

IPM BULLETIN

—September 2026—

News from ISKCON Prison Ministry / DBA of Vaisnava Outreach, Inc.

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

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LAWSUIT UPDATE

RECAP: On April 21st, 2026, Amarendra prabhu, aka David Liberman filed a federal civil rights lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida challenging the Florida Department of Corrections’ statewide ban on the **Bhagavad-gītā As It Is**, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

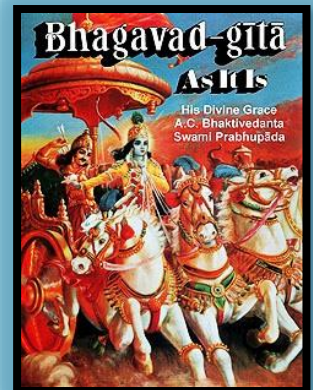
According to the complaint, prison officials banned **Bhagavad-gītā As It Is** on the grounds that it is “written in code or otherwise not reasonably subject to interpretation by Department staff,” and that it is “detrimental to the safety, security, or rehabilitative interests of the facility, or likely to create a risk of disorder.”

The lawsuit asserts that these justifications are offensive, factually incorrect, and discriminatory, noting that the **Bhagavad-gītā** is a central scripture for hundreds of millions of Hindus and related traditions worldwide. The text is widely used in academic, religious, and correctional settings throughout the United States, and mainstream scriptures such as the Bible and Qur’an are routinely permitted in Florida prisons.

The allegation is that the prison officials and the FDOC’s Literature Review Committee have unlawfully prohibited Florida inmates from possessing their primary sacred scripture, in violation of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) and the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment.

UPDATE: The lawyers for the defendant caused prolonged delays until the original plaintiff was released, so the lawsuit is now proceeding with a second plaintiff; M. Peralta, also an inmate in the Florida Department of Corrections.

The case is pending in the Northern District of Florida, Tallahassee Division. 



CHAPLAINS' APPRECIATION

I am the Catholic Clerk here at SCI-Frackville Prison in Pennsylvania. On our display I noticed that we had a Freedom Newsletter from April 2025. Could you please send us some more current newsletters to hand out to our prisoners. Maybe we could be put into a monthly rotation; if you could send us 5 or more, that would be greatly appreciated. We are also looking for donations of anything your prison ministry could offer to our display or library; posters, literature, calendars, books, booklets, etc. etc....

Thank you

**On behalf of Father Dumnych
SCI Frackville, Pennsylvania**

INMATE LETTER

From David Burkman —Danbury, Connecticut -2022

Prabhupada said a good cook should be able to cook anywhere with anything and make delicious food to offer to Krishna. I grew up with this same belief and I enjoy doing so and grateful Krishna has given me this gift to benefit others while providing service to Him as well. It certainly opens many doors/hearts in here.

I really always have loved sharing cultures/beliefs/faith/ideas with others and find in doing so wounds begin to heal, rifts are bridged and misunderstandings are cleared. It must be done with an open-mind and an open heart but I believe no matter their relationship with our Father, we are all still siblings and while we will argue over this or that at times, we still can love and respect each other as well and recognize our similarities while honoring our differences that are part of being individuals. I find many people state they believe in a higher power...

(...) Our inherent categorizing of religions also leads to stereotyping that I come across a lot and have worked hard with my own mind to overcome. I find it enjoyable to shock someone out of such notions in kind, compassionate ways. Take for example, two Indian-Canadian brothers in here. Their family was once "Vyasa Hindus" but "converted" a few generations ago to Muslim and moved to Canada where the

brothers were born and raised with trips to see family in India. Then they meet me. 😊 A 6'2" white guy who not only knows their culture better than they do (should have heard the conversations of telling their wives especially about my making paneer cheese, Indian dishes and even Ganga/Yamuna ladoos. Or as they called them – those egg-shaped thingies 😊 But [more importantly] is a follower of the Vaisnava traditions. They even borrowed my MP3 player and while they don't understand Sanskrit, they listened to some of the many bhajans I have and they were really shocked...

I have met other Muslims here as well and some are Pakistani, which also are shocked to find a Vaisnava their midst whom they get along with great...

Their reactions remind me a lot of the experiences when Prabhupada brought devotees

from America and Europe to India for the first time. It is just interesting to us that such is also happening now in the BOP as well. It certainly is entertaining as much as it is enlightening to them. I like to think our talks also help heal the wounds I see in them that happened and continue to happen between our faiths. There is an Orthodox Jewish man here who I have also spoken at length on topics of the Torah, Talmud



and even the Kabballah as he is a scholar of it as well. A few days ago he asked me if I could secretly get him a copy of the Bhagavad-gītā, because he saw it referenced in a Wayne Dyer book (which I have read years ago) he was reading and thought it very interesting. Needless to say, I got one of the chapel clerks to check out one of the ones you donated to the chapel, in my name and gave it to the Jewish man to read. We have had some interesting conversations since. I find that the case with many I have spoken to who pick up the Bhagavad-gītā. One staunch Catholic even proceeded afterwards to the Srimad-Bhagavatam because of how the Bhagavad-gītā deepened his faith as a Catholic. An ex-cop who is also Catholic has also befriended me and we have long discussions on how all the faiths are different ways of acknowledging the Supreme Personality of Godhead with different results for different faiths depending on where one is at in their spiritual development. Being in here is tough for him for many reasons but his mental health has greatly improved since we started associating and on topics of a higher plane. Srita Prabhupada through his books most definitely gave this world a great gift and gave me that ability to have such interactions. Jaya Srita Prabhupada!

