

*“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*

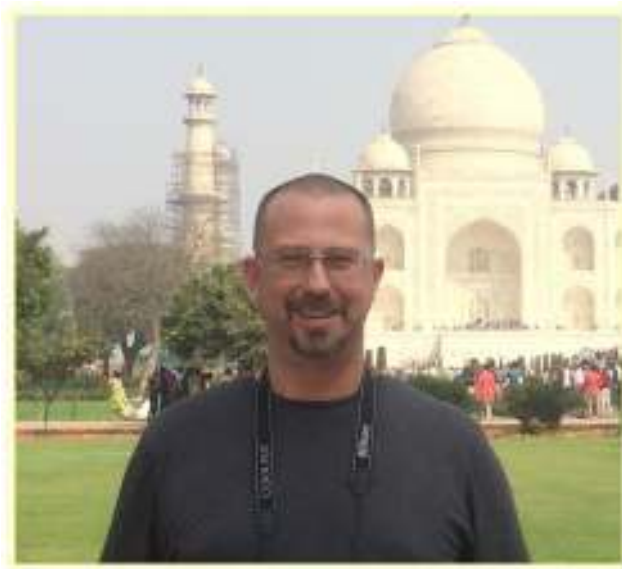
**Sept/Oct 2016**

## Coming Full Circle

By Gene Moore

For much of my teens and adult life I led a dualistic life, whose counterparts were contradictory and seemingly incompatible. On the one hand, I excelled academically in high school and college, always quickly gaining the attention and favor of my instructors; even after college, I similarly excelled professionally.

On the other hand, my antithetical persona was heavily addicted to alcohol and other substances. Rarely would the two threads of my existence cross, except when my actions, while under the influence, would lead to my arrest.



While sober, I was a law-abiding, loving, caring person who made genuine friendships and truly cared about others, our planet, and all of its inhabitants. I had a profound appreciation of our physical universe and a deep, driving desire to understand its complexities.

While intoxicated, a darkness would instantly enshroud me; I became angry, violent, resentful, self-willed and completely disconnected from humanity.

After four years of working professionally, I went on to get my Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, all the while battling this darker side which could no longer be contained or compartmentalized. After completing my doctorate, I settled into a research position. However, during this time I was arrested and handed an eight year prison sentence.

As I look at it now, I realize that my incarceration was simply as blessing from Lord Kṛṣṇa. It saved me from imminent destruction; the battle was over and my good nature emerged victorious. But Kṛṣṇa's plan did not end with my incarceration. It had only begun.



The author (back row, 4<sup>th</sup> to the left), with friends

During my first few months in prison, I was sent to ad seg (segregation), a place full of violence and negativity. With a year of sobriety under my belt, every fiber of my being objected to this environment. I turned inward and upward. I reached out to IPM because previously I had

somewhat regularly attended a Hindu temple in Riverside and had set up a home *mandir* dedicated to Kṛṣṇa. I was familiar with many of the mantras and shlokas used in puja and began meditating and chanting in my cell every day. I was in the “distressed” or *ārtah* (Bg 7:17) category of people who becomes a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. My relief was immediate. I felt a deep and powerful connection to Kṛṣṇa's intelligence and being. I reached out to Kṛṣṇa and He lovingly answered my call. Almost as if to say, “What took you so long?”

I eventually was placed in correspondence with Candrasekhara dasa who highly encouraged me to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. When I was transferred to the SHU prison, he sent BTG magazines which I adored. I still have Candrasekhara's original letter to me. His letters were very encouraging, with an emphasis on focusing on increasing my rounds. He also put me in contact with Nidra devi dasi at the Colorado temple. Nidra worked with Bhaktiswarupa Damodara dasa of the Bhaktivedanta Institute, for whom I felt a special kinship and affection. After I was transferred, I lost contact with Candrasekhara. However, I was eventually placed in contact with other IPM devotees, one of whom, Pradyumna dasa, went well above-and-beyond in his service to Kṛṣṇa, with his extensive letters and sending of books. He even arranged to send me a Bhagavad-Gita As It Is in Hindi (as I was learning Hindi at the time). I asked him some challenging questions regarding ISKCON and devotional service. He always answered my questions with patience, honesty, and sincerity. The excitement and joy I felt at receiving his letters was inexorable. To be connected to a devotee in this manner only served to increase my connection and love for Kṛṣṇa.

