

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*

**July/August 2016**

### Typing my Way Closer to God

For a couple years I've had the pleasure to do service with Yahna, who has been steadily volunteering to type letters for IPM. She has been very quick to type the letters I send her and she is so humble that when I asked her if she would share her realizations from this service, she emailed me the following response, *“I've written a little something, but is that okay as I am not really a devotee of Krsna Consciousness and just want to be of service?”*

Below are her reflections. She'd rather not disclose her last name and location.

**F**or quite some time I had in mind to do some voluntary work. I came across ISKCON Prison Ministry through a web search. Since I am not much of an extrovert, I was happy to see they needed help with typing up letters. Typing is something I enjoy doing, so it was all perfect. That aside, I do enjoy reading some of

the letters and hearing about the inmates' experiences in Krsna Consciousness. I was born in a Hindu family but went off on my own, seeking answers to life, and even though I am not an official member of Krsna Consciousness, while reading and typing up the inmates' letters, I started to see their love and excitement about Krsna. This inspired me and

did make me see God in a different way and actually feel closer to Him.

I had sometimes pictured God as a distant figure, of whom I was somewhat afraid. I used to feel like I was walking around eggshells, afraid of doing the wrong thing in life and thinking that God would reprimand or correct me if ever I did. My idea of God was someone who would value correcting me above loving me, so I always had this little fear in the back of my mind that God was playing a game to get me if ever I did something wrong, which is quite a miserable way of living, really. I did not really feel close to God from reading books and scriptures, and it was actually by hearing about God from the inmates that I started to see God in a gentle and friendly way; like someone who wants to pursue me and be my friend; who wants to share with me instead of wanting me to be perfect enough to deserve His goodness; someone who I can trust instead of being afraid of. It was through people who truly loved [or try to love] God, that I started to see God in their way; this gradually eased me out of my fear and helped me to feel closer to Him.

Although I do have this little fear from time to time, when my world is shaken, I can go back and remember how I started to feel when I heard about Krsna from the inmates, and this helps me not be so afraid anymore.



This service happened quite nonchalantly, but, looking back, it's quite cool to see how things fit together, how God had His hand in all of this, and I am very grateful at such an opportunity to serve Him, while doing something I am actually good at, in a way that's ideal for me.

**Yashna**



## Inmate Letter Excerpts

Hare Krishna!

One lonely day in Boulder County Jail, I came across a copy of the Bhagavad-Gita on the book cart. My life was changed forever. A professed Christian, guilt-ridden and dissatisfied with the Bible, I would still attend church and felt very spiritual but, in my heart, I knew something was drastically wrong. As a dear friend of mine practices Buddhism, my interest was already piqued by Indian philosophy. The Bhagavad-Gita As it gave me the scientific explanation that my soul

craved and my mind could accept. I drank of Kṛṣṇa's nectar as advised... with an attitude of complete faith and acceptance. Waves of what I can only describe as transcendental energy would flow through my being as I would read and meditate upon the Holy teachings of Krsna! It all made so much sense to me and renewed a vigorous taste for a life of spirituality. I read *The Science of Self Realization* and the *Sri Isopanisad* out loud with one of my cell-mates. What an empowering and awe-inspiring feeling this ancient Vedic knowledges give me! It's like awakening from a deep slumber, or having filth cleared from the lenses of my eyes.

I'm saving up for my Japa beads, chant the maha mantra, and am trying to obtain a copy of the Mahabharata and Bhagavad-Gita [which IPM provided to him after this letter]. I am currently in prison at a center where there is a dairy and literally my job is to herd and milk cows. It is so super hard to be a vegetarian in here but I am fully preparing myself for that lifestyle upon release. I can't wait to visit the Krsna center on Cherry St. in Denver and really want to obtain a spiritual advisor. I'm ready to commit my life to a deeper understanding of Krsna and am open to what plans my karma has for me. I know the road will be very hard but I feel the benefits are everlasting. I'm hoping for any guidance, inspiration, or just reading material that can be provided. If nothing else, it has felt good to share my story and reaffirm my faith in Krsna. Thank you.

**Bhakta Kevin R.,  
Boulder, Colorado**



I first became familiar with Krishna when I was younger; I read a book called *Chant and Be Happy*, which was about a couple of the band members from the Beatles studying Krishna and

Transcendental Meditation. At the time I couldn't afford the books to learn more on the subject, but that small book made a huge impact on me at such a young age because it opened my mind to more than just the things I was raised with. Now, unfortunately, I'm incarcerated, although it has given me the opportunity to further my spiritual studies. I found a copy of the Gita in the library here; now I'm trying to find somewhere I could buy the Vedas or the Mahabharata in English translation.

I'd be open to any sort of guidance you may be able to offer really. Hope to hear back from you.

**Bhakta Kyle B.  
Mineral Point, Missouri**

I would like to thank you and ISKCON Prison Ministry from the bottom of my heart for all your selfless service and support you have shown me during my incarceration. The books and magazines have been so wonderful in helping me stay Krishna Conscious and focus my intelligence and knowledge on the Lord, in this difficult time in my life. I am using prison as my ashram and utilizing my time to deepen the relationship I have with Krishna. You and other devotees have shown so much love and support and have been such a beautiful example of Bhakti. I have been able to share the literature you have sent me with a few other inmates along the way and it has been amazing to see a couple of them become so attracted to Krishna and thirst for knowledge of Him. I just wanted to thank you for everything that you do and I send all my blessings and pray that you and the Prison Ministry are able to reach many more lost souls in their time of desperation. I would love to one day be able to pay this service forward and help the Prison Ministry in the future.

