

Dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda
Founder Acarya of the International Society for
Krishna Consciousness (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

Jan/April 2025

See 2024 IPM book distribution scores on page 5

SHARING INMATES' CONTRIBUTIONS DURING A JAPA RETREAT

By Govindanandini Dasi —New Jersey

ISKCON OF Central New Jersey recently held their annual "Thanksgiving" Japa Retreat, under the leadership of H.H. Romapada Swami. A strikingly unique feature of this year's Japa Retreat was that I was asked to give a presentation about ISKCON Prison Ministry (IPM) and the unique contribution of the inmates involved in that preaching program.

I have been a volunteer with ISKCON Prison Ministry since 2013. I explained to the



audience how the activities of IPM attract and train the fortunate inmates to follow Srila Prabhupada's bhakti-yoga program in their prisons.

To demonstrate the point, I displayed the artwork created by inmates on the theme of chanting and bhakti from the prison ministry's website <https://iskconprisonministry.org/>

The audience was amazed to view the artwork and praised the inmates.

I also presented the writings of two inmates. Bhakta Jose's article described his journey with the holy name, his experience and his faith in the process of chanting. Bhakta Sean's sweet poem on Sri Chaitanya's process of chanting the Hare Krishna maha mantra was also a hit among the audience.

attending devotees, as they witnessed the purifying power of chanting Hare Krishna. They thanked the prison inmates for their contributions and were happy to know about ISKCON Prison Ministry. By the end of the retreat, at least two devotees felt motivated to inquire about the volunteer service opportunity with the prison ministry. 🌸

The presentation astonished and moved the



POEM CORNER

SRILA PRABHUPADA

By Sarva Laksmi Mayi devi dasi —St. Gabriel, Louisiana

Like a beautiful dove descending,
In a dark and ugly place.
You appeared
You lit up the darkness with
Light and blissful knowledge.
On your wings you carried
Radha and Krsna.
Around your neck was a
Garland of Gopis
And on your head
Was the Lotus feet of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu
Thank you dear Prabhupada



ASCENDING PATH

By Randy Curtis

Lord, who will abide in Your tabernacle?
Who will dwell in Your holy hill?
The meek and the lowly need Your love,
And with it, their hearts You will fill.
Oh, Krishna, create in us a clean heart,
Teach us to be meek and humble.
Before our souls begin to part.
So in the cycle of time we will not stumble.
Purge us from life to life,
That we may one day behold You.
Sifting from us all the unwanted strife,
And realize with You we'll never lose.



A WORTHY BATTLE FOR ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

By Bhakti-lata Dasi

A few months ago inmates made us aware that the FLDOC (Florida Department of Correction) has banned the Bhagavad-gītā from the list of books the inmates are allowed to receive. This decision has been reached by the LRC (Literacy Review Committee) and they state their purpose as, "For security reasons", which is as vague as can be. Some inmates speculate that the LRC concluded that the Bhagavad-gita, having been spoken on a battlefield may incite inmates to violence. Others think that the LCR views the transliterations as possibly dangerous messages written in codes. Whatever the reason, banning the Gita is a clear violation of the inmates' religious rights. It is greatly distressing for them to be barred from



reading this most important book, sung by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, and explained by His pure devotee.

Thankfully, two devotee lawyers in Florida —Amarendra and Balavanta prabhus— generously volunteered their time to take up this case with the FLDOC. I am extremely thankful to both of them and very optimistic that, by Kṛṣṇa's grace, justice will prevail. That is exactly the kind of battle Prabhupāda would urge us to take on with great enthusiasm and in a kṣatriya spirit.

I will keep you updated of any developments, in the next IPM NEWS. Please pray for this litigation to be swift and decisive. 🙏



Inmate Joseph Williams, in Florence, Arizona, left his body on 10/20/24 (the cause has not been disclosed). He had been charged with theft and child molestation and had been in prison since 1991. Joseph came in contact with ISKCON Prison Ministry in July 2013, and had been corresponding with a devotee (who prefers to remain anonymous).

Here is a list of the books he read over the years, while in prison:

Krsna, the Reservoir of Pleasure
On Chanting Hare Krsna
Beyond Birth and Death
Perfection of Yoga
BBT Calendar
Bhagavad-gita As It Is
Chant and Be Happy

Coming Back
Raja Vidya
Sri Isopanisad
Science of Self-Realization
Nectar of Instruction
Simple Vegetarian Cooking
Laws of Nature



He was also on the mailing lists for BTG and Freedom Newsletter.

