dilatory affair, what will one's duty be if a conflict arises with one's devotional practice? The answer is that if one does not maintain and nourish the healthy condition of the body, mind, society, and the pursuit of self-realization, how will it be possible to cultivate the higher endeavor, devotional service? If, abandoning the varnasrama institution, one acts independently, then the demands of the body and the mind will cause one to become intoxicated with material desire and no sign of devotion will manifest itself. (First vrsti, sixth dhara)

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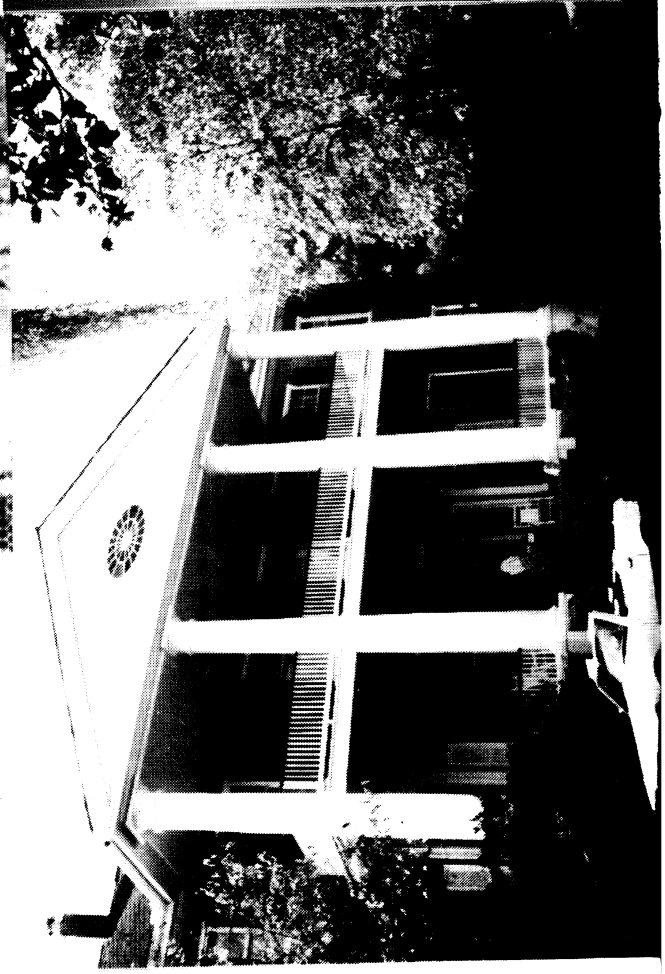
The sastras declare that all men have a right to perform devotional service. But those who practice the duties of varnasrama have a special right and privilage thereto.

(Third vrsti, fourth dhara)

The above was translated by Karnamrita dasa, New Jaipur.



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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CONCERNING LIFE ESTATES

1. Are life estates more authorized than private ownership?
Ans.: Having a life estate is ownership, so far as civil law is concerned. As Nityananda Prabhu pointed out in his article, "...once the life estate is granted on clear-title land, that life estate cannot be undermined by any future lawsuits or judgments. If the ISKCON corporation folds and the land is owned by a new party, that life estate is still fully protected. It is an encumbrance on the land that can only be voided by death or violation of covenants." The only strings attached are covenants which require the owners to follow the practices of sadhana-bhakti and pay their taxes of 25%. As far as authorization is concerned, the description of **Artha-sastra**, Prabhupada's room conversations, books etc. desribe ksatriyas granting land with conditions: taxes and the citizens following religious principles. We detailed some reference on this from **Artha-sastra** in the last article. Here is an excerpt from a room conversation with Srila Prabhupada in New Talavan 8/1/75:

Prabhupada: Ksatriyas, they'll levy tax. Ksatriya is given land. Now he divides the land. I have got, say, two thousand acres of land. So I divide to the vaisyas one thousand, this man, one thousand, this man, one thousand. So on condition that I give you this land, you produce foodstuff or utilize any way. You give me twenty-five percent.

Brahmananda: Twenty-five percent of the produce?
Prabhupada: Whatever you have produced.
Brahmananda: Not necessarily money.
Prabhupada: No.
Brahmananda: But the produce.
Prabhupada: Yes.
Brahmananda: The grains or the milk or whatever.
Prabhupada: Whatever, yes. Give me twenty-five percent. You can utilize the land. So that is resource of land.
Devotee: How does the ksatriya build a palace for himself or something like that?
Prabhupada: That will be done. That income. To keep a prestigious position they'll have building, servant, soldiers. Otherwise, how they will fear? How they'll respect?
Devotee: So the ksatriya is the predominator of the land.
Prabhupada: Yes. Ksatriya is the owner of the land.

[Here we see ksatriyas granting land with certain conditions, getting 25% taxes and being viewed as the ultimate owners of the land.]

In **SB** 1.9.36 we find the statement also: "The citizens... were to pay one fourth of their income to the ruler..." In our ISKCON communities we would not want to sell off the Deity's land to individuals, but rather keep it in a tax-free coporation, the land governed by an administrator (governing on behalf of the Deity) and advised by council of brahmanas. This can be done, and simultaneously the corporation can grant the life estates to individual devotees.

2. Who can own a life estate?
Ans.: Anyone can own a life estate, whether he takes the role of brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya or sudra. There are some differences in the type and size of life estates given to the different varnas. For obvious reasons, a vaisya would generally be granted a larger piece of land. A shilpin, an enterprising sudra with his own handicraft business usually employing others, would both be expected to give 25% in cash or kind. Other sudras would be given wages as employees with 25% deducted, but leaving them enough for a comfortable life. The brahmanas are granted their small cottages and estates tax-free in return for giving spiritual knowledge. Srila Prabhupada comments in the same New Talavan conversation: "Brahmanas, they are writers, editors, lecturers, instructors, worshiping Deity, ideal character. They have no anxiety for food, for clothing. Others should supply them. They haven't got to work...They will live on the contribution of the society, because they are giving for free: service, so valuable service, knowledge. So they are provided by the ksatriyas and vaisyas..." And in **SB** 7.11.14: "A king or ksatriya is not allowed to levy taxes on brahmanas..."

3. Isn't Canakya Pandita's Artha-sastra relativistic, pragmatic advice for kings? Does it actually have relevance for ISKCON devotees?
Ans.: Canakya Pandita gives the opinion of famous Vedic authorities throughout his work, like Parasara Muni, Lord Siva, Uddhava, Brhaspati, Narada and Bhisma to name a few. So if we have to make judgments about matters somewhat relative, what better way than to take advice on "ordinary affairs" from mahajanas and powerful sages. Certainly, any advice that Prabhupada offered on practical affairs, like the implementation of varnasrama, we deem very important. Why not the same consideration for Lord Siva, Bhisma, etc. The advice of self-realized souls always has the greatest practical value for ISKCON devotees or anyone else.

4. Doesn't private ownership turn sand into gold? Why do you think that devotees who buy and own their own land will end up "doing their own thing". Won't simple preaching and spiritual atmosphere be enough to keep devotees in a community strict?
Ans.: From a practical point of view, unless the ksatriya has some means of leverage over the citizens in lieu of starting his own country, own army, etc. how can he control the citizens? How will he get his taxes? How will he see to it that the citizens follow the religious principles and that everyone is properly engaged? From this point of view, as well as Prabhupada's descriptions of a varnasrama community, it appears to be superior to grant life estates. Otherwise, a ksatriya will acquire a large tract of land, give it away or sell it, and then lose all practical control over it. If some of the buying parties decide not to cooperate, give up the principles or refuse to come to the central place of worship, refuse to pay taxes and begin to commit sinful activities, then what can be done. Answer: Not much. And we have already seen this take place in many of our communities. A successful government always must have sufficient means for constraining the citizens. Ksatriyas grant land with conditions, never unconditionally. Devotees may well not do their own thing without the above structure, but there is certainly nothing stopping them from doing so. And our practical experience is that they often do once off "on their own".

5. Who is qualified to be a ksatriya?
Ans.: We may as well ask who is qualified as anything in this age. The most qualified person for the job will probably be the devotee who acquires a large tract of land and shows his expertise in developing it into a community and organizing it to the satisfaction of the Vaisnavas. "In the land of no trees, the castor plant is considered great." By study of ksatriya dharma, with recourse to Prabhupada's books and allied Vedic literature and practice devotees will become more qualified. We have to begin somewhere. And the ksatriya must agree to abide by the direction of a council of saintly brahmanas (again those who show themselves most practically qualified), and be prepared to hear and solve the grievances of the other citizens. On this point, Srila Prabhupada remarks in the New Talavan conversation:
"And those who have got brain, they can act as brahmana, ksatriya or vaisya. They have got brain to take the initiative." This is the practical measure, to simply see who can take the initiative and do the job.

by Rupa Vilas das

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AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS ON THE WOMEN SANNYASI ISSUE

From Narasingha Guru das, Pittsburgh, PA, 5.21.88:

As far as Rupa Vilasa's paper on women sannyassis is concerned, there are general observations to make before the specific points. My first concern was the underlying tone of the paper. A philosophical difference of opinion is one thing; but it was very uncomfortable to see the following verse quoted not once (presumptuous enough) but twice, bringing his detached objectivity into question: "No one can introduce any new system into the Vedic way of life; if one does so out of malice, he is to be known as a pasandi, or atheist" (S.B. 4.19.23). In other words, he is calling Srila Bhaktipada a malicious atheist!

Does he actually know the character, motives and detailed philosophical realizations of Srila Bhaktipada? Did he try to communicate with Bhaktipada directly, in a non-challenging way appropriate for dealing with such a senior and beloved child of Prabhupada, and so try to understand each of Bhaktipada's points, each in their own context?

Furthermore, regardless of his incomplete vision of Bhaktipada's preaching program, he completely ignores how Bhaktipada is supported by many senior Prabhupada disciples, such as Radhanath Swami, Varshana Swami (formerly Kashyapa Prabhu), Devamrita Swami and many other qualified and discerning devotees not likely to be hoodwinked by philosophical distortion.

Doubtless some of the measures Bhaktipada is introducing are controversial and revolutionary, but this does not mean that they should be dismissed out of hand, but there should indeed be philosophical enquiry and discussion "so that truth may prevail", and indeed Srila Bhaktipada is more than willing to entertain any proper enquiries in these regards.

At this point it is perhaps appropriate to at least address the challenge that no-one can introduce anything new into the Vedic tradition. What precisely is that tradition? Is it a tradition of externals? Hardly!

I understand that Rupa Vilasa Prabhu is at present working on a book about Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Prabhupada, so he should appreciate this fact better than most of us! Bhaktisiddhanta was a fabulous innovator and controversial radical, who made so many changes to the practices of Bengal Vaishnavism. For example, allowing his sannyasis to travel over the ocean and to wear stitched cloth, to ride in cars, even the very institution of tri-dandi sannyasa. Lord Caitanya had specifically forbidden the wearing of saffron cloth, and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's introduction in this regard was thought to oppose the Vaishnava mood of humility. But he did it all for preaching. And that is the unity amongst all diversities. That is our tradition, to preach love of God all over the world, not to establish any rigid set of external forms and dress codes and so on .

The same point is given in Bhagavad-gita, when Sri Krishna exhorts Arjuna that the Vedas deal mainly with the topic of the three modes of material nature and that he is to rise above all the modes and become established in the self. So what is that "established in the self"? Is it to be anything other than the servant of the servant of...of the empowered preachers coming in the line of Lord Caitanya! That is our tradition, not any rigid cultural codes; otherwise, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta was the most malicious atheist! And the smartas were right when they accused Lord Caitanya of the same, for destroying the established Vedic traditions; and Srila Prabhupada, who continued in the same non-traditional way (marrying his disciples, establishing the brahmacarini ashram - Vedic references anyone?), is also guilty of these appallingly indiscriminating and offensive charges!

The following quotes may help us better appreciate the legacy of our parampara, boldly preaching acintya-bhedabheda tattva, firmly fixed on the single purpose of Caitanya Mahaprabhu while making all kinds of external adjustments to keep up with changing cultural moods.

"And similarly, if one has not understood that the purpose of the Vedas is to reach Krishna and simply engages in rituals, etc., then he is uselessly wasting his time in such engagements. Persons in Krishna-consciousness transcend the limit of **sabda-brahman**, or the range of the Vedas and Upanisads" (B.G., 2.52, purport).

"His (Bhaktisiddhanta's) appearance took in order for new methods to be invented so that Sri Caitanya's religion of divine love could be preached in an extensive manner all over the world" (from "Prabhupada - Srila Sarasvati Thakura by Bhaktikusum Sraman, a disciple of Bhaktisiddhanta, p.11).

"With the aim of propagating the ideals of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, that is, the tridandi verse mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatam, Srila Sarasvati Thakura introduced the tridandi-sannyasa into the Gaudiya Sampradaya by personally accepting it in 1918 A.D." (p. 109, ibid.).

"The essence of the holy land of India's spiritual teachings shines forth from the great contribution of transcendental love given by Godhead Himself Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu in His pastimes as an Acarya. The ideal which Srila Prabhupada exhibited in inventing various novel methods to preach this pure Vaishnava religion to the whole world had never been exhibited in the activities of any other Acarya prior to him; spiritual history is proof of this" (ibid.).

So the acaryas are not condemned on account of their adjusting tradition; they are glorified for their preaching vision. Srila Prabhupada tells us that: "An acarya...cannot be expected to conform to a stereotype, for he must find the ways and means by which Krishna-consciousness may be spread" (C.C. Adi 7.31, purport).

"The expert devotees also can discover novel ways and means to convert the non-devotees in terms of particular times and circumstances. Devotional service is dynamic activity, and the expert devotees can find competent means to inject it into the dull brains of the materialistic population. Such transcendental activities of the devotees for the service of the Lord can bring a new order of life to the foolish society of materialistic men. Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His subsequent followers exhibited expert dexterity in this connection. By following the same method, one can bring the materialistic men of this age of quarrel into order for peaceful life and transcendental realization" (S.B. 1.5.16, purport).

"The teacher has to consider time, candidate and country. he must avoid the principle of **niyamagraha**", (following rules and regulations for their own sake, and not for the sake of spiritual advancement. Elsewhere Srila Prabhupada points out that the test of advancement is anxiety to preach everywhere, e.g.C.C.Madhya,24.277,purport,"that is,he should not try to perform the impossible.What may be possible in one country may not be possible in another. The acarya's duty is to accept the essence of devotional service. There may be a little change here and there as far as **yukta-vairagya** (proper renunciation) is concerned...The essence of devotional service must be taken into consideration, and not the outward paraphernalia" (C.C. Madhya, 23.105, purport).

So the main thrust of Rupa Vilasa's letter, namely that changes in our traditional ways of doing things are unacceptable, is completely misdirected. Actually, the various criticisms directed against Srila Bhaktipada's bold preaching visions seem to try to be using what he's doing as excuses to generally condemn him. Such envy is the natural comrade of the desire for sense-gratification, which has unquestionably invaded all levels of the Krishna-consciousness movement. Prabhupada has warned us: "There are many jealous people in the dress of Vaishnavas in this Krishna-consciousness movement..." (C.C.Madhya,1.218,purport) And, "One who is conducted by false ego...cannot tolerate the opulence of self-realized persons...instead of offering respect to the self-realized persons, foolish men who cannot approach the highest standard of self-realization are always envious, although there is no reason" (S.B.4.3.21)text &prpt

Furthermore, "Influenced by an envious temperament and dissatisfied because of an attitude of sense-gratification, mundaners criticize a real acarya...(which) will produce an effect subversive to transcendental realization" (C.C. Adi

1.46, purport). And, "Thus when a person exhibits wonderful devotional activities, a thoughtful man understands that Krishna has been more favorable to this devotee. This is not difficult to understand, but envious persons do not accept that Krishna has bestowed His favor on a particular devotee in accordance with his advanced position. Such foolish persons become envious and try to minimise an advanced devotee's activities. That is not Vaishnavism. A Vaishnava should appreciate the service rendered to the Lord by other Vaishnavas" (S.B. 7.1.9).

In various places in Srila Prabhupada's books, we find the word acarya used to indicate an empowered preacher, whose duty it is to adjust religious principles in terms of time and place (c/f S.B. 1.9.9, purport). There are many of us whose knowledge of Srila Bhaktipada's words, actions and visions for preaching is direct, and not attained via rumors or hearsay, as circulated by karmi media and disaffected devotees whose own poor sadhana must bring their own vision and judgement into serious question. We continually witness extraordinary transcendental dedication of purpose and spiritual optimism utterly unfazed by all manner of external influence and attack, "free of anxiety for gain and safety"; he is 100% absorbed in preaching, is continually receiving new inspirations in this regard, and we are seeing results. His activities have not yet reached fruition, but factually speaking, the groundwork is being done, and we are all tremendously excited and enthused to preach.

"When a person realizes himself to be an eternal servitor of Krishna, he loses interest in everything but Krishna's service. Always thinking of Krishna, devising means by which to spread the holy name of Krishna, he understands that his only business is in spreading the Krishna-consciousness movement all over the world. Such a person is to be recognized as an **uttama-adhikari**, and his association should be immediately accepted according to the six processes ...(and he) should be accepted as a spiritual master" (N. of I., Text 5, purport).

We may not be able to convince someone through our inadequate words that he is an acarya (please note the use of "an", and not "the"!), totally at liberty to make adjustments in external details; but we can certainly advise people to be very cautious and thoughtful in approaching his activities. To start off with a close-minded or critical attitude, as encouraged by many of the entirely one-sided papers on his activities, may be dangerously offensive; moreover, Krishna does not grant spiritual intelligence to an offender, but rewards his desires so that he may understand everything in precisely the light that he wishes, and thus his offences increase.

Sometimes he is accused of trying minimise Prabhupada's position; should we then sympathise with Prabhupada's detractors who accuse him of pushing aside Bhaktisiddhanta? After all, we do not see ISKCON devotees worshipping the same way as at the Gaudiya Matha, nor are they busy (directly) worshipping Bhaktisiddhanta everyday. That is "because when we speak of the fundamental principle of Gurudeva or Acaryadeva, we speak of something that is of universal application. There does not arise any question of discriminating my Guru from that of yours or anyone else's. There is only one Guru who appears in an infinity of forms to teach you, me and all others" (Prabhupada's 1935 Vyasa-puja offering to Bhaktisiddhanta). "(Narada) is the representative of Brahma...similarly all other successive disciples in the chain are also equally respected as representatives of the original spiritual master" (S.B. 1.4.33)

The living guru represents the entire parampara, which is worshipped through him. So to minimise his position, or to advocate jumping over him, is an offense to the entire parampara. Therefore Bhaktipada is not only glorifying the entire parampara in the way that he is encouraging the parampara approached and served; but he is also famous for his worship of his own Guru Maharaja, in form of Prabhupada's Palace and the ever-expanding New Vrindaban project (as Srila Prabhupada said: "just go on developing New Vrindaban to your heart's content"). So what is the actual **philosophical** basis of all the criticisms being levelled against him? Why are some people trying to find fault, being unnecessarily envious of his activities? He's trying to the best of his abilities to preach! (c/f. C.C. 3.51, purport).

As far as specific arguments against the points raised in Rupa Vilasa's paper against women taking sannyasa are concerned, the following should be considered. Firstly, it is not at all a question of dressing a woman like a man, nor can it all be compared to a sahajiya person dressing like an eternal associate of Krishna as he suggested. It is purely a question of preaching, preaching in a society that is now full of propaganda from Equal Rights Movements (e.g.N.O.W.), and that is quite offended at the idea that men and women do not share equal opportunities. The entire practice of adopting sannyasa is enacted on the external platform, and is done purely for preaching to the conditioned souls, who are on the external platform. An advanced person may indeed realise his/her spiritual nature, regardless of external position; but sannyasa is not a personal indulgence, it is for preaching, for inspiring the conditioned souls, who do identify the external and internal situations together.

Most of the criticisms and arguments Rupa Vilasa raises could also be easily levelled against the introduction of a brahmacarini ashram, or against women receiving gayatri initiation; so obviously such arguments are not as absolute and all-encompassing as Rupa Vilasa cares to believe. In fact, "As Srila Sridhara Swami has stated, **sarvasya nishedhasya savaadhitvat:** "every negative injunction is understood to have a specific limit. Negative injunctions cannot be taken as applicable in all cases" (S.B. 11.3.36, purport). And so it is with the injunction that in Kali-yuga no-one is to take sannyasa. But for preaching, things may be seen differently. For example, he quotes that "In all circumstances a woman should remain dependent upon some guardian"; but in our philosophy, we are all being trained to accept Guru and Krishna as our eternal guardians. So for an advanced soul in a woman's body who is actually Krishna-conscious, what is the difficulty?

