

I offer my respectful obeisances unto Sri Krsna Caitanya and Lord Nityananda, who are like the sun and moon. They have arisen simultaneously on the horizon of Gauda to dissipate the darkness of ignorance and thus wonderfully bestow benediction upon all. CC Adi 1.2

Sept/Oct 2015

—Special Vyasa-Puja Edition—

My Faith in Prabhupada and Krsna is Set in Stone

by **Bhakta Kevin C.**

Hare Krsna!

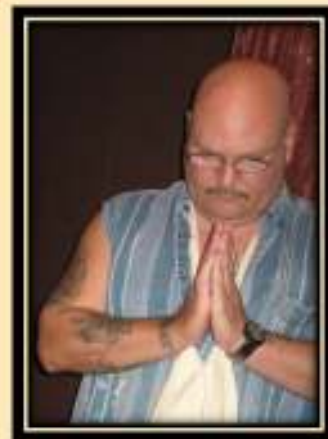
I believe Srila Prabhupada really knew what he was talking about and had a close personal relationship with Krishna. I choose the bliss he has offered to anyone willing to serve and worship Lord Krishna and His devotees' lotus feet.

I feel very low and unfit to approach Krishna on my own strength so I will make the attempt through service to His devotees. "The servant of the servant of the servant of the Lord."

My faith in Prabhupada and Krishna is set in stone and all the devotees I have had the gift of association with since I found out about ISKCON in 1999 has given me a very good foundation to stand on. Krishna has truly blessed me with His mercy in this life. He came into my life at a time when I was searching for truth and a time I needed to find answers to my questions. He has given me a sense of

family through the ISKCON devotees association; through letters and in person to person contact.

I will serve to the best of my ability with the time left to me in this body and hope to continue in the next. Jaya Prabhupada!



Bhakta Kevin

I have been helping some inmates here to learn about Krishna. I believe one has written to you, Mr. Van Peterson. He's a recovering heroin addict and is only eighteen or nineteen years old. He is in my cell. I share books with him and taught him how to chant on a Catholic rosary I got from the chaplain. I have made arrangements with the chaplain for inmates here to be allowed to have *japa malas* for chanting rounds.

My social worker here, Elizabeth, is very interested in Krishna Consciousness and I have given her some BTGs. I plan to leave the books you sent to me with her to use in her AODA groups. She feels it will relieve the high level of stress her inmates deal with. Elizabeth asked me to give a group presentation on Krishna Consciousness and the Hare Krishna *mantra* before I leave here. I told her I would do it. Say a prayer for me that Prabhupada will not be disappointed with my attempt and that Krishna will give me His mercy and guidance. I feel very unfit to do this but it will be a way to spread the teachings of Krishna in the prison setting.

My goal is this: I will talk a little then explain the Hare Krishna *mantra*; how to say it (call and response). Then I will get the inmates from my cell to join me in a demonstration of sankirtan. Then I will make a request that everyone present rise and join in chanting and dancing the Hare Krishna *mantra* together.

This will be done during our community meeting part of programming. We have about twenty-five inmates in this program so it will be interesting to see if I can get them all to stand and raise their hands and voices in praise to Krishna!

Wouldn't that be something! Maybe the first actual kirtan performed in a Wisconsin prison by a large group of inmates. Wow.

I plan to be back to sending books to the Prison Ministry inmates as soon as I can. That service is important to me and I will put it ahead of other things I do once I'm out. Hare Krishna!

Your humble servant,
Bhakta Kevin C.
Milwaukee, WI



ISKCON Prison Ministry Vyasa-Puja Offering

Our Dear Srila Prabhupada,

Please accept our obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to your Divine Grace.

Your truly selfless dedication to everyone's welfare is extraordinary. The knowledge you gave us is untouched by the modes of material nature and your desire is for everyone --from every country, every town and village-- to benefit from it. You instructed all your followers to distribute your books and the teachings of Lord Caitanya far and wide, without any discrimination, thus showering your mercy in every corner of this dark world. Through mass book distribution and preaching, you want everyone, from the most learned to the most ignorant, to receive the mercy of Lord Caitanya.