"Thank you" does not express the gratitude that I have for everything you have done for me. Haribol!

**Glen B.  
Fort Worth, Texas**

Hare Krsna!

I've been involved in Krsna Consciousness since I was sixteen (1996) and used to visit the farm in Southern Tennessee when I lived there.

Unfortunately, I've strayed from my path, but still hold my core beliefs in my heart. When I came to jail I immediately wrote the chaplain and got a copy of the Gita. I've read and re-read it several times. Three weeks ago, I felt as though I couldn't breathe and was transported to the hospital where I had two surgeries on my right lung. This was a life humbling experience for me as I thought I may pass away to my next journey.

To make a long story short, I am asking to correspond with someone at the temple to help strengthen my faith. If there are any pending

materials that could be sent, it would be well appreciated.

**Bhakta Ryan T.**  
**Riverside, CA.**

Thank you; Bhakta Jason "Bird" received his books... John Lennon on the cover of one of those. AWESOME STUFF! People are asking questions and the more we read the more equipped we are to

answer the questions presented and confidently encourage people to identify with the spirit soul and not the material body, and to call upon the Holy Names of God, He will reveal Himself to you...

I enjoyed ALL of the literature you sent! I received the BTG mags; they are awesome and I am reading them every day... Bird too. ☺

**Bhakta Andrew S.**  
**Coleman, Florida**



## POEM CORNER

### TRUE LOVE

Come, my beloved,  
Let me taste your ambrosial nectar.  
I have had my fill of this cruel world: tainted  
The taste of misery upon my lips.  
Only You can take away these pangs.  
Your love – the remedy  
For all sensual desire.  
I wish only to bask in Your light; to  
Suffocate in Your strong embrace.  
So come now, my sweet Govinda  
Fulfill my desire and lay waste the longings  
Of my heart, for only Your love can  
Complete me.  
The only peace and happiness  
The only love that's true  
Is that which comes from God  
The love He has for you."

**Bhakta Joseph P.,**  
**Galesburg, IL**



## Chaplain's Request

For the last year, Chaplain James Higbee, from the *Ray James Correctional Facility* in Folkston, Georgia, has been hoping for a devotee to volunteer and offer programs to the Hindu inmates. It is an amazing opportunity to present Krsna consciousness to an audience which doesn't need to be convinced that this material world is full of misery; the inmates are very eager to learn about Krsna, and they have very limited distractions!

Interested? Please contact me at: [iskconprisonministry@gmail.com](mailto:iskconprisonministry@gmail.com)

**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:

Mark Barnett

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### And our monthly Donors:

Ravi Jadhaw  
Amala Gaura dasa  
Bhavananda dasa  
Cliff Middleton  
Dina Sharana dasa  
Radha-Jivan dasa  
Kalindi dasi (Hopping)  
Jitarati dasa  
Mickey Singer  
Radha Vinod dasa

Rene Waisvisz  
Shashi Raina dasa  
Yudhisthira dasa  
Deepali Mittal  
Aritra Nath  
Satyanarayana dasa  
Thomas Nicholson  
Vishal Thakur dasa  
Sahadeva dasa



# Your Opportunity for more Service!

Many devotees feel inspired by this prison program and want to know how to participate.

Here are a few ways:

- give a one-time or a monthly donation (we provide tax-deductible receipts)
- donate new DVDs and music CDs (bhajans, kirtans)
- You have BTGs lying around the house? Send them to IPM; the inmates love them!
- Correspond with one or more inmates:

To be successful in this endeavor, you need to be motivated, to feel truly inspired by this service, and, also, to like/love writing. Of course, you also need to practice Krsna consciousness yourself, so your words have potency. If you would like to correspond with inmates, please email Kirtan Rasa Dasa at: [kirtanras108@gmail.com](mailto:kirtanras108@gmail.com)

**URGENT needs of the moment. Please help us by sponsoring the following items:**

1) Two types of labels from Stamps.com:

- Fifty sheets of NetStamps: **\$42.49**
- 250 sheets of Shipping Labels: **\$89.95**

2) Wrist japa malas for those inmates who are not allowed full size japa beads:

- 100 malas: **\$50**

3) 100 counter beads from KrishnaCulture.com: **\$50**

4) 100 white bead bags, on sale right now at KrishnaStore.com: **\$175**

3) Case of printing paper from Sam's Club: **\$25**

4) Heavy-duty shipping tape from Sam's Club: **\$25**

### 3 Donation Options

1) Send check or postal money order to:

ISKCON Prison Ministry

PO Box 2676

Alachua, FL 32616-2676

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.

**Questions? Inquiries? Please contact Mukunda Dasa or Bhakti-lata Dasi at:**

**ISKCON Prison Ministry**

PO Box 2676, Alachua, FL 32616-2676

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[www.iskconprisonministry.org](http://www.iskconprisonministry.org)