Then he makes the peculiar conclusion that our quoting Srila Prabhupada's references to the non-stereotypical activities of the acarya implies that we're claiming that the previous acaryas must have been stereotypes; I confess I do not understand his logic in this regard, but suggest he considers that we are merely pointing out our tradition is full of innovators, not stereotypes, and Srila Bhaktipada is just continuing the tradition!

Next he argues that women need not adopt the dress and social behavior of a sannyasi to become renounced; however, since no-one is meant to remain forever entangled in family life, why should a woman be obliged to think of herself either as a wife or a widow, i.e. as being with or without husband? If a man needs sannyasa to help him escape material family identifications, then why shouldn't a woman do the same? However, this argument is strictly secondary, as we do not necessarily require sannyasa to become Krishna-conscious; the over-riding consideration for sannyasa in this age is strictly preaching.

As far as the examples of great female ascetics such as Gandhari, Devahuti, etcetera, doubtless they were indeed all liberated and renounced; but their roles do not appear very liberated to modern Westerners. The fact is, this is a totally non-Vedic clime, and Vedic traditions are not very appropriate. One who cannot recognize this, and cannot understand how to invoke the spiritual desire that is ever the goal of spiritual life, in terms appropriate to current circumstances, should not consider himself a very advanced preacher. Certainly it is not his business to try to restrain or criticize the preaching of those whose vision is far broader and bolder than his own.

Reply by Rupa Vilasa das, 5.25.88:

I am pleased to get some response to my Women Sannyassi article from the New Vrindaban side. I thought some of your points were well-argued, but overall I feel that the type of argumentation you indulge in is a kind of cheating. What I

mean by that is that you already possess a certain conviction, and for the most part, putting aside the scriptural arguments and logic I have proffered, you often either attack arguments I have not made (the straw man technique), misunderstand my points or worse, just go on and on without even addressing the article's points (keeping that urgent necessity at bay with a harangue about the nasty qualities of detractors and the oneness of the guru). When you do address the article proper, it is not well-considered and you show your ignorance of the history of our parampara.

Your first objection is that I have accused Bhaktipada of being a pasandi. I have not. What I have done is to repeat the words of Srila Prabhupada, who in turn has explained the word **pakhanda** which is repeatedly used in the 19th chapter of the Fourth Canto. This **pakhanda** also means **pasanda** according to the acaryas and refers to atheistic activity or **adharma**: activities against **dharma**. Creating a false type of sannyasa is described in the purports of the 19th Chapter to be against **dharma** or religion or theism, therefore it is atheism or against theism. Now it is perfectly clear from Prabhupada's purports and letters that this type of activity is **adharma**. Whether or not it is malicious as well may be in question. At least we have to say that to act irreligiously is not good, but if you feel that malicious is too strong a word, then I am prepared to concede that. But then that is Srila Prabhupada's phrase, not mine. Even Srila Prabhupada used to speak very strongly at times and call people mudhas, etc. But in reference to the use of that word he also used to say, "I am not saying. Krsna is saying." Therefore, I do not presume to be in a position to call anyone a **pasandi**, but if Maitreya Rsi does so and it is confirmed by the acaryas, then I may repeat it without offense.

Regarding your second point: I have known Bhaktipada since 1971. As far as his character, I have some good estimation about it. As far as his motives, I can observe what he does and what he says. As far as his philosophical realizations, I will have to determine that by what he writes and what he speaks. As his God-brother, I can certainly challenge him on philosophical grounds. I should think that you might want to question what your position is to challenge me. But I certainly don't question <u>your</u> right to do so.

Your next point about his being supported by senior men is hardly a proof of **ANYTHING.** I am also supported by many senior men. Does it then mean that anything I do or say is correct? What is this logic? I believe Bhaktipada himself is fond of making this point. There were many senior, qualified men who supported other persons who were incorrect about all kinds of things in the history of our movement. I think you may remember that. I have the highest personal regard for the men that you mention, but if they support this women sannyasi business, then I must disagree with them just as strongly.

I am not required to phrase my disagreement as an enquiry as those who are Bhaktipada's disciples are.

The tradition I refer to throughout my article is not a tradition of externals, but the instructions of the acaryas and the Vedic literature, which are entirely spiritual, about the scientific execution of the material aspects of life (**varnasrama-dharma**) which help to lead us ultimately to liberation. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, and Srila Prabhupada have all dealt elaborately in their preaching with the necessity of establishing the **daivi-varnasrama** system, which includes division into the four spiritual and four social orders. This whole practice when coupled with sadhana-bhakti facilitates the liberation of the living entity. Therefore, in order that we move scientifically toward love of God, we follow "the program of the varnasrama institution" and "accept sannyasa according to the parampara system of the acaryas". The clear point is that what Sankara, Ramanuja, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, Srila Prabhupada, etc. never recommended and in fact condemned, we should not attempt to institute. The whole purpose of the varnasrama dharma is not to simply follow some useless ritualistic formularies, but to execute that which is most favorable to our increasing devotion and liberation from the bodily platform. The social and religious aspects of varnasrama were designed by no less an architect than the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself: **catur-varnyam maya srstam** <u>and</u> with a completely spiritual goal in mind. A role is prescribed for women which is completely harmonious with their psycho-physical tendencies. A male role of sannyasa does not help them to achieve liberation. As far as your hopeful statements about very advanced devotees being beyond all this, believe it or not, such advancement is extremely rare, and even when it exists, our role models are such exalted liberated persons as Mother Jahnavi, Mother Visnupriya etc. If even **goddesses of fortune** do not take up the dress, social behavior and religious duties of sannyasis, how can we think we are now more advanced and do this?

Regarding the institution of tri-danda sannyasa in our line, please see <u>**CC Madhya** 3.6</u>. Tridanda sannyasa is the original Vedic tradition, always practiced in the line of Ramanuja, and in our line by Prabhodananda Sarasvati, Gadadhara Pandita, Madhava Upadyaya, Gopal Bhatta Bose, etc. This was not really an innovation by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati. It was strictly within the parameters of varnasrama-dharma. It is actually the babaji **vesa** that is outside of varnasrama--paramahamsa platform. Sannyasa in our parampara is established according to Vedic principles, and the negative injunction has more to do with the faultiness of Kali-yuga, than an absolute prohibition against sannyasa. Sannyasa, however, is intended only for very qualified persons. We are accepting it in the preaching spirit of Lord Caitanya, Who is God Almighty and who certainly never forbade Prabhodananda Sarasvati, Gadadhara, nor anyone else the right to saffron cloth. If God sets the example in our line, no one can fault that, or call someone who follows His excellent example in the renounced order heretical or anything of the sort.

Marrying disciples and the brahmacarini asrama were hardly introduced by Srila Prabhupada as institutions. He wanted to push on preaching, but marrying disciples was a temporary practice, not meant to alter the duties of future renunciates. And the brahmacarini asrama was a temporary, compassionate concession to the circumstances, also not really meant to continue, as Srila Prabhupada always insisted that all of the women must get married, the Vedic practice! Hardly a parallel situation to the brahmacari asrama where men are encouraged to always remain celibate. And the women that had lost husbands he urged to behave as renounced widows, which is fully in line with the scriptures and the acaryas. If we establish varnasrama society as Srila Prabhupada desired, brahmacarini asramas will eventually become extinct. If you mean to argue that women sannyasa is just a temporary stop-gap measure meant to overcome the resistence of the ERA and NOW supporters, which will be dropped after a sufficient number of them become devotees, then I would still argue that it is very risky and quite unncessary. Your arguments about ERA and NOW are quite insubstantial. We preach **spiritual equality** not material equality. Men and women will <u>never</u> be materially equal. Srila Prabhupada made that point again and again in his preaching. Jivas in women's bodies have an equal opportunity to become self-realized, but not an equal social opportunity. As a matter of fact, the varnasrama prescriptions in this regard afford them a <u>**better**</u> opportunity to become free of the foolish conception that they are women and become truly liberated from the constrictions and restrictions of the illusory energy, because the duties prescribed for them take their womanly nature into full consideration. Women are as conditioned by their bodies nowadays (perhaps more so!) as in the past. The injunctions for women are all meant to keep sanity and ensure smooth social interaction and spiritual development.

Innovative preaching has to have its roots in guru, sadhu and shastra. One innovates from within that framework, otherwise it is deviation from the sampradaya.

So far as the arguments about sewn cloth, riding in cars,

crossing the ocean, etc. these are extremely superficial aspects that cannot be compared to the havoc created in tampering with foundational social and ecclesiastical aspects of varnasrama like women taking on the duties & roles of men. Such details as you mention have little to do with spiritual advancement, social organization or preaching.

The next part of your letter is an elaborate defense of making adjustments according to time, place and circumstances. Again you appear to miss the point. It is one thing to adjust details connected with clothing, mode of travel, etc. but quite another to alter the whole role of a class of people. Rupa Gosvami has stated in this connection:

sruti -smrti-puranadi-
pancaratra-vidhim vina
aikantika harer bhaktir
utpatayaiva kalpate

"If someone wants to pose himself as a great devotee without following the authorities of the revealed scriptures, then his activities will never help him to make progress in devotional service. Instead, he will simply create disturbances for the sincere students of devotional service." (**Brahma-yamala** - **Nectar of Devotion**)

Why do you ignore all of Srila Prabhupada's statements in relation to the institution of sannyasa for women in which he is clearly and repeatedly against it, citing the authority of the parampara and the Vedic literature. The attempt to defend the practice is flying in the face of our acaryas. I am very surprised that you cannot see the danger in this. I again refer you to just **one** of Srila Prabhupada's warnings: "A female is never awarded the order of sannyasam. Because a female is never considered independent and sannyasam was never awarded to any female in the past by the great Acharyas like Samkara, Ramanuja, etc. The female Sannyasins are to be immediately understood as pretenders or prostitutes. In India they have organized so many organisations where specially young females are maintained to attract rich women-hunters who pretend to pose as righteous in the society. This is the age of Kali which plunders away sense of the human being and it is only the Divine Grace of Lord Chaitanya Who can protect us from all these dangerous pitfalls." (Letter to Brahmananda 67-3-5)

The next part of your letter I found the most depressing: the standard accusation of ENVY. As if every time anyone **dares** to disagree he must be considered envious. So many of our acarya God-brothers and their followers have previously tried to sledge-hammer us to death with that one, yet many of them have now left aside devotional life for pursuits other than Krsna consciousness. Anyway I certainly agree that if anyone is disagreeing due to evil motives, he is certainly doomed. But perhaps you should try to apply your own statement to yourself as well as to me: "To start off with a close-minded or critical attitude...may be dangerously offensive; moreover, Krishna does not grant spiritual intelligence to an offender, but rewards his desires so that he may understand everything in precisely the light that he wishes, and thus his offences increase."

After all, you are accusing me (and others) personally, e.g. "envy is the natural comrade of the desire for sense gratification", "whose knowledge...(is) attained via rumors and hearsay, as circulated by karmi media and disaffected devotees whose own poor sadhana must bring their own vision and judgment into serious question", "close-minded or critical attitude", "dangerously offensive", "offender", "advocate jumping over", "trying to find fault, being unncessarily envious of his activities" etc. Yet, I am quoting from the scriptures in my article, so which one of us is really out of line in this instance? Perhaps it never occurred to you that someone might just **disagree** with someone else without necessarily being infected with all the malignant diseases you accuse him of. Of course I agree with you that one "should not consider himself a very advanced preacher" but does that mean he can never speak anything in disagreement without having to assume that he is in maya, full of envy, etc. and therefore must refrain? It appears from the tone of your letter that that is what everyone must do who does not agree with your conclusion.

When you speak of "the living guru" is that adjective inserted to clearly distinquish the "living" from the "dead"? Who is dead? "He reasons ill who thinks that Vaisnavas die, when Thou art living still in sound." And who has advocated jumping over? Another straw man argument. Perhaps you should consider that it is not a question of envy, it is a question of attempting to correct a deviation from the parampara with argumentation from the scriptures and the acaryas. That is the philosophical basis which you generally fail to address.

It is true that our ultimate guardian is Krsna, but in the interim before we are fully liberated, self-realized souls, we are meant to follow the injunctions of the scriptures in regards to our designated roles. Even after liberation many great acaryas and even Krsna and Lord Caitanya set an example by executing their roles within varnasrama. That acceptance of our designated roles is also taking shelter of our guardians Krsna and the acaryas. Our tradition is innovation within the parampara system, not deviation from it.

I was especially amazed that you could not understand the logic of the stereotype argument. It is very clear. On one hand, you use Srila Prabhupada's words about stereotyped attitudes toward preaching as justification for innovation, but then if Srila Prabhupada's words assert the unacceptability of women sannyasa and you use his words about stereotype in opposition, you are, in effect, saying that his ideas, which I am simply repeating are **sterotyped.** What could be clearer?? It dumbfounds me that such an intelligent devotee as you cannot understand this simple point.

A woman is not required to think of herself as a wife or widow. She should think of herself as a spirit soul as far as possible. But the system is to remain within particular roles so as not create a disturbance in human society. Sannyasa is also simply another designated role meant to lead jivas in male bodies toward liberation, and widowhood serves the same function for women.

You say "this is a non-Vedic clime, and Vedic traditions are not very appropriate" This is really a wild assertion. Srila Prabhupada dedicated his whole life to bringing this culture, Vedic civilization to the West. It is not Indian. It is the eternally auspicious original culture. Vedic culture is **real** culture, and **because** it does not widely exist, there are so many inappropriate circumstances. Vedic culture is the **most** appropriate and essential culture, and thousands of problems have been created by this "non-Vedic clime".We are meant to establish **that** original culture, **not** create a hodge-podge with decidedly inferior religions and cultures. Vedic culture is pure and perfect. It is perfect to maintain the teachings of the parampara in regard to it and faulty to concoct. If that is termed narrow-minded or without vision, then at least it is in harmony with Srila Prabhupada's teachings and methods of preaching which have admittedly been very successful all over the world.

One observation: Who cares if modern Westerners think that our great female ascetics do not appear to be liberated? They are foolish people who are in need of education. What do they know about liberation? They think that being able to kill unborn children in the womb is liberation. They do not even know how to go to the bathroom or keep clean. They do not know what they are or the purpose of life. They do not know what perfectional life or culture is. Educate them, do not accede to them. That is our tradition coming from Srila Prabhupada, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, etc.

Finally, in regard to its not being my business to correct another preacher: That is so if I am doing so only due to impure motivation, but if my motivation is to preach the instructions of my spiritual master, then why should it be checked? I appreciate your intelligence and sincerity, but I think you are mistaken in your ideas and I welcome you to substantially prove me wrong.I don't think you have done so.

KALINDI by Kurma Rupa dasa

The dawn reveals the sacred waters,
wide, glossy and still.
O Kalindi! Just to see you brings delight to my mind.
Memories spring up...of afternoon processions,
mrdangas and karatalas...the boys dancing in the sand,
paying impatient obeisances before bursting into the water,
filling the air with sparkling beads and laughter.
And I clearly remember...once further upstream,
after the rains, though you were wide and swift,
we entered your waters after having taken permission.
It was foolish to try to cross you during the flood.
But who could resist the soft white dunes,
smoothed by the wind, tufted with grass
hiding long-legged cranes, in the soft morning light?
Unlike Sanjaya, I am not a good swimmer,
but your fast water kept me afloat.
As he went ahead, and your bank drifted behind...I felt
alone... My heart's excitement transformed into fear,
as my shoulders and legs weakened in the deep water.
With lungs praying for air, and feet reaching down...
I felt I was falling...My mind started to race as I tried to
remember...it's auspicious to depart in the Yamuna.
Almost convinced...I closed my eyes...and while sinking,
You brought your soft sandy bottom under my feet,
so I could rest...and call to Sanjaya.
There is no cause for fear, for I'm like the child,
that's carefully tossed into the air,
and caught by the playful mother.
Once I knew you were teasing, I continued ahead...
reassured by your frequent touch to my feet.
Like that, you continued to tease, and even after
chasing those birds, and making them fly...
after rolling in the warm sand, You did it again while
returning. And I felt favored by you.
It was then I started understanding how you are our mother.
But I haven't forgot that sudden fear...
you dispelled by your touch.
And as I don't want to take you for granted, I promised
never to again request your mercy during the flood.

THE REIGN OF KING YUDHISTHIR by Nandakishore Das
(from first canto Srimad-Bhagawatam)

The clouds shower plentiful rains,
The earth bears sumptuous fruits and grains,
The cows with bulging milk bags stand
Or sprinkle milk over the pasturing land.
Auspiciousness reigns for many a year
During the reign of Maharaj Yudhisthir,
Years from now great sages will sing
How the earth was ruled by a saintly King.
Earth citizens live free of fear
During the reign of King Yudhisthir,
Suffering neither mental strain
Nor heat nor cold nor bodily pain.
For the King will not allow the least
Of violence done to man or beast,
Protect a man and kill a cow
King Yudhisthir would never allow.
All human needs like grains and milk,
Cotton, minerals, jewels and silk,
Nature provides abundantly
As Yudhisthir rules the land and the sea.
Now one may ask how can it be
That a King could reign so prosperously,
The answer is, his voice and sword
Are empowered by the All-Powerful Lord.
Lord Krsna the souls' dearmost Friend
To save the fallen souls descends
Now He has kindly taken birth
To relieve the burden from the earth.
And just as to water the roots of the trees
Satisfies all of the branches and leaves,
So the King's undaunted love for Him
Has turned this earth into Heaven...

ON HIS ORDER: THE ESSENTIAL FLAW

(A brief review of an article by H.H. Kirtanananda Swami)

by Rupa Vilas dasa

An essential flaw which surfaces in this presentation is the yawning gap between the ideal descriptions of guru and the reality of the spiritual positions of present-day acaryas. On one hand, when the author likens the guru to a postman: "...good postman, who delivers the mail intact, without any change or alteration", we can see a good number of devotees fitting the description. Or when the guru is described as simply a good devotee: "anyone who strictly follows the regulative principles and preaches Krsna consciousness without deviation" or as one who simply repeats the same message: "He must repeat exactly the message of the previous acarya...perfect because he was repeating perfectly" some devotees may come to mind. And no doubt they are gurus.

But then again the guru is defined as "the most confidential servant of God", "pure", who has "taken complete shelter of Krsna", who can "withstand every temptation of maya", who is "transparent", "the predominated moiety of the Son of the Chief of Braja", "fully surrendered" (all quotes from the author's article and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's article, which the author extensively quotes from) it then becomes less clear what sort of devotee is being described. It would appear that very few fit the bill if we take these attributes as the qualifications.

And then what if we take it a step further and define guru according to other statements from the sastra and Vaisnava acaryas. For example: "he is relishing the mellows of pure devotion within his mind, sometimes his hair stands on end, he feels quivering in his body, and tears flow from his eyes like waves...he is expert in assisting the gopis, who at different times make different tasteful arrangements for the perfection of Radha and Krsna's conjugal loving affairs within the groves of Vrndavana." Sri Sri Gurv-astaka)

"The guru must be situated on the topmost platform of devotional service. There are 3 classes of devotees, and the guru must be accepted from the topmost class...When one has attained the topmost position of maha-bhagavata, he is to be accepted as a guru and worshiped exactly like Hari, the Personality of Godhead. Only such a person is eligible to occupy the post of a guru." (CC)

"The guru must be situated on the topmost platform of devotional service.There are three classes of devotees, and the guru must be accepted from the topmost class.The first class devotee is the spiritual master for all kinds of people"(CC)

"Unless one can find a person transcendental to the four basic defects, one should not accept advice and become a victim of the material condition." (S.B.V.2 p. 60)

"One must be conversant in all systems of philosophy to sit on the vyasasana." (S.B.I.1 p.60)

"The spiritual master is always thinking of the pastimes of Krsna with His consort Srimati Radharani and the gopis. Sometimes he is thinking about Krsna's pastimes with the cowherd boys. This means that he is always thinking of Krsna engaged in some kind of pastime. prati-ksanasvadana-lolupasya. Prati-ksana means he is thinking that way twenty-four hours a day. That is Krsna consciousness." (The Qualifications of the Spiritual Master from BTG Vol. 13, issue 1-2, by His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada)

radha-sammukta-samsaktim
sakhi-sanga-nivasinim
tvam ahama satatam vande
madhavasraya-vigraham

"O spiritual master, I continually ofer my obeisances to you, who are always in the presence of Srimati Radharani and very much devoted to Her. You always reside in the association of Her confidantes, the gopis, and you are the abode of loving devotion to Krsna." (Arcana Paddhati p.54)

Even if one were to quote from the same essay by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura as the author has, we will find some very exalted definitions of guru not mentioned in the author's descriptions of Shri Guru.