Prisons are like little kingdoms in their own rights, each with their own set of rules and peculiarities. They are miserable places of ignorance and suffering where men are often swallowed up in a world of senseless violence and oppression, losing all hope for a better future. Many are thrown in, caught in the revolving doors of prison life, being released only to come right back to prison again. Like an angel of mercy, you empowered, and keep empowering your disciples to bring the light of knowledge to these prisoners in the form of your books, giving them the only real, lasting solution out of their miseries.

Your words, which are both cutting and healing, have been preserved in your books. Year after year, we see the prisoners' minds open up to your instructions, and

their hearts softened by applying the process of Krsna consciousness in their lives. True freedom can be tasted even within the prison walls, in the midst of the deepest ignorance, oppression, and violence. In your books, Srila Prabhupada, you explain the process in such clear and simple words that everyone can understand it, become inspired to practice it, and thus have a tangible taste of spiritual life – Krsna consciousness.

The consciousness of the inmates we correspond with is deeply affected by your instructions and their lives are transformed. Even inmates in solitary confinement are able to transcend their external circumstances, seeing their solitary condition as a type of monastic life favorable for chanting and studying your books. Every day, new inmates are introduced to Krsna consciousness, because not only are the inmates blessed by reading your books but your words also ignite the fire of sankirtan within their hearts. By your mercy, the good fortune to give Krsna to others is available to all; many take it upon themselves to become your messengers and pass the knowledge on to everyone around them who, in their turn, are also moved to share the nectar. This is reminiscent of Lord Caitanya's activities on his South Indian tour, as described in the Caitanya Caritamrta, Madhya-lila, chapter seven;

“As soon as He saw someone, He would request him to chant "Hari! Hari!" (...) After some time the Lord would embrace these people and bid them return home, having invested each of them with spiritual potency. Each of these empowered persons would return to his own village (...) and would request everyone and anyone — whomever he saw — to chant the holy name of Krsna. In this way all the villagers would also become devotees of the Lord. People from different villages who came to see such an empowered individual would become like him simply by seeing him and receiving the mercy of his glance. When each of these newly empowered individuals returned to his own village, he also converted the villagers into devotees. And when others came from different

villages to see him, they were also converted. In this way, as empowered men went from one village to another, all the people of South India became devotees.”

In this way, your Krsna consciousness movement is growing exponentially, even within the confines of prison walls, the world over. Everywhere, groups of men gather in prison chapels, tasting the holy name in joyful sankirtan. This movement is powerful and gaining momentum; it cannot be stopped by anything or anyone.

As one inmate wrote us:

"I know that so many prison bhaktas fall away from devotional service. But that is okay. You have still brought them (and me) a taste of Krsna – and even if we do not break free from maya in this lifetime, we have at least been started on our way back to Godhead. And this is the greatest gift anyone can receive. The seeds you are planting will someday, with Krsna's help, grow into beautiful Tulasi trees, watered by the devotees! So for myself and for all other prison bhaktas, I say thank you – thank you very much!"

Srila Prabhupada, as a supremely empowered devotee of Lord Caitanya, you have brought the Sankirtan movement all over the world. Devotees and inmates alike feel honored to contribute to this prison preaching program. We feel privileged to be soldiers in your Sankirtan army. Thank you for showering your compassion on innumerable inmates who often have no one left in the world. Thank you for engaging us in Krsna's service. Hare Krishna!

Your fallen and humble servants of the ISKCON Prison Ministry



Chaplain's Appreciation

Thursday, July 23, 2015

On behalf of the 2,400 inmates here at Adams County Correctional Center, I want to humbly thank you for the very generous donation of books, magazines and DVDs. The resources have been put in the Chapel library for access of our entire population. In addition, all inmates have the opportunity to attend the religious program to inquire, contemplate and study the Hindu faith.


Partners like you strengthen the Religious Services Department in any prison. I am grateful for your partnership. Blessings.

