

Dedicated to His *Divine* Grace  
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada  
Founder Acharya 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*

**Sept/October 2017**

## EMBRACING ALL OF KRSNA'S FAMILY

By Bhakta Joseph P.  
Galesburg, Illinois

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**NOTE from Bhakti-lata Dasī:** As the inmates evolve in their Kṛṣṇa consciousness, increasingly realizing the importance of Prabhupada's teachings and making a conscious effort to apply them in their life, they develop in strength and realization. Being a witness to this spiritual growth, I feel the joy and pride of a mother seeing her children mature. I am forever captivated by the power of Srila Prabhupada's words to completely transform the lives of so many who receive his mercy. Joseph has been in contact with IPM since at least 2010 and following his progress is an honor. Below is an essay he sent me in August 2017.

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*The Lord is very satisfied with His devotee when the Devotee greets other people with tolerance, mercy, Friendship and equality.*

**SB 4.11.13**

In our devotional service to the blessed Lord Krsna, we are repeatedly encouraged to practice friendship with all living entities. Not just the ones that we find pleasing to be around, but even, and sometimes especially, those who we find it so very difficult to befriend. But oftentimes this is the most monumental of tasks. Not everyone is easily approachable, and many are downright mean. So why then must we include these “ruffians” in our circle of friendship? We don’t have to be mean in return, but can’t we just have nothing to do with them?



In Sri Isopanisad, mantra 7, it is explained that we are all spiritual beings, part and parcel of Krsna. It is only because of our contact with material nature that we have become deluded, thinking one person better than another, desiring material pleasures and seeking to gain power over the mundane world (BG 14.5). This contact is the root of our lust, anger and greed, and is the impetus for the animosity we feel towards other entities. Understanding this, we realize that we are all struggling. Trying to find our way back home. It is our duty as devotees to help others find the path of Krsna Consciousness – the path Back to Godhead.

*If a person in Krsna Consciousness (...) is always compassionate, he is not satisfied that only he himself is a devotee, but he tries to distribute the knowledge of devotional service to everyone.*

**SB 3.21.31 purport**

By excluding these “undesirables” from our circle, we are committing a most grievous act – we are denying what was so freely given to ourselves —Krsna Consciousness— to those we judge unworthy. We have placed ourselves upon a pedestal (so much for humility!), and, in our arrogance, have possibly prolonged their suffering.

Being a friend to everyone doesn’t necessarily mean having direct association with them (though sometimes this is absolutely necessary), but it does mean sharing with them the glories of Krsna. By preaching, chanting and even just living a life dedicated to serving God, we help others to discover the wonders of Krsna – His love, compassion, mercy, etc. Through our words and actions we are helping others find their way back to the Supreme Lord, Sri Krsna, and this is the greatest act of mercy and compassion we can offer.

May there be good fortune throughout the universe, and may all envious persons be pacified. May all living entities become calm by practicing Bhakti-yoga, for by accepting devotional service they will think of others’ welfare. Therefore let us all engage in the service of the Supreme transcendence, Lord Sri Krsna, and always remain absorbed in thoughts of Him.

**SB 5.18.9**

Even in prison, there are those we deem worthy of association, and those we would exclude from our circle. We create a social caste which causes separation and segregation of the many that we find “undesirable” – and yet, we ourselves have been ostracized by society. It is only by the acceptance and compassion of those such as His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada that we have this chance of redemption. How then can we deny this chance to others? Are we, the lowest, that arrogant?

I was taught an important lesson today, by being shown something about myself. I have worked diligently at trying to see everyone as equal, without exception. This can certainly be a real challenge, but one I think worthy, and one that the Gita declares necessary. But, as it turns out, all I’ve done is learn to compartmentalize everyone into a structure of how I deal with them. I thought I was responding to people as necessary in each situation, but not so. I was judging them, and acting accordingly to my own egoistic views.

Today, I found myself disappointed and frustrated at how a couple of people acted towards me, and I spent way too much time thinking about how to respond. Then I realized – they actually didn’t do anything to me; they just failed to meet the standard I had set for them. HOW EGOISTIC!

It is not my opinion that matters, nor my standards they should meet. It is Krsna’s, and He sees everyone as equal.