By this time I had been in prison for six years, I was chanting regularly, listening to talks by Srila Praphupada, fasting regularly, and listening to bhajans. I would walk the yard chanting rounds. After nearly seven years I was released on parole.

I was unable to find work in my field because of the ever increasing scrutiny of background checks. I had to go far outside my comfort zone to find employment. I found a position working in real estate development, assisting developers in mapping, entitlements, and association budgets. Though not passionate about this line of work, I was grateful for the opportunity. Meanwhile, I focused my efforts on starting my own diagnostics company, developing diagnostics for animals. Though this venture recently came to an end, it landed me a position in a research lab, as the lab I was using to develop my company saw how hard I worked and needed someone to fill an opening. I have come full circle from where I began in 2005, except this time I keep my attention inward and upward on Kṛṣṇa.

I feel more and more drawn to Kṛṣṇa consciousness by the day. I am attending an ISKCON temple and recently returned from a trip to the Kṛṣṇa-Balarama temple in Vrindavan. To be

in the presence of sannyasis who permanently reside and serve at the temple, who exemplify love and devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, is incomparable to any other experience. They work so hard in service of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. To chant and sing the holy names with such devotees fills me with overwhelming love and affection for them and, by extension, deepens my love for Kṛṣṇa. I now find that association with non-devotees is comparably empty. I am only now truly beginning to understand Bhakti yoga on an experiential level— to have all inhibitions swept away and feel true rasa. To feel the call of devotional service without any desire for profit or relief from distress, only for knowledge of the Absolute and connection with that intelligence. I do not know what Kṛṣṇa has in store for me as His plan continues to play out, but I surrender to Him completely and my only desire is to become a better, purer devotee. In the end it is truly about love. Love for Kṛṣṇa. Love for Kṛṣṇa’s devotees. Love for all earth’s inhabitants. Hare Kṛṣṇa!

*Gene now lives in San Diego, California*

## Inmate Letter Excerpts

I grew up Protestant, but wasn’t happy with the contradictions that Christianity demonstrated. I found out about Krishna consciousness fifteen years ago but my parents shot it down. I started noticing a lot of my favorite Punk bands were Krishna ((Shelter, Cro Mags, CIU). And my NA (Narcotics Anonymous) sponsor is huge into it. And I feel Lord Krishna found me at just the right time.”

**Andrew S.**  
**Somerset Pennsylvania**

Hi! Just a note to let you know that I do receive the Freedom Newsletters. I very much enjoy them. I’m now writing from the prison “hole” (solitary) where I am locked down. I was at work in the prison laundry when two men got into a fight. When the one man went down and the other continued to pummel him with blows and started kicking him, I reacted on instinct. I ran over and told him to just

“walk away, it’s over.” He stopped. The guards took them away for fighting, and then later came and took me away also. They told me that although I wasn’t involved and even stopped the fight, because the camera video shows me in close proximity, I must be held until the “investigation” is completed. Wow! No good deed goes unpunished (my initial reaction)!



But Krishna is good to me; I worked for like two years to be granted a Hare Krishna vegetarian religious diet by the prison and I am now provided fresh veggies, oatmeal, peanut butter and a kosher vegetarian cookeable entry – all in disposable serving trays that have NOT been contaminated by slaughtered flesh. And on some occasions I can even take this food into my cell and present it at my altar. However, now that I am in the “hole”, each meal comes to my cell and can be offered! I have this home-made altar set up on the desk and I now offer each meal to Lord Krishna. I have a large cardboard note book folder with pictures of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada, Lord Caitanya, and Lord Krishna. I have other pictures of the deities, some photos of devotees, and a banner with the Hare Krsna Mantra. So now I eat prasadam three times a day! Krsna is very good to me.

The more I chant and read, the more I become calm and centered in my life situation. I’m positive, I’m changing, and the “dark cloud” over my personality has disappeared. Thank you for helping me to grow in Krsna Consciousness.