Kind regards,

Chaplain Jon Shonebarger
Religious Services Department
Adams County Correctional Center

POEM CORNER

Eternally Grateful



In the darkness of ignorance, so blind,
Longing for light, darkness no longer to bind.
Since time immemorial, wandering aimlessly along the way –
Silently searching for Krsna's pure devotees, to hear what they have to say.
Desperate and downtrodden, crying for their company
Humbly begging for mercy, dear devotee, kindly help me to see
Submissively I pray, please impart the truth, as you have realized it within.
May you mahatmas free me from material life...
From within the heart compassionately teach me how to eradicate the sin.
Indeed I admit to being a rascal, no more than a poor fool –
Unworthy and unqualified though this fallen soul be, still here I am
Humbly begging of you...please rescue me from this material pool.
My heart is open and I have a little faith, but not much more
Hear me knocking, Haribol! Haribol! Haribol! Please open the door.
There is hope for me to gradually surrender, hearing you speak about Krsna's fame
Yes, attentively listening to lectures, hearing the pure chanting of Krsna's holy name.
The glorious gif of Krsna Consciousness, ever sweet and sublime, eternally grateful that you gave
For us conditioned souls to see the light, for Krsna's pleasure we truly live.
All glories to Srila Prabhupada!
To all of the very dear pure devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna!
Jai! Jai!

Your Humble Servant,
Bhakta Jason Matthews – Columbia, SC

Little Big Man

When he was young his guru said, he must go to the West
Throughout his life he studied hard, preparing for the test
Then at the age of sixty-nine, he finally set out
Putting all his faith in Krsna, without a doubt
Aboard the Jaladuta he set sail to a new land
The voyage proved more difficult, than Prabhupada had planned
Through stormy seas and heart attacks, he successfully passed
The penniless but rich in faith, his ship arrived at last
The big apple in '66, that's where he got his start
Then as disciples came to him, from every walk of life
He brought to all the lost souls, a way to change their hearts
He taught them ancient wisdom that could lessen all their strife
His movement grew quite rapidly, he planted bhakti seeds
He cooked, he preached and he chanted, he gave us books to read
Gita and Bhagavatam, and of course KRSNA Book
He brought lost souls to the Lords feet, his prasadam they took
Thus Lord Caitanya's message spread, from sea to shining sea
In temples all across the land, he installed Deities
Sometimes it was Lord Jagannatha, and sometime Gauranga
And sometimes Radharani was, installed with Sri Krsna
Then soon from New York to L.A. and places in-between
In airports and on street corners, the devotees were seen
In England the maha-mantra, took over the radio
There was nowhere on God's green earth, the movement didn't go
In Europe and in Australia, in South America
The whole world got a higher taste, by chanting to Krsna
He circled the globe many times, before he passed away
But he's still here among us all, right to the present day
For he has left his legacy, for these upon the earth
Now future generations have a chance when taking birth
To meet devotees, read his books, to learn to dance and chant
His causeless mercy gave us all the seed of love to plant
Those seeds will make a tree of love, where prema's fruits will grow
It's for those who will taste those fruits, that I've written this poem
To tell of that little big man, named Srila Prabhupada
He blazed a trail with heart and soul that leads to love of God

**Bhakta Carl S.
Raiford, Florida**



Inmate Letter Excerpts

The quote below is from an inmate who was reading out loud in his cell. His words reached other inmates through the vents of his cell.

I started reading out loud the Gita. I soon realized that you can reach a man's soul without ever meeting him; just like A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada still touches the souls of men & women he has never met.

**Christopher L.
Henderson, Texas**



Let me tell you how tremendously Krsna consciousness has changed me. I've transformed into a person I didn't think was possible for me to become. Lord Krsna has so perfectly dried up my most severe and detrimental material attachments, that there's no doubt in my mind, heart or soul that Prabhupada calling this a *science* is perfectly accurate. The maha mantra has worked for me like nothing else could. I absolutely *relish* my morning hours when I chant my sixteen rounds as nature wakes up around me. I do my Vaisnava best to give the holy name a proper host as the Lord rolls off my tongue and I'm so grateful for the Pancha-tattva mantra for excusing my offenses as I chant. Lords Gaura-Nitai are so merciful.

