

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

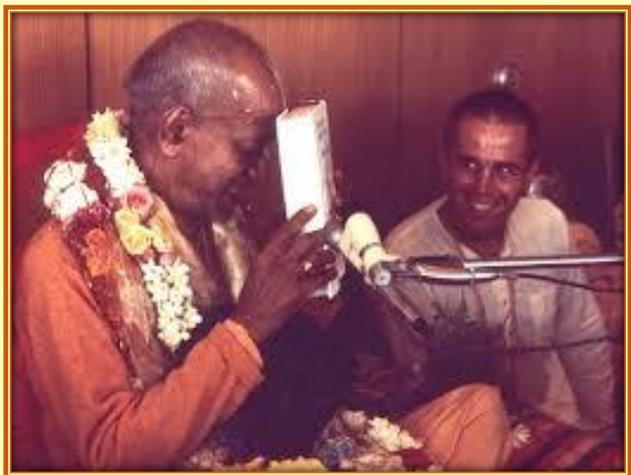
Sept/Dec 2025

BAN ON BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ IN FLORIDA PRISONS

UPCOMING COURT CASE and fundraising

As you have learned in the last two issues of IPM NEWS, Florida prisons (with some exceptions) have banned the Bhagavad-gītā from the list of books the inmates are allowed to read. This decision was taken by the **LRC** (Literacy Review Committee). They say it is because it contains subject matter that is inadmissible per section (1S) of rule 33-501-401. F.A.C.

However, This ban is done stealthily; the prisons will not confirm this decision officially, on paper. They will only tell you if a book is banned when you call the mailroom. There's no straightforward way to prove this ban is in effect. There isn't a publicly available comprehensive list of banned



Prabhupāda receiving the first copy of his unabridged Bhagavad-gītā As It Is

books available online.

Advaita prabhu, in charge of the Krishna House in Gainesville, Florida, talked to someone at from the LRC (in Tallahassee) about a year ago, and that she confirmed the BG was banned.

Only the BG (from all authors) is banned, not any of the other books from Srila Prabhupada.

Two devotee lawyers, Amarendra and Balavanta prabhhus have generously taken this case pro-bono. Because the Florida Department of Corrections (FLDOC) hasn't put this decision in writing, in order words because it is not officially publicized, we have to start with taking the issue with individual prisons.

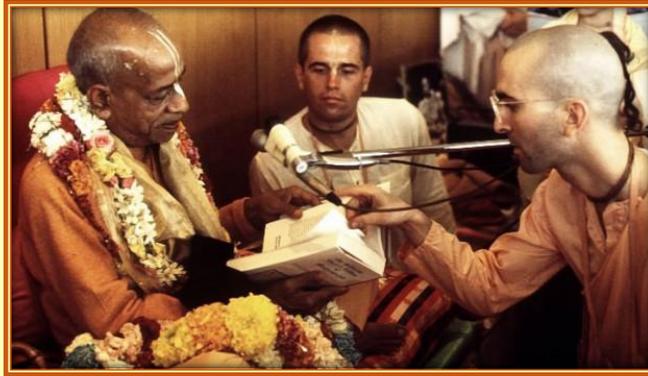
Amarendra prabhu sent two official letters to one institution, Jefferson Correctional Institution in Monticello, Florida and its Warden. Neither the institution nor the Warden ever responded to Amarendra prabhu's letter in any way. So the only recourse is to now bring the issue to court.

We started with Jefferson Correctional Institution because a courageous inmate, Bhakta Rakesh P., has volunteered to be the plaintiff, at the risk of being harassed for his decision. He already felt the consequence recently when his wife and nephew came to visit him, as they have done regularly, and were at first denied entrance. Thankfully, Rakesh's nephew didn't take no for an answer and was very vocal about this injustice, requesting to speak to a superior. They were eventually let in for their visit. You can appreciate the very real risk Bhakta Rakesh is taking in Krishna's service and we pray that no other repercussions befall him.

