

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

May/June 2018

UNPRECEDENTED HARINAM!

By Bhakta Krishna Kirtan

We have a new bhakta. His name is Thomas Biers and he is the MOST sincere new bhakta I've come across since I've been practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness (2009). He is very genuine and his bhakti was spontaneously awakened in his heart at the sound of the maha mantra. Lord Caitanya and Srila Prabhupada sent me a great one. I've known him for years. He became disenchanted with the Buddhists because of his belief in a creator and Kṛṣṇa consciousness resonated with him like nothing else!

Things have been just amazing lately. We had an extra unused mrdanga, in the chapel as well as an extra pair of kartals. I convinced the chaplain

to donate these to the rec department, so now I can check them out and have harinam on the yard!!! Already, inmates who would have NEVER have heard the maha mantra have benefited by Bhakta Tom and myself doing kirtan on the yard. And we sing LOUD!! 😊

Inmates have come up to watch and ask what it is we're singing and we've had such a good opportunity to spread the holy name. Tom and I do this on Saturday and Sunday evenings and on holy days. It's SO great, singing kirtan outside; something we weren't able to do at the chapel. To sing the Lord's name to the birds and the tree, to experience Krishna in the wind and the sunshine, to sing TO him, for him, there's no greater ecstasy.

I'm learning how to be a very good mrdanga player. I learned the mrdanga pranam and say it before playing this holy instrument and I instruct the rec employees how to care for it so that when it's not in use, it is respected and put in a good place.

Also, one of the nine processes, atma-nivedanam, has been working its way through my heart. Being that "soul surrendered unto the Lord" is particularly liberating. I notice when I remind myself that Krsna's got my back...what in the heck should I be worried about? When I realized a deity like Lord Nrsimhadeva is always there...I like to say in my mind

Jaya Nrsimha, ugram viram maha visnum
jvalantam sarvato mukham nrisimham bhisnam
bhadram mrityourmrityam namamyaham Sri
Nrisimha jaya jaya Nrsimha...

...u know? What do I need to be concerned about? That doesn't give me a license to be stupid, but it lets me know if I screw up somewhere, or if I get too wrapped up in maya, Krsna is always there in one of His many forms to bring me the comfort and assurance that I may need at that given time. Really, no other path can provide this. We are SO blessed to have this. Jaya Prabhupada!!

We fasted until sunset on Lord Rama's day and had the entire chapel all to ourselves from six to eight. We chanted a round of japa together then we had a lesson about Lord Rama. We sang kirtan (I did the Prema dhvani prayers for the first time after kirtan!!) and then watched the first part of an old Bollywood Ramayana. It was pretty awesome.

Oh also, the case is being filed by the attorney this week in Federal court to get our holy days recognized in the BOP [Bureau of Prisons] and thus require them to provide us with vegetarian fast replacement meals. It will be listed as Chase vs. BOP, Eastern district, Virginia. They have twenty-one days to respond. Please have this news published in the newsletter as all prison bhaktas need to hear about this case so they can get what THE LAW will now require their chaplaincy and prison to provide. I will let you know more as the case progresses. Hopefully, the BOP will concede once they see they have no way of winning this, but if it goes to court, I know that Lord Nrsimhadeva will be co-counsel to Mr. Harsh Voruganti and have quite the effect in the court room. I so look forward to this. Gaura-premanande hari haribol!!!!

Bhakta Krishna Kirtan
Petersburg, Virginia



Program in Petersburg, 2015 (Krishna Kirtan circled)
Devotees present: Sarva-drk Dasa and his wife, Sudevi Dasi
Haripada Dasa and his wife, Phalini Dasi

NOTE: “Krishna Kirtan” is an affectionate nickname that Sarva-drik prabhu gave Bhakta Richard because of his great enthusiasm for kirtan.

It is the first time I hear that harinam has ever been performed in a prison yard. This is unprecedented and incredibly amazing! Krishna Kirtan, being a sincere bhakta, is inspired in his heart to expand Kṛṣṇa consciousness in his institution. His eagerness and daring spirit are very inspiring!



Inmate Letter Excerpts

I am in the same prison as Bill. I have been reading some of his books and have come to the conclusion that in my four years journey, searching for the ultimate truth about our lives, I believe I have found it in Krishna. I have been studying Bible for four years and have a couple degrees in Biblical Studies and theology, but I felt something was missing. I feel more complete now.

Richard F.
Crawfordville, Florida

Thank you for the BTG! I really missed reading it. I still find myself re-reading the ones you sent me before.

I enjoy helping others and in doing so I also benefit. I am so blessed in many ways and glad I can share my blessing and lessons with others. Kṛṣṇa has certainly been helping in making it all go so

smoothly and I just flow with it all. I do it all for Kṛṣṇa and I am but His tool. In doing so I have seen so much positive in my life and those I am in contact with and it gladdens my heart to be His servant in His cause. I am so busy but through His mercy I am constantly listening on my MP3 player to His devotees. I am constantly chanting and singing too and I still manage to read such as the Srimad-Bhagavatam as well as chanting my rounds. It amazes me when I think about it but I smile and think of my efforts as minuscule compared to those of Srila Prabhupada, Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Lord Caitanya, Vyasadeva, etc. Hearing of their accomplishments keeps me humble and always striving to do more for Him.

David B.
Danbury, Connecticut

I have been asked by several people here about my personal “religion” and I only have my Bhagavad-Gita as a source to feed their curious minds. Do you have books you may share with the women who have showed interest in learning about our philosophy? I have suggested that if they desire a Gita of their own they should write you. My hope is that by sharing Prabhupada’s teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a place like this (prison), where Christianity reigns supreme, it could help bring a little light to such a dim place of suffering. I love to share books with everyone and anyone who shows interest in what I am reading, so please also consider sending maybe a Kṛṣṇa Book and a Science of Self-Realization too! 😊 I appreciate your willingness and love. Thank you, thank you!

Julia M.

Aurora, Illinois

I am currently in prison and have come across a book by the name of Sri Isopanisad, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. I

have received a lot of answers to my many questions in this book. It has left me in complete awe and a hunger to know more in regards to the teachings of the Vedas. If it is possible for you to send me any and all information surrounding the Vedic social system, and as much info for someone who’s a beginner in the Veda teachings. I want to be able to walk, talk and think the Veda teachings for the rest of my life.

I have three more years until I get out and I feel and know that these teachings are of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. If only I was taught these teachings as a child, I would not be in prison right now. And now that I’ve gotten a glimpse of what true freedom is, I want it more than anything. So with your help, I plan to use the next three years trying to become a dhira, a brahmana, a Maha-Bhagavata and everything I am destined to be in this life. I thank you in advance for your time and love. Peace & love.

Roland W.

Raiford, Florida



POEM CORNER

SPIRIT SOUL

If there were no spirit souls
Nobody would feel.
Our consciousness has always been
Each atma never dies
And smaller than a molecule
Is each person’s size.
Krishna is the Gita
Vedanta Sutra too.
He is not a ghost
He will never say “boo”.
This world is a prison house
Birth and death are real.

Jan H.; Napa, California



THANK YOU to ALL our WELL-WISHERS!

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

Our donors since last newsletter:

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

WANT TO HELP?

If you would like to correspond with inmates, please email Bhakti-latā Dasi at iskconprisonministry@gmail.com and we will discuss it.

This prison preaching is solely supported by donations (books and laksmi). If you feel inspired to help out, we will be very grateful for your support!

3 Donation Options

- 1) Send check or postal money order to:
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