

IPM NEWS

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



ISKCON Prison Ministry / DBA of Vaisnava Outreach, Inc.

Sept/Oct 2014 Changing Lives from the Inside Out!

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VYASA-PUJA OFFERING

by Inmate Bhakta Mark

Dear Srila Prabhupada

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet,

With every day that I am able to continue to chant, to read your books, to follow the regulative principles, I am more and more in debt to your mercy and love. It is only because of your mercy and love that we have the chance to perfect our lives through Krsna Consciousness. It is only through your love that we can ever know real love and receive and share this love.

All of my life I have held on to material relationships of family and friends, thinking this to be love. And in all of these relationships, the outcome is always the same let down and pain. The object of love always leaves in one way or another, by either breaking ties, or passing on from this life.



These material relationships are never permanent, and before we know it, have ended, leaving us feeling pain and longing. For most of my life, I have doubted the existence of love. How could real love end in pain? The answer is, the love that I have experienced, material love, is not real love.

In Canto six of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, two rishis instruct Maharaja Chitraketu that; *“As pierces of seaweed come together on the surface of the ocean and then are separated by the force of the waves, so the living entities who have accepted material bodies come together and then are again separated by the force of time.”* Later in this same Canto it is said, *“Only because of our past actions, do we create the temporary mental concoctions of wife, children and property, and on the basis of these dreams, we perform further actions.”* These statements show us that our material relationships are only temporary and from an eternal standpoint are very short-lived.

It is through your books that we are taught about our spiritual relationship with Krsna and His devotees. It is only through these relationships that we experience an eternal relationship that exists beyond this material body. It is only in these spiritual relationships that you have taught us about that we can, for the first time our lives, experience real, eternal love.

We are able to experience this love because you loved each spirit soul enough to leave the country of your birth, armed with only a few dollars and the copies of Srimad-Bhagavatam that you translated for our spiritual benefit. These books that you lovingly translated, teach us about Krsna, His love for us, and how to reciprocate that love in devotional service.

You lovingly taught us that we can serve Krsna by following the four regulative principles. You teach us that if we love you and love Krsna, then we will always strive to follow these regulative principles. Your love inspired your disciples, who now continue to inspire the world, by continuing your mission. This is eternal love that you have selflessly given to the world.

As predicted by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, you have spread the love that is the holy names of Krsna. Because of your mission, **Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare**, is known throughout the world. It has been included in songs by top musicians, in movies and in television. You have made available the culture of love of Krsna to every household in the world. This chanting of the holy name of Krsna is the only way in this age that we can perfect our lives. You have lovingly given this ability to everyone.

Please allow me to serve you by serving your devotees who continue your mission. I know that I struggle to embrace your love properly for I still hold tightly to the material world. Please give me the ability to sincerely serve you by allowing me to help your disciples share your love with the world. I am indebted to you and your servants who have taught me about Krsna Consciousness and the holy names of Krsna. Begging to become the servant of your servants,

**Bhakta Mark M.
Hillsboro, WV**



HEAVY KNOWLEDGE

“You asked me to explain, in my own words, what I mean when I say that the reading material you sent me is “heavy”. I will do that here.

What's so unique to me about Vaisnavism is that unlike most if not all theology, it does not teach that God/Krishna created us on Earth and then we rebelled against Him. No. For the first time ever (for me) the proposition is that we originated in Krishna, by His side, in His abode, Krishnaloka. That makes the relationship more personal, I think, not distant: that we're not strangers and won't be in a strange land when we get back home to Godhead. Standard theology says God gave us a body made of clay, dirt, water, and put a spirit in it. Krishna Consciousness does not claim that. Quite the reverse: it illustrates that we began as pure spirit, in Krishna's presence, and then we ourselves, by coming to explore and pursue Maya, elected to assume a body.

Further, in typical, pseudo theology, you only have one chance to become holy and deemed worthy to be in God's presence, in His abode. Missing that boat, you suffer forever after, no second chance, third, fourth, fifth. That's not compassion. It's not the ideal of a compassionate Lord who understands the poor human condition in the body. The Divine is marked by extraordinary compassion. Otherwise, what makes such a God any better than a vengeful fleshy human being? Extraordinary means extra. In a word, He goes the extra mile. That's love of the purest strain, I think, holy.

Vaishnavism is *multicosmic*, unlimited in scope. Take the story of Dhruva Maharaja in the Srimad-Bhagavatam, the two parts excerpted in the last two issues of *Back To Godhead*. That is so "weird". In a word, theology must be weird, because weird is beyond human reasoning, beyond our conceivability, characteristic of things divine. It sure impacts me.

I know I'm just a baby devotee and there's more to it than this, and I do look forward to learning a lot more. And it's not just Srila Prabhupada's book and the Srimad-Bhagavatam, but everything else, too. Every sentence is a pearl of wisdom. Our dear Srila Prabhupada is indeed Divine Grace! I never heard of any of this and so regret not having encountered it sooner in life. But now I'm on my way. I'm going through different worlds in this right now; places, realities never before encountered, and thus my awe."

Eva C.

San Diego, CA

Short Inmate Letter Excerpts

"I discovered Krsna books in 1975 at a swap meet, midway Washington. I saw a "*Supreme Personality*" book; from 50 feet or so, in big letters, I read *KRSNA*. I says, that word, what that meant? It's not Christ but pronounces similar. I asked the people at the flea market, "How much do you want for that book?" They said "One dollar". I said, "Sure, here you go." I took it home and started looking at the picture plates and reading about the gopis, Balarama, and the cowherd boys.