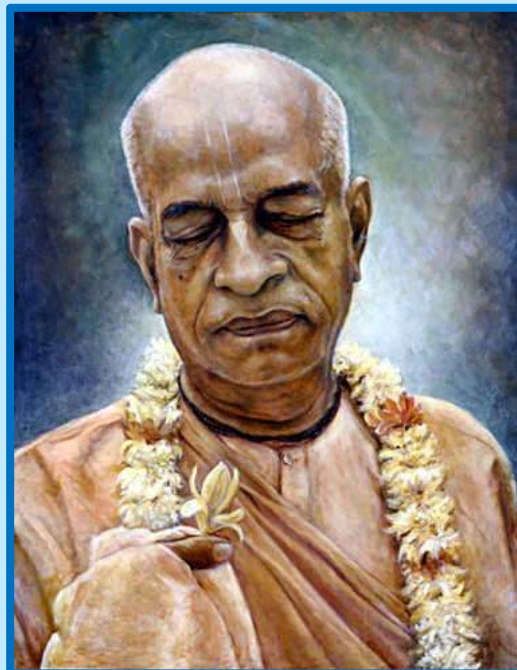
It is up to me now to reciprocate this sentiment, and take the little “I” out of the equation. The time I could have spent trying to serve Him was wasted trying to figure out how to adjust another to fit my standards.

Here, again, I have failed.

I am sorry.

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As spring comes forth, melting the frozen ponds of winter,  
So devotion to our Lord breaks loose the wrathful grip  
Maya holds upon us.  
Trees and flowers blossom, opening – gathering the rays of the sun  
And our spirit, before the glories of Govinda, dance,  
Basking in His love.  
But unlike spring, which rises and falls with progressive time,  
The love, the light of our blessed Lord is evermore  
In our hearts – always shining.



## Chaplains' Requests and Appreciation

Below are the kind of email exchanges I have with chaplains on a regular basis. Some find our address online, some in the annually updated *National Prisoner Resource*, and some are guided in our direction by inmates. It is exciting to see that some chaplains become "repeat customers". After collaborating with chaplains of USA prisons and jails for many years, several now regularly contact me for material for their inmates.

I need 6 Bhagavad-Gitas and 6 Beads and Bags for Krishna inmates here at St. Marys. Thanks,

**Chaplain Smith**  
**St. Marys, WV**

We would welcome any books and other items that you could send. Ours is a very diverse population and always seeking new items to assist our inmates to seek and follow their individual paths.

Items for our inmates must come from an approved source (approved by the Arizona Prison System) therefore it is easier to send items to the inmates through our inmate programs office.

We also have a growing spiritual practice section in our library and the inmates are hungry for any new information they can get their hands on.

**Chaplain Cherie Roberts**  
**Marana, AZ**

When I was Chaplain in Mississippi a few years ago, you provided a donation of books and DVDs I was hoping that you could assist me here in a new prison. Here we have 2600 medium custody inmates. Please advise if you can assist. Thanks.

When I was Chaplain in Mississippi we had an inmate library of almost 1000 volumes. The largest faith group was Hindu/Krishna. You all helped.

Your assistance and generosity is greatly appreciated.

**Chaplain Jon Shonebarger, Jr.**  
**Hartsville, TN 37074**



## Inmate Letter Excerpts

Hello, my name is Garland, I'm 21, and have been sentenced to 35 years in prison, I would love to receive any books you could send me, like books on Krishna Consciousness, yoga, and meditation, I'm trying to cope with the stress of being in prison for so long and believe any and all books you can send me will help. Thank you.

**Garland P.**

**Abilene, Texas**

The chaplain informed me that my japa beads were in, and that I would get them after class today. So tonight I will be able to chant on Japa beads for the very first time. It will be a mahamantra marathon.

I was reading through a chanting pamphlet. Pg.12 on Chanting the Hare Krishna Mantra. It shows a very beautiful photograph of a family in Alachua Florida, deeply engrossed in Sankirtana. Upon looking at this portrait of love and devotion of a mother and father, it reminded of a longing I had had since I was a very young child. This longing seems to have followed me my whole life. Though upon further examination of myself, I realized that since I have become involved with Krsna Consciousness, this empty feeling of loss and longing has disappeared like fog on the shores of a field. It's so strange. I really had not noticed it until this picture. I realize my desire has been fulfilled. My sadness



turned to joy. I see now that when I look back at all the painful mishaps they now are a great source of insight and information. Simply put; the way I now think is as different as my haircut. HA!

