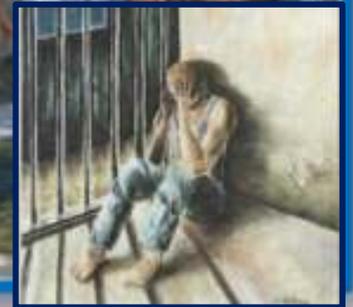


Dedicated to His *Divine* Grace  
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada  
Founder Acarya of ISKCON

## IPM NEWS

ISKCON Prison Ministry / DBA of Vaisnava Outreach, INC.



*“In this age, Kali-yuga, to kill the demons means to stop their demonic activities by the weapon of kirtan, Hari-sankirtan, which is spread by Lord Caitanya's associates.”*

*Srila Prabhupada in London, March 10, 1975*

**March/April 2017**

## WHAT WE HAVE BECOME

by inmate Bhakta Joseph P.  
Galesburg, Illinois

Hare Krsna! I received your latest letter and was truly touched by some of what you had to say – especially that you are willing to share a bit about yourself and the perspective you’ve come to view life from. This is so humbling and appreciated. It is so very rare, here in prison, to find someone willing to not only share their time and wisdom, but even the personal aspects of daily life. Rightly so as many in here are quick to seize on these moments of openness and try to use them for their own purposes. But it is in these “sharings” that the



Bhakta Joseph

soul is moved – that connection can be found and the heart opens to friendship and guidance. I am so grateful to you, dear Mother, for reaching out to me with such compassion, kindness and openness. You have made possible the prospect of me seeing the world with eyes of love and joy.

Bhakta Stephen has continued coming to chapel, and is doing good. We discuss the Bhagavad-Gita, some of Srila Prabhupada's teachings from other books and watch the videos we have when we can get together. He knows the four regs and is working to abide by them. He also chants two rounds on his beads each day. So he is coming along. When he first came over, he was actually looking for the teachings of Eastern Mysticism (chakra work, kundalini energy, etc.) but took quickly to what Srila Prabhupada offers – in fact he became captured by Srila Prabhupada while watching the video, "Science of God". Last week, he was asking about a picture of Krsna found in the Gita. It was one of Him surrounded by smaller visions of His past incarnations – Nrsimhadeva, Varaha, ect. Now, Stephen is an avid fiction reader [he loves stories] and when I began explaining these pictures by telling the stories from the Srimad-Bhagavatam, he became enthralled. And when he discovered these stories were available in SB, he wanted to read this nectar terribly. And guess what – He Can!!! Our chapel recently received the set of Bhagavatam you sent. What a treasure! Srimad Bhagavatam; Caitanya Charitamrita; Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita... How incredibly blessed we here are!!!

You know, when I first discovered this wonderful path of Krsna Consciousness, there was nothing here – no books, pictures, devotees – nothing. In what can only be described as the merciful guidance of Sri Gauranga, I came in contact with Candrasekhara prabhu through an address I found in, of all places, a Buddhist newsletter. Since that time, he, you, and so many more devotees of ISKCON's Prison Ministry have worked desperately to make this darkened place a thriving community of joyful devotees in Krsna Consciousness. We can get together a couple of times each month, we have many books, DVD's, CD's, and so much more. But more importantly, we

have the association and guidance of the devotees of Srila Prabhupada. We are in Vaikunta! What a joy!

If anyone doesn't believe that the dear souls of the IPM, who work tirelessly just to reach such fallen souls in here, make the greatest difference, then they should visit us – see what we have become, see how many people of other faiths now come to find out what we are becoming – even our chaplain has expressed an interest...

Just see how fortunate we are here and in other prisons can leave no doubt that IPM is making a world of difference. How proud Srila Prabhupada must be of you all.

Oh, the new DVDs you sent are now available and being used. Thank you so much for these. I personally have developed a strong affinity for these "Prabhupada Memories" DVDs. Listening to the devotees speak about Srila Prabhupada and about early ISKCON draws me in like you wouldn't believe. The first one you sent (I think #26) was like a trap set to catch me.

