

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

May/June 2022

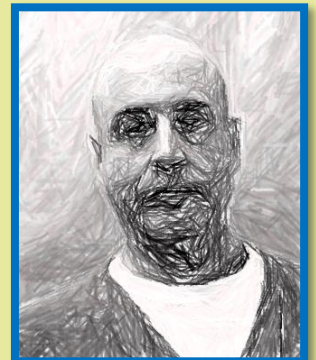
MORE OF BHAKTA LOUIS' REALIZATIONS

NOTE: Because I receive an abundance of nectar from the inmates' letters, I am unable to print them all in one newsletter, but because I still want to share them all with you, I publish them gradually, over time. So although the following excerpt from one of Louis' letters was written in 2021, it is so enlivening that I feel it just must be shared with all of you. Bhakta Louis in prison for life. 🙏

Hare Krishna! I offer my respectful obeisance unto the lotus feet of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the founder acārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, who delivered the light of the Bhāgavata to the whole world through his books and teachings. By his mercy I've been saved from the darkest ignorance by my intellect, knowledge, and understanding of the most confidential knowledge of the science of the spirit-soul, and of Bhakti-Yoga. He has given us such a superior fund

of knowledge, even the neophyte devotees of Krishna have a superior fund of knowledge of God.

I'm writing today to share some very important spiritual realizations, and advancements I have made, and also to let you know that I've actually been moved twice in one week, and am now in Lake Buttlar, awaiting surgery (I



will be there only 6 to 12 weeks at most.) I only have 4 ½ months left of my “close-management ‘CM Punishment’” [isolation] left to serve, then will be back in general population. I’ve been having concerns with my old nature showing its ugly head once more freedom is awarded to me as I move out of this CM punishment. I’ve been discussing this with Arturo too. I’ve come to understand that as long as the living being is trapped in matter, the gross-material body will act according to its nature as it was created for you by Krishna according to your past karma, it has no other choice, so it will always desire the gratification of the senses, but it’s how you, the living being, react to the karma that makes all the difference.

Bhakti-lata Dasi when they shipped us from FSP to Suwannee CI, the officers there took all of our personal property and were very disrespectful, throwing away very personal things we are authorized to have, just to get a violent reaction from us so that they may be justified in using force on us and giving us Disciplinary Reports to make us go back to Close Management and start all over again to prove how violent and dangerous we are. You see the CM and confinement punishment cause mental health problems in the inmates, and they may win.

They threw away some pictures and letters of my dead mother and father, my Japa beads that, as you know, were authorized by the Chaplain and the Security Property Sergeant at FSP. These things being sacred to me, this would have normally gotten the reaction from me that they wanted! But I remembered the

Bhagavad-Gita and how one can recognize the Bhagavata by his not being disturbed over loss or overjoyed by gain. I gave the hurt and anger over to Krishna by trusting in Him. Krishna will always protect and provide for his devotee. As He said in the Bhagavad-Gita “Son of Kunti, let it be known, my devotee shall never perish.”

I realize I’m placed in these most sinful environments in the same room and on the same wing with old friends, all together —being able to

participate in or think of old sinful activities — because somewhere deep inside I still desire these things and The Blessed Lord fulfils all our desires; but I feel such shame and guilt over this; I cry out to Krishna to please forgive this transgression, that somehow I have fallen into the pit of material entrapment, and been bitten by the snake of time, that I am most fallen, the lowest of the low and I can make no progress independent of Krishna – I can do nothing independent of him, and to please lead me on the right path to reach You O Lord, please accept me into your service and as I am a neophyte devotee alone in a most sinful place I am weak; please place me in the presence of other devotees and or give me a spiritual master to guide me, and support me.

This constitutes the proper use of my free will, that’s why the Lord says in the Bhagavad-Gita that even though it may appear that the devotee of the Lord may commit an abominable act he is still to be considered holy and one should not deride him. As the neophyte advances and is sincere in heart Krishna will give him the knowledge needed and purify him so he will no longer continue to fall. I am actually experiencing and understanding this truth; and I understand now more than ever the importance of the spiritual master, and the association of devotees of Krishna to support and strengthen the neophyte devotee until he becomes “The Bhagavata.” Also, Bhakti Lata Dasi, I give thanks to Krishna that by His Grace, and my superior fund of knowledge as a neophyte devotee of his, I’m now able to explain to others about Krishna be they so-called Muslims, Christians, or etc., in a way that they can understand and relate to

as not to offend anyone, as I now understand God and our constitutional position with Him.