Richard Chase – Petersburg, VA



I grew up going to Baptist churches, so that being said; I've always been a Godly man. Then one day about one year ago I was introduced to Krsna Consciousness in the prison system. At first I thought it was just another religion. Then I began to read the books by the great A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. 'Such a great souls is very rare'. I have read books such as *Beyond Birth and Death*, *King of Knowledge*, *Perfection of Yoga*, *Science of Self-Realization*, etc...these are all good books that I couldn't put down. I'm not much of a reader but when dealing with real life, I'm all ears. I can gladly say that I am now Krsna Conscious. I've never been happier and focused in my life. The Hare Krsna mantra plays a major part in my life also. I just wanted to let you know that Krsna Consciousness is a very beautiful thing. Truly yours,

**Bhakta Darius, H.
Milledgeville, Georgia**

I chant the maha-mantra all day long. I have also been reading the books you sent to me. It is slowly making sense.

**Wayne Martinson
Springfield, South Dakota**

Until about 6 months ago I have always been a Christian. I knew about the Krsna movement from being born and raised in Gainesville, but only in passing; however, an inmate devotee named Carl Sheppard changed my whole life. Since then I changed my religious affiliation from Baptist to Krishna Consciousness. Carl Sheppard told me I could receive prayer beads from the ISKCON prison ministry and hopefully a pen pal to better understand your ways and ideals.

**Mark R.
Florida**

Inmate At



Drawing by Bhakta Burl D.

[Type here]



Drops of Nectar

Srimad-Bhagavatam

A few months ago, Svavasa prabhu, from the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) in Los Angeles, offered to donate fifty Srimad-Bhagavatam sets to prison chapel libraries open to receive them. About thirty sets have been distributed so far! This generous offer gives the opportunity for hundreds, even thousands of inmates to read this most transcendental of all literature for years to come! We are deeply grateful. Thank you!



THANK YOU to all our Supporters!

Thank you for sharing your heart with the inmates.

☺ Please forgive me if I forgot anyone, and let me know so I can add your name in the next news!

And our monthly Donors:

Anonymous donor
Aritra Nath
Amala Gaura dasa
Bhavananda dasa
Deepali Mittal
Dina Sharana dasa
Jitarati dasa

Kalindi dasi (Hopping)
Maya Sudana dasa
Mickey Singer
Radha-Jivan dasa
Radha Vinod dasa
Ravi Jadhaw
Rene Waisvisz

Richard House
Rupa Manjari dasi
Shashi Raina dasa
Stava Mala dasa
Satyanarayana dasa
Yudhisthira dasa

[Type here]



HOW CAN I HELP?

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

Here are a few ways:

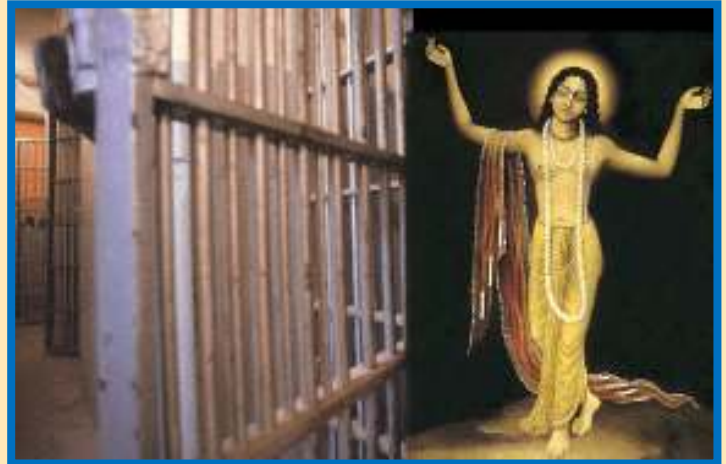
- **PRESSING NEED OF THE MOMENT:** We have many japa malas, but not bead bags or counter beads to go with them. We need **280 bead bags and counter beads!**

- 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
- Give a one-time or a monthly donation (we provide tax-deductible receipts).
- Donate **DVDs** and **music CDs**: bhajans, kirtans (new or like new).

❖ 3 Donation Options

- 1) Send check or postal money order to:

ISKCON Prison Ministry
3759 McCreary's Ridge Road
NBU #46
Moundsville, WV 26041



- 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:

ISKCON Prison Ministry
3759 McCreary's Ridge Road, NBU #46
Moundsville, WV 26041
ISKCONPrisonMinistry@gmail.com
www.iskconprisonministry.or

[Type here]