Believe it or not, the very first book I received about Srila Prabhupada or Krsna Consciousness was "Prabhupada Nectar". It was sent to me by Candrasekhara Prabhu with his third letter. At first I thought it was an odd selection for one not knowing anything about Krsna Consciousness. But it didn't take very long for me to realize the empowerment Srila Prabhupada has. Krsna, faith and everything else aside, I HAD to know more. Srila Prabhupada captured me and, as of yet, hasn't let me go.

Recently, I honoured the 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the disappearance of His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada. And, as I am sure so many others did, I spent the day chanting, reading stories about him and relishing a deep sense of loss. Though I never met him personally, I cannot help but to feel that he is with me; to feel his influence upon my life. Through Srila Prabhupada's teachings, books, and through the association of those who served, and still serve him, I have been forever changed. My life has become peaceful, sublime and God-centered. Prabhupada will always be a part of me, and I miss him greatly.

Each and every thing I have read or heard from him contains a message – a lesson to be learned by those willing to listen. He gave himself over to us completely – teaching us how to serve Krsna and showing us the way back home. Every act, every word is full of wisdom. Prabhupada was, and continues to be the perfect Spiritual Master. His business, his concern, was not for himself, but

for others, helping and caring for them and leading the way back home. This is how he lived his life, and this is the example he left for us.

I look hopefully to hearing from you again, my friend and merciful guide. Krsne matir astu.

Your servant, Bhakta Joseph

## Assistance greatly needed!

The generous devotee who had sponsored all the UPS shipping costs, to send boxes of books to chapel libraries, is unable to do so anymore.

Sending books to chapel libraries is a **vital** part of the prison ministry; it ensures that hundreds of inmates have access to Prabhupada's words for years to come. It enables us to reach out to inmates who wouldn't have known about Krsna consciousness in any other way.

The UPS shipping cost each year is \$2,000 (\$165/month).

Please let us know if you feel called to take up this great service! You can reach us at:

[iskconprisonministry@gmail.com](mailto:iskconprisonministry@gmail.com)

## Inmate Letter Excerpts

I found your address in a copy of the Bhagavad-Gita, given to me by a friend. I used to live in Alachua when I was younger and in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade I dated a girl whose parents were Krishnas. Funny how life works out. I'm writing to see if I can receive a copy of the Vedas. I see that you're a prison ministry program and I've been intently studying the Gita daily. It has granted me freedom within these walls. Anything you could send me that will assist my spiritual development in Krishna consciousness would be greatly appreciated. Thank you very much.

**Robert M.  
St. Johns, Arizona**

This short letter is to thank you and to inform you that I have received all the precious and valuable reading materials that you so kindly

sent me. I can't find any words to even try to begin expressing the profound appreciation arising from within my heart due to this most kind and loving act of yours. However, know that at the same exact moment I walked out of the property room with the Bhagavad-Gita in my hands I cried like a little baby, while experiencing some overwhelming mix feelings of longing, yearning, joy and happiness, all at once, as if someone or something most dear and precious to me, that I love so much and know so well and has been lost or gone too long, has all of a sudden returned to me.

The fact is that in this lifetime of my existence I have been totally ignorant and/or unaware about the existence of the Bhagavad-gita until recently, a year or so ago, when I started reading His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupāda's books. I have been trying since then, unsuccessfully, to

get a copy of this precious book and now thanks to you I finally have one. I thank you so much for your generosity and kindness. May our Lord Krishna bestow His mercy upon your soul..

**Juan Carillo**  
**Lowell, Florida**



Hare Kṛṣṇa, my name is Ricky and I've been a devotee of Lord Krishna well over a year and a half. I have a *Gita, Perfection of Yoga, Beyond Birth and Death*, and *Kṛṣṇa, the Reservoir of Pleasure*. I found these books a year and a half ago on a book cart at another facility. I started reading, chanting the maha mantra, and giving full devotion to Krishna and I fell in love with Krishna because devotion to Him helps me so much.