My roommate here at RMC (for only one day) was a Muslim and we talked of God. He asked me about Bhakti-yoga, and I told him that the pure devotee of the Lord are Mahatmas and as a Muslim with their

discipline of praying several times a day, washing themselves to consecrate themselves holy unto God, and the diet restrictions, and chanting mantras in Arabic, he should be able to grasp the concept. I gave a quick but accurate breakdown of love for

God and devotional service, what is matter and what is spirit, and we are not this body but spirit-soul, I then let him read *Beyond Birth & Death* (read not study) as it's about fifty-five pages. When I asked him what his understanding of this was, I was very surprised by his comprehension of it. I then brought up the mantras in Arabic that start each of his days; He said that because he knows their meanings, whenever he hears them in Arabic it fills his heart with joy! So, I then chanted the Maha Mantra several times vibrating the Transcendental sounds, and he gave a big smile showing great emotion, saying that hearing this fills his heart with great joy, and he does not even know the meaning! I explained this was crying out to God as a child cries out to its mother, O Supreme God, O energy of God, O God, please accept me into your service.

Bhakti Lata Dasi I was at first very distressed to learn I was losing all my long-awaited freedoms and privileges of CM3 to come here to RMC confinement, but just that 24 hours I spent telling this man about Krishna was well worth every hardship! I feel this is the closest I have come to helping fulfil my part of His Divine Grace Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's mission and giving to another this most precious gift given me by the causeless mercy of Krishna's devotees, Haribol!

I want to thank you for all the lost souls you minister to in all the prisons and your hard work and dedication in the *Freedom newsletter*, and also for the *Back to Godhead* magazine. You have personally assisted me greatly in my spiritual advancement!

Your humble servant, Louis 

THE ULTIMATE DESTINATION

by Jason Matthews

I love Lord Sri Krishna,
the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
I shall serve Govinda, reading the sastras,
studying what Srila Prabhupada has said.
I shall offer my eternal loving devotion;
with mind, body, and word.
All that I am, favorably engaged for Sri Krishna;
opening my heart of hearts,
the direction of Lord Visnu to be heard.
For in the deep darkness of ignorance I did wonder
- though by the causeless mercies of Sri Krishna
and His pure devotees -
no longer do I desire this human form of life
squander.
Now I seek to glorify my worshipable Lord Sri
Krishna
humbly bowing unto His soft
and sweet lotus feet.
Yearning ever so deeply to be in the fine association
of His pure devotees -
these great souls, one day, I must personally meet.
Then I know my life will be a success,
purified of all contamination.
Yes, then I know my spiritual consciousness
will be surely elevated
to continually think of Lord Sri Krsna,
on this journey back to Godhead,
The ultimate Destination.

POEM CORNER



OPEN UP

by Bhakta Jan H. —California

Just open up and
hear it.
Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna
ancient
here and now
the source of
sage and demigod
unto His feet
they bow.
Countless servants
each unique
devoted to His
pleasure
to see Their
Lordships
herding cows
can be the greatest
treasure.
Baladeva and Govinda
light and dark
complexions
in all the
Vedic texts there
are
the harmony directions.

Inmate Letter Excerpts

I am so looking forward to getting the prayer beads. I am chanting some with Swami Prabhupāda, with a japa meditation chant I downloaded off the kiosk. I also downloaded the Hare Krishna kirtan with him. I love them both. However, I feel my chanting/prayer will be way more effective with the beads. I have received one e-mail from dear Ramaniya lately where she answered some questions I had. She is **such a blessing** and so well-versed in Krishna Consciousness. I now see why you chose her to be my contact. I am truly blessed to be able to consult and learn from her.

I have been proselytizing here big time! I'm letting guys read some of my BTG's and *Freedom Newsletters* and chanting with them. Moreover, I've also shown these guys the beautiful art in my gorgeous new calendar I had my wife send me. To me the ISKCON art is one of the best things about our movement—so aesthetically wonderful!!!

