



*“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*

**Jan/Feb 2018**

## **Prison Preaching in CANADA**

By Ishvari Jahnava Devi Dasi

My son Gopal, who was born into the movement, has been in and out of jail since he was sixteen. In January, he will turn twenty-five. Currently Gopal is in Surrey Pretrial Center, British Columbia, Canada, awaiting trial in May 2018. If convicted, he could get fifteen years for his crime.

New Gokula ISKCON has sent around a hundred books into the jails throughout BC since last September. Our plan is to provide every jail with a Srimad-Bhagavatam set. All Glories to Srila Prabhupada and his books!!!



Ishvari Jahnava dasi

For a long time I was not able to get books into jail. I spent so much money. And unfortunately, nothing was reaching him. But Gopal spoke to his chaplain and the chaplain contacted our temple president. Because Gopal preached to many people who are now in different BC Jails, those people contacted their chaplain and those in turn also called our temple president asking for the books to meet the spiritual needs of their inmates. To make a long story short, in the past three months we saturated almost all the BC jails with books. Over three hundred we sent out to chaplains all over; they kept half in their libraries and half went directly to the interested inmates. The whole thing is Krishna's MERCY!!!! His grace Manu prabhu, our dear temple president, authorized me to take from our book room as many books as I needed to distribute in jails. He even reimbursed me for shipping. In the last parcel I managed to send Gopal the first volume of Srimad-Bhagavatam; I had to cut the hard cover off because he's not allowed hardbound. Some jails also accepted japa beads. So many people are chanting! We know how fertile the soil is for planting Hare Krishna seeds behind bars. Srila Prabhupada's books are so incredibly mighty!!!!

In Gopal's own words: "I came into this world knowing exactly who my innocent true self was and knowing what felt right in my heart. My kind and loving nature, although benevolent, was enveloped by a seemingly insurmountable amount of Maya and ignorance, resulting in rascaldom at its finest!"

All these years, our family has been intensely praying to Radha and Krishna for Gopal's welfare. I always begged Krishna to kindly pass on to Gopal the possible effects of my devotional service, of my chanting the holy name. I have been dedicating to Gopal and all my children the results of all my pious and devotional activities. For the longest time only few books could reach him in prison, and they had very little effect on his spiritual awakening.

We never gave up on him, though, praying. Finally, by Krishna's mercy we found a way to send books to Gopal, as described above. An

amazing transformation started to take place in him. As Gopal says in his letter:

"Srimati Radharani reciprocated all of your causelessly merciful prayers by engaging me twenty-four hour daily in the devotional service to Sri Govinda!!! Thank you unlimitedly! There is nothing like jail in this world, to shift those of us 'who need to learn the hard way' into the perfect paradigm of ripeness for learning Krishna Consciousness! This jail is perfect and our combined service would be tantamount to wielding a celestial magnet capable of drawing all the precious jewels beneath the earth surface (how fallen we are) to the transcendental plane of surrender unto Lord Krishna's Lotus feet! Jail is assisting us in the battle with Maya, by simply removing all sense objects of pleasure and it is unknowingly working as a tool in Krishna's all-powerful plan!!!"



Above: Gopal Dasa

After Gopal started to read Srila Prabhupada's books, chant 16+ rounds of mahamantra, fast on all Ekadasis, appearance and disappearance days, and on Saturdays, dedicating all his austerities to Sri Krishna— miracles started to happen. This is how he describes everything:

"I was the seventh individual to come to this current unit as in April 2017. I followed my beloved parents' step by step, daily guidance on my personal purification process and on how to effectively spread the Holy Name wherever I am. I started to focus on cleansing myself from within, allowing the all-powerful vibrations of the mahamantra to do the rest. I went back to my sikha-

shaved head haircut. This, along my sometimes 2-3 days-long fasts, done in a very joyful mood, generated a lot of questions. I started to share. Below are some of my friends' experiences after coming in contact with the knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

My Bro Everett is thirty. Once in 2014 he told me: "*Gopal, I am an atheist, but if I had to pick a religion it would be yours as Krishna and His pastimes are by far the coolest!*" Now, after he's read his first book *Perfect Questions, Perfect Answers*, and realized that Krishna is the ultimate scientist because only He knows all things as they are, Everett has surrendered to Lord Krishna!!! His daily mantra meditation is strengthened by daily reading of the Bhagavad-Gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam and Krishna Book. He became a strict vegetarian, and refuses to eat anything that isn't first offered! The day he surrendered he felt a huge weight lifting off his shoulders; he felt immense peace, knowing with certitude that everything was going to be OK.

My older 'brother', Dean A., who is forty-eight and of aboriginal heritage, is a true Krishna bhakta; he just did not remember it until now. He was always spiritually inclined and grew up as a devout Christian, which is great. He immediately took to the addictive process of sankirtan after seeing a *Back to Godhead* picture of Lord Jesus, Lord Buddha, Lord Allah, and Lord Caitanya, and after reading a description of all the Avatars in Srimad-Bhagavatam. He even grew his own sikha out of solidarity with me, so nobody makes fun of me.