Although our devotee lawyers have very kindly waved their fees, court fees and travel expenses will need to be covered. The case could take some time, and may even need to be appealed if the outcome is not favorable. The projected maximum amount that will be

needed is \$10,000. IPM, operating on a shoe-string budget, doesn't have this kind of resources, therefore we have set up an electronic fundraiser to gather the necessary funds to go the distance with this case. When the case is over, if any funds remain, they will be used for the daily operations of ISKCON Prison Ministry.

Amarendra prabhu said that after filing this case, he intends to call a press conference, to attract the public's attention to this cause. The more publicity there is, the more support it will attract, such as potentially the group *Three Rivers*, a non-profit organization providing free civil legal aid to low-income individuals in North Florida. Even the general public will be outraged at such a violation of the inmates' religious rights.



Religious freedom is a core component of the First Amendment, which protects individuals' freedom to believe and practice their religion.

Years ago, Amarendra prabhu was involved in the case against the infamous Mr. Nair, who was trying to cheat the devotees out of the

Bombay land, on which Śrīla Prabhupāda had already strategically installed Radha-Krishna deities. Amarendra prabhu remembers how angry Prabhupāda was; he said this anger was so intense and palpable it reminded him of the description of Lord Nrsimha's anger. So now he is very enthused to be part of another such cause. Prabhupāda liked a good fight in Krishna's service.

A young devotee, Ananga Manjari prabhu, has very kindly taken upon herself to set up a beautiful fundraiser page on behalf of IPM. Please donate to this cause to help us reverse the ban on the Bhagavad-gītā. This court case is another worthy "rhino" to be caught for Śrīla Prabhupāda's pleasure.

Below is the link to our fundraiser. You will be issued an automatic tax deductible receipt. Please help!

<https://iskconprisonministry.betterworld.org/campaigns/gitaban>



Inmate's Appreciation of Bhagavad-Gita As It Is

I got Bhagavad-gita As It is from the Vedic resources. I learned it is Divine instruction for the battlefield of one's life to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead. My favorite verse is in chapter 9, *"This knowledge of Bhagavad-gita is king of education, the secret of all secrets"*. It is the purest of all knowledge and because it gives direct perception of self-realization, it is the perfection of all religion. This is Raja-Vidya as there is no higher knowledge than Bhagavad-gita. It is spoken on the battlefield of Kuruksetra between Sri Krishna and His disciple friend Arjuna.

Mark B. —Canon City, Colorado

I found a Bhagavad-gita As It Is in a used bookstore. As soon as I saw it I purchased it; I was already familiar with Srila Prabhupada's books by reading BTG (Back to Godhead Magazine), BTG was given to me by sankirtan devotee. Under Srila Prabhupada's expert qualified guidance, I learned that Bhagavad-gita must be understood in the disciplic chain of succession. When approached by a sincere student, a bona fide guru transmits knowledge of the Absolute Truth, namely knowledge of soul, the relationship between soul and Supersoul, understanding of the time activity and cosmic manifestation. This knowledge is contained in the Bhagavad-gita, and Bhagavad-gita must be accepted in the manner Arjuna, disciple accepted from Sri Krishna the original guru.

Anonymous inmate —(he holds a very nice Krishna Conscious program on festival days in the prison)

In verse 2.66 (of the Bhagavad-gītā) it is stated that *"One who is not connected with the Supreme (in Krishna Consciousness) can have neither intelligence nor a steady mind, without which there is no possibility of peace and how can there be any happiness without peace?"* I am very impressed with the Bhagavad-gita because it has answered my questions, and if I want to read about something in particular I will look in the general index and it will take me to what I want to read about. I have learned

from the Bhagavad-gita that we are not this body and we are spirit soul (Bg. 2.2). *The six promises of Lord Krishna are:* 1-Therefore Arjuna you should always think of me (Bg. 8.7) 2- Engage your mind always in thinking of Me (Bg 9.34) 3-To those who are constantly devoted to Me (Bg. 10.10) 4-My dear Arjuna, he who engages in my pure devotional service (Bg. 11.55) 5-Just fix your mind on Me the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Bg. 12.8) 6-Always think of Me, become My devotee (Bg. 18.65)