I like this quote from Henry David Thoreau: "*In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita*" — I like this quote because it's exactly how I start my day.

**Anthony A.**

**Pine Bluff, Arkansas**

Dear Nagaraja Dasa, I hope this note finds you well.

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is L. Lynn Langston. I am 68 years old.

I am in prison. I have been now for 32 years. It is not a certainty that I will ever get out.

But, what I'm taking your time for is this: I need help. I recently ran across a discarded BTG magazine and I can't put it down. It's old (Sept/Oct 2013) but new and exciting to me. To give you an

idea; I started attempting to chant (quietly) the mantra mentioned in the BTG. I have no idea what I'm doing. But I love it, I'm drawn to it, and I "ain't" gonna quit. :)

For years I have been drawn to Hindu writings and teachings. I have learned so much about our life and experience of it.

I want to “be” (what do you call a follower of Krsna?) A servant? I want to chant and dance and *most* of all, come to see Krsna in everything and everyone. Will you help, please?

By the way, I don’t consider it an accident I found your magazine. It was supposed to happen. I’m glad too.

Let’s see, what do I need to get started, what should I start with? How should I start to become a follower of Krsna? To be honest: I don’t know what I’m doing!!

**Lynn L.**  
**Lovelock, Nevada**

I got the books you sent to me, and I just got your last letter today. Thank you for them both, the books, and taking the time to write.

I can’t wait until I have a set of beads again. I’ll be the only person who has them at this prison. I am doing well, and barning a lot. Although it is difficult at times to live here, it is great to have so much time to devote to studies, without distractions. Thank you again for your letters and your time. It means a lot especially in here. If you could, in your next letter, please send me the dates for Ekadasi. Thank you! I appreciate all your assistance.

**Tyler B.**  
**Lawtey, Florida**

Hello. It is my hope that this correspondence reaches you in the best of spirits. I received your address from a good friend of mine; he told me that I should get in contact with ISKCON, so, here I am. I hold little knowledge of what all you guys do offer, but would love to know, and if you have any type of correspondence courses, reading material

i.e. magazines or books, I would like to know what I would need to do in order to obtain them, for I am greatly interested. For the past two years I have fallen in love with yoga and everything that I do know and understand of it. I love the endless amounts of knowledge that pour out of the Vedas, and Bhagavad Gita that I strive to understand and gain from it the wisdom that was meant to be gained. I am currently going through some “serious” medical issues, and the science of yoga and all that it entails has been my stronghold, and will help see me through. I am open and eager to learn anything that you are willing to teach. I look forward to hearing from you, hopefully soon, until then...Your friend in God,

**Sean P.**  
**Graceville, Florida**

I was lucky enough to find your mailing address in an old book... I was surprised to see a commercial on TV with you all September festival at the Palace of Gold a couple of days ago; hope for it to have went well... As a young adult I’ve visited the place a couple times, not understanding Krsna Consciousness but amazed by the sheer beauty of it all...

I was brought up as a Christian, in a Baptist church but don’t practice anymore. I feel as if I going through a change of faith, which is the reason I write... I feel like I can’t help but seek God on a different level and Hare Krsna Consciousness seems to the right direction to follow... I’d like to have a better understanding and a direction of modern day living... Thank you for your time and hope to hear back.

**Dave L.**  
**Caldwell, Ohio**



## Inmate Art!

Bhakta David B., from Danbury, Connecticut, painted this beautiful picture of Srila Prabhupada, to adorn the altar during the very successful local Kṛṣṇa group programs.



# 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:

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

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### 3 Donation Options

- 1) Send check or postal money order to:  
ISKCON Prison Ministry  
PO Box 2676  
Alachua, FL 32616
- 2) Donate through PayPal at: [www.paypal.me/IPM](http://www.paypal.me/IPM)
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#### ISKCON Prison Ministry

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