Above: Gopal's sikha shaved head

Paul A., thirty-seven, a very great dude with amazing qualities, has always supported me. He was instantly drawn to the holy name of the Lord. After reading a book called *The Hidden*

*Messages in Water*—which describes the effects vibrations have on water—and after watching an episode of *Ancient Aliens* about the transcendental sound vibration OM, and how the holy name and OM provide the best possible vibrational frequencies to the body and the universe—he fell in love with the holy name and its lovely peaceful effects. He calls it "*mantra-ining for the soul*" and states, "*I have never felt such peace as when I first started chanting rounds. The soothing inner stillness is incredible; it is the best method for controlling the insatiable mind and senses!*" He told me he hasn't been able to stop and never will, as the happiness is always steady and increasing. It also gave him refuge during tough times and rescued him from some ugly voodoo/cursing effects. This is one example of why we all chant the *Narasimha Kavacha Stotram* every day—for complete protection from all types of danger.

My roommate, Jonny M. and I, came to this point in our lives where we feel deep dissatisfaction materially speaking and immense enthusiasm for advancing Lord Caitanya's mission and for pursuing unconditional love of Krishna. He chanted his first rounds of japa on Janmastami; we chanted together and during the second round we both started crying. He told me that by the second round he already couldn't conceal a momentous surge of unprecedented love and emotion. He's never experienced this transcendental emotion before. I could not hold back my tears either, sensing what he was going through! In this way we chanted four rounds, feeling an ecstatic array of emotions together, balling our eyes out. Then, when we came to our senses, we had a very sweet discussion on that very special day of Krishna's appearance, rejoicing, reading the introduction to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam and some relevant Krishna Book pastimes. Both of us can't wait to play our role and sincerely contribute to Lord Caitanya's Movement. God bless Jonny and all of us!

My senior friend Ed K., fifty-three, considers that destiny brought him to jail to meet with this knowledge. Ed constantly glorifies Lord Krishna and he can't stop crying whenever he reads Srila Prabhupada's books. He says: "*We have all endured so much pain in this life and we all need Krishna's Lotus feet in our lives!!!*" He must be very sincere because when I gave him my japa mala (upon seeing him chanting the holy name on his fingers), after half an hour of chanting he had seen Krishna!!!! He called me into his room to talk in

confidence, evidence of tears on his face, and he proceeded to describe to me his first interaction with the Absolute Truth! He told me that while he was chanting, looking at the pictures on his wall of Sri Sri Radha Madana Mohana and Lord Jagannatha, he suddenly saw Krishna sitting on his bed. He describes feeling a powerful and peaceful presence gracing him with His sidelong glances on the left of him. As he turned, he saw a huge, dark blue figure, strong yet graceful, filling up the bunk, sitting cross-legged, with the bearing of a lion. At times it was a silhouette—navy blue, as clouds move across a stormy sky—smiling most affectionately. Ed was awe-struck and dumbfounded, yet not the least bit scared. He felt immense peace and, after catching his breath, he continued chanting the holy name. But now Krishna raised His magnificent flute and swayed slowly from side to side, with His eyes closed as if enjoying a trance. Ed recognized Him as Krishna because of His famous peacock feather and, of course, His transcendental flute! I immediately paid obeisances to my friend and to the place where Krishna had been sitting. I reassured him that he was not insane but rather a great soul who Krishna loves so very much that He personally welcomed him to the Vaisnava family! All glories to the primeval Lord Govinda and His wonderfully miraculous ways! I described to Ed, how Lord Caitanya feels mad with love through the holy name; how He loses all track of time, of His senses and composure, and He sometimes dances and sings and cries out of control due to the transcendental activity of Krishna Sankirtan! And how His spiritual master told Him: ‘No, you are not mad: this is a sign of pure love of God and quite natural when feeling the grace of Krishna by His constant association. It’s a transcendental emotion very rare in this material manifestation!’ Needless to say, Ed is bathing in the love of the Lord and has every intention of progressing spiritually and contributing to our Temple’s causes!

Jaimie B., thirty-two, reciprocates appropriately and affectionately in his comments towards Bhagavata-Dharma. He always compliments my spiritual dedication and good qualities. He loves how I am always happy even

during any adversity life throws at me. I tell him that I am a worthless bag of flesh and bones without Krishna’s divine spark of light and without the devotional service to the Lord Sri Krishna and association of devotees. This is the only source of my good qualities and my ever increasing happiness. Jamie is intelligent. He instantly dove into the refreshing pond of Krishna conscious knowledge. He is retaining the knowledge and transmitting it to his loved ones. He said that Lord Caitanya’s Sankirtan Movement is the most conducive path to love of God and to God Consciousness for us here in jail and for humanity at large! Jamie also beautifully phrased that “*Chanting Hare Krishna is at first similar to a high derived from being addicted to narcotics, but it quickly surpasses the drug’s feelings as the happiness always and steadily increases, and the love and ecstasy are very tangible, easily accessible and without a roller coaster ride of ups and downs. The holy name replaces the artificial pleasures with self-realization and such profound love and jolly happiness – even in here!*” He thanks Srila Prabhupada for helping us understand the Lord so easily and for helping us to eliminate all of the effects of tedious and disheartening times in prison. Jamie has been contributing to book distribution within jail, helping Ahimsa cows in Saranagati village and deeply desires to play his part in assisting the entire movement and our entire transcendental welfare activities worldwide. Krishna bless his soul with peace and madness in love of God!