Later on, I was there at the swap meet again and found a different book and it was a dollar, so I had two books then. (...) I didn't have any place to stay so I took my duffel bag and footlocker up in a stairwell at that old hotel. I was up at the top of the stairway with my Krsna books open, reading all about Krsna. (...) This was in the winter months. Fairbanks was like 60 below zero. So I was glad to be inside and glad to have Krsna to comfort me."

Matthew K.

Salem, OR

"As I was meditating one night, I asked for guidance to whoever was hearing me. This is no lie; when I woke up, there, under my cell door, was the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, and

Prabhupada, Your Ever Well-Wisher!

I've always been drawn to the Hindu religion, but any time I have tried to get books I've always received Buddhist books or Christian books from different places that send free books. I've even tried to look through companies so I can purchase them and could never find them. All I had to do was meditate and Krsna was listening. That's how I received your address (stamped in the books). "

Joe J.

Amarillo, TX



“I do my altar worship daily and I’m now chanting 12 rounds daily. In one month’s time I will increase to 16. I’m becoming very thirsty for more transcendental literature. Will you please bless me with your mercy? I’m trying with determination to advance in Krsna consciousness by japa meditation and altar worship. Please give me any other instruction you think could help me. Association with devotees is the best according to the Vedic scriptures and Srila Prabhupada and the only association I have is through you. Thank you for your grace and mercy.”

**Christopher E.
Buckeye, AZ**

“I received your books, all beautiful works that I have found to be very touching, insightful, and moving. My question to you is how do I go about receiving the Bhagavad-gita? I have been trying to get one for years. I would greatly appreciate any assistance in the matter. Thank you for your time, consideration, as well as generosity and philanthropy.”

**Prince Stewart
New Boston, TX**

“Meditation and chanting have brought me much peace among the chaos of prison life.”

**Avery S.
Calico Rock**

“I’ve...been lying low, and working on purity and keeping my sadhana steady and strong. And looking forward to our worship service...and preaching to everyone I meet.”

But now I’ve been transferred to another prison in Salem, Oregon, called OSCI. And I’m not in my single cell anymore!

I’m in a big room with 61 bunks! And I found many people interested in Krishna!

The first morning here, I laid out my Krishna calendar and was looking at the beautiful picture of Radha Krishna for the month of May, when a man came by, completely taken by the beautiful picture. The next day was June 1st and this same man came by and asked to see that picture again. He had fallen in love with Radha Krishna! And his eyes got big when I tore out the picture from my calendar and gave it to him. He hung it on the wall above his bunk. Soon everyone wanted to see my calendar. And the beautiful pictures pleased them very much. And soon there were beautiful pictures hanging on the walls all over the dorm.

Radha and Krishna are taking over the place!

I also made some toffee! It’s made from 4 little crystal lite raspberry ice and 2 bags of non-dairy creamer and a little water. It’s kinda like burfi. And after I offered it to the Lord, I passed it out. And, wow, everyone loved it so much!

Here in this dorm we have an ice machine, 190 degree water, and a microwave. So there’s going to be a lot of cooking for Krishna!

I’ve spoken to the chaplain, and he likes the idea of building a Krishna library like I did at O.S.P.”

**James S.
Salem, OR**

“Dear Bhakti-lata mataji
Hare Krsna! Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!
Please know as you continue to very generously bestow so much mercy upon me I am feeling, becoming more and more humbled in heart. It’s no wonder devotees are glorified throughout the universe. You, my dear mother, are doing so much to water my devotional creeper in Krsna Consciousness. And for your tender mercy I am eternally indebted and even immensely grateful.

We just received the box of books and BTG on the 19th; there are no words to adequately articulate my depth of thanks and appreciation. I am reading, studying and truly relishing the sweetness of these transcendental gifts. Krsna’s causeless mercy....your divine presence in my life.
Your humble servant,”

**Bhakta Jason, M.
Columbia, SC**

“Hare Krsna! I got my release for July 5th. I am so very grateful for your service and generosity. I will never forget you. The other day I was outside with my japa bag and beads, trying to share the Gita with a friend. A guy from India saw me with the japa beads and got very excited. He’s from Bangladesh. We talk of Krsna often.”

**Luke Snyder
Rockwell City, Iowa**

“Yes, the materials arrived and we have been playing the DVDs on the inmate television station. Thank you very, very much for them. All inmates can listen to the inmate television station, unless they are in segregation [solitary]. They are greatly appreciated. Blessings, “

**Chaplain Rader
The Ohio State Penitentiary, Youngstown, Ohio**

THANK YOU to ALL our SUPPORTERS!

Your generosity is what keeps this program going! ☺

Please forgive me if I forgot anyone; let me know so I can add you in the next newsletter.

Our donors since the last newsletter:

Coral Wheatley
Eddie Garcia
Gangagati Dasi
Satyanarayana Bodeda
Inmate Jeremy McElroy
Inmate Andre Johnson



And our monthly Donors:

Amala Gaura dasa
Aritra Nath
Bhavananda dasa
Deepali Mittal
Dina Sharana dasa
Jitarati dasa
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Mickey Singer

Radha-Jivan dasa
Ravi Chandu Jadhaw
Ravi Jadhaw
Rene Waisvisz
Richard House
Shashi Raina dasa
Stava Mala dasa
Vaninatha Dasa
Yudhisthira 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 (or like 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

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
- 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:

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