"He is the true and perfect guide to show us the transcendental track to approach the Eternal Full-knowledge and Incessant Bliss." (p.255)

"The messenger is the pioneer leader of Love, the courier of the All-love, the establisher of all relations of Divine Love..." (This would mean situated in love of God and able to connect us in that love.) (p. 256)

"The best of devotees, the maha-bhagavata, is possessed of exclusive reliance on Krishna. Being devoid of any other consciousness excepting that of Krishna the heart of such a person is free from any discordant mood leading to slander or malice against any person." (p. 265)

Also from the same essay, "guileless servant" and "delivered from the evil desire of seeking advantages and honours from others."

Although the author speaks quite ideally from a certain scriptural angle about the nature of the guru - it would seem that <u>all</u> gurus cannot be seen as qualified according to the standard of a wide range of statements from the scriptures describing the guru. A pure devotee, a paramahamsa like Srila Prabhupada may be seen in all of the scriptural quotations as the bona fide guru, but others cannot.

It is therefore quite clear (and this can certainly be sustained from the sastra) that gurus may be of different standards: lst, 2nd and 3rd class. If one has a $l00 bill - he also has $25 and $10. One may see all the characteristics described in sastra in an uttama devotee, but how can we expect to see all this in a madhyama or kanistha devotee? Kanistha means defective (actually he can scarcely be considered a guru) - he has not come even to the anartha-nivrtti platform - so how can he be pure, perfect, transparent, associated with the gopis, exhibiting ecstatic symptoms, etc.? Even if one has achieved the higher stages of madhyama-adhikari (nistha, ruci, asakti) he is still to be known as fallible. Consider the example of Bharata Maharaja, who fell from the beginning stages of bhava.

Only when the devotee reaches the platform of bhava and prema is one considered a topmost devotee. "At this stage the devotee is on the platform of uttama-adhikari, perfect devotion. Such a devotee has no agitation from material affections and is interested only in the service of Radha and Krsna." NOD p. 131)

Thus, it can be understood, that to attempt to merge all of the gurus together, as though there was only one standard and all of them were either on it and gurus, or not on it and not gurus, is bad reasoning tinged with impersonalism. There are gradations, there is variegatedness. Dhruva Maharaja's mother was described as a siksa-guru or his patha-pradarsaka-guru ("the guru, or the spiritual master who shows the way") And Prabhupada further comments that "This incident proves that the siksa or diksa guru who has a disciple who strongly executes devotional service like Dhruva Maharaja can be carried by the disciple even though the instructor is not as advanced." This indicates clearly that there are different standards of advancement among gurus, that they are not all one, although their purpose may be, and according to NOI they are not all uttama-adhikaris. Here Dhruva Maharaja's mother is even referred to as jananim - mother, and dina - poor. Prabhupada also comments that "there was no question of carrying Narada Muni to Vaikunthaloka". So clearly a distinction is made here between the uttama-adhikari Shri Guru, Narada Muni, and the "poor mother" patha-pradarsaka-guru, Suniti. However, both were considered to be exalted by Dhruva Maharaja, and he expressed his obligation to his mother by praying for her deliverance, and his prayer was answered.

So certainly there is no disgrace if one is presently not qualified to the highest degree. Gurus are all exalted and have the same purpose, but they may not have equal realization or equal delivering power. Nevertheless, one can still help others and he can also be delivered. But it is wrong to pretentiously claim all the attributes of the most exalted souls or to indicate that there is no difference between kanistha and madhyama devotees and nitya-siddhas - "Guru is one." Guru may be one in function but quite different in realization and purity. Without humbly admitting the differences, this philosophy becomes a kind of kaitava dharma. Whenever oneness is stressed over difference, that is not our philosophy and it is cheating.

The point really is that imitation of an uttama-adhikari or artificially blurring spiritual distinctions is completely unnecessary, even offensive. It is also dangerous, as Srila Prabhupada states in the Nectar of Instruction, "...one should not imitate the behavior of an advanced devotee or maha-bhagavata without being self-realized, for by such imitation one will eventually be degraded." (p. 58) There is room for all kinds of gurus. All are worshipable and saintly, but the uttama-adhikari guru is to be afforded a special distinction due to superior spiritual understanding and his power to deliver the fallen conditioned souls, therefore the shastras especially honor and declare the glories of such spiritual masters who always regard themselves as servants of Krsna's servants and never the master of anyone. Such a mahatma even sees his disciples as his prabhus. Srila Prabhupada, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura and Gaura Kishor dasa Babaji Maharaja all exhibited this sentiment, and from this sincere emotion, devoid of all arrogance and false prestige their actual position is clear.

MEMBERSHIP RULES FOR NEW JAYAPUR

Members must attend the morning program daily: mangala arati, tulasi puja, class, guru puja. Rounds should then be chanted before breakfast. Poor attendance will not be overlooked, but discussed at community meetings. Brahmanas are to promote and preach about the morning program.

Members must strictly follow the four regulative principles: No intoxication, no illicit sex, no gambling and no eating meat, fish, eggs or products thereof.

Members must chant daily 16 rounds japa on beads.

Members must conduct themselves properly according to Vaisnava etiquette codes and civil laws and codes.

All members must give at least three hours in service to the community project each week. Naturally, the more the better.

Members must adhere to a conservative dress code and appearance; dhotis and saris are the standard; no pants, open blouses for women etc, and short hair for men.

Members must not send their children (under 18) to any non-Vaisnava schools, but may teach them at home, in the gurukulas or by mail correspondence course. Karmi schools are unacceptable.

Members must not eat at karmi restaurants and agree to offer to Krishna by proper method whatever they eat. Bhoga becomes prasadam only after being properly offered to Krishna.

Each resident family is expected to prepare something for community Sunday feasts or special festivals and take a share of the morning Deity worship responsibilities.

There must be no television watching except for Krishna conscious videos, news or educational programs, and if a member is found to be doing otherwise, he agrees to dispose of his TV set at once. TV is an insidious means by which the demoniac civilization contaminates the consciousness.

Members must not read karmi fiction, listen to karmi radio or karmi opera, or classical, jazz, rock or any karmi music.

Members agree to donate as a preaching tax 25 % of their net income to a central community treasury (brahmanas exempted).

SHORT NOTES by Nityananda das

I wrote some things about the bad effects of sending our devotee children to karmi schools, and then I found this amazing quote from Martin Luther King:

"I am afraid that schools will prove to be wide gates to hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not constantly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt."

Bhakta Sergei, a Russian devotee in Boston, called recently to request a few of the special Russian devotee issue of BTG. He was going to try to meet with Andrei Sakharov that week, who had finally been allowed to come to the USA for special medical treatment. I don't know what was the outcome, but soon thereafter Bhakta Sergei sent a $50 donation.

I was in Los Angeles in November and we bumped into Michael Landon in a parking lot. I had a gardenia flower from Prabhupada's lotus feet in the temple, and we presented it to Mr. Landon. He smelled it deeply and made instant contact with the mercy of the Lord. Ajnata sukriti.

Due to past fumbles and fiascos, ISKCON has suffered greatly. Many devotees got hurt and confused, alienated. They lost their place in the house the whole world can live in. An effort must be made to bring them back. Maybe the house needs to be expanded, or the doors opened wider. Any devotee should feel welcome and enthused to participate in and support some ISKCON programs. The GBC should make this a priority: to patch up family relations by finding out all the forgotten prabhus and befriending them, offering their humble services and preaching simple Krishna consciousness.

Rupanuga Prabhu has a program called Perfection at Home. There was an article in BTG years ago about it. The idea is that if someone is not near a temple (or uncomfortable going to it much) they can make their own home a temple and practice KC at home. We have a booklet called KC at Home that is free upon request; call 1 800 553 8298.

In renaissance Italy, wealthy merchants patronized now-famous artists and philosophers. Similarly, wealthy devotees should support bonafide brahmanas so they can do their spiritual work peacefully without worries. In New Jaipur we are trying to pull together such a brahmana community. Writing and publishing transcendental literature, teaching gurukula and conducting deity worship. Rupa Vilas is here, Karnamrita on the way, Padmapani, Nrsimha and Yasodanandana were invited. We are providing house, stipend, life estate and encouragement. It is like a transcendental scholarship program.If the brahmanas are neglected, then where is the head of society? Society, or the government ultimately, must provide for the saintly class who are productively engaged.

Some devotees thought it was strange how New Jaipur and myself settled with the Georges. But Amarendra himself gave the green light. The Mississippi legal front was entirely separate and different from the main front in California. We had to defend ourselves separately, and we succeeded in what we feel was a victory. If the main case is ultimately lost after all appeals, we in Miss. are bound by the settlement agreement to pay large sums to the Georges. However, our potential losses are manageable and limited, so our survival is guaranteed. Did you know that the George case could have been settled in 1980 for about $50,000 ? The GBC vetoed it. But hindsight is 20-20; why cry over spilt milk?

New additions to New Jaipur are Nanda Kishore and Jahnava Prabhus, with their two daughters and a tractor trailer truck full of drama paraphernalia. Also Pundarik (ala Guru Kripa's party) and Ramaniya Prabhus with daughter Gauralila are set up on the land and working into agriculture. Rsi Kumar Prabhu is taking charge of the fields and animal program. Sucharya dasi and daughter Madireksana are arriving shortly. Jnanagamya and a local carpenter are busy building houses for the surge of immigrants we expect next year.

Jnanagamya Prabhu completed the altar and Deity room in the Cedars mansion, into which the temple and deities moved at the end of October. This establishes the community's central temple; everyone takes part in the deity worship program, which is basic but expanding. Thirteen foot ceilings, Bohemian antique crystal chandeliers and a 25' by 75' kirtan hall are the features. The large rear section of the Cedars houses the New Jaipur Gurukula, called Vedic Village School. Chandrika took some older girls to India for the Kartika festival and a thorough pilgrimage tour. We are needing more teachers, and the pay and benefits are good!

MILKING DEVONS: THE BEST COW FOR DEVOTEES !

On the way from Connecticut are six young Milking Devons, a breed almost extinct in North America. I have been closely involved with cows since 1974, managing a herd of 120 in New Talavan. Several basic problems were constantly plaguing us and Milking Devons solve them all in a way I never dreamt possible. So we have embarked on a pioneering attempt to develop a line of milk cows and oxen suitable for Vedic Villages and individual devotee families.

One problem was feed for the cows. Modern, highly in-bred (hybrid) animals are not efficient eaters. They require very high quality feed that can only be produced effectively with hard labor, endless farm machinery and chemical fertilizers. Milking Devons were the predominant breed used by the pioneers who settled America from the 1600's through the early 1900's. Devons thrive on ordinary pasture, even without supplementary grain. Native grasses are adequate for maintaining and raising strong, healthy Devons. Brown Swiss, Jerseys etc will starve without high protein forage &grains.

Another problem was health. Jerseys typically got edema and milk fever when freshening. Then there was bad feet, worms, infections, mastitis and you name it. Vet bills were more than the value of the milk produced. However, Milking Devons are very healthy, genetically. Any climate will do. They are hardy, resistant, thrifty, and generally robust.

Their milk is as rich in butterfat as Jerseys: 5%. They give about 8-10,000 lbs per lactation, which is half of some other breeds, but you get it with far less than half the effort or expense. Devonshire county in England is famous for Devon cow milk products. Devons milk by hand easy, too.

Devons are one of the most intelligent and docile of bovines. This is why they make the best oxen. In New England, Devons always win the ox contests at fairs. They work as fast as a horse, walking at up to 6 mph! That means they can use horse drawn machinery, which is readily available. Devon oxen learn quick, work hard, are extremely reliable, and although smaller (medium size) they make up for it by their other superior qualities.

Previously, it was almost impossible to have a Vedic cow protection program with Jerseys, Guernseys etc. The effort expended in dealing with basic problems seriously reduced the PRACTICALITY of having cows at all. But Milking Devons seem to be the answer to our past frustrations. They are the ideal Vedic cow or ox, best for devotees in all respects.

Milking Devons are deep red, with cream colored ears, tails and udders. Beautiful. They can really attract attention, which we will use in our preaching. The American pioneer's cow is resurrected from history by the Hare Krishnas!

....Nityananda das

GLOUCESTER CULTURAL MUSEUM UPDATE by Nityananda das

August 18, 1988: Old South Vedic Society purchases the Gloucester mansion and six acre estate in Natchez, Miss. The Vedic Cultural Museum is moved from Cedars Mansion to the Gloucester Mansion in September, adding a full collection of priceless antiques and exhibits. One thousand tourists visit Gloucester in two months, and now the museum is closed during the three month winter for repairs and modifications.

US Congress has approved plans and funds for establishing a National Historic Park in Natchez. Tourists should grow from 300,000 a year to 1,000,000 a year. We are very excited about our unique preaching program at Gloucester! Everyone that comes is very satisfied and intrigued by the antiques, American and southern history and the displays on Vedic culture, including Srila Prabhupada in His royal suite. It's amazing how easily ordinary Americans become favorable to Krishna consciousness when presented thru a suitable medium.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE FIRST KNOWN PRINTING OF A HAND WRITTEN MANUSCRIPT BY SRILA PRABHUPADA FROM THE 1940's OR 1950's, THE ORIGINALS OF WHICH ARE IN THE NEW JAIPUR ARCHIVES.

A SPIRITUAL STUDY

THE BLACK MARKETEERS FROM THE BHAGWAT GEETA POINT OF VIEW.

The Black-marketeers who have recently been raided in large scale by Police of Bihar are almost in all cases very rich merchants, millionairs, landholders etc. It would not have been possible for them to hoard such huge quantity of cloth and food grain if they would not have possessed wealth enough to do the mischief. These people were not needy men but they amassed money and hoarded commodities out of a passion for accumulating wealth not only for their personal enjoyment but also for the enjoyment of their future generations. Such diseased persons, who don't know the highest value of human life, but simply go on amassing money unnecessarily and immoraly simply for the sake of sense-gratification, are described in the Bhagwat Geeta (Chap. 16 Stanzas 6-20) as Ashuras or the demons or the opposite number of the gods. The Ashura is generally faithless and unbeliever in the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is led to think like that otherwise he cannot act so irresponsibily. His main principle of life is to satisfy the material senses coupled with undue pride and variety of possessing more. It is unknown to him that mind is the controlling agent of the material senses. Above mind there is intelligence and above intelligence there is the living spirit known as the soul. He amasses money for enjoying it in the estimation of sense gratification but not for the benefit of the soul till the end of the creation and makes arrangement by legalised document how his future generation who may come into his home to enjoy the amassed wealth. His only business is to see how much bank balance was there yesterday and how it has increased today. He thinks of killing one every to-day and others tomorrow and tries to pose himself as one of different almight Gods having attained to all perfections of life through the medium of money. These Ashuras are bound up by the laws of Nature which they do not know and simply for the sake of sense-enjoyment which is always transient and berieving, they amass money by all immoral means influenced by a disposition of passion anger and lust. It is stated in the Bhagwat Geeta that such Ashuras who are the lowest of the human being, because they are not only mean but envious to other fellow beings, are forced to take their birth in the lower grades of life after life till they are completely forgetful of the very existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This forgetfulness of the relationship of Godhead is the standard life of the animals and that is the highest punishment that can be inflicted on a living being.

So these Ashuras, although aparently they seem to be fortunate enough by possession of much material wealth are actually most unfortunate creatures. Wealth is considered to be 'Lakshmi' or the internal energy of Godhead. 'Lakshmi' is the eternal consort of 'Narayana' the Personality of Godhead. Therefore wherever there is Narayana there is surely His eternal consort 'Lakshmi.' But where there is no Narayana the apparent existence of Lakshmi is the false representation of her--just like Sita (who is Lakshmi herself) was falsely in possession of Ravana. Ravana who is an ideal Ashura wanted to possess Sita by cheating Rama. The result was that Ravana was vanquished with all his paraphernalia. The ultimate destiny of the Ashuras are just like the Ravana.

The decendents of Ravana in the present age may take lessons from the fate of their celebrated forefather that they must not try to possess wealth or Lakshmi simply by cheating Her Lord the Narayana or the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If they want to have mercy from Lakshmi and bestowed with her favours, they must keep in contact with Narayana the Lord of the Universe. We shall discuss in a separate article how such contact with Narayana can be made.

Lakshmi the eternal consort of Narayana is always engaged in the service of Narayana. She cannot be detached from Her Lord's service and if the Ashuras like their forefather Ravana try to snatch Lakshmi from the service of Narayana, surely the Ashuras shall meet with the same fate as Ravana met with.

So forgetfulness of Narayana the Godhead and possession of wealth or Lakshmi goes ill together. The Ashura however imagines that Lakshmi being in his possession the Lord of Lakshmi Narayana has become poverty-stricken. He does not know that neither Lakshmi can be dispossed of Narayana nor the latter can be made poverty stricken. Both such conceptions are manufactured in the rabid (?) brain of the Ashura.

Narayana is the singular origin of all Naras. Nara means living entity and ayana means the repose. In the Bhagwat Geeta we can get this information that all living entities, irrespective of their source of birth or species, are all born of the Almightly Father Sree Krishna who is non-different from Narayana. He is the begetting Father and the Material Nature is the maternal source of their birth. The Supreme Godhead being the Father of all living being, every one has got birth right share in the property of Godhead according to His plan. Such plan is not a direct design of the Almighty Father but it is influenced by the living entities according to their mode of nature which they contact in the relative world. The Ashura does not know this plan of God nor they believe in it.

The Godhead as Father of all living entities is equal to everyone. He does not design anyone's activity subjectively or objectively neither does He create anyone's factual results. The actions and their results are all outcome of the mode of nature of a particular living entity as it has embibed by its association with the different modes of nature. That is the instruction we get from Bhagwat Geeta.

The Black-marketeers are therefore not influenced by any design of Godhead but they have become so by dint of their association with the modes of passion and ignorance. Unrestricted hankering after accumulating wealth is the result of the mode of passion for unlawful enjoyment and madness after this business if the result of the mode of ignorance. They are due to lack of the cultivating the mode of goodness which alone can endow them with a sense of proper vision and knowledge of life.

The state cannot check or banish the black-marketing process simply by police action, personal appeals or by legislative conventions. The modes of ignorance and passion have pervaded the whole atmosphere. The mode of goodness has altogether been banished from the religio-social life of the present generations. Mahatma Gandhi was an example as to how one can develop the mode of goodness. It is not necessary or expected that everyone of the members of general public will be able to develope this mode of goodness. But if there are only fifty heads all over the world who might have embibed and practiced in the mode of goodness, the whole atmosphere of the world will be changed at once. One moon is sufficient to illuminate the whole farmament but millions of stars cannot even remove the darkness of night.

In order to save the world from a greater catastrophy which seems to be impervading, some of the big responsible heads of every state of the world must now combine to implement in their character the mode of goodness. Where they are so, general public will try to follow their footprints if the numbers themselves cannot imbibe such nature.

It is necessary therefore that an association of really sincere gentlemen who may be called the devotees or so, should now be formed with a view to end the animal type of civilization. The civilization which has no other end in mind than to solve the necessities of the body and mind only is surely doomed to meet such calamities as are daily happening in the present age. The ignorant population whose basic principle of life is animality only cannot but cut one another's flesh by such novel methods as black-marketting or similar such sinister habits.

There is clear cut ways and means as to how one can achieve the quality of Goodness, stated in the Bhagwat Geeta. One has to imbibe the characteristic goodness of habits in respect of bodily and mental activities. Controling the movements of speech, mind, belly, generating organ, anger, and tongue and for any sincere gentleman the whole course of achieving success, in the above mentioned endeavors--does not take a period more than a year only. Above all controlling the habits of the tongue is the most important item. And one who has control over the tongue has control over all other senses. The socio-political leaders must be those who have passed the course of above controlling system. Mahatma Gandhi was in recent days the only saintly stateman, although with many imperfections, whose habits with reference to the above are very excellent. He took about 30 to 40 years to become a Mahatma because he did not follow any standard process of attaining such success as was prescribed by authority. According to Bhagwat Geeta the Mahatmas are all imbibed with the Godly qualities and as such the Mahatmas are invariably devotees of the Personality of Godhead avowedly as such Mahatmas do know it perfectly well that the Personality of Godhead Sree Krishna is the Primeval Cause of everything.

So to become a Mahatma is to learn the art of understanding the plan of Godhead as Mahatma Gandhi tried to know it in the different experiments of his life. He realised and declared it publicly that not a blade of grass moves without the will of Godhead. This realisation is different from the pretention of doing everything under the Will of God as many people do. That realisation is achieved in a transcendental plane distinguished from any kind of mundane imagination. It is realised under transcendental method by progressive and submissive aural reception of the messages from the Personality of Godhead Sree Krishna.

We have to stick particularly on the point of submissive aural reception of the message only and nothing more. No body has to change anything of his present status quo neither anybody has to give up the mode of his living. Everything has to be settled and modified by the process of aural reception only by a sincere heart. A sincere heart who does not unnecessarily disturb the process of aural reception is sure to attain success.