Bhakta Joseph has started his devotional service and will have the chance to continue on that path in his next life. This is the inconceivable blessing that Śrīla Prabhupāda compassionately gave to even the most fallen.



Inmate Letter Excerpts

For most of my life I had believed that God was both unknowable and unapproachable, believing that nothing controlled my life. I had complete control of everything, and after this life there was nothing after. I was not a spiritually minded person, and it was missing in my life; especially since, we in this world are both material and spiritual.

It was not until somebody came into my life wearing neck beads, he awakened inside of me and told me about Krishna and ISKCON, he gave me *Science of Self Realization* book by Srila Prabhupada. The book answered my questions that I couldn't find anywhere else. If it would have not been for Srila Prabhupada journeying to USA and fulfilling the order of his spiritual master, I would have never come back to Krishna. I would still be a lost soul. All glories to Srila Prabhupada, my spiritual grandfather, one of the greatest devotees of Lord Shri Krishna, the most humble of all men.

I continue to remind myself that whatever happens, I have to ask Krishna for help to lead me in right direction. I understand that by Krishna's mercy the decision will be made, Michigan or Washington. I may not get what I wish, but I know that it is by Krishna's will this soul is in body.

Randall S. —Washington

First of all, before I started to write to ISKCON or knew what it were, I was professing the religion of

ISLAM. I do still practice "ISLAM", but now it is to the fullness of my ability. Swami Srila Prabhupāda has opened my eyes to worship God within my religion in devotional service. On July 20, 2012 is the time for all Muslims worldwide to fast which is called "Ramadhan". Yes I am observing it in devotional service. I will add in it the Hare Krishna mantra.

I will not stop reading books about Lord Shri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I have developed ecstatic love of Shri Krishna. By me reading about the Lord's pastimes, names, qualities, forms etc., it has given me so much of

joy. But it cannot do for me what it can do for me by honoring it from a pure devotee of the Lord. I read my Srimad Bhagavad-gita As It Is, The Holy Quran, and the Nectar of Devotion. These three books has served me well. The book *Science of Self-Realization* is a wonderful book and I have allowed two other prisoners to read it and they liked it. I really love the book *Nectar of Instruction!*

Nonetheless, I am chanting the Hare Krishna Maha mantra. It is so wonderful; but, not as it would be if I were around a true Spiritual Teacher who is a pure devotee of Lord Shri Krishna. Since I have started corresponding with IPM, it

has helped me out a lot. Everything I read of Lord Shri Krishna by Srila Prabhupada I will apply it within my life. I am really dedicated with the Hare Krishna's movement

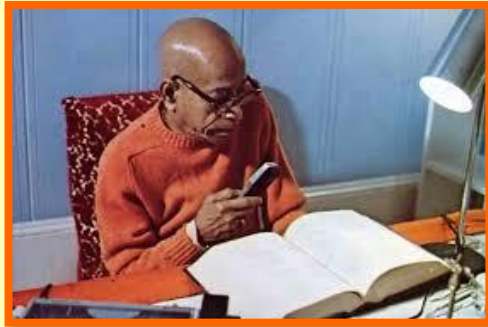
Wilbert W. —Louisiana

2024

What truly blows me away though, is how this man from India [Śrīla Prabhupāda], whom I never met, could become so very special and necessary to me. He is my air and I cannot do without his association. I have a picture of him (taken from a magazine) which I always carry with me. It gives me the strength and inspiration to try to live and act properly.

Srila Prabhupada left behind everything he knew to bring Krishna Consciousness here. He dedicated his life to producing literature we now have to study. We can never repay this. Were it not for his compassion for us, we should never have had the opportunity to know Lord Krishna. In addition to this, not only did he give us the chance, Prabhupada also set for us an example of what we must do in return.

His seva [service] was done for us, but also as repayment to his own spiritual master for giving him Krishna consciousness. He gave his entire life over to obeying the order of his Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, and then he instructed us to serve God and teach others to serve God. I can only hope and pray that I shall



one day be afforded the chance to serve him at the feet of his devotees.