I luckily ran into a Buddhist here, a while ago, who had your address and told me to try it, so I hope it works. ☺ I'm requesting three books I would like to study, but you can send up to seven; they have been approved! Whatever you help me with will be greatly, greatly appreciated...

I look forward to starting a relationship with you as a Hare Krishna brother and I hope to hear from you soon and receive the literature.

**Ricky H.**  
**Big Stone Gap, VA**

Could you please put me on your newsletter list and send me free materials about bhakti-yoga study and practice. Please feel free to open my eyes to all details so I be on point with the correct understanding.

**Patrick B.**  
**Wewahitchka, FL**

I have been studying the Bhagavad-gita As It Is, on and off since 2012. I've also read the Isopanisad a few times over the past five years. I feel more in tune and closer to God when I think about what is written in these texts. Last night I chanted the maha-mantra for the first time. I must admit it did not feel natural, but after a few repetitions, it had a rhythm to it. I find it calming, amongst other things.

I am reaching out to you and hope you stick your hand out to pull me up. I look forward to hearing from someone that is willing to assist and guide me on this journey. Thank you.

**Ryan B.**  
**Florence, Arizona**

I'm spending as much time as I can with Bhakta Noller. I've known him for many years. He has cancer so I'm preparing him.

What I've learned from my years in Kṛṣṇa consciousness:

- It's all about serving Srila Prabhupada.
- His way, his instructions only.
- Don't even touch the stupid stuff.
- Keep it simple.
- Keep it clean.
- There is so much nonsense out there; many people lying and misleading others.

**Kalki W.**  
**Corcoran, California**

My life has been up and down and I started using drugs and ended up in prison because of that. I have been locked up now for five years. I have nineteen more to go. I just lost my mom to cancer and my only brother and sister don't write or visit. I have sent them several letters but I never got a response back. But that don't change my faith.

**Jason B.**  
**Waverly, Virginia**

## POEM CORNER

### Can a Soul Just Be?

We navigate through fields  
of Maya's Illusory web,  
all our own making.

What a fool I am  
to think I can control anything MY WAY.

I'm an idiot!

Amazed I've not lost  
my mind as of yet.  
This world is nuts!

Thank you Srila Prabhupada.  
Your instructions and mercy  
is the only cure.  
I love you.

**Bhakta Kalki W.**  
Corcoran, California



### **Everything Belongs to You**

I look out of my tiny window, and see  
Soft clouds, billowy,  
Floating free.  
Darkened, their shade resembling Your hue  
And I am reminded  
That all this beauty, everything I see  
Belongs only to you.

**Bhakta Joseph P.**  
Galesburg, Illinois

# THANK YOU to ALL our SUPPORTERS!

Your generosity is what keeps this program going! 😊 If I forgot anyone, please forgive me and let me know so I can include your name in the next IPM NEWS.

## Our donors since last newsletter:

Danette Adams  
Henry Schoellkopf  
Kamlesh Patel  
Premavardhan dasa  
Sivananda das and Madan-Mohan-Mohini dasi  
Inmate Joseph Powell  
Inmate Dennis Law

Thank you also to Ekanatha  
and Ramai prabhus, for their  
astute technical advice.

## And our monthly Donors:

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Mickey Singer  
Radha Vinod dasa  
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Thomas Nicholson  
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## 3 Donation Options

- 1) Send check or postal money order to:  
ISKCON Prison Ministry  
PO Box 2676  
Alachua, FL 32616
- 2) Donate through PayPal at: [www.iskconprisonministry.org](http://www.iskconprisonministry.org)
- 3) For automatic, monthly donations, you can do so on our website (with the PayPal button), or through your bank "Automatic Bill Pay" option, which is free and easy.

We can send you a **tax deductible receipt** at the moment of the donation or at the end of the year, as you wish.

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