The leaders of men in the field of Politics, social activities, economics, religiosity and specially those who are on the top of the Government of a state must try to become first a Mahatma as Mahatma Gandhi was before they may appear on the public stage for playing their respective parts. As we have already mentioned only a few Mahatmas can solve very easily all the disturbing problems of present day society while a galaxy of Duratmas i.e. those who are away from the mode of goodness can do nothing to solve such problems. Everyone irrespective of his caste, creed and colour can become a Mahatma if he simply desires to be so. Those who therefore really intends to do something good for the humanity not by profession but by action only must become a Mahatmas simply by assimilating the teachings of Bhagwat Geeta.

(note on rear of manuscript reads:
The Process of Stamping Out Black Market)

HOME SCHOOL-SMALL GURUKULA CURRICULUM GUIDE

New Jaipur Gurukula has completed its CURRICULUM GUIDE and anyone interested may obtain a copy. We also are offering all the texts for sale. We hope this service will make it much easier for devotees to teach their children at home or get together with others and start small 2 to 5 family school programs. But karmi schools are out of the question!

I have seven children, none of whom I ever sent away to gurukula or to karmi schools. And if you ever saw them, you would see how nice they are for it. From age 5 to 17, they are all solid devotees and uncontaminated by modern society.

We will do whatever we can to assist devotees keep their children out of what Prabhupada called the SLAUGHTERHOUSE. I have managed to educate 7 children at home, and I will try to share my experience and convictions with those who want to protect their children from material society.

.....Nityananda das

NATCHEZ DEVOTEES MEET RUSSIANS by Jnanagamya dasa

The Peace Cruise

For the past 25 years 50 Americans have been traveling to Russia each summer to join 100 Russians in a peace cruise down the Volga River. Last year the Americans reciprocated by inviting 50 Russians to join 100 Americans on a similar cruise down the mighty Mississippi River. This year when the famous paddlewheeler "Delta Queen" docked at Natchez on its way from St. Louis to New Orleans, ISKCON devotees were there to greet the participants of the cruise. Nanda Kisora, Rupa Vilasa, Kamarikanta dasi, my wife Mahamaya dasi and son Rasacarya and I, all attended the Key to the City welcoming ceremonies held at a Natchez Indian historic site.

The Books

After addresses from Mayor David Armstrong, State Representative Barney Schoby and local peace activitists, we greeted the Russian visitors during a break by offering them free books-**KRSNA BOOK** and **Bhagavad Gita**-in Russian. As soon as the Russians saw the books, the books became the cynosure of all attraction, and they were distributed in minutes. Their enthusiasm was tremendous. In fact, we didn't have enough to go around and some of the Russians were pleading with us for more or asking their friends to give them one of their books. In return, they offered us postcards of Russia, and a large medal medallion was offered to Rasacarya. One stout gentleman was waving from the stage and, catching our attention, offered his pranams. It turned out to be Gorgy Grechko, a popular Russian cosmonaut, who asked that a book be reserved for him. We found a last copy of the **Krsna** book and set it aside. We then met Archbishop Agafangel of the Russian Orthodox Church and made a presentation of literature to him as well. The famous Russian artist, Zurab Tsereteli was gliding about snapping pictures of the devotees and other interesting guests for future paintings and sculptures. We soon discovered by speaking to the interpreters that each of these visitors had been carefully selected and that each was a highly successful and well-educated person. Cameras were snapping and flashing everywhere - the press's, the Russians', the Americans', the devotees', as we mingled with the crowd. It was undeniable that the devotees were the most unusual participants, and the Russians were fascinated and full of questions.

The Background

The Russian books had been arranged by Nityananda Prabhu and were his donation to our visitors. Actually, he and family were responsible for doing the years of groundwork in Natchez that led to our being asked to speak at the "Prayers for Peace" ceremonies that were a part of the welcoming program. The invitation to attend and speak at the ceremonies was extended to the devotees by Kathy Moody, a friend of the devotees and a member of one of the old, prominent Natchez families. Kathy and her mother, Mrs. Maggie Burkley, have entertained the devotees in their homes and taken them on tours of the antebellum homes in the area. In large measure the opportunity to meet with and speak to the Peace Cruise participants was due to their gracious arrangement.

The Media's Main Question

The American reporters seemed happy to see us there (we added color) and were curious. Several interviews were held with us including a TV interview. The main question was, "What are you doing here, welcoming Russians?" We told them we had been invited to take part in the "Prayers for Peace" ceremonies and that we were also taking the opportunity to speak with the Russian visitors of our desire to see Soviet devotees freed from labor and prison camps.

The Press Conference

A press conference ensued and the reporters quickly ran out of questions. "No more questions? You're missing a great opportunity," I heard the M.C. say to a group of them. Most of the reporters had followed the cruise down the river and were fairly clear on the standard refrains. But now I felt that I was indeed missing a great opportunity. I was about to settle into my "don't preach--it might offend someone" mode when I remembered the sad plight of our God-brothers and God-sisters in Russian prisons. What was Prabhupada's desire for me now? I found myself pushed in this way up to the M.C., who said, "I'm sorry. The conference is for members of the working professional press."

I replied, "I'm with the ISKCON Press and the **Vedic Village Review**. I am a volunteer, not a professional." In front of all the recently repressed Russians, what could he do? I reached for the microphone. He gave in. I identified myself and asked, "Why are Soviet devotees of Krsna still being held in labor camps and prisons in Russia?"

The atmosphere became more electrified. There was a short flurry on stage and then the answer came from Alexander Ivanko, a reporter from the **Izvestia**, the second largest newspaper in Russia. Having spent part of his youth living in the United States while his parents worked at the United Nations, Mr. Ivanko responded in perfect English, "The policy of `glastnost' is the reversal of these previous policies. I hope the devotees will be freed very soon, even while this Peace Cruise is going on," he said. "They should not be held. They have done nothing wrong."

I was elated to hear this sympathetic statement.

The Cosmonaut and Fellow Travelers

Later, I found out that Rupa Vilasa had met the Cosmonaut Gorgy Grechko (the one who had waved from the stage) and after some lively conversation about the philosophy of Krsna consciousness, with which he was unfamiliar, offered to see what he could do to help the imprisoned devotees. But he needed a list of names. We didn't have one handy. The most recent **Back to Godhead** had it, but we were unequipped! Perhaps we could reach him later.

After the press conference I met a reporter from the **Literary Gazette**, Anna Martynova, a high-spirited lady who seemed anxious that the devotees meet her in Moscow. She asked that they contact her at the offices of her paper. Another very nice lady, Ludmila Saraskina, was very excited to see us and gave us her home address. Her husband was a professor of Indian culture in Moscow and had spent much time in Calcutta. She lived near Arbat Street, where the devotees chant, and had seen them there.

Prayers for Peace

Five speakers were scheduled to offer prayers for peace: a Catholic priest, a Jewish representative, a Protestant, Archbishop Agafangel, a cruise participant, and Rupa Vilasa for the Hare Krsna Movement. By Krsna's arrangement the Hare Krsna representative spoke first. The talk had to go through a translator, and was centered around Prabhupada's **Peace Formula**. When the Hare Krsna mantra was vibrated by Rupa Vilasa, the translator, a young lady, very enthusiastically repeated it, and the crowd began to applaud! There were smiles all around - a high moment! Some of the speakers looked a bit miffed, but the Russians seemed to like Srila Prabhupada's message that there is no question of peace without God consciousness.

The Homework: Networking for Krsna

All in all we met so many nice Russian people -- important people also--as well as many friendly Americans, both cruise members and local people, to whom we gave the special Russian BTG issue. It seemed like a successful engagement but not quite complete. That night I read a brochure about the Peace Cruise and discovered that the boat was docking in New Orleans the next day. There might be a good chance of getting the list of the devotees still captive in Russia to the cosmonaut. And how nice it would be for the riverboat to be met again by devotees in yet another city.

I finally managed to get hold of the devotees in New Orleans and I explained the situation to Ranganatha, gave him the devotees' names and their locations in the Soviet prison system and also some Russian reporters' names so that they might help if Mr. Grechko was not on hand. But he had to hurry down to the river before they left.

Mission Accomplished

Successfully, Ranganath delivered the list to Mr Ivanko who then gave it to cosmonaut Grechko. Altogether, our contact with the Russians had proved very productive.

PRAYERS FOR PEACE by Rupa Vilas das

We welcome the delegation from Russia, along with all the honored dignitaries and guests. The theme of this morning's program is Prayers for Peace. We have here with us a wide range of speakers representing the major religious traditions of the world. Our Hare Krsna Movement represents the ancient Vedic tradition of India. 5,000 years ago the **Bhagavad-gita**, Song of God, was recorded in its literary form, and the tradition is older still. Actually, it is eternal.

This tradition is called **sanatana-dharma** or **varnasrama-dharma**. **Dharma** roughly translates as religion or duty. **Sanatana** means eternal. **Sanatana-dharma** refers to that path which is the eternal constitutional duty of the soul. And what is that duty -to love, serve and glorify the Lord. This is actually the eternal occupational duty of the human being and has nothing to do with designations like Hindu, Muslim, Christian, etc. That process which helps one to practically execute his eternal occupational duty of loving and serving God is **sanatana-dharma** Our roots go back millions of years far beyond even recorded history and the principles are universal and non-sectarian.

Today everyone wants peace. But practically no one has a solid idea of how to achieve it. Our spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder of the International Society for Krsna Consciousness, used to point out that we have created the United Nations, and yet the number of flags is steadily increasing. That means that there is no unity and no peace. No one is satisfied. Wars are erupting and bloody battles are being fought everywhere. The world is beset with problems, and, according to the great sages of India, the main problem is the false notion of proprietorship, which stems from the bodily concept of life. This means that one mistakenly identifies himself with this temporary material body instead of his eternal spiritual soul. The real proprietor is God. We own nothing, including these temporary bodies housing the immortal souls, and yet on the basis of a false sense of proprietorship we are claiming God's property as our own and thus wars are being continually fought all over the world.

However, the actual formula for peace is spiritual. No materialistic formula will produce peace, because the actual nature of this world is miserable and temporary. In the fourth chapter of the **Bhagavad-gita** there is a nice verse spoken by Lord Krsna: bhoktaram yajna-tapasam
sarva-loka-mahesvaram
suhrdam sarva-bhutanam
jnatva mam santimrcchati

I have just cited the ancient Sanskrit verse from the **Bhagavad-gita**. The meaning is "A person in full consciousness of Me, knowing Me to be the ultimate beneficiary of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all planets, and the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, attains peace from the pangs of material miseries."

Our spiritual master called this verse the peace formula and 20 years ago he wrote a short tract explaining this formula which I would like to read before you today.

"The great mistake of modern civilization is to encroach upon others' property as though it were one's own and to thereby create an unnecessary disturbance of the laws of nature. These laws are very strong. No living entity can violate them. Only one who is Krsna conscious can easily overcome the stringency of the laws of nature and thus become happy and peaceful in the world.

"As a state is protected by the department of law and order, so the state of Universe, of which this earth is only an insignificant fragment, is protected by the laws of nature. This material nature is one of the different potencies of God, who is the ultimate proprietor of everything that be. This earth is, therefore, the property of God, but we, the living entities, especially the so-called civilized human beings, are claiming God's property as our own, under both an individual and collective false conception. If you want peace, you have to remove this false conception from your mind and from the world. This false claim of proprietorship by the human race on earth is partly or wholly the cause of all disturbances of peace on earth.

"Foolish and so-called civilized men are claiming proprietary rights on the property of God because they have now become godless. You cannot be happy and peaceful in a godless society. In the **Bhagavad-gita** Lord Krsna says that He is the factual enjoyer of all activities of the living entities, that He is the Supreme Lord of all universes, and that He is the well-wishing friend of all beings. When the people of the world know this as the formula for peace, it is then and there that peace will prevail.

"Therefore if you want peace at all, you will have to change your consciousness into Krsna (God) consciousness, both individually and collectively, by the simple process of chanting the holy name of God. This is a standard and recognized process for achieving peace in the world. We therefore recommend that everyone become Krsna consious by chanting Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

"This is practical, simple and sublime. Four hundred and eighty years ago this formula was introduced in India by Lord Sri Caitanya, and now it is available in your country. Take to this simple process of chanting as above mentioned, realize your factual position by reading **Bhagavad-gita As It Is**, and reestablish your lost relationship with Krsna, God. Peace and prosperity will be the immediate worldwide result"

The chanting of the Lord's Names mentioned above is not only a tradition in India, but it found in almost every major religion of the world. Especially in the **Bible** which many of us are more familiar with, this is recommended, and nowhere more beautifully than in the Psalms of King David, which make four great assertions: [1] Since man exists only by the mercy of God, man's only recourse is to trust Him completely: "And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee." (**Psalms** 9,10) [2] The names of God have great potency, and it is the duty (dharma) of man to thank and praise Him: "Praise ye the Lord, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. Blessed by the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised." (113:1-3) [3] Man derives great joy in praising Him. "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing."(100:1-2) [4] All nations will eventually praise him and thus the chanting of the names of God will constitute the world religion: "All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy name." (86:9)

The peace formula is therefore simple. As a practical experiment sing the holy name of the Lord as one knows it in his locale throughout the day and night and see the difference, locally, nationally, internationally and universally.

Before I close, I would again like to offer a warm and special welcome to our visitors from Russia. They must be offered congratulations that they are all a part of the renaissance in human freedom which is presently sweeping the Soviet Union and giving hope to the people of the world. Our Hare Krsna Movement has recently won legal status in Russia and is presently recognized as a state religion in Moscow where a center has officially begun. For us this is a landmark event of tremendous historical significance, as up to now, due to misunderstanding of their purposes, followers of our religion there have been confined to labor camps, prisons, and psychiatric hospitals where they have undergone extreme hardship and suffering. Now there is hope for them and a number of them have been released. However, many still linger in labor camps.

I would like to forward a special plea to the Russian delegation and to the other Western members of the group here today who represent the desire of people all over the world for peace, to do what they can for the release of these imprisoned souls whose only offense was to try to propagate the Holy Name of the Lord. The Holy Name is the formula for universal peace. Please vibrate the holy name of the Lord and be happy. Hare Krishna! Thank you very much.

Letters to the Editor

From Amala Bhakta das, Los Angeles, Ca:

This is just to let you know that I enjoyed reading the article on Srila Sridhar Maharaja in the VEDIC RIVER journal No. 6, by Rupa Vilasa Prabhu. I liked it not only for the factual material he presented--most of which I already knew--but for the balanced tone with which he presented those facts. I found it completely disarming--neither condescending nor accusing. Such a genuine reflection and evaluation of the course they have pursued--in terms of whether they are truly filfilling the wishes of, and thereby giving pleasure to, Srila Prabhupada. Notwithstanding the article, the ultimate test of whether an individual wishes to recant his present position depends on how much false pride he has and how much false prestige he wishes to renounce. The more of this insideous weed he can renounce, the more he can once again be the recipient of the abundance of spiritual blessings from Srila Prabhupada and our disciplic succession acaryas. Please thank Rupa Vilasa Prabhu for me for organizing the article so nicely.

From Chris Minihan, California:

Hare Krsna! Could you please send me a copy of Ray of Vishnu. Enclosed is a money order for $11.00 as stated in your ad in IWR. Could you please also send me your full catalog. It sounds like you carry just about everything! Thank you in advance, Your friend in Krsna,

From Devadhatta das, Badger, Ca:

Having read your editorial entitled "Srila Prabhupada's Intentions" and specifically with reference to the shamefully anonymous invective endorsed by the "friends" of Rsbdev prabhu of San Jose, I feel somewhat inclined to reply. Frankly, your editorial is so poorly organized that no salient conclusion stands forth of its own merit. Nor can the apparent rebuttal from the San Jose sector derive any intellectual value from its meaningless sloganeering (neo-christian apocalyptic utopianism).

The truly International Society established by Srila Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada does not yet exist, nor can it ever emerge from any one enclave of sectarian intolerance. Should Western Vaisnavism every mend itself from its self-inflicted birth defects, the true challenge will emerge. Only when the spiritual physician has healed himself can he minister to a strife-ridden world. That the intent of these two points of view is to create animosity is the only readily observable conclusion: whatever intrinsic value either argument may have is lost. Where you see "Sridharites" and "Prabhupadaites," I see monkeys, playing at God.

Frankly, I am relieved that internal squabbling has overshadowed the inflammatory campaign against every other religious body in the world. That smear campaign has mercifully abated, though only temporarily. It is truly unfortunate and misguided for Western Vaisnavas to attempt the leap to Krsna consciousness by stepping on the faces of the three great Western acaryas, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed, or by deprecating Lord Buddha. The virulent disaffection endorsed by fledgling Vaisnavas toward the very building blocks of Western acaryas and sages can only undermine the non-sectarian international appeal of ISKCON's founder, and circumvent his expressed desires.

The inability to qualify as spiritual guides to a quarrelsome world is no more sadly apparent that from ISKCON's internal mismanagement and various disharmonious splinter groups that have risen from failing to love one's neighbor. Only when the reality of Jesus's final "command," that one love each other as he did, humbly washing his disciples' feet, is effective with Western Vaisnavism will these self-inflicted wounds heal. Only then will the world listen. It may take centuries. That God has handed ISKCON the world on a silver platter is foolish sentimental religion.

Should political systems ever truly disarm, the spirit and reality of warfare would continue in the guise of religiosity. The pages of "VVR" only confirm increasing disunity, all in the name of the One God. The sublimity of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's appearance within the Muslim dynasty in the guise of Pandit, not warrior, creating unity through intellectual discourse,not emnity through invective, is the message of all acaryas in the line of Mahaprabhu and a mystery whose significance is all but overlooked.

The petty quarrels your pages print are of little moment. Our beleagured world needs no more quarrels. Kali is defeated only when the multiplicity of mankind delights in its variety, not when that variety is destroyed. It is only conceit to believe in the supremacy of one's own beliefs and fail to recognize Truth elsewhere. The Paramahamsa takes truth when and where it is found, discarding the rest.

Those who initiate quarrel are but the prey of Kali, hiding at last in the gold. Whatever the effect may be, doubtless our yuga-stricken planet needs no new quarrels. It is our duty to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to end those quarrels. Now!

Bring the sound of the Holy Name back to the streets! The essence of Harer Nama is obscured in quarrelsome sectarianism. How typical. This sublime truth will no doubt survive our lackluster heritage. The Message is stronger than we are, thank God.

Editor Nitya: Sounds like ecumenism. Prabhupada always argued philosophy to defeat illusion and propound bhakti-yoga, the topmost yoga system. To study, debate and repeat the teachings of Srila Prabhupada is definitely proper. But, we are not interested in comparative study of religions. However, Vaishnavism is not a religion, but sanatana dharma.

EditorRV: This is a strange brand of ecunemic liberality. Devadhatta Prabhu wants to embrace the world's religious leaders and simultaneously condemn bhaktas who are discussing and debating philosophical points. Yet, this is one of the great traditions of Vaisnavism - please study the lives of Ramanujacarya, Madhvacarya, Sankaracarya, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, etc. for profuse examples of this practice. He wants to condemn Western Vaisnavas as suffering from "birth defects", being "monkeys playing God", "stepping on the faces of Moses, Jesus, Mohammed...Buddha", "creating enmity from invective", of having the "conceit to believe in the supremacy of one's own beliefs", "prey of Kali" and he concludes that the real problem is "quarrelsome sectarianism". And one might well ask what is Devadhatta Prabhu's real problem!? As Lord Balarama said after patiently hearing the invective of the Kuru dynasty as to why the Yadu dynasty, Balarama and Krsna were completely unqualified to tell them anything, "Your conclusion is wonderful!" Everyone is to be tolerated and appreciated apparently except those petty fools who have accepted the path of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu but have some differences about how to execute His mission. If debate simply results in inertia and lethargy, then we agree it is useless and without purpose. If the result is increased understanding, then it is certainly valuable and enlivening for those who want real understanding. The letters from San Jose, along with Devadhatta's letter appear to be good examples of the former.

From Gaura Mandala Bhumi das, Reg Sec'y, Indonesia:

I read with great interest your "Vedic Village Review" No. 6 which you sent to Kavicandra Maharaja in Japan, where I am visiting for some time. I must admit that I do not know very much about the political situation or legal affairs in the USA, but I found the philosophical articles very interesting and stimulating. It is also enlivening to hear about your attempt to establish a Krsna conscious Vedic Village.

Your project is of special interest to me as I am also presently trying to develop a small temple and farm in the mountains outside Jakarta, Indonesia. Our situation is a little different as Indonesia is a predominantly Muslim country (but having strong remnants of Vedic culture) with a military government, and we are also banned at the moment. However we may also be able to implement some of your good practical and philosophical ideas as described in your VVR.

We are wholesaling various items to support Sri Sri Radha Govinda's temple and farm project. We have the only ISKCON Radha-Krsna Deities in SE Asia, served by all Indonesian devotees since 1982. I will be returning to Jakarta soon to work on our Indonesian Teachings of Queen Kunti and Srimad-Bhagavatam First Canto, which we will be printing on our own tiny offset press. Please send past and future VVR issues!