The letter of the volunteer from IPM [ISKCON Prison Ministry] states that "It is our duty to Srila Prabhupāda, and those who come before and after him, to develop Krishna Consciousness, and to help others to do the same." I can't, in fact, think of any other way to serve him. His Divine grace gave up everything—his family, home, security, everything—to come here under direction of his spiritual master, and lead us, who are so unworthy, back home back to Godhead. Nothing anyone could ever do can compare to this, no amount of wealth or power will ever give us so much happiness. This is one of the greatest lessons I have been led to recognize coming here. The blessing bestowed upon us by my beloved Prabhupada are endless and unearned, and I have

found myself so unworthy of receiving them, yet they never cease. Through his books, devotees, and glorious Krishna Conscious movement, which he single-handedly brought to the West, my life has been completely transformed; peace and joy have filled my heart, and I have found the love which can only come from blessed Govinda. Through his divine grace's sacrifice [Prabhupāda], I have been allowed to know IPM, which has given me so much by allowing me association with those IPM volunteers who serve him so faithfully.

Joseph P. —Illinois



2024 IPM Book Distribution

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Books total: 1,946

Breakdown

Booklets: 179

Small: 1,041

Medium: 99

Big: 76

Maha-Big: 551

Books by other devotee authors: 188

BTGs: 4,062

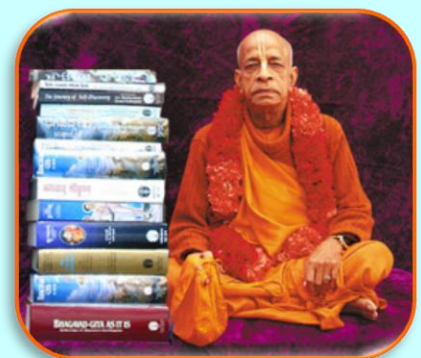
BBT Art Calendars: 60

CDs: 336

DVDs: 75

Japa Mala sets: 15

Freedom Newsletters : 2,520



GRAND TOTAL
Books and BTGs combined: 6,196

Śrīla Prabhupāda, ke, Jaya!

Chaplains' Appreciation

7/23/24

Thank you for your recent donation of your Back to Godhead magazines. Our patrons will greatly enjoy the use of them. It is always a warm welcome to receive material from outside resources, such as your organization.

Again, thank you and may God continue to bless your efforts!

In Christ,

Chaplain Andrea Bravo

Crowley County Correctional Center —Olney Springs, Colorado

8/24/24

Thank you for the donation of various DVDs and CDs, and *Back to Godhead* magazines. They have been put in the Religious Library, making them available for the inmates to expand their understanding of Hare Krishna faith.

Thank you for your kindness and generosity!

Chaplain David Rink

Chippewa Correctional Facility —Kincheloe, Michigan

Thank you so much for your wonderful letter and all the wonderful information you sent; it is always a pleasure to hear from people like you who see inmates as human beings and not mere numbers. I am very happy to make your acquaintance and look forward to telling the Buddhist/Hindu group that I have found such a terrific resource for them.

Any teachings by Swami Prabhupada, any copies of BTG, and anything else you are willing to donate to the library would be very much appreciated by the inmates here who wish to expand their minds,



deepen their faith, or simply want to learn about a way of life which is different from their own. As for myself, Upendra, I really enjoyed the book and material from George Harrison you sent, so I would welcome more. George Harrison is someone I know only from his musical works, but I can plainly see for myself that he has more than one facet.

And while I don't think the Buddhist/Hindu groups will be able to afford an 18-volume set of Srimad-Bhagavatam, I will say that it certainly looks interesting from my point of view.

I will give your mailing address to those inmates who wish to correspond, and I am certain that at least a few will want to write someone as nice and as dedicated as you. I am sure you have learned and experienced much in 25 years of ministering to prisoners; I imagine I could learn a great deal myself. If I had the luxury of time to correspond, kind Upendra, I surely would.

Thank you, bless you, and may the seasons be kind to you. Peace unto you,

Chaplain I. Trevino

Northeastern New Mexico Correctional Facility

12/4/24

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you for sending all the Krishna books and Literature.

I received them Monday, but they came into the Mailroom, about a week ago. Because of past drugs coming in through donations etc., the Mailroom has to search the boxes first.