Gordon S. —Salem OR

I read all the books on Buddhist philosophy and I was not satisfied. As I read Bhagavad-gita As It Is, Krishna began to reveal Himself to me and the realizations were so deep. The information of Bhagavad-gita totally made Buddhist literature seem weak. Besides reading Bhagavad-gita, I decided to chant one round of Hare Krishna Maha-

mantra. By doing these two things I had a spiritual experience; this is something I will never forget, something that has changed my life forever.

Kyle W. —Mineral Wells, Texas

I received the copy of Bhagavad-gita in 2001. I have learned from the

Bhagavad-gita that I am not this body I am spirit soul, I am eternal and once dwelled with God. My goal is to return home back to Godhead, and only way to do this is through devotional service unto Lord Krishna; and I must become His devotee. To become Lord Krishna's devotee I must render service unto Him and follow His will which is set forth in the Vedic literature specifically set forth in the Bhagavad-gita. The basic of devotional service is the hearing and chanting of Krishna's glorious pastimes and names and to follow the four regulative principles.

Travis B. —Parchman, Mississippi

By reading Bhagavad-gita and studying Prabhupada's books I gain wisdom and knowledge of God. Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita – verse 9.34, *"Engage your mind always in thinking of Me,*



become My devotee, offer obeisances unto Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me." The same is true in the Bible, "*Love your God with all your heart, mind, strength and soul*". Constantly my mind is completely absorbed in God. One should engage his/her mind on the eternal form of Lord Krishna (God), with conviction in his/her heart that Krishna (God) is Supreme, he/she engage themselves in worship.

James S.— Carson City, Nevada

The first copy of Bhagavad-gita As It Is was sent to me by Tirtha Dasa. I was amazed by looking at the cover, pictures and pages. I began reading it with no understanding and no attention. When I got to the last page, I placed Bhagavad-gita in a box filled with old books; which contained the books I have read a long time ago. One day in spiritual crisis, I opened the box, looking for something though unsure what I was looking for. There laid Bhagavad-gita. I picked it up and began reading. Again I didn't understand a thing that I read but this time something was different. I felt something different. I felt calm when reading from this book; I felt that this book contained the answers which I needed. If I am right about anything in my life it is this that Bhagavad-gita contains all the answers I need in life. Though still I don't understand much of what I read in Bhagavad-gita As It Is, I know that I am looking in the right direction; I must continue to read Bhagavad-gita and study it daily.

Mark M.—Huntsville, West Virginia

In When I first received my Bhagavad-gita As It Is from Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, it was like opening a treasure. I have truly found the answers that I have been searching for all my life. I know that continuing to study and read Bhagavad-gita and other scriptures, associating with devotees and dedication to my devotion of practicing Krishna Consciousness will make the rest of my life in this body a much more pleasant place to be.

Michael H.—Salem, Oregon

My cellmate introduced me to Krishna Conscious philosophy and I was very much attracted to the

artwork and philosophy. I wrote to Shyama Priya Mataji and explained to her that I carry emptiness due to my different beliefs. Shyama Priya wrote me a nice letter and sent me a Bhagavad-gita. I read her letter very carefully and read Bhagavad-gita. It may be hard for others to understand the Bhagavad-gita but I truly found what my body and soul is looking for in Bhagavad-gita. I filled that void of emptiness in my heart by reading Bhagavad-gita. You can see the impact Bhagavad-gita has made in my life and I will always practice and carry Bhagavad-gita in my physical life.