From Jeffrey Hedrick, Manhattan, Kansas:

Thank you for sending me your Vedic Village Review. I enjoy it very much and find you very fair to all sides. Your devotion is very Krsna and Prabhupada centered. I am glad to see you officially in ISKCON once again. I find myself in the middle when it comes to ISKCON and Srila Bhaktipada, as I see correct ideas on both sides. I wish I could decide which side is correct. I find Srila Bhaktipada's views on what a guru should be more correct from my readings and the example of Srila Prabhupada. He also seems to be the only one that thinks we should strive to be better than Srila Prabhupada. I do believe that Srila Prabhupada wanted us to open more temples, get more devotees, etc. We show our love by making bigger. A father wants his son to succeed and do better and get farther than he has. This is spiritual and not material. I don't think we can do more than Srila Prabhupada, but we must try. I also think Srila Bhaktipada is too concerned with changing externals, answering Christianity and such.

From Kaliya Krsna, Potomoc, Maryland

All glories to Srila Prabhupada whose vision seems to be manifesting itself within your heart. I recently read Vol. 6 of VVR. I want to tell you that I am very enlivened by what you are all doing. When I read the guidelines and qualifications for life in Vedic Village it all made perfect sense to me. I always remember Prof. Ehret who would say that if an explanation doesn't make perfect sense at once, it's humbug. Anyway, I am glad to see that Krsna consciousness is in good hands down there in the Old South. Please keep up the good work.

From: Karnamrita dasa, Royston, Herts. England, 7.25.88:

I am very interested in your New Jaipura project, and your offer is likely to be very hard to resist. I think the establishment of Daiva Varnashram is essential to the provision of the greatest amount of good for the greatest possible number of aspiring Vaishnavas, and that ISKCON will not realise its true potential without it. The steps you are taking, therefore, to establish a working model of genuine Varnasram, are of inestimable importance. I hope my visit will dispel all apprehensions that I may have about moving there to work together on such a vital project.

From: Karnamrita dasa, Royston, Herts, England, 11.12.88:

I just wanted to write to say how much I enjoyed my visit to New Jaipur. I am also very appreciative of the offer you made me- it will be nice to perform my varna-dharma without eyebrows being raised, and simultaneously to play a part in the establishment of a vitally important project. I look forward to assisting with your magazine and cooperating on publishing my translation of the RAMAYANA. Volume One of seven is now ready. Where else can a humble brahmana find full provision for doing his brahminical service? This is almost unprecedented, and exciting. See you by March!

From Kulapriya devi dasi, Colorado Springs, Colarado

I read from cover to cover with great relish your VVR #6. I feel like I have a chance to associate with devotees of like mind by reading your publication.

I especially liked both your articles on establishing Varnasrama. I agree whole-heartedly with the position presented so excellently by Karnamrta dasa. It is obviously the most honest position and just plain common sense that, as neophyte devotees, we are not ín a position to impudently disregard Lord Krsna's establishment for human beings.

As far as your article "Srila Prabhupada's Practical Solutions," I wish I could speak eloquently, but for now I would just like to say that I thought it was completely "right on." I thought the article on Sridhara Maharja was tactfully and honestly presented.

Yes, certainly Sridhara Maharaja is an advanced Vaisnava who must love Krsna very much and must have gone back to the spiritual world now that he's left his body. Whatever his level of advancement, he spent so much time talking about the glorifying Lord Krsna--so how can anyone find fault with him for that. (I'm sure you feel the same way) So, the criticism is not with Sridhara Maharaja, but with those who made a cult out of going to hear him speak, and then distributing those lectures even when they presented statements that clearly disagreed with those of our own spiritual master.

If some people become angry or offended when you repeat the words of Srila Prabhupada (on any subject!) what can be done? It just does not speak very well of them as disciples if that is their reaction.

I had one question or difference of understanding on one point in this article. That point was on page 20, 2nd column, 3rd paragraph from the bottom. You said in Srila Prabhupada's final days he said the GBC could consult Sridhara Maharaja on philosophical issues that could not be resolved. This is very different from the way I have always heard it. I always heard that Prabhupada told them they could consult those two Godbrothers specifically (and only) in regards to Vaisnava etiquette and especially in regard to funeral and samadhi preparations, as you mentioned. Any further information on that?

Now I would like to discuss with you your "Membership Rules for New Jaipur" as printed on page 18. Certainly these are not new or radical; what you're describing so far is the usual ISKCON program, and you will have a very pure community by keeping these standards. My question: is your idea for New Jaipur to be a community for brahmanas or is to be a varnasrama community for all different levels of society.

When I took my vows in 1975, my understanding was that the four regulative principles were to elevate one to the human platform and from there, one could become a Vaisnava by chanting Hare Krsna and practicing devotional service. So, I always presumed that in a daivi-varnasrama community, at least the four regulative principles would be followed. But in more recent years, I've heard devotees argue that only the brahmanas in society must follow those rules and they would cite the Pandavas and other pure devotees as examples of devotees who sometimes broke those rules. This point is frankly confusing to me. Personally, I only want to associate intimately with devotees who follow the "4 regs."

As far as some of the less critical rules, do you expect sudras never to watch TV?

About the morning program; maybe this wouldn't be applicable in your geographic location, but you can think about it in any case; if it is cold or rainy and muddy, I know that my family would opt for managala arati at home rather than walking a quarter mile to a community temple.

As far as the rest of the morning program goes: frankly, the idea of trying to fit all that sadhana into my morning plus all my rounds is just plain scary. There aren't that many hours in my day. When would I fix breakfast?

What are your priorities here? What do you want to create? Do you want all the Vaisnavas to congregate together at that time of day? Or do you want that the devotees are up during brahma-muhurta worshiping Krsna?

I guess what I'm asking is: are all your rules hard and fast or do you bend and make exceptions according to life situations of the individuals involved? .....

Thank you agan for your wonderful publication. I

certainly wish you all success with your community. Also thank you for letting me share my thoughts with you.

Editor:Nitya: We are concerned for now with establishing our central community of devotees who are all following strict standards and working in the roles of either brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya or sudra. Most devotees who are strictly following are not brahmanas by occupation. Later we will accomodate at some safe distance those who are not strict. But first the house needs a solid foundation. As far as TV goes, it is an insidious means for maya to enter the brain and spoil the purity of a household. I never knew a devotee who could just pick out the "educational" things on TV and leave aside the rest. Anyone serious about purity should simply resolve: no TV. Besides, who has the time for TV when Prabhupada's mission and our own spiritual perfection are yet incomplete? About the morning program, I agree it is too much when it goes to 8 or 9 am. Ours goes 4:30 artike, tulasi puja, class, guru puja and then at 6:00 jappa. Those who need to go to work or cook etc may go with a basic sadhana program already out of the way. Jappa is the responsibility of the individual, although 16 rounds is the standard. Yes, it is a little inconvenient to go to a temple for the morning program, but it's worth it. Compare a home arati (if we would get up at all!) to the association and energy at the temple. Again, we require these basics so we won't slip into excuses and lethargy, neglecting sadhana. So it is a fine line between ensuring high spiritual standards and making residents feel restricted. That is why we have adopted official standards so anyone coming in will know in advance and voluntarily meet those standards. No choice but to be strict, voluntarily. Otherwise, it's like L.A. again.
Editor:RV: Regarding the question on consulting: Srila Prabhpada mentioned Narayana Maharaja for samadhi arrangements, etiquette, etc. He is reported to have said to the GBC men, "For philosophy, you may go to Sridhara." This meant any points unresolvable by them by other means.

From Mahanidhi Swami, New Delhi, India
I really enjoy reading your journal, especially the articles written by Sriman Rupa Vilas Prabhu. You are trying your best to serve Srila Prabhupada according to your love and realizations, and I am likewise encouraged by your example. Let all our Godbrothers work hard and in their individual and varied ways to give transcendental pleasure to our ever-well wisher, Srila Prabhupada. Please put me on your mailing list. I hope this letter finds you in the best of Krsna con. and ever expanding your wonderful Vaisnava community.

From Mahatma dasa, San Diego, California
I wanted to ask you several questions regarding your articles in the latest issue of the "Vedic Village Review." You didn't address the situation of devotees who don't follow strictly. How can they be incorporated into your community--or will they be allowed at all? There are many devotees who are sincere and non-envious but, because of some weakness, may not be regularly attending temple functions (most specifically mangala arotika). At the same time, these devotees are willing to serve Krsna all day.

I know this is a sensitive issue. If we lower our standards to accommodate them, others may lower their standards. At the same time, we see that most of our Godbrothers and Godnephews are not that strong.

In addition, you have a larger number of people joining the FOLK program than moving into our temples. If they express an interest in living in your community, but are unable to regularly attend the morning program, how would you deal with them? What would you instruct them? Does your community have a place for them? (ED: Live outside, nearby)

Regarding your article on Sridhara Maharaja: I have had contact from time to time with old friends who have left ISKCON and taken Sridhara Maharaja as their siksa guru. They claim to have found inspiration and direction in Krsna consciousness. In the light of this, they feel that any statements directed against Sridhara Maharaja cause a gross misunderstanding of his position as well as misfortune for those who, after hearing such propaganda, are unable to hear from him and benefit from his siksa.

They have their explanations of what Srila Prabhupada said about Sridhara Maharaja. They even have Sridhara Maharaja's own comments of what Srila Prabhupada said about him. But ultimately they feel that Prabhupada trusted him and felt he was competant to guide his disciples if and when they needed his help. We have to consider past circumstances in ISKCON. Many devotees were spiritually better off by going to Sridhara Maharaja. This doesn't mean that I'm advocating a break-up of ISKCON or that everyone should "follow their heart." However, I have personally seen devotees "saved," so to speak, by taking shelter of Sridhara Maharaja. These devotees were definitely on their way out of ISKCON. Hopefully, this will change more and more. But we must realize that certain individuals not making progress (for one reason or another) in ISKCON, by chance read something from Sridhara Maharaja, or hear something from Tripurari Swami and find it inspiring. Inspiring in a way which brings them out of maya with greater force and speed than anything happening in their present situation. Then naturally, they become attracted to hearing more from Sridhara Swami. The more they hear, the more they want to surrender. Now if factually, there was no way they would have made it in Krsna consciousness, can we say it's bad or wrong in this particular circumstance? This is not just an isolated incident. I've seen it happen many times. And they do chant sixteen rounds, follow the principles, distribute Prabhupada's books, etc. What are your comments on this?
EditorRV: The rule for this community is that devotees who don't follow strictly are not allowed to live here. We might make some rare exception if a devotee was debilitated in some way. Otherwise, a community like this, in its infant stage, could not withstand the rigors of the association of devotees who are lacking in sincerity and devotional vigor. We thrive or die according to our association. You speak of devotees who are sincere but not following. Such people may exist, but their sincerity is something I am hard-pressed to appreciate and their association is not something I aspire for, unless there be the rare exception. I think the FOLK program is more for the sort of people you describe.
Editor Nitya: The idea is to have separation between the different classes of society. Vedic civilization had brahmana communities, sudra communities, all part of a village. Similarly, our spiritual society should protect the strict devotees in the "center", allowing the weak the chance to associate with the strong in a pure atmosphere. Unrestricted association is devastating to a Vedic society.
Editor RV: Re: Sridhara Maharaja. People are certainly free to feel what they like. In my article I attempted to put Prabhupada's comments in perspective. If the bottom line of your question is, "Isn't it better that these people went to Sridhara Maharaja than to bloop from spiritual life?" The answer is that it was certainly better. However, I don't think they were spiritually better off going to Sridhara Maharaja for siksa than they would have been by going to Srila Prabhupada for siksa. Srila Prabhupada, the spiritual giant, the saktyavesa-avatara, whose books are the standard for 10,000 years, whose compassion overflooded the world, where will anyone get a better siksa-guru? Who among us has even made a thorough study of his books? Or listened to all of his tapes? My understanding is that one has to try to understand the desire of the spiritual master, and then make his desire one's life and soul. My understanding is that Srila Prabhupada did not generally encourage his disciples to go to Sridhara Maharaja. I think this was clear from my article. It was a few men in the beginning out of desperation, and members of the GBC, who could not resolve some scriptural conundrum any other way. Do you seriously believe he would have approved the things that have taken place? My general experience with the Sridhara followers is that there is little talk of Srila Prabhupada and little understanding of his immense importance in our disciplic line, and very little association with him as siksa-guru.

From Hamsavatar das, Malibu, CA:

I applaud your efforts with the VVR; no doubt your efforts are reaching the hearts of many of our Godbrothers, who have been disillusioned with the state of ISKCON's leadership and have withdrawn. The "guru business" disheartened many, as has the GBC's corruption and infighting. "Now what?" echo many depressed Prabhupada disciples. Many feel cheated, used and thrown away, not knowing where to turn. The answer: turn within--to Krsna within your heart. Sharpen your weapons against the onslaught of maya--chant the holy name and pray for guidance. Then act! Laziness has brought down many ISKCON projects, not just improper leadership. Householders should work, supporting their families, as well as contributing to their temple. The householders are the backbone of the society, not the sannyasis. Their business is to travel, distributing love of God to whomever they meet. Householders are to carry on with the "business" side of life. Why cry the blues? We have the capacity to carry on this movement, and it is our duty! But first we must be concerned with developing the qualities of a Vaisnava, like honesty. It will take work to bring ISKCON back to a healthy state. We must work together, stopping the useless bickering and fault-finding. Let's have the maturity to stop, take a good look at ourselves (not everyone else) and begin to go forward again. We must be strong, and most of all positive.

So let us wake up before we waste the chance of this lifetime. We owe everything to Srila Prabhupada, and the goal of our lives must be to help carry on this Sankirtana Movement. Let's not waste what youthful intelligence and abilities we have. What has happened has happened! It's over. Today is a new day. How will you begin today, right now, to fulfill your life's mission? Let's work together, honestly and cooperatively, to bring this movement out of it's present condition. Because we cannot rely on one leader, we must compromise in order to work together. How will you feel in another 20 years if you've not made any more progress than you have at present? Fearless, stand up and fight! Krsna will not provide us with the facility we need. But success is not cheap, and will take honest hard work. I want to thank Nityananda and the other devotees at VVR for their sincere efforts and I pray that other devotees will begin such works and projects, or join with those who have already done so. May Krsna bless us all with good intelligence to work together toward our mutual goal.

From Narada Muni dasa, New Orleans La.

I feel like I'm writing an old friend. Though our association was minimal, our eternal relationship is established.

As we are coming in the line of Lord Brahma, by the mercy of His Divine Grace, we have both taken it as our life's work to be somehow engaged in helping to reclaim the fallen souls. I am very pleased to see the seeds of your project there beginning to fructify more and more. Srila Prabhupada said devotees are clouds that rain love of God onto the earth where the creepers of bhakti then grow.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the issues of Old South Vedic Review. Your thoughts and the Prabhupada nectar are nicely presented. I find they resonate many of my own, and I suppose other devotees' feelings, aspirations and realizations. Giving the Vaisnava community a forum for expression is also a much needed and appreciated service.

I also appreciated your contrition in the last issue in regards to your somewhat sardonic comments against those who are currently trying to manage the affairs of Prabhupada's BBT. We all need to become so expert that our chidings are not derisive so they will inspire rectification and union rather than a further polarization of viewpoints. We have had too much intransigence in devotees relative beliefs and opinions. Though your feelings may have been justified, we all need to learn how to use our individual capacities cojointly in order to realize the full synergistic effect service to our Divine Master can bring to the world. Otherwise ISKCON as we know it will never flourish and be the World Religion Srila Prabhupada envisioned. His prophetic statements of the group of sticks bunched together or the sparks of a fire are relevant. Isolation breeds destruction and extinction, as history has aptly taught.

It is said, "sajjana gunam icchanti dosam icchanti pamarah." Everyone is a combination of faults and glories. But a Vaisnava is adosa-darsi and therefore sees the good, never the faults. He is like a bee to honey rather than the fly who hunts for the stool.

Of course we (the body of devotees) cannot tolerate those kali chelas who pose as leaders but vitiate Prabhupada's legacy, and try vainly to usurp His superior position. Prabhupada once said a devotee is innocent but not naive. He said He was never cheated because He was a "Calcutta man."

But I think all of us need to mature in our dealings with Godbrothers and Godnephews. We should stop seeing others as a threat trying to encroach on our territory (bulldog mentality) and learn the art of dasa dasa anudasa! The best leaders are the best servants. Anyone who is sincerely trying to serve Lord Krsna we have to see the way the Lord Himself sees such a person.

bhajate mam ananya-bhak sadhur eva sa mantavyah

ISKCON doesn't need big leaders; we need sincere followers of the predecessor acaryas. As Srila Prabhupada explains in the NOD, sincerity is the only qualification for advancing in KC. The Lord is much more pleased by one who has a simple submissive attitude to the Lord and spiritual master than He is by one's insincere showy religious fervor.

As Prabhupada mentions in B.G., a sincere sweeper of the street is better than a showbottle (pretender) spiritualist. Lord Ramachandra relished the sanga of His lowly animal devotees when He returned to Ayodhya more than even big personalities who came to greet Him such as Lord Brahma.

I have seen there are still remnants of institutionalized fallacious principles within our society regarding Srila Prabhupada's position and His relationship with members of ISKCON. Koti-mukta-madhye-'durlabha eka krsnabhakta (Madhya-lila 19.148) Other issues of vital importance in regards to how Prabhupada wanted His mission to progress are also of concern. But I believe in the integrity of the majority of devotees and hope and expect those of us who are left will take up the mission bequeathed to us and work together to form what Srila Prabhupada wanted, a society based on "love and trust." The situation is not yet incorrigible.

It is especially incumbent upon those who are true leaders in ISKCON today to really try to understand why so many devotees are "fried" and listen to their feelings. We need tolerant, compassionate, open-minded leaders who will act as a catharsis for reconciliation, healing and K.C. upliftment. Given the recent history and sometimes current state of mundane politics and egos in ISKCON, plus past undue castigations and injustices, coupled with our own struggles to maintain our spiritual commitments, it should not be a surprise to see devotees in a state of lassisitude and apathy.

There is such a great scope for spreading K.C. if only we could learn how to be sadhu-bhusanam. Titiksa karunika suhrda sarva dehinam. The pressing need of the day is for all of us to become meek and humble. Otherwise spiritual progress is very difficult. Trnad api sunicena. Jagai madhai haite muni se papistha, purisera kita haite muni se laghistha. (Adi-lila 5.205)

We have all made mistakes in the past. Now is the time to give up our anger (krodha bhakta dvesi-jane), forget our petty grudges and forge an alliance of all devotees so we may win the great battle for the souls of Kali-yuga. Though it sometimes seems there is an ubiquitous feeling that the "old" ISKCON is dead, if we can as Srila Prabhupada said, bring the Satya-yuga to Kali-yuga by instituting varnashrama-dharma, we certainly can perform the smaller miracle of reviving the spirit of ISKCON.

We all have the try to become first class servants of Prabhupada by co-operatively executing His desires. If we don't at least strive for this, we may degenerate to be 4th class servants. Uccaritum pituh. The stool of the father.

I have spoken with many devotees who have recently visited New Jayapura and all of them were very favorably impressed. Many devotees including myself are inspired by

your current ideals and accomplishments. Keep up your good works. Just by meditating on the order of the spiritual master one can become perfect. Tad dhyayanto jopantas ca pirjayantas ca samyatah (S.B. 4.24.16). Of course one should also worship the order by somehow or other finding the ways and means to carry it out without being deterred by any material circumstance or condition. Vyavasayatmika buddhi ekeha kuru-nandana. I think your determination in these regards has been commendable.

From Yamala Arjuna dasa, Ascroft, B.C., Canada, 11.5.88:

I must admit I have for your first few issues just briefly looked through your Vedic Village Review. Last night I received a copy of your No. 6 issue and I must admit I couldn't put it down. Rupa Vilasa prabhu has compiled a lot of information on many wonderful statements about Prabhupada, especially on the article "Srila Prabhupada's Intentions," page 18. It's nice to get all this; to be honest, it's the first one I read from cover to cover! I felt very inspired and humbled and pray and wish you the best. Yes, please put me on your mailing list. Devotees association and communication Ki Jai!

From Puranjana dasa, Lafayette, Ca. 9.2.88

I was very impressed with your VVR #6. Rupa Vilas did an excellent job in clarifying the "women sannyasis" issue. His recent article, "Srila Prabhupada's Intentions" was nothing short of superb. Hopefully, this article will become the ISKCON-wide standard to clarify doubts on this controversy.

