

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

Sept/Oct 2020

HOW I CAME TO KRṢṂA CONSCIOUSNESS

My Curiosity Developed A Life Of Its Own

By Troy P. —inmate from Welch, West Virginia

It was late in 2016 at Mount Olive Correctional Complex, when I met Tirtha Dasa. Tirtha approached my cell door to introduce himself and to say that I looked familiar. I had only been housed at Mount Olive for approximately three years and Tirtha had seen me running track long distance on the yard; this was a particularly difficult time in my life and now that I ponder on the last few years I realize that I was blessed by this seemingly simple conversation with a stranger.

Tirtha Dasa asked if I knew of Krishna Consciousness. I answered that I had heard of the name Krishna and that He was associated with Vedic culture, but beyond that

my understanding was vague. Tirtha offered to let me borrow his copy of the Mahabharata and then told me about Bhagavad-Gītā. As I read Mahabharata I encountered a fascinating epic unlike any other I had ever read. The next day Tirtha told me about chanting the Maha mantra and about the sin of eating meat



and the general dangers of sense gratification. He encouraged me to write and learn more.

My initial interest went no further than simple questions and basic readings. As time passed my curiosity developed a life of its own. I wrote to ISKCON, received a devotee Pen Pal, began a correspondence course in Krishna Consciousness, received a copy of the Gītā, and, in time, all of Srīla Prabhupada's books. I have been incarcerated nearly eleven years and have been seriously studying Krishna Consciousness for slightly more than one year now. Although having lost everything I ever had

In The Darkness Kṛṣṇa Doth Shine

By Jeremy B.—inmate from Bowling Green, Florida

Coming into Kṛṣṇa Consciousness was very simple and easy for me. I was already a practicing Zen Buddhist Monk meditating on emptiness, and nothingness for years until one day Kṛṣṇa came and filled that emptiness into fullness with his divine and Supreme light.

One day in 2015 I woke up on my rack only to see four guys trying to stab another guy for his cell phone. The only Mantra I knew at the Time was the Hare Kṛṣṇa Maha Mantra. So I was scared but started chanting anyway. I prayed to Kṛṣṇa That this guy who was being stabbed would come out alive. And well he did. A Kṛṣṇa Miracle happened that day. The victim was stabbed in 15 areas all missing vital organs. The guy walked up to the Bubble or officer's station and was helped by officers to Medical. He was okay just bleeding everywhere. I believe to this day it was Kṛṣṇa who saved his very life.

By this time I had been a devotee for one year. I only had a Gita given to me by an older devotee. I was the only one on my whole compound doing prasadam, vegetarian eating, chanting, and watching Prabhupada's lectures. Soon others noticed and I answered questions but no one was too heavy on getting serious. My first darshan [seeing the Lord] came to me in a dream. I would chant the Maha Mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare for three hours from 7 to 10pm. And it was beautiful

and everyone I ever knew, I have found the greatest treasure imaginable, I have found Krishna, and I now know that I don't need anyone or anything else.


I am very grateful to Tirtha Dasa for approaching me that day and I am very grateful to everyone at ISKCON Prison Ministry who have served as the tools of Krishna to ensure that although I was born in the darkness of ignorance, my eyes might be opened by the torch of knowledge. My respectful obeisances are unto you all.



because Kṛṣṇa appeared before me in a dream. I was meditating in a forest and Kṛṣṇa walked by and smiled. I wasn't scared but just a bit surprised. He walked in my dream state. So this was nice experience but I knew it wouldn't last, so I released any attachment [that it would happen again].

My transition into Kṛṣṇa Consciousness happened sometime in late 2014. It was



the one pointed devotion of another devotee that actually drew me toward Kṛṣṇa mentally. Even now on CM [Control Management], I am able to meditate longer and chant more. Combining this with some yoga stretches in the morning is perfect! I can still remember the day when I asked my friend about Kṛṣṇa. Bhakti Yoga is truly a path of effulgent devotion. More people should try it, it liberates you. When will you begin this inner Journey of Awakening Kṛṣṇa Consciousness within mindfully? After all is said and done Kṛṣṇa Consciousness fills the void within. 



Inmate Letter Excerpts

I was convicted and sentenced to 'life plus 60 years in prison! I never stopped chanting the entire time I was there, I was strong in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness up until I heard them say 'guilty' and sentence me, then my entire mind, thoughts, actions 'FROZE UP.' Although I knew that the ENTIRE trial process was UNLAWFUL. I couldn't chant, eat, or sleep for days. It took some Christian guy to remind me of the story of Job in the Bible to bring me back to reality. I accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but you know, a lot of people see me chanting etc. and assume it's witchcraft because it's 'DIFFERENT' from their belief. Recalling the story of Job was all I needed to remind me of KRSNA's omnipotence. Now I'm sure I will find stories similar to Job in 'KRSNA BOOK' you sent (THANKS) which definitely predate Biblical stories.

I am now back to Devotional Service and done thinking that KRSNA has rejected me as His servant. I met another Bhakta, actually, he is the 1st Bhakta I've ever met in person, named 'Fernando'. He knows you and told me to tell you we met. He is here with me, but in another dorm. I had the Kṛṣṇa book in my hand and he saw it and came over to me and said "Prabhupada'. I smiled ear to ear, amazed to finally meet someone who not only was familiar, but also a devotee.

Mario S.

Pelham, Georgia

I have received all the books. I have been so eager to devour the knowledge within them. I have been reading constantly for the past two days. I was so happy to receive them. Thank you so very much. I grew up studying mysticism and esoteric topics. So a couple years ago when I ran across the teachings of Kṛṣṇa I was naturally drawn. I've recently finished my full memorization of the Bhagavad-gita in English. I can't easily pronounce the Sanskrit, though I hope to one day.

