



IPM News



Dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

April 2012 ISKCON Prison Ministry Newsletter

Changing Lives from the Inside Out!

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FINDING KRSNA IN THE DARKEST PLACE

Dear devotees, nectar keep pouring in and I want to share with you some more nectar. Today I was reading another letter of an inmate reaching out to Krsna and His devotees for guidance and inspiration. I wanted to share this with you all. I am always awed and touched how Krsna arranges for sincere souls to be connected with Him. Sometimes an inmate finds a book, or is guided to the prison ministry by another inmate. Sometimes they find our address in a resource list provided by the institution. Somehow they come to Krsna's feet. Here is the letter:

“Hare Krsna. I am serving 15 years for aggravated robbery. I am embarrassed of how powerless I became over my life, to chemicals, lust, and greed.

I have 5 small children; 3 beautiful girls and 2 beautiful boys, by 2 different women. My oldest is 10. I come up for parole 2015. To say I am searching for a higher power and desperately need a change of lifestyle and belief system is an understatement. I try to love myself.

A friend here (which is hard to come by) gave me your address and told me to request the book “Bhagavad-gita”. I am searching for the new me and was told this book would help me develop it. Please send me a copy and correspondence. Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you and reading true knowledge.”

Robert Hallman
Angleton, Texas

I sent Robert some books and a BTG and will be waiting to hear back from him soon. In the meantime, I continue writing many more inmates and their letters often offer great nectar. See for example, the following excerpts:

Effects of Srila Prabhupada in my Life

“I was a lost soul wandering in this material world. I remember thinking, ‘I can’t find my way home.’ I didn’t really know the deep meaning of this, but that’s what I used to think as I would lie in bed suffering throughout the darkness of day and night. Though wanting help, needing it, searching for it for

years, I had nearly given up my efforts to find assistance along the way. It was then, at my lowest point that I came into contact with Srila Prabhupada's books. What a powerful experience it was for me reading the first book. A truly life changing event! Gone are the days and nights filled with depression, despair, and the deep darkness of ignorance. Now, my path illuminated with transcendental knowledge, I have an abiding inner peace and joy. By Srila Prabhupada's boundless, causeless mercies, I am finding my way back home...back to Godhead. Jaya Srila Prabhupada! Hare Krsna! Your humble servant, Jason"

Jason Matthews
Columbia, SC

"So here I am, an aspiring bhakta, trying to make even a little advancement in my personal practice of Krsna-bhakti, however, for me, this is not enough. I am not on a solo journey; I must preach, propagate the glories of Sri Hari-nama. I must do everything I can to go and expanding Lord Caitanya's sankirtan movement, all the while humbly and very respectfully crying out for your mercy, the mercy of all of you, kind, caring, and compassionate devotees of the Divine Couple Sri-Sri Radha-Govinda.

I need assistance, books, booklets and BTG magazines, articles, downloads, etc. Like a field commander, I am calling for tech support for "bombs" to be strategically dropped."

Jason Matthews
Columbia, SC

"Hare Krsna. All glories to Prabhupada.

Today is Thanksgiving. I was up early doing my studies and preparing myself for the day. My chanting could not go so well though because I have been awake for over two days now. It seems there is an individual nearby who has been banging real loud all day and night on his cell door. He only does it to aggravate everyone else. It has been ahrd to meditate but I still found myself able to give thanks.

I gave thanks to Krsna for making me who I am...(there he goes banging again!)...for allowing me to be on a path to yearn to know him and understand His instructions. Thanks that even though I am in prison in solitary confinement, I do not feel alone because I know His energy animates and sustains everything. And thanks tthat He has blessed us with the teachings of His Divine Grace to best understand our relationship to Him and a way back to Godhead.

I just received the latest BTG and as always the articles are informative and inspiring. I loved His Graces's article, "Only the Pious Turn to Krsna." It made me again aware of how much the sould cries for more than material living; food, films, jewelry and other illusions. I really enjoy the BTG magazines and I pray that Lord Krsna continue to protect me and watch over me on my journey. Thank you for your support in the prison ministry."

Bhakta Robert Cepeda
Malone, NY

"I found your address in a booklet titled, "The Perfection of Yoga", by his divine grace Swami Prabhupada. I'm writing to see if someone would be interested in having a pen-pal.

Even though I am labeled as an inmate, I'm devoted to spirituality and advancement. I'm 28 years young and I'm seeking someone who is like-minded to correspond with. I enjoyed reading the booklet by Mr. Prabhupada and found it to be full of truth. I look forward to possibly discussing the various topics that Mr. Prabhupada has written about. I consider myself to be open-minded. Thank you for your time. Take care. Hare Krsna!"

Blake McGrath
Lauringburg, NC

"Prison has forced me to look within myself and understand the need for a spiritual life. That's why I wrote to you because I want to learn and to change for the better. For two years now I've been doing Hatha Yoga and contemplative meditation but it's just not what I'm looking for. I believe in a power much greater than myself and I want to obtain the consciousness to be in harmony with this power. The peace formula that you sent makes a lot of sense and I'm very interested in prayer and chanting. So far the simple chant

from that formula has brought comfort and calmness to me as I currently in a tough situation. I grasp the idea of Krishna consciousness. How does one actually reach this state of being?

I want to learn and lead a happy spiritual life during my prison term and take it out into the free world with me. Because of my surroundings, I am aware that oftentimes the only peace that I'll know will only be within. Once again I thank you for responding to my letter and I hope to hear back from you. Please teach me more about Krishna consciousness."

Ivan Braden
Lompoc, CA

"I very much enjoy reading Srila Prabhupada's books and BTGs. The *Nectar of Instruction* is PRICELESS."

John Hunnicut
Chillicothe, OH

"Thank you very much for all the times you have helped me to receive what is to me THE best magazine in the world, I mean I have learned more now and have a clear understanding of what is going on, not only in my mind but I feel it in my soul too."

Mark Flanigan
Susanville, CA

To read more excerpts of inmate letters and to see some of their artwork, please visit our website at www.iskconprisonministry.us

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To help with this prison program, please contact Mukunda Dasa or Bhakti-lata Dasi at:

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