We should recall that Srila Prabhupada himself also disagreed with his Godbrothers openly, and no offense was ever committed. While we cannot at all equate ourselves with Prabhupada it is imperative to understand why he wanted us to know of his disagreements. Since the Gaudiya Matha mission had many problems due to these particular misunderstandings, Prabhupada therefore called those disciples who sought outside connections "prostitutes" because he had clear philosophical reasons as well as direct practical experience fom the Gaudiya Matha.

Thus, there are direct parallels to the Gaudiya Matha's problems and ISKCON's. For example, the 1978 GBC paper emplacing their "acaryas", directly states it was drafted "in consultation with higher authorities," and that authority was Sridhara Maharaja. The relativistic acarya idea needs much philosophical foundation, since it opposes Srila Prabhupada's clear teaching on this subject.

As soon as we target relative conditioning as absolute, the break up of the Church is in motion. Srila Prabhupada used to give a simple yet sublime example; if pebbles are dropped in the same spot into the water there will always be concentric circles, but if we drop a pebble here, a pebble there, the circles will conflict. As soon as we have another "acarya" his purity will be simply tested. If he is in the parampara, he will add to the existing acarya's preaching. But what we have witnessed is a remarkable failure even to maintain what was set up already. People who were"disciples" are angry and confused, they were told to accept another and another acarya, if they remained. People who were not "disciples" and who knew the greater standard were forced out. Civil and criminal problems developed and so on. This same exact history developed in the Gaudiya Mission. But, although there may have been so many sub-developments, Srila Prabhupada consistently targets their lack of keeping the acarya in the center as their basic problem. In other words, when we are all "brothers" we can check and balance each other. But if someone artifically tries to become "king of the hill" he can no longer be checked or advised. It is open anarchy, and Prabhupada never wanted it. He clearly said we should work together cooperatively with checks and balances.

When Syamasundara started his ruby business, Prabhupada directly told me to make independent monies, pay off his debts and not give any money to the (then) GBC. He told Mukunda Maharaja that he should not have sat by and allowed this to happen. Mukunda replied that he was only the temple president, to which Srila Prabhupada countered, "Yes, but you are a devotee." A devotee has to be responsible, he cannot simply let the GBC or anyone jeopardize this movement. In short, we have to cooperate as we were instructed to do. Artificial absoluteness short circuits this whole process and that is why Srila Prabhupada says that they were told to work cooperatively, but they insisted on deviating and making an artificial absolute authority.

Ascribing relativistic conditionings to the acarya plane is not at all a new thing. There were dari-sannyasis (lusty renunciates) existing at the time of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. The Bharatavarsiya Upasakha Sampradaya compiled by Aksaya-kumara Datta (1820-1886) lists 56 sects, but this is not at all a definitive catalogue. Although there is a seeming complex variety of deviations presented by these groups, the common thread is that they relativise the acarya plane and sometimes Krishna's lila also. We have seen these same exact deviations in ISKCON's so-called acarya sabha right up to Sisyavilasa (enjoying female disciples) and other Tantric-sahajiya elements. We find that incorporating the Bible into Krishna consciousness is not at all new. One offshoot of the Kartabhaja sect, called the Ramavallabhis, had their followers recite the Koran and Bible in addition to Vaisnava literatures. Other sects wanted to combine with the Muslim faith because it would be easier to preach, supposedly Rama-Krishna also incorporated many apparent Vaisnava themes into his deviations. He claimed to be a manjari (conjugal assistant) of Krishna's, and so on, but Srila Prabhupada says he dragged all of Bengal to hell. ISKCON has not fared much better under the relativisitic acarya ideas. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to know what our Krishna Consciousness philosophy really is. There is no question that deviants within the Gaudiya Matha borrowed from these many other sects and speculations commonly found throughout Bengal.

Srila Prabhupada, therefore, always distanced himself from all of these various sects. He says that the relativistic acaryas are dangerous and headed for "the most obnoxious regions of the universe." Clearly, he was not in favor of compromise with these elements. He says, "Therefore, one is forbidden to regard the guru as an ordinary human being (gurusu nara matih naraki sah). The spiritual master, or acarya, is always situated in the spiritual status of life." (Bhag.10.4.20) It is not surprising that a relativistic acarya sampradaya has directly taken root in America, since ISKCON has incorporated many of their ideas itself. ISKCON has to decide whether it wants to continue being infiltrated with these ideas, or whether it wants to make a clean break to promote non-relativistic acaryas exclusively.

We find that persons heavily afflicted with all kind of deviations are still directly called "gurus" or "acaryas" . For example, one devotee told me "the whole problem has been solved, that acarya was removed." When he says "that acarya" he is ascribing a nomenclature reserved only for the purest of the pure. When we say "he was an acarya" we are adding him to the parampara, either directly or indirectly. This has to be reversed. What we have to say is "that deviant was exposed and the GBC finally realized he was not an acarya or even a sannyasi or even an ordinary regulated devotee." Indeed, even the common man would not indulge in some of these things. So, when we say this range of deviations is acarya, we should recognize it is borrowing from the so many relativised sampradayas. That was not Srila Prabhupada's plan or instruction and success will not come unless we begin to understand it.

Regarding varna-asrama and other practical developments, these will naturally grow once we have a comprehensive and uniform philosophy. I am glad to see you are helping to consolidate the ideas and weed out a major outside influence. After all, Srila Prabhupada is no longer here to protect us from relativism by his staunch, non-compromising mood. We have to take up his philosophical instructions and avoid these things ourselves. Again, I wish to commend you

for your nice article(s) and other efforts.

EditorRV: Your letter was very interesting, but it is often unclear to me what you are talking about, and sometimes it is unclear from what source your "Prabhupada says" are coming from. For example where does he say that disciples who consult other Vaisnavas are "prostitutes". He may have said it, but where? What does the statement "The relativistic acarya idea needs much philosophical foundation, since it opposes Srila Prabhupada's clear teachings on subject" mean? If it means no one can be an guru without being an uttama-adhikari, I think that cannot stand philosophically or practically. For example, Narada and Suniti were both accepted as guru by Dhruva Maharaja, but one of them delivered him and the other was delivered by him, yet he worships them both. It is not impossible for different grades of devotees to function as guru. Of course if we call a less-advanced devotee a paramahamsa, an uttama-adhikari, etc.that is misrepresentation, along with allowing oneself to be so named or regarded. When you say we see "these same exact deviations in ISKCON" as in past histories, I am doubtful that the deviations from one era are exactly replicated now, although such histories are certainly instructive. Where exactly does Srila Prabhupada confirm that "relativistic acaryas are dangerous and headed for the `most obnoxious regions of the universe'." If by "relativistic acarya" you are referring to the imitation of those who are on the Absolute platform of realization, then I would agree that accepting such devotees according to their pretense and those devotees engaging in such pretense is productive of all kinds of evils. This has been clearly seen in our recent history. If you question whether DADS, the dreaded acarya disease, is over, I would again agree with you that it is not. But if you are saying, no one should be guru unless they are a self-realized paramahamsa, situated in prema-bhakti, then I would say that such a position is both impractical and the contrary can be proven from scripture. Please see the article in this issue: **On His Order** for some points on this topic.

From Rasaraja dasa, Bhaktivedanta Institute, Bombay:
The last issue of the Vedic Review was very impressive and I have included the Old South Mansion in my list of places to visit when I get the time and opportunity. Keep up the good work.

From Shaktimati dasi, Felton, Ca (Santa Cruz):
Although we admit to some casual interest in leafing through your publication, we will not be used as your unsolicited magazine distributors. Your last two issues have arrived in huge bundles from UPS and have been subsequently trashed. Any future bundles will not be accepted. Save your money and efforts for some agreeable "distributor." If you send one copy, we may look through it, but this stack arriving here is annoying. Discontinue it. In service of Srila Prabhupada...

From Mr. and Mrs. C. Cheppard, St. Petersburg, Fla.
Thank you for sending us your issue #6 of Vedic Village Review. We liked it very much and would appreciate you sending us any back issues that you can. Please use this small donation to offset printing costs. Keep up the good work and we hope all is going well at your "Vedic Village." Keep us on your mailing list if possible.

We'll be making an order from your catalog soon. All glories to all the devotees. Hare Krsna!

From Bhakta Stephen, Memphis, TN:
I am a student of Rupanuga dasa, GBC in Potomac Md. He has been instructing me here in Memphis Federal Prison for over 2 years. I have known about Krsna consciousness for over 16 years when I stopped eating meat, but I am a sentimentalist and so whimsical so I never really surrendered. I did travel on the Radha Damodara Sankirtan buses with Radha-Damodara Deities in the mid-seventies, experiencing real sankirtan in action, all for the glory of Srila Prabhupada, but I was too whimsical and chose to serve in my own way. I am in prison for 28 months more.

I have had a Hare Krsna meditation program here for over 2 years for 5 days a week. One hour on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday we have Kirtan, Gita, Kirtan, then prasadam. There are 10 other bhaktas here. There is a big turnover here but even though sometimes superficially I might seem unsuccessful, actually I am successful because I'm doing my duty and the results are Krsna's and for Srila Prabhupada's pleasure too--that simply everyone I meet I tell them of Lord Sri Krsna who is most dear to Srila Prabhupada.

I chant 40 rounds daily and I have read all of Prabhupad's books. Right now I am finishing a study of the Bhagavatam. Everything I have read based on varnasrama and cows and farming I have noted. I plan under the direction of Rupanuga dasa to implement Prabhupada's instructions on organic farming as a way of preaching practically how to live simply and be absorbed in Krsna consciousness.

I have farming background--I was raised on a farm and I have just finished 8 correspondence courses on agriculture with Penn State University. I plan on getting a degree in horticulture. Education used in the service of Prabhupada is an important key. Also I pray that Lord Caitanya will give me the intelligence to put a curriculum together to teach future generations of Prabhupad's servants to live this way.

Our only true identity is to perfect our service to Prabhupada's instructions. This I have come to realize by the mercy of Rupanuga dasa. Now I want to please him and Prabhupada so I am studying and preaching and preparing myself for the test when I get out of this so-called prison.

I am writing to say I am encouraged by your nice program. I am wondering if any of the VVR readers would care to correspond with me care of Rupanuga in Washington. I am so poor I cannot afford any new books etc, and if anyone has any extras, I would surely be indebted forever. I am especially interested in cows, agriculture, varnasram etc.

I just received your VVR issue #6 and I am enlivened. I am also not so understanding of what happened with you and ISKCON, but what is important is that you are rightly situated now.

We have lively kirtans here. We have mrdanga and 3 kartals and next month we should be getting a harmonium! All for the Glory of Srila Prabhupada! Jai Radha-Damodara!

From Srila dasa, Septon, Belgium
We don't get to hear much of what is actually going on within the minds and hearts of the devotees in America these days, but it does seem to be a "world in turmoil," doesn't it? One devotee from America came through here with a copy of VVR No. 5; it was quite impressive. To have the contributorship of such a scholastic reservoir as Rupa Vilasa das would guarantee the success of any publication. And as expressive (if not downright evangelical) as your goodself seems to be, VVR must certainly be having a lot of impact.

I thought the "Sannyasa for Women?" article by Rupa Vilasa prabhu was very appropriate and timely. I would like to see this distributed perhaps as a monograph throughout ISKCON to give the standard of our philosophy, as it thoroughly discredits such reprehensible behavior on the part of Kirtanananda Swami to inaugarate such a concoction in Gaudiya Vaisnavism. One wonders whether the followers of Kirtanananda Maharaja would even still consider themselves part of the sampradaya anymore, what with all the changes they are making (new dress, no tilaka, new music, English "mantras," different philosophy, etc.).

I am also interested in hearing your presentation on the "Sridharite" theme, because it is important for us as followers of Prabhupada to understand the points of contention between us (otherwise, they should just join us or we them). Unfortunately there are some very serious "differences of opinions." Actually, it is not merely a question of "us" and "them"; it is a matter of what is pure and unadulterated, and that which is something else:

"Suris are great scholars, but they may not always be anagha, or spotless. The anagha-suri is one who is a pure

devotee of the Lord." (SB 3.7.39 purport)

Srila Prabhupada proved himself in the line of pure devotion by being tested in the fire of ordeal. He sacrificed everything to fulfill the mission of his guru maharaja, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, and he was thereby benedicted by Lord Caitanya with the potency to spread Krsna consciousness throughout the entire planet. Such selfless and unalloyed surrender to the order of the spiritual master as exhibited by Srila Prabhupada is not anywhere else visible amongst Prabhupada's Godbrothers. The Holy Name has been glorified all over the world on account of Prabhupada's dedication. Krsna also insures that His pure devotees are glorified above all others: ebe yasa ghusuk tribhuvana. Srila Prabhupada's splendor stands out like the blazing sun.

So when asked why we follow Srila Prabhupada exclusively, we can reply: In the face of the sun, what need is there for any other light? Any other so-called "light" is dim by comparison. Similarly, anyone who turns their back to the bright, direct sunlight of Krsna's vani coming from Srila Prabhupada must be in the shadow. Send me #6 when it's out!

P.S. As a point of information, you might be interested to know that the chateau here in Belgium receives 8,000 - 10,000 visitors per season. To begin with, of course, the castle itself is quite a unique and attractive piece of architecture. It was officially commissioned in 1949 as one of the National Historical Landmarks. Although styled as if of the Medieval period, the castle itself is only 150 years old. It happens to be in the Ardennes (a famout tourist area of Belgium) and is en route of many bus tours. However, even beyond that, the devotees have invested a large amount of time and energy to fix up the place, and with the kind donation of one devotee's fortune, they made a marble palace out of the temple room (in the mood of a by-gone era). Even for an inexperienced eye, it is gorgeously done. (Credit must go to Matsya-avatara prabhu from Italy for his design and production). The devotees have also put together a very professional slide show which explains the ancient tradition and background of our religion. In addition, all guests are treated to a guided tour of the castle, including preasadam (cake or sweet), darshan and kirtan in the "royal hall," a climb up the winding staircase to the top of the tower (six floors up), and from there a commanding view of the fiefdom, with walled gardens, fields, forests and 110 acres. A donation of $2.50 is requested. We now have just renovated an old carriage house into a boutique and snack shop where souvenirs from India and refreshments are sold.

Editor RV: Although I generally agreed with your letter, I still think we can avoid criticism of Sridhara Maharaja as "not spotless". From our position it is difficult to say with certainty what his spiritual position is, nor is it necessary or proper, in my view, to deprecate him. He is the God-brother of our Guru Maharaja. If we are convinced that Srila Prabhupada did not want us to intimately associate with him, then we can avoid that association without criticizing him personally, understanding well our spiritual master's intention and view. However, your glorification of Srila Prabhupada as the sun of devotees is undeniably true. Your project sounds very nice.

From Tulasi Carana dasi, Honolulu, HI:

The Vedic Village is brimming over with "love." One does not endeavor with the effort to give so much nectar about the spiritual master, Krsna, etc. with only business or intent to build a successful "company." Where does this Caru Krsna get off? Not everyone with a little writing ability or knowledge does create a magazine or want to quote spiritual information. The articles on Sridhar Swami were not so critical as simply stating facts; they do need clearing up. It's efforts like yours that are getting this movement somewhere, and by what I read, your impressions are toward Love of God.

You're on the right track. You have met responsibilities, as in the Robin George case; you have proved to be more capable than most devotees. Why your membership rules alone are enough to put most temples to shame. In Hawaii most devotees living in the temple with their TVs, loose attire and lack of cooperation would have to go! As it is said, "You must have something good going on. Why else would others criticize you?" If Krsna is being worshipped, He is where He is being loved, and by your fruits you are showing Krsna is in the Vedic Village, New Jaipur's Radha-Govinda. May Krsna continue blessing your efforts to attain and give Love of God. Enclosed is list of items being ordered. Am awaiting list of any gurukula and home texts and workbooks. The State of Hawaii has made it legal to teach children at home, thus there is no excuse to send the children to karmi schools. Unfortunately many parents consider private schools or just teaching their own children a better way than cooperating together to form some type of gurukula. I trust I may find the strength to meet this challenge.

From Upananda dasa, ISKCON Tokyo, 10.6.88:

I greatly appreciate your wisdom and earnestness. For the benefit of myself and many others in ISKCON and outside of ISKCON could you kindly address the "guru issue" as you see it. Some gurus and GBC seem to be following the recent adjustments "for the sake of unity" while inwardly they feel that Prabhupada's standard should be maintained (honor the father by honoring the son!). Yours in anticipation.

Your previous 5 issues are missing, so please send. It seems in one of them you denied access to New Jaipur to any "Sridhar" men, but I hope you do not put off any of those souls who would be moved favorably by your conclusive arguments and wish to join you. As long as one is submissive we always maintain an open-door policy, no? If someone is going to preach something else, then that is a different story. Like the time I was running a temple in Brisbane, Queensland. Some devotee associate of Siddhaswarupa Swami came and preaching a laissez, faire, do-your-own-thing liberalism that broke up completely what had been two weeks previously a most vibrant, expanding temple in Australia.

Again, may your attempts at establishing Prabhupada's desires in regard to varnashrama dharma be soon fulfilled.

Editor RV: Anyone who wants to join us after being convinced of what we have written, how can we turn them away? If they can follow the programs and make a solid contribution, then they are certainly welcome. Regarding the guru issue, please see our review in this issue of **On His Order** (review) in which this issue is addressed.

Hare Krishnas open mansion

The Associated Press

NATCHEZ, Miss. — A combination of Southern antiques and artifacts from India should provide a one-of-kind tourist attraction at an antebellum mansion, say its owners, a group of Hare Krishnas who have opened it to the public.

The Old South Society for Vedic Life, which has about 20 members, recently acquired Gloucester House in this historic Mississippi River city and hopes to make it a popular spot for visitors.

"We're still in the process of decorating and furnishing. But we went ahead and opened the house because it's so unique in itself. We could show it even if it were completely empty. It's in all the major picture books and is an example of one of the finest suburban villas in Natchez," Nico Kuyt, leader of the Church Hill-based group, said.

Kuyt said that while the list price for the home was $1.25 million, the society paid only "a fraction" of that cost.

"It was a very reasonable price," he said. "We financed the purchase, so now it's, 'We owe, we owe, it's off to work we go.'"

Kuyt said tours of the pre-Civil War mansion will cost $4 per person.

"We have moved our cultural tour program about Vedic life down to Gloucester. That's on the second floor," he said. "The first floor is a period house, with an 1820s dining room . . . and an 1830s library."

The parlor of the home is of the 1850-60 period.

The society distributed brochures recently to welcome centers all over Mississippi to let people know the house is open for tours.

"Gloucester was on the Pilgrimage Garden Club tour until about two years ago, when the last owner decided to take it off," Kuyt said. "We're serious about tourism. We have plans for developing the house very nicely."

From Syamasundara dasa, Dallas 8.23.88

I have just finished reading **Srila Prabhupada's Intentions** by Rupa Vilas Prabhu. It was excellent and illuminating. In Prabhupada's dedication of the **Srimad-Bhagavatam** he writes: "He lives forever by his divine instructions and the **follower** lives with him." To be a disciple means to follow the guru's discipline. By following implicitly the guru's order you become intimately and eternally connected with him. You are never separated from him even after the death of his physical body. **Cakhu-dan dilo jei, janme janme prabhu sei, divya jnan hrde prokasito.** He is our guru birth after birth, and he illumines our heart with divine knowledge even after his departure. Those unchaste persons who left the shelter of Srila Prabhupada do not know how to relate to the guru. He is there in his writings, tapes, videos. By following his instructions he reveals more knowledge as we are ready to accept it. There is no need to go elsewhere when Prabhupada is in your heart. You need only listen and follow his teaching to be his disciple.

Those who claimed that they needed a "live" teacher to take shelter of will be put into the same predicament when he also passes away. Then what will they do? Seek out another guru for initiation?! I know some God-nephews and nieces who have had one or even two gurus who fell down. Yet they remained staunch devotees, reading Prabhupada's books, preaching his glories, etc. If these so called less advanced persons were able to take shelter of Prabhupada after such a calamity, why not the disciple of Prabhupada? It is only a lack of faith in the spiritual process.

Their reasoning is fallacious as has been so aptly demonstrated by others. Many Prabhupada disciples underwent the same traumas after his departure as they did, yet they are with us and very much **Prabhupada** men. They didn't deviate from the path. The unchaste say that we offend their new guru. But what of the offense they have done to Prabhupada? I use the word unchaste because the guru is the swami (husband). As Caitanya Mahaprabhu said to Vallabhacarya, "One who leaves the swami is a prostitute." They are prostitutes. A sad but true conclusion.