Kyle S. —Angola Louisiana

I apologize for my being desperate as we should be serene and not anxious, but separation from the contact with devotees still does that to me, and the blessings I get when letters with instruction and blessings come is worth all the gold in the world.

I have contacted multiple temples (ISKCON) in the surrounding areas to see if they have any devotees interest in visiting a prisoner in Krishna, to no avail yet. Visitations are behind a Plexiglas so there isn't any chance of spreading the virus, Just love of Krishna!!!!

It will be nice to have contact with devotees and enjoy the actual association, but everything in the Lord's time.

Jose A. —Fairton, New Jersey

Hare Krsna. It has been sometime since I have last written. I have been struggling with anger. I chant and nothing works. I tend to internalize and suppress my anger. I am very lucky I haven't exploded. My anger comes from a number of factors. My prison environment, my roommates, psychotic issues, my own addictions to substances and material reality in general.

I use a number of coping skills such as mantra music, Mozart, dolphin sounds. I use auditory music while I draw mandalas and peaceful scenes. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Prison is a dark place

filled with demon-possessed people. So much deceitfulness around me. So much hurt. I try to be nice, forgiving, and helpful. I get taken advantage of sometimes; some people enjoy getting one over others. My distrust of people is high.

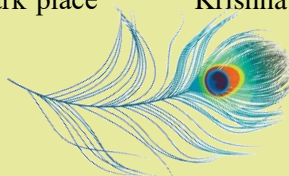
It is through the grace of the one Supreme Source of all Universal cosmic manifestations that I have not hurt myself or others even though my anger monkeys want me too. It is extremely hard. I have a life sentence. I pray one day I will be shown relief for my case. Maybe laws will change, but Florida is slow for prison changes. I bow down before God to help me. I have been going strong for ten years. What one usually deals with in prison settings is a series of psychological torture mechanisms. Every day I am mentally assaulted with negativity, griping and complaining from both authorities and criminally insane individuals. At times I don't know what to do. At the end of each day I take a lot of deep breaths. I teach yoga and the fundamental structural basis for Zen meditation. It works but not all the time.

Today someone made me very angry. So I am sitting here right now with this anger in my chest. I am breathing very slow and deep. To compound this problem, is an abnormal amount of heat, we have no fans, no AC, so yes it is a struggle for sure. In Krsna consciousness I keep going and trying with all my will to move forward. I have been sober for three days now. I have struggled with addiction of one kind or another since my teens. I have no questions. I seek nothing. I renounce, I detach. Please pray for me as I for you. Love, peace, and blessing.

Jeremy B. —Arcadia, Florida

Hare Krishna Mataji. The chapel has turned over a completely new leaf, thanks to the mercy of Srila Prabhupada, Lord Chaitanya, and dear, sweet Gopala. For the first time in many years, Chaplain Y. authorized a substantial liturgical order with oils, chadars, Gangajal, tilak, additional murtis, and many other things. They were all wonderful today and our little sanga from our housing unit only did a rousing kirtan with dancing and video of Prabhupada darshan. It was wonderful and transcendental. I just arrived back from the chapel and am ecstatic--almost like the old days. Hope all is well for all of you.

your servant,
Krishna Kirtan das



Chaplains' Appreciation

4/26/22

Dear Bhakti:

It was a pleasure speaking with you this morning. Thank you for being so generous with your materials. I know the veterans will greatly appreciate them. They value receiving spiritual materials from non-Christian sources so they can explore different approaches to living and spirituality. We usually have about 50 vets who are in three locked units. They come in with a variety of problems but talking and reading seem to help.

The veterans are my favorite group to work with; they are open to talk about God, and they need the most help.

Thank you again for your generosity.

Chaplain Sara Goodman

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs —California



ABOVE: Material sent to Krishna Kirtan's institution in Virginia, where a very active group of inmates bhaktas meet regularly for hearing and chanting, and for viewing/listening to Hare Kṛṣṇa DVDs and CDs.



THANK YOU to ALL our SUPPORTERS!

Your generosity is what keeps this program going! ☺ Because of a senior moment, I may forget someone, so please forgive me, and let me know so I can include your name in the next IPM NEWS. 🙏

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- 2) Donate through PayPal at: www.paypal.me/IPM or look for IskconPrisonMinistry@gmail.com
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