I believe the same is true with Bhakti yoga – once we get comfortable and complacent (if even we don't think so) we need to be challenged again to chase that next rhino. Not only does such deepen our service but also our faith and encourage us to take shelter of Krishna. By the way, we did indeed have to move. This time it was to the auditorium where at first they did not have enough cots for all 82 of us, had to go out and buy some that day, then everyone less than three feet from each other, two showers, two bathrooms/toilets and one telephone. No television to babysit the inmates and a lot of complaining. Personally I didn't mind but I did get COVID a second time while over there and testing positive put me (and many others who were close to the original persons that were the vectors) in a lockdown in the cell with another inmate for at least twenty-three

hours a day for two weeks. Again, I didn't mind at all as it let me do things like read and write after my roommate went to sleep. I find if I let go of expectations (attached to the outcome) and ride the flow instead of trying to swim upstream I am not stressed and things work out as long as I take shelter of Krishna. Of course, me being the stubborn soul I am, I will go for the challenge of swimming upstream just to see if it is another option (and sometimes it is) but now know when to turn around when the current is too much. I see it is Krishna's way of saying "no." Of course, if we don't heed Him (many don't as we all know) we will eventually tire as Krishna certainly will outlast us and will fall into the flow eventually.



There are times when I get comfortable because things are, by my perception, going well. My chanting is not as focused, my prayers not as sincere, my monkey-mind running all over. Then by Krishna's mercy, the illusion is ripped away and I am thrown into a situation where I can only place my faith in Krishna as all the rest is not in my meager means of control. These upheavals give me that chance to remember who is really in control and instead of completely acting out against the stimulus I turn to Krishna and Narasimha to weather the storm, increase my faith and surrender unto Him. I can be stubborn, but Krishna is kind to keep helping me find the path again and again to make it back home to Him.

When you offer yourself in the service of Krishna, you better have your armor at the ready and be prepared for anything. You may be sent into the most hellish places to fight numerous demonic forces, but this does not mean you will be overwhelmed, so long as you have faith in and devotion to Krishna.

When you are forced to deal with other people 24/7 and cannot get away from them, I find that no matter how demonic their behaviors and actions, there is also another side to everyone. I cannot help but develop compassion for every person even if I don't like their behavior and actions. Outward appearances are also rarely

accurate and some of the toughest looking and acting persons are the hungriest for Krishna and have a kind soul hidden and protected by the exterior. This prison sentence is really helping me to be less judgmental and be more compassionate to even the “worst of the worst” and see they are all really just God’s lost children looking for love and acceptance but not knowing how to get it.

I shared the books with an aspiring devotee here; as I have told you before, he reads every one of them. He is getting out of here in eleven months and through him his adopted teenage son is also very interested and so they say they will be visiting at least the Boston temple once out of here. There is also a new aspiring devotee I have engaged and he seems very hungry for the material and knowledge. I gave him some of the mantra cards and he says he is going to write to you as I know he is looking to be put on the newsletter list, if possible and likely also a BTG since I don’t have any more to give out. He is planning to go to the Detroit temple and so far, his actions seem to say he is seriously searching and very interested in it all. I’ll let him speak for himself in his letter.

I am doing well, continue to keep up on my 35 rounds daily of japa but find my mind wandering at times during aratik. I am working on doing better at this now after such a lapse in concentration due mainly, I believe, to the chaotic surroundings. I mainly stay to myself in my cell when not out working on a project and read at least three to four hours every day. It is, therefore, always shocking when I hear news or catch a glimpse of the television, magazines, etc. around here. I see all of it with eyes that are unused to such droll and worse sensory input. I have learned to be detached from such and just put my faith in Krishna whatever the outcome of everything comes to be. People ask me all the

time when am I going to do this or do that or what do I have planned daily, weekly, etc. They don’t get how I manage to get so much done in this environment without the usual issues and “drama” they encounter/have themselves. Krishna talks if we listen and I am but a young child who is just beginning to learn the language and wow! So, I am doing just fine. :)

I had a good-ole-boy Christian ask me what I thought of Jesus. At the beginning of my answer I could see he was dismissive at first but as I explained the transcendental truth he re-engaged, eyes lit up and became involved. He disclosed to me that he had spoken to another

“Hindu” once and yet never had this “Christian” heard such a beautiful explanation as I gave him and in fact, he thought that “Hindus” were “a little off.” I told him that everything I told him was not my speculation but scripture I am merely repeating. I

can tell our conversation certainly got him thinking.

In here, inmates are constantly concerned about hierarchy and what job and level in said job they hold is very important to who they see themselves as – a very materialistic way of viewing everything. I occasionally find myself getting swept up in this but I also find that with a little reflection and effort I can stand apart from the mad scrambling and drama involved in such ways and yet still be just as well respected if not actually more so.

I am finally learning that I don’t need to comment on or get involved with in mundane conversations because I realized all I am doing is trying to show off instead of reining in my ego and being humble as a devotee should be. Such behavior otherwise is damaging and hurtful and does not further us spiritually. 🌸



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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