Pedro P.—Corcoran California

I have learned from the Bhagavad-gita As It Is that we as human being have forgotten our true self and position, as servants of God – Lord Krishna, eternally I have learned that it is by His mercy that

we even have the chance in human form to acknowledge even His lotus feet, and try to get back to home Back to Godhead position. I have also learned that to know Lord Krishna, first one must know one's self and Supersoul. The only way to truly know these things is by

hearing from proper authority such as Lord Krishna Himself, the Vedic literature and other advanced devotees. As of my favorite verse, I would have honestly have to say that every verse in the Bhagavad-gita is my favorite verse.

Gregory I.— Reidsville, Georgia

1978 my friend took me to the Los Angeles temple for the Sunday feast program. This was the first time I saw the Bhagavad-gita As It Is and devotees gave me one to take with me, and after three days I moved into the temple. Many texts in the Bhagavad-gita I love so much, it's very hard to pick one as my favorite. But maybe verses 12.13-14 and purport I love very much. In purport Srila Prabhupada writes "*Thanks to my past misdeeds I should suffer far, far greater than I am suffering now, so it is by the mercy of the Supreme Lord that I am not getting punishment I am due.*" I am just getting a little suffering by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. How wonderful



Krishna is to bless this old fool with so much facility to come to Him.

Jivananda Dasa —Portland Oregon

I received my first Bhagavad-gita on my birthday (June 20, 2005). It was best present I have received. Bhagavad-gita has taught me the most important thing is devotion to Lord Sri Krishna, it shows that true path is Bhakti Yoga or devotional service. I read nine verses every morning to help start my daily routine along with chanting Hare Krishna Mahamantra. I share the verses of the Bhagavad-gita with others when one comes to my attention, they find verses interesting. I love the Bhagavad-gita and I love the words spoken by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-gita.

Jennifer R. —Draper Utah

From my constantly studying Bhagavad-gita, I have learned that the false identification of material life is due to our being ignorant of our real life, our ultimate relationship with the Lord. I always thought I was this material bodily nature conceived from the womb of earthly mother, therefore

I was in ignorance, ignorance of my real identity apart from the nature of delusion, or material consciousness. I was mostly attracted to Srila Prabhupada's presentation of Krishna Consciousness. What really impressed me was the book called *The Science of Self Realization*. This was my first book, it gave me the love and devotion I needed to understand the Bhagavad-gita As It Is. The more I hear of Krishna the more I became enlightened of my real life, my relationship with Him. The verses 4:34-42, 3:36-43, 2:10-30 and 12:30-20 had created a strong impression on me and helped me to understand that I am a spiritual being.

Kevin B. —Reidsville Georgia

I have learned from the Bhagavad-gita that I must always chant 16 rounds and follow the four regulative principles of freedom and study Srila Prabhupada's books and associate with His devotees. I should serve Srila Prabhupada, improve my service attitude and preach to whoever will listen.

Thomas D. —Aiea, Hawaii

The first I knew of Bhagavad-gita As It Is was from word of mouth and then from the quotes from books and magazines. When Bhakta Bill sent me a copy of Bhagavad-gita, I fell in love with the first chapter of the Bhagavad-gita. Even though I have lot to learn, while I am reading Bhagavad-gita I feel content and it seems that it is all I need. I like the chapter one of Bhagavad-gita so much that I feel like it fits my current situation. I am a man who loves beginning to something good and for me Bhagavad-gita is ultimately good.

Fahad M. —New Boston, Texas

I received Bhagavad-gita after reading *Science of Self Realization*. I was hooked reading Srila Prabhupada's books. I have been requesting Srila

Prabhupada's books ever since. Reading Srila Prabhupada's book are like an appetite that grows when you feed it, can't get enough of Krishna and Srila Prabhupada. My favorite verses of Bhagavad-gita are 9.26, 9.27, 9.29, 9.30, 9.34 and 18.66.