Editor RV: Your loyalty to Srila Prabhupada is admirable, but I feel you make the mistake of attacking the devotion for Srila Prabhupada of some of his diciples, many of whom simply had the misfortune to make a very human mistake. Our article tried to reveal more clearly Prabhupada's attitudes about association with Sridhar Maharaj, so those who were uncertain if Prabhupada would be pleased by their activities could come to a decision. You presume a great deal about the aspirations and motives of such persons, and it is not sound to consider that such persons should all be lumped together as unchaste prostitutes. Some may be, some not. Calling them prostitutes is harsh and offensive in my view. Furthermore, Caitanya Mahaprabhu did not say one who leaves the swami is a prostitute. He said: **svami na mane yei jana vesyara bhitare tare kariye ganana** "One who does not accept the svami [husband] as an authority I consider a prostitute." If a disciple is honestly confused or misled about the desires or intentions of his swami, then he cannot be immediately classified as a prostitute or as one who does not accept Srila Prabhupada's authority. I think name-calling other Vaisnavas is precisely what we want to avoid in this issue. We are trying to clarify Srila Prabhupada's intentions in the matter.

From Patita Pavana dasa, San Pablo, Ca. 9.1.88

Thank you very much for sending VVR which I enjoyed. I greatly admire your accomplishments in New Jaipur and I feel very inspired to read about your work there.

I appreciate your position on HH.Sridhara Maharaja. However, I want to point out that although Srila Prabhupada had differences with Sridhara Maharaja he was always very friendly and respectful toward him. The fact that he offered Sridhar Maharaja the position of being President of ISKCON seems to indicate that he was willing to work with him despite their differences. Regarding the followers of Srila Prabhupada and Sridhara Maharaja I feel that it's very unfortunate that fellow Vaisnavas are unable to relate to each other in a friendly, respectful manner.

I think it can be agreed that the disciples who are sincerely following Sridhara Maharaja are genuine Vaishnavas. Why not show genuine appreciation and respect?

Although Rupa Vilas' article "Srila Prabhupada's Intentions" is excellent, informative, authoritative and shows conclusively - or comes very close - to showing that Prabhupada's disciples who left ISKCON and joined Sridhara Maharaja made a mistake and are wrong, I doubt very much if even one follower of Sridhara Maharaja who reads the article will join or rejoin ISKCON. Why? Because as anyone can see who visits one of his temples the devotees there who are sincerely engaged in devotional service are feeling genuine spiritual happiness. They really have no reason to leave.

I think that it's time that mature devotees from each group met to reconcile their differences, to perhaps to agree to disagree on certain points, but most important to embrace one another as fellow Vaisnavas and enthuse each other with their programs for preaching Krsna consciousness.

EditorRV: Although you are expressing laudable broadmindedness and liberality here, you also cloud several issues in the process. The point is not whether or not Prabhupada could work with Sridhara Maharaja, but whether Prabhupada's disciples should follow him in Srila Prabhupada's absence, and in the relationship of guru. Also your blanket assertion that "all" the devotees in Sridhara Maharaja's mathas are "feeling genuine spiritual happiness" seems a bit hard to swallow. And further, that not even one follower will change his opinion, no matter what information is presented about Srila Prabhupada's desires in the matter,seems to unwittingly presume a great deal about the **insincerity** of some of those followers. First you agree with the article and then assert that "they really have no reason to leave." This is the inherent weakness of excessive liberality: it is contradictory. It is difficult to simply "embrace" all Vaisnavas as sincere souls, if, in fact, they have deviated from the desire of Srila Prabhupada. Certainly, they are Vaisnavas. Whether or not we should want to accept their association is another. We should respect everyone, what to speak of followers of Sridhara Maharaja. But one must choose who he **takes** association from with the greatest care. Personally, I offer my respects to any devotee, but I find it difficult to laud those God-brothers who follow Sridhara Maharaja as perfectly sincere, when, after hearing the evidence in my article, remain unshaken in their attitude.

From Paramadvaiti Swami [formerly, Alanatha Swami - ed.]

After reading your article I felt compelled to write something to clarify my beloved God-brothers' position whom you glorify as "Sridharites". To begin with, let me refer to your article from the **Vaisnava Journal** which convinces me that, in your present article **Srila Prabhupada's Intentions**, your great learning has been covered by some misinterpretation out of bitterness (perhaps from being pushed around for so long by your God-brothers) that you concluded to take shelter of your own realizations (mind). Your loving feeling for Srila Prabhupada was mixed with the before-mentioned, and thus you gave a distorted picture of Srila Prabhupada's intentions contradicting shastra and reality.My points are:

1. Sridhara Maharaja **never** re-initiated a disciple of Prabhupada. In some cases he gave new names, as it is the custom to give names in India at the second initiation. Those who only had the first initiation from Prabhupada and took second initiation from Sridhara Maharaja [got new names] and also some sannyasis received titles from Sridhara Maharaja, but they were never re-initiated. Even Prabhupada received the title Bhaktivedanta from Sridhara Maharaja. If you carefully read these lines you will see that all your 8 points have been considered and are without standing.

2. You quote so many pro-Sridhara Maharaja statements from Prabhupada and very few against which you try to patch up by quoting totally unrelated comments Prabhupada made about other God-brothers or general God-brother statements which were produced by some antagonistic attitudes of some God-brothers, never by Sridhara Maharaja. Do you realize that by

doing so you try to become more than Prabhupada? Here is why: The sastra tells us of the story of the guru and his disciple and the rope. The guru said, "Beat it, it's a snake." Then, "Why do you beat a rope?" Then: "I told you to kill that snake." And so on. As you quoted in your article, our master's last instruction was, in regard to Sridhara Maharaja - go and get his help and advice. So, why is your faith now shaking? Has Sridhara Maharaja contradicted the Vaisnava siddhanta? Why do you paint the saktyavesa-avatara as someone who didn't know what he was saying?

3. When we judge the right or wrong thing to do, we take shelter of guru, shastra and sadhu. That means Vaisnava bhakti-siddhanta. Could Prabhupada have ever contradicted the Absolute Truth? If you quote "Prabhupada said", which was anyway prohibited by Prabhupada while he was still on the planet, to avoid abuse and distortion (e.g. to prove something like "don't consult higher Vaisnavas"), thus contradicting bhakti-siddhanta, you are being insulting in the misused name of your guru. Nevertheless, Prabhupada did say many things and we are not to understand them all necessarily. A practical example:

I am teaching new students to my best capacity as I learned from Prabhupada. I don't tell them: "Never read other Vaisnavas' books." Or, "You don't need any other Vaisnava's mercy." But if a God-brother of mine behaves wrongly I may point that out to avoid misunderstanding in the students. But if I am to die today and that Godbrother is the most advanced Vaisnava available I will tell my students, "If you have trouble or questions, please consult with my dear God-brothers." But if after I die, one student will say to the others, "Just listen to me, don't consult with that God-brother. Don't you remember that our teacher previously pointed out some mistake in him? Never read his books. We don't need other Vaisnavas' mercy (except you need my mercy he means). We must be "faithful" to our master.

That is cheating, distortion and a big offense which will kill his advancement.

In order not to overextend this answer, I beg the interested reader to carefully read Gaura Govinda Swami's article **Guru-tattva** and Rupa Vilasa's article **Some Considerations Concerning Siksa and Diksa Gurus** in the **Vaisnava Journal** (Vol.2 No 1) Thus, you will conclude that Prabhupada could never have been against re-initiations, if the need arose. Obviously, he was against some envious attack against his mission and kindly protected his sons and daughters with his protest. It is beyond a shadow of a doubt that Prabhupada wanted his movement to remain unified, and so also desired Bhaktisiddhanta for the Gaudiya Math. But it is now already a historical fact that those two institutions did not maintain the original structure they started off with. We are learning undoubtedly, but now our beloved guardians have rejoined their eternal Lord in Goloka, and we can only see them again if we become as compassionate and loving with others and amongst ourselves, that we may develop pure love for them and Krsna.

Please point out any mistake I may have made in this article with detailed proof. If we have any doubt about the best way to serve our guru Prabhupada, we are allowed, and I recommend, to study Sridhara Maharaja's books. One can accept or reject in accordance with the bhakti-siddhanta. One will discover the same as I did. Lord Caitanya inspired his pure devotee to help us in the separation of our beloved Prabhupada. Where is that strange idea coming from that by glorifying and loving a certain Vaisnava it puts down or places in the shadow what we feel for our guru, which is a scare tactic frequently used within ISKCON. Where in the shastras do we find evidence for such a strange attitude?

Of course it is wrong to neglect your guru's presence and go to consult others without special reason, for example, having doubts about the guru's proper action (as in **Bhajan-amrta** by Narahari). But to say that those who took shelter with Sridhara Maharaja are unchaste, while the GBC did not even lend an ear to so many individuals' difficulties and busied themselves covering up for one another - this sounds to me like old-fashioned GBC propaganda. It is offensive to discriminate between siksa and diksa gurus in both how one treats and respects them. And by the way, who knows who is whose guru? These are individual hearts' decisions. When one has received a spiritual gift, and the desire to become Lord Caitanya's pure devotee is invoked, then, and only then, has he met his guru. And he may meet him again in other forms until he reaches the spiritual sky where they all live together forever. Nobody can vote who is guru, nobody can say he is or he is not. He may not be your guru, but don't try to play Krsna, because only He knows whom He wants to empower and whom he will allow to discover His transcendental agents in this world.

EditorRV: You have assumed that due to bitterness I wrote some articles, taking shelter of mental speculation. Where is the Vedic evidence for that? Your first point that no re-initiations have taken place appears to be word-jugglery. Giving spiritual names is a feature of initiation which Prabhupada performed along with Hari-nama, first initiation. Why should what Prabhupada had rendered be put asunder by another? In the **CC Madhya** Ch.1, text 208 we find:

aji haite dunhara nama `rupa' `sanatana'
dainya chada, tomara dainye phate mora mana

"My dear Sakara Mallika, from this day your names will be changed to Srila Rupa and Srila Sanatana. Now please abandon your humility, for My heart is breaking to see you so humble. Purport: Actually this is Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's initiation of Dabira Khasa and Sakara Mallika. They approached the Lord with all humility, and the Lord accepted them as old servants, as eternal servants, and He changed their names, It is to be understood from this that it is essential for a disciple to change his name after initiation.

sankha-cakrady-urdhva-pundra-
dharabady-atma-laksanam
tan nama-karanam caiva
vaisnavatvam ihocyate

"After initiation, the disciple's name must be changed to indicate that he is a servant of Lord Visnu. The disciple should also immediately begin marking his body with tilaka **(urdhva-pundra)**, especially his forehead. These are spiritual marks, symptoms of a perfect Vaisnava."

Now my question is: since these devotees already had been initiated and had their names changed by Prabhupada, why should their names be changed again? Prabhupada had already done at first initiation what may be done at second initiation in the Gaudiya Math. These devotees were clearly his disciples (with names given by him that were clearly spiritual). Could anyone have misunderstood this or invalidated it in any way? Lord Caitanya gave spiritual names to two persons, who were considered Mohammedans, at their first meeting, and it is stated here that this constituted initiation. What was the necessity to re-name Prabhupada's disciples, since there is every indication here that this would constitute initiation of the already initiated? Do you think that Rupa and Sanatana Gosvami would have agreed later to change their names, having met another great Vaisnava? What is the rationale?

Giving a title to someone is something else, as he retains it as an addition to his already given name. Prabhupada was given the name Abhay Charan by his father. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati only slightly altered it making it Abhay Charanaravinda and Bhaktivedanta was an additional title, as was the later Swami. Further, please tell me the rationale for men who were given first, second and sannyasa by Prabhupada who now go by completely different names as Panchadravida and JagatGuru Swamis are doing. Why give them new names? What is the meaning? How could Prabhupada approve of this?

All 8 of my points in the article remain intact.

You say I quote very few statements warning us against the association of Sridhara Maharaja. Perhaps you are referring to some other article. I count at least 10 such statements, and there were others too heavy to mention.

Prabhupada advised the GBC men to inquire from Sridhara Maharaja on any topics they could not resolve with recourse to his writings. He never gave carte blanche for all of his

disciples to go to him for advice, take initiation, change their given names, start new Societies, recruit men from his Society for another, etc.

Prabhupada never forbade the expression, "Prabhupada said" in regard to things actually spoken by him.

Who is that Vaisnava higher than Srila Prabhupada?

How does the **need** arise for a re-initiation? This is beyond my comprehension. You say you read my **siksa/diksa** article, so how can you propose this? A liberated siksa guru on or off the planet can deliver the sincere student who was initiated by a less advanced guru or by one who later fell.

If we have any doubt about how to serve Prabhupada, why should we particularly read Sridhara Maharaja's books? If you want to know how to serve someone, why not go to that person and ask. Read Prabhupada's books if you want to know how to serve Prabhupada. Everything is in his books.

What is your special reason to go to another? Do you not find sufficient siksa in Prabhupada writings? The GBC's faults aside, why didn't **you** take shelter of Prabhupada's siksa? You say, "Who knows who is whose guru?" Are you Prabhupada's disciple or not? Don't juggle words. Prabhupada is your eternal master, so spend your time associating with him. Of course there is no harm in associating with a highly elevated siksa guru, but where is one more highly elevated than His Divine Grace AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada?

To The Anonymous California Faultfinder:

EditorRV: We've received many letters condemning our inclusion of the anonymous letter sent signed "a disgusted Prabhupadite". To a man, devotees were shocked that we would even print such an outrageous letter. It was an experiment. We had thought that the letter so clearly revealed the position of the writer's mentality that we would not have to even make any commentary. However, our readers thought it was unnecessary and disturbing. Two replies follow.

From Bhakta Wyndell, Long Island, N.Y.
"I was shocked that some of the letters were published. I think the editor is overly democratic. It's alright to make constructive criticism nicely. That's worthy of devotees. But some of the letters, one in particular, signed a disgusted Prabhupadite, was obviously offensive."

From Nrsimha dasa, Honokaa, Hawaii
"One last thing I'd like to mention: I think it was improper to print that anonymous letter from California. First of all, since the author didn't have the courage to put his name by his views, I don't think he deserves space for his shrill accusations. Moreover, I don't think the readers of **Vedic Village Review** need to be subjected to that kind of high-pitched harangue. It is said that unless one defends a person or group who is severely criticized, one looses faith in that person or group. This is both a practical and spiritual principle of social interaction. I, for one, don't have a lot of extra time to answer such irresponsible, stupid letters. But now I'm obligated to do so. For the sake of being "open" and "fair", I feel you have been unfair to sincere readers."

EditorRV: This is Nrsimha P's reply to the Ca. faultfinder:

Although your letter to Editor doesn't address philosophical issues in a sober manner and indeed seems more like the words of a madman, I'll try to reply, as somehow your strange observations were printed in Vedic Village Review.

You obviously don't like the fact that in one issue of Nityananda's magazine it was announced: "No Sridharites need apply." I, too, thought this was blunt and somewhat disrespectful. I know and respect a few devotees who hold Sridhara Maharaja in great reverance yet understand the order of Srila Prabhupada as their life and soul. Like they, I have also gained inspiration from reading Sridhara Maharaja's books. There may be some important reasons, however, why those who want to work exclusively for the institution Prabhupada established should not start a community with those who consider themselves staunch followers of Sridhara Maharaja. But that's not the issue here. If your intention was to defend the spiritual prestige of Sridhara Maharaja and the devotees who identify themselves with his teachings, you have done a very poor job. You had an opportunity to preach about Vaisnava etiquette but misused your chance by offering high-pitched, pedantic condemnations that should never be spoken to Vaisnavas.

First you condemn Nityananda for having used the term "Old South" as part of the name of his organization. Of course everyone knows the Southern Confederacy fought to maintain slavery, along with other social systems of the Old South, but your attempt to make your accusations ring with the authority of historical knowledge has failed. You have failed to offer a valid viewpoint or show by your vicious analogies important similarities shared by the Southern Confederacy and Old South Vedic Society. Apart from the name "Old South," you pointed out no similarities. The fact that Old South Vedic Society has rejected the idea of associating intimately with other spiritual camps is hardly similar to the Southern Confederacy's fighting for slavery. How does selectivity on the part of the New Jaipur community indicate rascism or bigotry? Rupa Goswami recommends we seek out the association of devotees of like mind. So, is it unreasonable to be selective in choosing new members of a community in its infant stage?

You've accused the Old South Vedic Society of being fascist, racist, Nazi and on the level as the Klu Klux Klan, whose members also dance in the streets. Do you think intelligent devotees will be impressed by such foolish accusations? You obviously feel hurt that a group you respect has been rejected by one you don't respect. For this reason you want to reject the latter. So, why not just issue your own rejection notice on behalf of your group & refrain from heavy condemnations that have no basis in truth? Your words and tone are dangerously offensive. You've responded to a minor insult with an irresponsible, vicious attack.

Also, you've revealed some serious philosophical errors in your thinking. For instance, citing Caitanya Mahaprabhu's rejection of varnasrama as being external, you imply that Nityananda's attempts to reestablish the system of varnas (you call it the caste system) are ludicrous. Where did you get this idea? Sounds like new-age "all-is-one" philosophy. Are we on the level of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu? Rather than imitate the ecstatic symptoms of Sri Caitanya and Ramananda Raya, who experience the highest stages of **prema-bhakti**, we must follow their example and never reject the **daivi-varnasrama** system. Even when we have transcended the three modes of material nature, we must teach others how to act by our practical example. For this reason, great acaryas like Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Srila Prabhupada have called for the reestablishment of the varnasarama system. If you have no inspiration for this aspect of Prabhupada's mission, you should at least refrain from maligning those who do.

I have no idea what "neo-christian millenarianism" is or

why you think Nityananda is promoting this along with "reactionary social paranoia." But I must admit the terms sound pretty impressive. From your tone and words, however, I gather that you are ignorant (or you choose to ignore) that Prabhupada did, on several occasions, speak about how the present civilization is condemned. Among dozens of similar things, he said, "This civilization is not good. It will not last. There will be catastrophe, waiting. It has happened, and it will happen [again]." Modern civilization will be destroyed either by its own devices or by a powerful revival of God consciousness led by Prabhupada's movement. Either way it will soon fall. Our avoiding reality in this regard is like avoiding the reality of death. Furthermore, a golden age of Krsna consciousness is clearly predicted by bona fide authorities. Yet you seem to demean this idea, too. I find it diffcult to understand what the nature of your complaint is in this regard. Prabhupada spoke many times about how Krsna conscious varnasrama could revise world civilization, so I fail to see how, by holding this ideal dear, Nityananda and his community promote such things as neo-Christian millenarianism, reactionary social paranoia or neo-Christian apocalyptic utopianism. Maybe you should have defined "neo-christian apocalyptic utopianism" and those other impressive terms and then given at least one example of how Old South Vedic Society has promoted such wonderful phenomena. It seems to me you are hiding behind high-sounding words to cloak your inability to speak philosophically on real issues.

You asservate that Nityananda's life and efforts are essentially empty and useless, but I wonder if you are really qualified to make this assessment of a Godbrother and his service. I wonder why you call pictures of devotees "empty," or buildings housing Vaisnavas and the **arca-vigraha** forms of the Supreme Personsality of Godhead "empty." You signed your letter "a disgusted Prabhupadite." but I wonder why a faithful disciple of Prabhupada is so thoroughly disgusted with a Godbrother who follows the process of **sadhana-bhakti** without claiming to be perfect. I wonder how a genuine follower of Prabhupada can believe that myths and cliches have destroyed the main part of Srila Prabhupada's mission. Is Maya stronger than Krsna? In saying "...the myths and cliches that destroyed the house Prabhupada **tried** to build," you have implied that Prabhupada's mission to build an international Vaisnava society has proved a failure. I wonder why you have so easily given up on Prabhupada's mission. Maybe this indicates your own emptiness. Maybe this indicates your own failure.

Individually, as disciples, any number of us may fail, but it is foolish to announce, just 11 years after Prabhupada's disappearance, that his mission has been totally ruined. What's more likely is that you have personally failed in some respect and for this reason you are seeing failure and ruin everywhere. Inimical devotees who indulge in bitter, hateful criticisms of Godbrothers trying to follow Prabhupada's instructions are the greatest threat to the house Prabhupada successfully built. This is Srila Prabhupada's opinion.

In recent years, senior disciples have felt it was necessary to sometimes criticize ISKCON leadership, but I feel that right lies solely with disciples devoted to keeping ISKCON alive. Others--those who have obviously given up on the society Prabhupada worked so hard to establish--should carefully hold their tongues. Those of us who, in recent years, have found themselves outside the ISKCON institution should at least try to uphold the principles Prabhupada esrtablished and offer friendly advice whenever possible...to the extent our personal knowledge and realization allows. Moreover, we should try to show a superior example for the sake of the world and, particularly, for the sake of our Godbrothers "in" and "out" of ISKCON. In this way, anyone may assist Prabhupada's mission, as Nityananda is trying to demonstrate. Although his devotional service may not be as perfect as yours, I believe he's open to constructive criticism.