The holy vibrations are strong and we are all feeling the love! I notice that more and more Krishna katha is taking place within these walls and between all of us, as well as with our loved ones we communicate with. This love of the holy name compels us to pay it forward to all of our loved ones and to all of those in need with whom we come across... I believe we all shall continue to expand our cause in this fashion, in a productive manner, as long as we continue to receive the nourishing love of the local devotees!”

*Ishvari Jahnava Dasi lives in Burnaby, BC, Canada, with her husband. Rama Nityananda Dasa.*



## Inmate Letter Excerpts

It's such a blessing for me to have been accepted by you. I'm starting to read the book and I'm trying to be dedicated to this consciousness I found about just a couple of weeks ago, and I'm really trying to get into it. I'm so excited. You have no idea what this means to me. On my birthday, January 20, when I sent you the request, I turned twenty-four years old. And this is my year. This is the year when everything will change for me. I'm determined to start a new beginning. I'm a very spiritual person, very God oriented. I would really appreciate your help in all this. So far I have only read the *Teachings of Lor Kapiladeva*. That's the book that inspired me to keep reading about Krsna consciousness. It really inspired me; this is the kind of things I want to do in life, this is the meaning I was looking for. I'm on a very spiritual journey, and even though I have made many mistakes in life I am now ready to follow the right path. This whole thing about *attachment* it's what got me in trouble. I was very attached to physical desires and money desires, and that's why I'm here, doing time for the third time. But I no longer want this for my life. It is an insane repetition. And yes, I already have a copy of the *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is* in my locker, ready to start reading. I really hope and have faith that this journey that I chose to embark on will make my life joyous. Thank you for responding.

**Wendy R.**

**Dublin, California**

I can't begin to explain what I have learned reading the books you sent me, but to sum it up, I'm becoming more aware of the truth of life.

**Jason T.**

**Angola, Louisiana**

I was reading the Gita this morning and I was trying to pronounce the Sanskrit words and trying to get it right. I also was chanting the Hare Krsna chant this morning and was thinking of all the people in the world chanting with me at the same

time and this was a beautiful experience to have first thing in the morning! I am getting used to doing my chanting in the mornings and this helps set my motivations right for the day...

**Michael C.**

**Crawfordville FL**

I am very interested in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. My father was a professor of Eastern religion and I was introduced to many different forms of religion from an early age. Unfortunately he passed away seventeen years back and I did not continue in my studies. I was raised Christian by my mother but as Swami Prabhupada states, the Godhead transcends Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. I truly believe that studying Krishna and His teachings will bring me closer to the Godhead, by whatever name I may call Him. I am very excited to begin my journey in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**Alexandra B.**

**Alderson West Virginia**



Hello, I've been in prison going on ten years now and I've chanted without japa beads. I have pictures from an old art calendar hung up around the room and offer my food as I should. But as of late I'm having real, real bad dreams. I feel that's because of so many people around me who say they're worshipping Satan. Even though in my dreams I have the sword of Kṛṣṇa to kill the noticeable demons, there are more vixen. I was just wondering if somebody would bless me with a few gifts to fight my most inner battles with. Like a picture of Nrsimhadeva to place on my door and window to show the demons they're no longer allowed to

come in and attack me in my sleep so I can dream peacefully of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I've been in solitary since 2015.

**Israel G.**  
**Marquette, Michigan**

Dear good people,  
A friend of mine passed on a flier to me when I expressed my thoughts of wanting to learn more about Hinduism. I am an eclectic Pagan evolving over the years. But lately I have learned some about Hinduism and the more I learn, the more it fits with my belief system. Thank you.

**Chris W.**  
**Malvern, AR**

I'm writing to let you know that I received the books that you sent and thank you very much. One thing I've learned from all religious books I've read is that they all say the same thing. The Gita has everything in it that one needs. ☺ Always remember...Chant and be happy! Love you guys, thank you and hope to hear from you soon.

**Ricky Howell**  
**Big Stone Gap, Virginia**

## IPM 2017 Book Distribution

**Prabhupada's Books total: 2,933**

**Breakdown:**

**Booklets: 773**  
**Small: 1,223**  
**Medium: 455**  
**Big: 138**  
**Maha-Big: 344**

**Books by other devotee authors: 117**

**BTGs: 2,082**

**CDs: 233**

**MP3s: 25**

**DVDs: 24**

**Japa Mala sets: 112**

**Neck Beads: 23**



**Grand Total of all Books and BTGs in 2017: 5,132**

**Srila Prabhupada, ke, Jaya!!!**

# Inmate Art!



Artwork by inmate Robert Brown

# 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.

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2 anonymous (you know who you are: thank you!)

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