John R. —New Boston Texas

My favorite verses are Bhagavad-gita 2.17, 7.5 and 7.7. In the purport of verse 7.7, Srila Prabhupada states that, "*I know that Supreme Personality of Godhead who is transcendental to all material concepts of darkness, only he who knows Him can transcend the bonds of birth and death.*" I liked that; it was uplifting and made me feel like I will make it out of my darkness. In the purport of Bhagavad-gita 2.17, Srila Prabhupada explains very well how the spiritual spark is an atom is size of 1/10,000 of the tip of hair and is situated in the heart and changing the red corpuscles and how the scientist agree the energy of the body is caused or comes from the heart.

Robert M. —Wala Wala, Washington

In reading Bhagavad-gita it is obvious that purpose of life is to serve Krishna. In Bhagavad-gita verse 6.6 it is stated that "*One who has conquered the mind, the mind is best of friend, but one who has failed to do so, his mind will remain the greatest enemy*". Most religion regards the mind as intelligently evil, which seems silly to me. This



verse reminds me to always direct my mind for good and not just float through this life.

John B. —Frackville, Pennsylvania

I do my best to understand Bhagavad-gita and every time I study the Gita it fills me up with self-realization, it makes me hungry to learn more.

Kendrick C. —Gatesville, Texas

In Bhagavad-gita As It Is verse 4.31 it is stated that existence in the material world is due to multiple reactions to our sinful lives. Ignorance is the cause of sinful life and sinful life is the cause of ones dragging into material existence. From Srila Prabhupada's Bhagavad-gita, I understand that this

materialistic society which is made to look like it's new or modernize on futuristic way of a life is really demonic.

Rhodney S. —Lancaster California

I am learning much from Bhagavad-gita As It Is. Arjuna and I have much in common and many of the same characteristics. I bear the witness to the truth and divinity of Bhagavad-gita and I am constantly chanting and applying the ways of Krishna to my life.

Richard S. —Menard Illinois



Please help us reverse the ban on Bhagavad-gītā in the Florida Prisons!

Below is the link to our fundraiser. You will be issued an automatic tax deductible receipt. We need your help!

<https://iskconprisonministry.betterworld.org/campaigns/gitaban>

THANK YOU to everyone who has already contributed to our fundraiser:

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Anonymous —\$1,086
Anonymous —\$56
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Jayshri Kulkarni —\$23
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Norma Payne —\$118
Mukhya dd Tassinare —\$27
Richard House —\$118
Anonymous —\$17
Srutadeva Dasa —\$108
Michael Borgese —\$17



Chaplains' Appreciation

8/21/25

“On behalf of all staff and inmates at ECCC, we want to give a huge THANK YOU to ISKCON Prison Ministry for the amazing donation of literature for our inmate library. I stumbled across your website while researching ways to update and increase our religious section of the library and have enjoyed the quick and amazing response from Bhakti-lata Dasi in helping to assist me with the donation. Since receiving the literature, many staff and inmates have shown an interest in expanding their beliefs and wishing to learn more. Thank you for your amazing generosity in blessing our facility!”

**Myrna Cropp —Correctional Records Administrative Assistant
Enid Community Correction Center, Oklahoma**

6/12/25

“Good Morning!