But your letter was clearly not meant for constructive purposes. If you really believe Nityananda and Old South Vedic Society are so terrible, why not ignore them completely? You are not qualified to sit in judgement like Lord Yamaraja, pronouncing condemnations. Nor is that your role. Indeed, even Lord Yamaraja himself says he's afraid to chastise those who wear Tulasi beads on their neck and Vaisnava tilak. In this connection, Srila Prabhupada says, "A pure Vaisnava should be very careful about criticizing others. This is the safest position. Otherwise, if one tends to criticize others, he may commit the greatest offense of criticizing a Vaisnava." (Bhagavatam purport 6.7.15). If we can't offer constructive advice, we should at least be patient, and satisfied to let Lord Krsna reveal in His own perfect way who is condemned and who is glorious.

Although I doubt if you can hear my advice, I suggest you reevaluate your own spiritual life and perfect it before you condemn the activities of fellow Vaisnavas. Furthermore, I suggest you visit New Jaipur and apologize to Nityananda and the devotees there. In this way you may clear some dangerous obstacles on your spiritual path. Then, next time you are inspired to write a critical letter, you may do so with compassion and thus find the courage to sign it.

From Uddhava das, Dublin, Ireland, 7.21.88:

I just got a couple issues of VVR and was very impressed. Please send me # 1, 2,3 and put me and the following names on the mailing list. In Ireland there are about 20 devotees who feel ostracized from the "main ISKCON body", and some of us were thinking of getting a community together. We would be interested in any help we can get. Most of us are grand-disciples of Srila Prabhupada, living quite isolated for years with only one Prabhupada disciple in charge. Anyway, the ISKCON revolution has hit us, but we lack senior devotees to council us regularly. We are lucky to have Satsvarupa das Goswami as our spiritual master, and he visits as often as he can. Still, we would like more association with other older Prabhupada disciples. Your Vedic Village is certainly association that we want.

From Mucukunda dasa, Gita Nagari, Port Royal, Pa.

We read your magazine and have become fascinated with your vision and courage to stir up matters that need looking into. We are happy at home here with the cows, and Gita Nagari Village is safe in the hands of Their Lordships Radha-Damodara. One of the leading devotees (and our temple president) Tejo Prakasha dasa is single-handedly pulling the farm back into order, with full am & pm programs, each that he personally gives full attendance. He also, on his own ability and finances, supports the community with his mall shows (paintings), and he is encouraging us all through his vision of prasadam (Yogi Bars) and book distribution: one of the really great disciples of Srila Prabhupada.

There are several old time greats here and for all practical purposes everyone else's name should be unprinted as we are under complete new management and a 180 degree turnaround in our preaching approach. We value our neighbors from former ISKCON management, and we wish not to disturb anyone. Anyway, all is well and our mood is that of positive outlook. Lord Krsna will help us and our 150 cows eat daily. We do have very firm faith in our construction of the new temple. We have had several pledges and it will be designed by a famous Indian architect.

The Yogi Bar business will be in full swing by the time you receive this letter. We will gradually increase, and we are hopeful that the demand is as great as in past years. We have a total of 85 devotees in and around the community. We are very set and hopeful for a revival in the mission and our personal standards and progress in our Krsna consciousness. Our community has 150 beautiful Brown Swiss cows and oxen of show quality, and we are offering any serious devotees free of charge an opportunity to really adopt them body and soul; all you need is grass and water, and I hope you will give that a little thought.

From Sridhara Swami, Bombay:

I am writing to thank you very much for all your hospitality during our stay at New Jaipur Vedic Village.

I was very impressed with what you have done on your own and I am happy that you now have the good association of such nice devotees as Rupa Vilas, Jnanagamya, Pundarik and others. I am praying that communities like yours will spring up all over the world. Of course good things don't just spring up but by hard work, dedication and sincere desire they are manifest. There are many devotees who are seasoned men and who have had their mettle tempered by the fire of the difficult times in ISKCON but now they are ready to make a fresh start and from all our traveling the prognosis in America is very good. The spirit is still there and all we need is a little cooperation and a positive attitude and Srila Prabhupada's mercy.

From Nrsimha dasa, Honokaa, Hawaii, 9.13.88:

Thank you very much for sending me the VVR. I very much appreciate your nonpartisan spirit in presenting this Krsna conscious publication. Certainly as you continue to push on your project and its publication, devotees and sincere souls are all over America will come to appreciate your efforts there more and more. I mentioned to Rupa Vilas that I like the philosophical and practical outlook you have developed there. Your success thus far is surely due to your determined effort to keep Prabhupada and his instructions in the center. I applaud your determination to keep the children of New Jaipur out of yavana schools, and I also agree that there's no need to accommodate those who consider themselves staunch followers of Sridhara Swami Maharaj.

Going further, I suggest that you develop your community at this stage according to a specific theme decided upon by your council. Then, I would carefully screen those who might want to join. I feel that in the beginning it is important that the devotees who lay the foundations for a community be very committed to the principles Prabhupada clarly outlined for rural community development and spiritual sadhana.

From Nrsimha dasa, Honokaa, Hawaii, 11.2.88

I've been meaning to write you and offer the comments you requested on **Vedic Village Review.** Devotees whose opinion I respect think **VVR** is presently the most philosophically correct magazine on the planet. Personally, I think it touches the soul in a very enlivening way. Your article on Sridhara Maharaja was excellently done and very informative. I've also greatly appreciated Nityananda's writings in there. It isn't easy to write and publish in a way that enlivens the soul, but **VVR** is doing that. I hope the magazine will go on increasing and improving and providing inspiration for sincere devotees and guidance for confused devotees, who sometimes wonder, "Which camp is right? Who is speaking truthfully today? What should I believe?" Regarding some of the letters **VVR** has received: I suggest you ignore those who, for whatever reason, are too cynical or narrow-minded to participate in genuine spiritual discussions...I'd like to thank you for your enlightening article in VJ about the grand significance of **siksa-guru** in our line. Everyone should know there is no bar in accepting Srila Prabhupada as one's only life and soul, no matter who one's **diksa-guru** happens to be...I wanted to comment on your fascinating article entitled "Farming Guru". After reading that, I felt like packing my bags and flying to New Orleans. At least three staunch devotees will be joining me on this island soon, and there are serious devotees on Oahu who are interested in what we are trying to do. Any temple or community that makes the cultivation of real **sadhu-sanga** the main function will surely prosper and become an effulgent holy place. We are trying to start such a transcendental hermitage here. Please be kind enough to bless us with the inspiring news of your progress there.

EditorRV: Hare Krsna! I'm not sure our effort with **VVR** is worthy of such high praise, but by Krsna's grace, the magazine may someday be as good as you say it already is.

From Gadai dasa, Angelica, N.Y.:

I am writing to you at the suggestion of Yasodanandan Prabhu. He says that you are publishing a magazine or newsletter, and further that you send these free to devotees who live outside the temple. If possible I would appreciate receiving even one copy. I am building a small cabin in the woods and am interested to correspond with any devotees with similiar interests. I live alone but would like a male companion (preferably). No gays or druggies though. I will answer any sincere correspondence from female Vaisnavas.

From Bhakta dasa, July 20, 1988:

In June 1972 I was traveling in the Pacific Northwest distributing books. I called one day to our San Diego temple which I was serving as temple president at the time and was informed that Srila Prabhpupada had made a decision to come and stay for a few days over the July 4th holidays!

Naturally we were more than ecstatic, but I was afraid. Afraid that somehow I could create some offense to Srila Prabhupada. Therefore we put the gas pedal to the floor and drove without stop for 32 hours to get back to San Diego and prepare for the arrival of our eternal father.

We had about two weeks to prepare and in that time we managed to re-paint the entire temple inside and out. We prepared the temple grounds, polished and repolished, cleaned and cleaned again and again and again. We also were working to prepare as many preaching engagements as we could for Srila Prabhupada as well as organize a festival in Balboa Park to take place on Independence Day. Finally the long waited for day arrived.

We greeted Srila Prabhupada at the airport and took the short drive up the hill to the temple. I was practically speechless, as I always was in Prabhupada's presence. Upon arrival at the temple Srila Prabhupada started to walk up the front steps and then he stopped! He gave me a very grave look and asked, "Who has done this?" while pointing at the steps leading into the temple.

Srila Prabhupada had immediately noted that we had painted the MAHA MANTRA on the uppers of the steps and he did not want to step over the Holy Name! I confessed my guilt and Srila Prabhupada admonished me that KRISHNA and HIS NAME are non-different. We would never place our feet on KRISHNA, so why should we want to step over HIS NAME?

Srila Prabhupada seemed to recognize that my offense had been done in ignorance and he rapidly regained his smiling demeanor. I was chastened indeed.

Srila Prabhupada then took a complete tour of every room, beginning with the temple room itself. He offered his dandavats to the Deities of Lord Jagannatha and the painting of Gaura-Nitai which we were worshiping. He then inspected all the offices, living quarters, kitchen, bhoga room, prasadam room, etc. The last room he entered was the sankirtana room where all his books were stored. Fortunately one of the devotees (probably Tarachandra dasa) had seen to it that every book was stacked neatly, and no books were touching the floor, were in perfect condition and well-organized.

Upon seeing the manner in which His books were kept, Srila Prabhupada wrapped both his hands around my shoulders and patted my back saying, "Thank you very much."

I was dumbfounded and dropped to the floor. Placing my head on Srila Prabhupada's feet, and then looking up into His eyes, I could only say, "Srila Prabhupada, thank you very very much."

To this day upon remembrance of Srila Prabhupada's kindness I am overwhelmed by tears of happiness, and a feeling of hope that one day again I may glow in the unfathomable loving smile of HIS DIVINE GRACE!

From Aja dasa, Portland, Oregon

Enclosed is check for "Ray of Visnu." Tell Rupa Vilasa Prabhu I loved it. NECTAR. I read it practically STRAIGHT THROUGH.

From Shirley Rose Barnett, Natchez, Mississippi:

Dear Carol, Nico and family: Thank you all very much for a delightful evening in your home. The meal was delicious and so wonderfully prepared. Also, it was very nice visiting with your other guests from out of town. Dr. Kamlesh's lecture was very informative and helpful.

Indradyumna Swami poses at Rosalie in Natchez.
Tour guide says,"Honeychild, that's better!"

Before touring Melrose, 1845 glamour mansion.
Nityananda das, Sridhar Swami, Indradyumna Swami,
Dhanurdara Swami and Rupa Vilas das.

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There was one Indian man who was an engineer or scientist of some kind and he had absolutely no faith in Vedic culture or religion. The five hour evening was spent in furious discussion between Dr. Dhaveri and Srila Prabhupada. Dr. Dhaveri tried with due diligence to convince Prabhupada that the old Indian system was useless, etc. Prabhupada relentlessly challenged him with all reference to shastra and sadhu. Dr. Dhaveri did not want to abandon his conviction, but Srila Prabhupada would not let up. He called Dr. Dhaveri fool, rascal, idiot, mudha, etc... The argument went on and on and on. I was surprised that Srila Prabhupada would spend so much effort on this one man.

Finally, very late into the night, about midnight, Dr. Dhaveri fell at Srila Prabhupada's feet in surrender. From that night onwards Dr. Dhaveri became the most faithful member of the San Diego Temple's congregation. All of his family became devotees, and they participated in all devotional activities!

Upon returning to the temple about 1:00 a.m. Srila Prabhupada went to His quarters. Shyamasundara dasa and I were there sitting quietly with His Divine Grace, when Srila Prabhupada looked up at me and asked, "So, how was I?"

"You were perfect, Srila Prabhupada!" I answered. His response: a heart-stopping, full moon-like smile!

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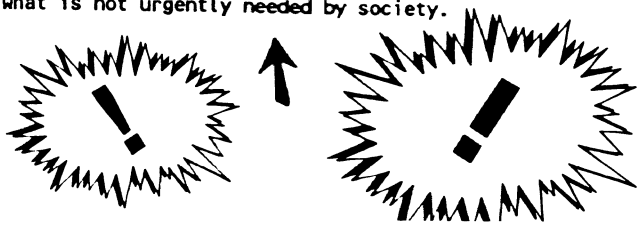
Prabhupada Letter to Balavanta das, 4.28.74:
"Yes inflation is due to paper currency. As for land ownership, in the Vedic civilization the land was given to the people for cultivation not for ownership, and a tax was collected which was 25% of the person's income. The land belonged to the state and the man would cultivate it and pay 25% to the state. If he has no income then he doesn't have to pay. If he doesn't pay tax he may be disowned of the land. One cannot get land from the government unless he agrees to produce something and if everyone produces food then there is no scarcity. At least he has his own food produced by himself. Now people are educated as sudras. They are going to work to produce what is not urgently needed by society.



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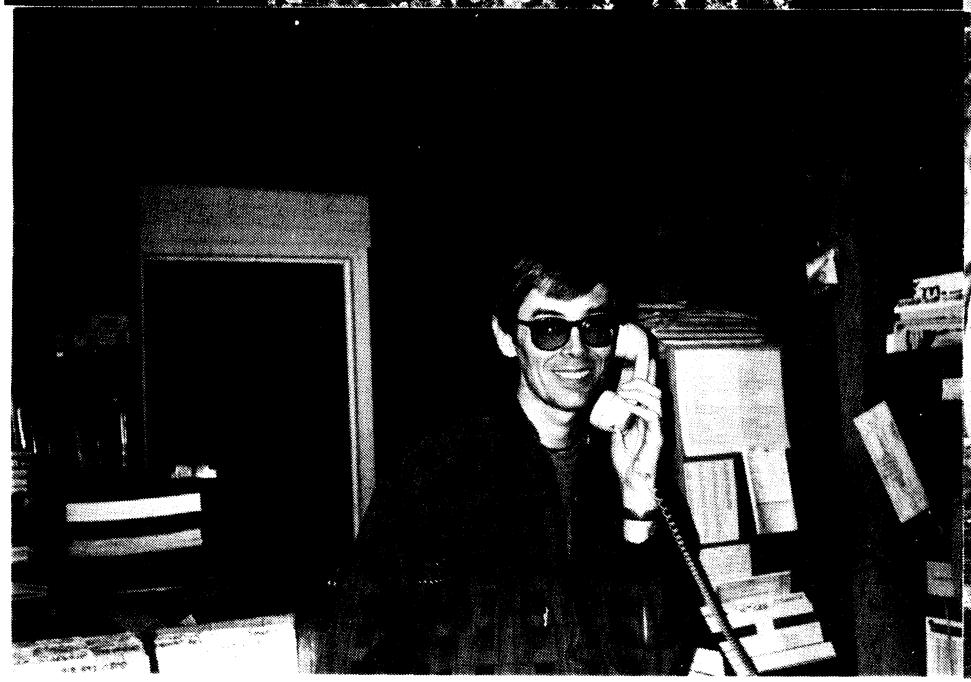


ABOVE: Sri Sri Radha Govinda, New Jaipur

BELOW: Nityananda das on phone:"Hello, ISKCON Temple. May we help you?...Oh, Haribol, Balavanta Prabhu..."

ABOVE: Rupa Vilas das talks with Russians, including Gorgy Grechko, in the center.

BELOW: Rupa Vilas das, Kamarikanta dasi, Russian Orthodox Archbishop Agafangel(with Gita) and Nanda Kishore das.

What follows is an excerpt from Valmiki Muni's **Ramayana**, translated by Sriman Karnamrta Prabhu, and soon to be published. This nectarean portion is Canto 17 of the Bala Kanda and entitled:

THE MONKEYS BORN

1) Upon Lord Vishnu assuming the role of son to the righteous King Dasaratha, the mighty Brahma addressed the host of demigods as follows: 2) "In order to assist the well wisher of us all, Lord Vishnu, in His transcendental pastimes, beget powerful portions of yourselves endowed with the ability to change their forms at will. 3-6) So that your offspring may be heroic, swift as the wind, highly intelligent, insuperable, inventive, endowed with divinely robust bodies and with every virtue; so that they may be like Lord Vishnu in valour, familiar with creating illusions, with logic and with all kinds of weapons: beget sons in the form of monkeys, equal to yourselves, in the wombs of Apsaras and Gandharva women, in Yaksha and Naga maidens, in the aboriginals, Kinnaras and the apes. 7) Formerly, I created the bear-like Jambavan. He was generated from my mouth while I was yawning."

8) Being so addressed by Lord Brahma and heeding his command withal, the demigods begot sons in the form of monkeys. 9)Moreover, broad minded sages, Siddhas, Vidyadharas, and Charanas begot heroic simian sons. 10) Even the celestial Indra begot Vali, king of the monkeys as his son, and Sugreeva was begotten by the sun-god, the great generator of heat. 11)Brihaspati begot the great monkey known as Tara, chief of all the monkeys in wisdom. 12) The fortunate Gandhamadana was born the son of Kuvera, treasurer of the demigods, and Visvakarma, the celestial engineer, begot mighty Nala. 13) The fire-god begot Neela, who resembled the fiery element, and surpassed all in power, fame and glory. 14) The divine twins, the Asvini Kumaras, who are possessed of great physical beauty, begot Mainda and Dvivida as their own sons. 15) Varuna, the sea-god, begot Sushena, and mighty Parjanya, god of rain, begot the monkey known as Sarabha.

16) Vayu, the wind-god had the glorious Hanuman as his son. He is endowed with a body as strong as a thunderbolt and he is as swift as Lord Vishnu's bird carrier, Garuda. Hanuman is the best of all the monkeys, and he is intelligent and strong as well.

Monkeys such as these were generated in many thousands and were all enthusiastic to kill the ten-headed Ravana. 18) Those mighty heroes, whose strength was enequalled, were able to alter their forms at will, and their mighty bodies resembled elephants and mountains.

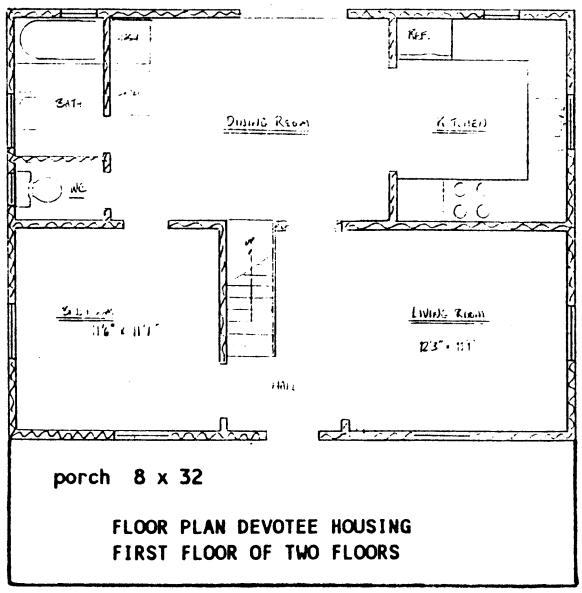
19-20) The Rikshas, monkeys and long-tailed monkeys were soon born, each being the image of the demigod who had sired him; though the long-tailed monkeys were somewhat superior in prowess to the others. 21-22) Monkeys were born from Rikshas and Kinnaras. Famous demigods, rishis and Gandharvas, Garuda and the Yakshas, the great serpents known as Nags, the Kimpurushas, Sidhas and Vidyadharas begot many thousands of such sons with great joy. 23-24) The Charanas begot powerful sons with massive bodies, forest dwellers all, capable of changing form at will, in the wombs of the principal Apsaras, Vidyadharas, Naginees and Gandharvees.

25) They were like lions and tigers in pride and strength and were accustomed to doing battle with great rocks and mountain tops as their weapons. 26) They could fight with their teeth and nails and were conversant with the use of all the regular missiles. They could shake huge mountains and split mighty trees. 27) They agitated the sea, lord of waters, with their impetuosity, split the earth with their feet and leapt over great oceans. 28) They leapt into the firmament and caught hold of clouds, and they seized intoxicated elephants as they wandered in the forest. 29-33) With a roar they would cause shrieking birds to fall from the sky.

The demigods begot ten million great-souled monkeys, who were able to change their forms at will. These were the chiefs of the foremost monkey tribes, and they begot other heroic monkeys who became great captains in their own right. Some descended upon Mount Rikshavatan, while others dwelt on other mountains or resorted to the forests. Many of the chief tribes allied themselves with the son of the sun, Sugreeva, and the son of Indra, Vali, while others placed themselves at the disposal of Nala, Neela and Hanuman. 34) They were all as powerful as Garuda and proficient in the arts of war; wandering here and there they despatched lions, tigers and huge snakes. 35)Great-armed Vali of extraordinary prowess protected, by the strength of his own arms, the various species of monkeys.

36) Those heroes were scattered all over the world, with its mountains, forests and oceans, and they each had individual beauty and unique personal characteristics. 37) Endowed with terrible forms and features, resembling a mass of clouds or the peaks of mountains, the monkey chiefs appeared in order to assist Lord Rama in His transcendental pastimes.

THUS ENDS THE SEVENTEENTH CANTO OF THE BALA KANDA OF VALMEEKS MUNI'S RAMAYANA



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