Dale S.D.

Oglethorpe, Georgia



Dear Devotees,

Please accept our humble obeisances.
All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

We are in receipt of your blessing and exceedingly humbled by your spirit of generosity. Thank you for exhibiting the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the contribution of the Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta book set; the greatest literary gem of India. This Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta set is now the crown jewel addition to our Eastern Religion library. We are aspiring devotees and your gift of the Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta with its instructive value will enrich our practice and assist us in our service. You have set the perfect example in following Srila Prabhupada's foremost decree, "distribute my books." By faithfully following Srila Prabhupada's instructions, you are helping in the spreading of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to those who are the most misfortunate and in great need of this spiritual science. Srila Prabhupada must be very proud of you and more than pleased with your commitment to service. Our sincere appreciation and we thank you for the gift of the Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta book set. We offer our prayers for the continued blessings and mercy of Srila Prabhupada and Lord Kṛṣṇa to be upon this ministry and upon every devotee dedicated to the sankirtan mission-JAYA!

In His service,

Your humble servants, the Devotees of the Eastern Religion Service

Bhakta Daniel,

Bhakta Charlee,

Bhakta Brian,

Bhakta Rolan,

—Tennessee Colony, Texas

Chaplains' Appreciation

Good Morning,

Please know that the box of donated resources did arrive to our institution and we are deeply grateful for your generosity. The resources will be available for our inmate population.

Blessings,

Chaplain Andrew M. Neamtu

FCI Marianna

Marianna, Florida

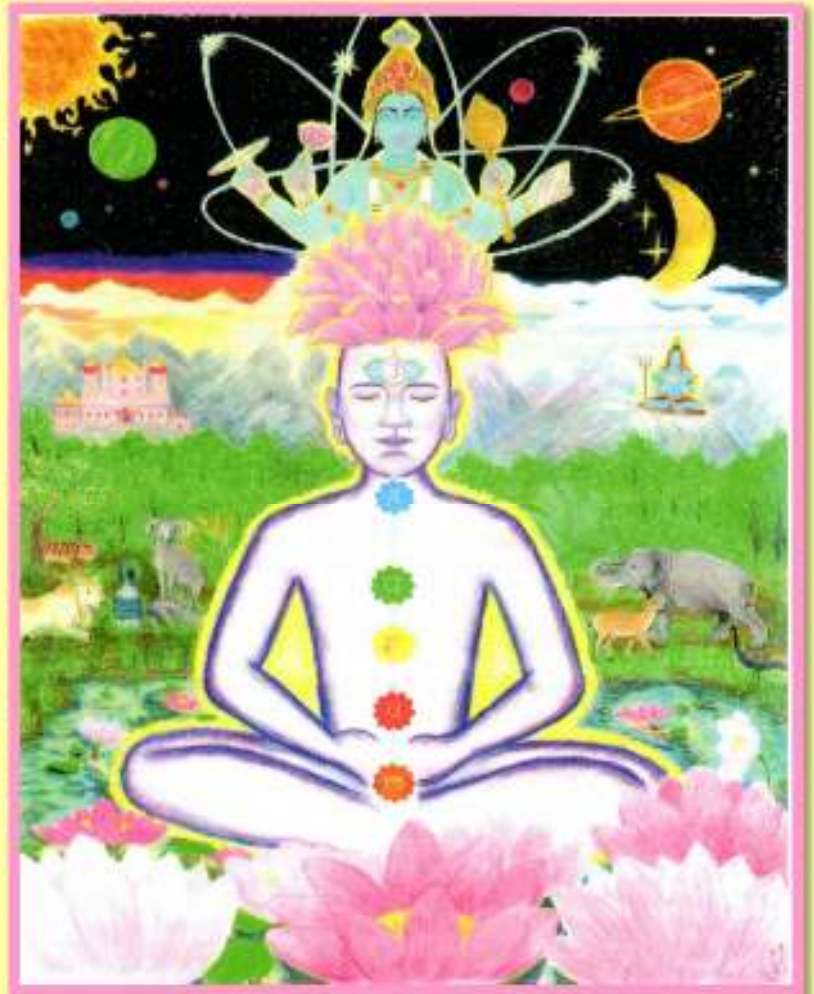
We received a box of books from ISKCON Prison Ministry. The books have been distributed to our three prison yard; Fort Grant, Graham, and Tonto. Thank you very much for your generosity. All of our religious books are received by donation. Enjoy the day!

Respectfully,

Chaplain Jeff Lind

ASPC

Inmate Art!



RIGHT: Drawing from Jason B.
Inmate in Graceville, Florida

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:

Elizabeth Elson
Hamsavatar & Jennifer
Kristopher Held (5 stamps) (Inmate)
Mark Barnett
Sri Krishna Dasa

And our monthly Donors:

Amala Gaura Dasa
Aritra Nath
Bhavananda Dasa
Deepali Mittal
Dina Sharana dasa
Gene and Claudine Moore
Jitarati dasa
Kalindi Dasi (Hopping)
Maya Sudhana dasa
Mickey Singer
Pritam Dey
Radha Vinod Dasa



Ram Tulasi Dasa and Ananda Shakti
Dasi Rene Waisvisz
Richard House
Sahadev Dasa
Satyanarayana Dasa
Shashi Shefali Majmudar
Raina Dasa
Vegavati Dasi
Vikram Kumar
Vraja Kishore Dasa
Yudhisthira Dasa
Anonymous (you know who you are:
thank you!)

3 Donation Options

- 1) Send a check or postal money order to:
ISKCON Prison Ministry
PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616
- 2) Donate through PayPal at: www.paypal.me/IPM
- 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
PO Box 2676
Alachua, FL 32616
iskconprisonministry@gmail.com

iskconprisonministry.org