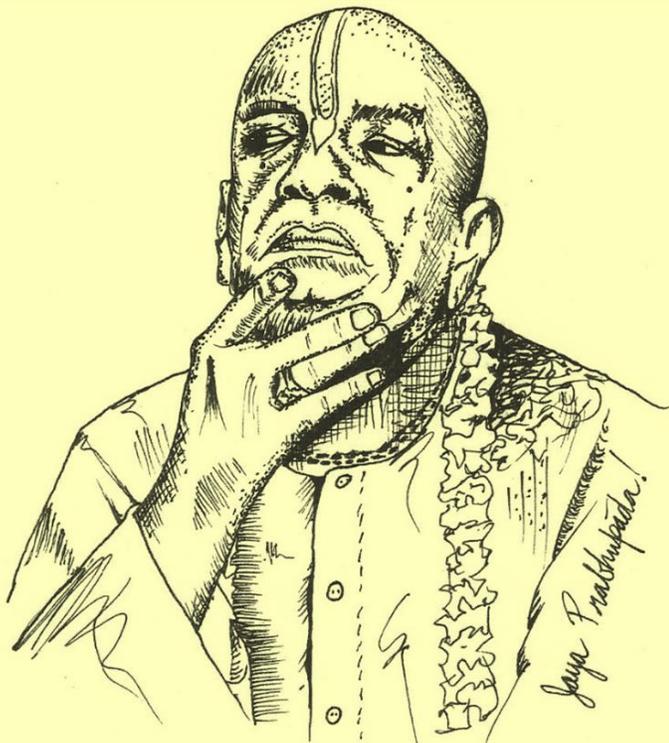
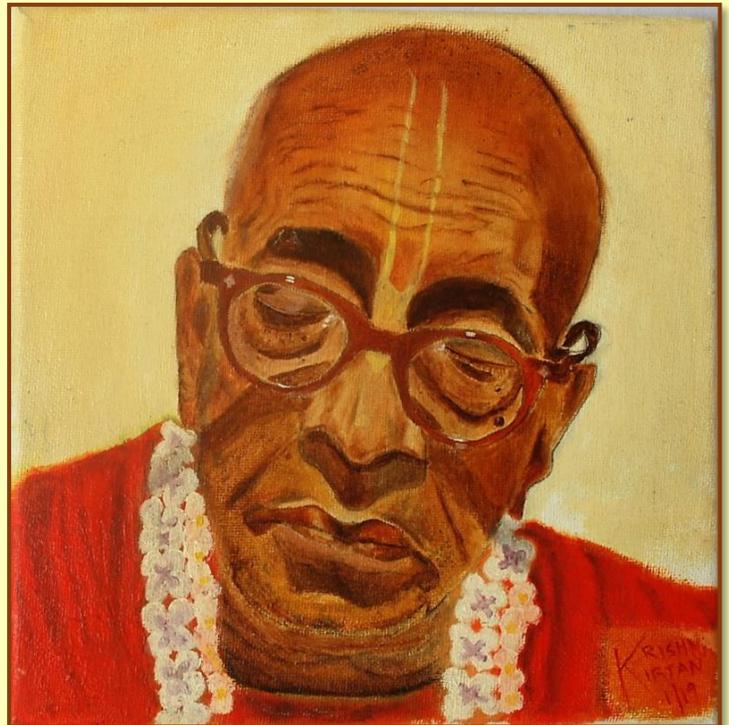
The texts [books] you so graciously sent to our facility arrived yesterday and I was able to get some distributed to those who had requested them. Thank you so much! Our small religious library is now beginning to grow and have resources for many more faith, thanks to the generous help of groups like yourselves. I have also included [below] a thank you note from one of the individuals incarcerated here who had been waiting for these texts. I have your business card pinned to my board in my office. I am sure I will be in touch again! Thank you again for all your help!

“The Bhagavad-gita is a spiritual poem about the inner conflict each person confronts through life's challenges. The Hindu holy book is essential reading for any person who introspects into the nature of the soul. The ability to hold and meander through the text comforts the heart and nourishes the mind. Gandhi loved the book and said, "When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to the Bhagavad-gita and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow." The book is an invaluable source of hope for an incarcerated person and I am grateful to the ISKCON Prison Ministry for making it available."

Sgt Laughter —County Jail, Utah

Inmate Artwork

RIGHT: Drawing by inmate Krishna Kirtan Dasa—Petersburg, Virginia



LEFT: Drawing of Prabhupāda by unknown inmate

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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Vegavati Dasi
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Anonymous (you know who you are:
thank you!)

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