**Bhakta Steve D.  
Rawlins, Wyoming**

Hare Krishna! Thank you for the books, *Raja Vidya*, *Coming Back* and pocket size *Bhagavad Gita*! I am very happy that you remembered me here! I have dedicated my life to my studies and devotional service to the Lord Krishna. I read, take in-depth notes in my notebooks and share Krishna Consciousness when the Lord provides opportunities. This way, it seems, the atmosphere remains very spiritual, blissful. It also seems that many so called “coincidences” appear rapidly one after another and prayers are answered, even if things aren’t going the way we planned, Lord Krishna is in control!!! Jaya!”

**Bhakta Andrew S.  
Coleman, Florida**

I have read some of Prabhupada’s books and really wish I could have met him; I would have become a devotee at a younger age.

**Bruce B.  
Boscawen New Hampshire**

#### **Morning Sadhana in Cell 7**

We are so blessed here at Petersburg. On top of the rousing weekly kirtans in the chapel, and the monthly visits from Sarva-Dṛk dasa, myself and two other bhaktas in my housing unit come to my cell after morning count for our daily Sadhana. I have uninstalled deities of Lord Jaganath, Subadhra, and Lord Baladeva and murtis of Srila Prabhupada, Lord Nṛsimhadev and Prahlad, and Lords Gaura-Nitai enshrined on the one and only shelf on the wall.

We offer them water and food then say our morning prayers. Prabhupada pranam, the Om Ajñāna prayer, Gauranga pranam, Govinda pranam, and Vaiṣṇava pranam. We then sing the Pañca-tattva mantra and chant eight rounds together (the other eight we chant individually at a later time). We then have a Bhagavad-Gita study, opening with “Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya.”

This Sadhana sets the tone for the day and infuses us with Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. I recommend it to ALL the prison bhaktas!!

**Bhakta Richard C. (Kṛṣṇa Kirtan)  
Petersburg, VA.**

I’m writing tell yall thanks for the reading material. I really appreciate that. *Science of Self-Realization* really opened my eyes on a lot of things, spiritually and mentally, yall could not have sent me a better book. I enjoy reading so whenever yall have books please think about me. Once again thanks.

**Lyntavious E.  
Trion, Georgia**



# Inmate Art!



Drawings by Bhakta Christopher C.



# Announcement

Please note that the IPM office will be relocated to our Florida address by mid-November 2016.

ISKCON Prison Ministry  
PO Box 2676  
Alachua, FL 32616

**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:**

Chaitanya Cultural Center  
Cintamani Engelhart  
Corey Wilson  
John Curtis  
Jiva Daya Foundation  
Kamlesh Patel



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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  
Richard House  
Shashi Raina dasa  
Yudhisthira dasa  
Deepali Mittal  
Aritra Nath  
Satyanarayana dasa  
Thomas Nicholson  
Vishal Thakur dasa  
Sahadeva dasa

## URGENT need of the moment:

We want to thank a group of devotees from Scotland who have sponsored the inmates' **Back to Godhead magazines** for over a decade. Unfortunately, they are unable to do so anymore.



This is a great loss because when inmates receive a BTG it is like Christmas for them, and each BTG often passes through dozens of eager hands! These magazines are so attractive that even inmates who know nothing about Krsna consciousness want to read them. Many take up Krsna consciousness after reading a BTG. It is such a powerful preaching tool!

Please help the inmates by sponsoring one of the 6 issues, or all six issues for the whole year. Bought in bulk, each BTG is \$1.15 each. IPM distributes 240 BTGs of each issue.

Each issue costs **\$276.00**

**TOTAL EACH YEAR: \$1,656.00**

If you can help, please contact Mukunda Dasa or Bhakti-lata Dasi at:

[iskconprisonministry@gmail.com](mailto:iskconprisonministry@gmail.com)



**HARE KRSNA HARE KRSNA**

### **3 Donation Options**

- 1) Send check or postal money order to:  
ISKCON Prison Ministry  
3759 McCreary's Ridge Rd., NBU #46  
Moundsville WV 26041
- 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.

#### **ISKCON Prison Ministry**

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