As I opened the boxes and put them on the shelf in the Library,, I was so moved by the Donations, Of everything.. The quality of them all and the titles made me even want to read them and Understand Krishna for me as well. All that you provided in the donations are so good to help

understand the Krishna Belief and then for them to practice it as well. Those residents of the Krishna faith will be so happy to see and read them to help them better practice with sincerity their faith. I have already taken the Bhagavad-Gita As It Is to one resident who requested it. He was so pleased and has requested more, which I will be taking out to him today. Thank you also for the 10 Volume Srimad-Bhagavatam for the Chaplain Library. Thank you also for sending initially the 2 sets of Prayer Beads.

Thank you, Thank you, thank you again for generosity in helping our Krishna Residents understand and live their Krishna Faith here. Your generosity is much appreciated, for some of other religions are not so generous.

Chaplain Melhorn

Moshannon Valley Processing Center for Immigrants —Philipsburg, Pennsylvania

10/23/24

Hello,

My name is Jamie Orlando. I'm a clinician at Essex County Sheriff's Departments prerelease facility located in Salisbury, MA. I came across your website during my research for

resources for incarcerated women. I was wondering if you would be willing to send me one of your some of your literature. I think your program is wonderful and would love to share it with the women here.

The women can have any hard cover and/or soft cover books. My facility hold up to 22 women, right now we have 16. Thanks again for your generosity



I look forward to hearing from you

Thank you

Jamie Orlando -Counselor

Women In Transitions Pre-Release & Reentry — Salisbury, Massachusetts

4/4/24

I was wondering if your ministry still donated books to jails? We are in need of the Bhagavad-gita for the people who are requesting it here. If you had other materials for them that would be great also.

6/20/24

I can play either DVD and USB in a group setting.

10/7/24

Thank you for the reply! The inmates would love to read more! The more you send the more options they will have!

Just know, the more you send the more they will keep asking. You can set your limits as needed.

Still, only paperback, no names engraved! Thank you again!

10/15/24

We give these books away and people take them home! Very rarely do they return them to us! You sent four the last time and there are no more on the shelf! All that to say - can you send a case?

10/21/24

Yes, we received all of the items you so freely gave to us. We have given out all the Gitas, look forward to receiving more in the future if possible!

Chaplain Lewis Kyle

Inverness Jail —Portland, Oregon



LEFT: Crocheted elephant from inmate **Rakesh Punn—Connecticut**, in appreciation of the guidance the IPM volunteers gave him, helping him to pursue Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. By extension, these thanks also go to our well-wishers (yes, you 😊)

BG. 10.27 ~~From the nectar were produced many entities, of which there was a horse named Uccaiḥśravā. Another animal produced from the nectar was an **elephant** named Airāvata. Because these two animals were produced from nectar, they have special significance, and they are representatives of Kṛṣṇa. ~~

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.



Our donors since last newsletter:

Bhartrihari Dasa
Coral Wheatley (England)
Haripada Dasa & Radha Bhakti Dasi
Hrdayananda Mahārāja
Inmate Charles Bailey
Inmate Robert Barnett
Inmate Ayil Nayee
Kamlesh Patel



Nimai Hemphill (CA)
Radha Bhakti & Hari Prasada prabhush
Ram Tulasi Dasa & Ananda Shakti Dasi
Rasvilas Dasa & Amrita Sundari Devi Dasi
Srutadeva Dasa
Svarbhanu Dasa & Cindy prabhu
Vaninatha Dasa (Arizona)

And our monthly Donors:

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Kalindi Dasi (Hopping)
Kanva Dasa
Maya Sudhana Dasa
Mickey Singer
Pancaratra dasa & Atita Guna dasi



Premananda Dasa
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Shashi Shefali Majmudar
Radha Vinod Dasa
Raina Dasa
Rāma Kīśora Dāsa
Vegavati Dasi
Vikram Kumar
Yudhisthira Dasa
Anonymous (you know who you are:
thank you!)

4 Donation Options:

- 1) Send a check or postal money order to: **Vaisnava Outreach, PO Box 2676, Alachua, FL 32616**
- 2) Donate through PayPal at: www.paypal.me/IPM or look for IskconPrisonMinistry@gmail.com
- 3) Donate through pay.google.com to iskconprisonministry@gmail.com
- 4) 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 will send you a **tax-deductible receipt** at the moment of the donation, provided you give us your legal name and mailing address.

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