

hare krisna hare krisna krisna krisna hare hare hare rama hare rama rama rama hare hare

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE
RESIDENTS OF ISKCON MAYAPUR

Mayapur Katha

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

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FOUNDER-ACHARYA HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

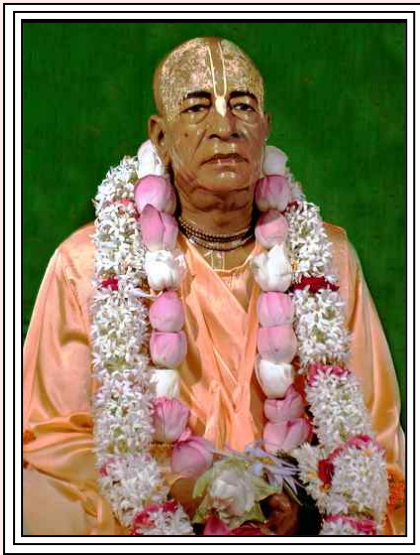


Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare



Mayapur
Project
continues
to
unfold





Prabhupada vani

Prabhupāda: Yes, yes. We make. We actually make. At least ten, twenty kinds of sweet preparation we make from the cheese. Therefore our, as recommended in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *kṛṣi-go-rakṣya-vāṇijyam* [Bg. 18.44]. *Kṛṣi-go-rakṣya*. People... A class of men should be trained up for agriculture, producing food grain, and cow protection. Cow protection means you get the milk, sufficient quantity, and from milk you get so many nutritious, full of vitamin food.

[Conversation, Melbourne, 2.7.1974]

Human civilization means to advance the cause of brahminical culture, and to maintain it, cow protection is essential. There is a miracle in milk, for it contains all the necessary vitamins to sustain human physiological conditions for higher achievements. Brahminical culture can advance only when man is educated to develop the quality of goodness, and for this there is a prime necessity of food prepared with milk, fruits and grains.

[Srimad Bhagavatam 1. 16. 4 purport]

We have to keep some cows. Never mind we are to take payment from others. That is not cow protection. Cow protection means just like Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He is tending the cows. He is going, taking the cows personally from His royal palace going to the forest whole day, working there. Is it not, cowherds boy? And taken some little fruit, whatever mother has given. They are playing that. So this is cow protection, not that "Somebody will give money and we shall keep some third class cows and feed there and become cow protector." We must tend the cows very nicely, so that they give us sufficient milk. And with that milk we shall live. "No, because we are giving protection to cow, you send money for the cows and the cow protectors - earn money there and give us money. We shall eat nicely and sleep." As soon as this practice is going on, then next will be: "Give me some LSD, give me something else." This will go on. We don't want that.

[Srimad Bhagavatam 2. 9. 2
Lecture, Melbourne, 5.4.1972]

Cow protection means increasing the milk productions, namely curd and butter.

[srimad bhagavatam 1. 9. 26 purport]

Progressive human civilization is based on brahminical culture, God consciousness and protection of cows. All economic development of the state by trade, commerce, agriculture and industries must be fully utilized in relation to the above principles, otherwise all so-called economic development becomes a source of degradation. Cow protection means feeding the brahminical culture, which leads towards God consciousness, and thus perfection of human civilization is achieved.

[Srimad Bhagavatam 1. 19. 3 purport]

Mayapur Katha

is a facility for you to share your ideas, articles, suggestions, comments, realizations, concerns, etc, with the community of Vaisnavas. You are welcome to contact us.

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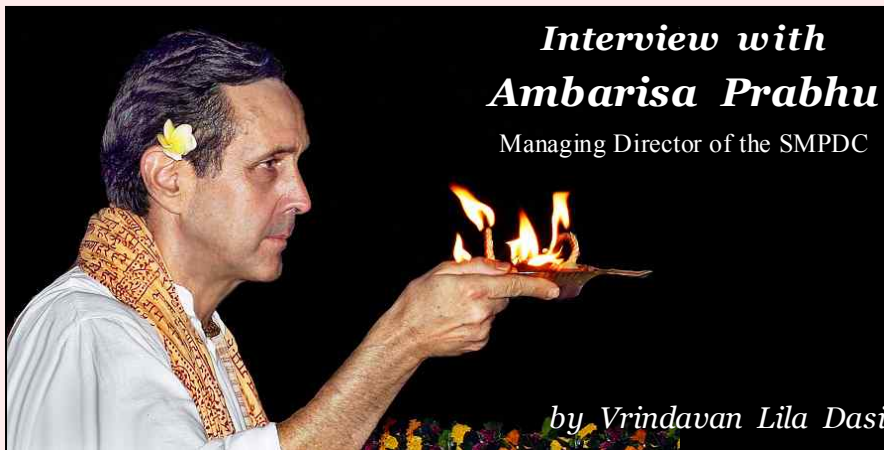
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Interview with Ambarisa Prabhu

Managing Director of the SMPDC

by Vrindavan Lila Dasi



MK: *What was your experience of Mayapur on your last visit?*

Ambarisa

Prabhu: I was very happy to be in Sridham Mayapur during my visit to India during Kartik. One of the first things you

notice coming into Mayapur is how lush and green it is after spending time in the city. The Samadhi is an imposing structure, and it is always impressive to see so many devotees moving here and there.

Of course, the deities are awe inspiring in Mayapur. If you have not bathed in the loving gaze of Sri Pancha-tattva or Sri Sri Radha- Madhava, you are missing the sweetest treat. The temple seems always packed with devotees and visitors. This makes for enthusiastic kirtans, especially during special festival times. When I was there, Srila Prabhupada's disappearance festival was going on. We had a very special program in the morning, during which many of Srila Prabhupada's senior disciples shared their pastimes with His Divine Grace.

The climax of the festival took place in the Samadhi during the evening program. Sri Prahlad led beautiful kirtan, while the devotees offered lamps and garlands to Srila Prabhupada. At the end of the kirtan, thousands of flower petals rained down from the majestic dome, which depicts many of the famous pastimes of Srila Prabhupada. It was

(SMPDC reads as Sri Mayapur Project Development Committee)

a phenomenal experience.

Whenever I come to Mayapur, there is always a lot of activity. This time, they were improving the roads, so there was some machinery, noise, and fumes. Of course, this is the price of progress, and it is good to see things improving all the time. I have heard that there are plans to build a new restaurant, which I think is a good idea. Not that there is ever any scarcity of prasadam, but a restaurant is a good place to see old friends and meet new ones. I will look forward to that.

MK: *What is your impression of the community of devotees here?*

A: There are many divergent types of devotees in Mayapur. Being an international ISKCON center, they come from all areas of the globe. The local Bengalis are very friendly, and you see a good many of them. I did not get a chance to see many of the householders, but hope to in the future.

Seeing such a divergent community is wonderful. I see a great sense of Srila Prabhupada's mission in Sridham Mayapur. I heard some devotees, who said that this was missing to some degree, but I am seeing the great importance of our mission in Mayapur.

Srila Prabhupada wanted to attract people of the whole world to Mayapur. This is, of course, a very tall order. Mayapur is not the easiest place to get to. It is going to take the combined efforts of all devotees, both within and without

Mayapur, to make this dream of Srila Prabhupada and the previous acharyas become a reality.

MK: *What would be your advice to the devotees who are living here all the time in terms of development of their community?*

A: Someone may ask, "What can I do, I am just a small devotee?" It is going to take all of us cooperating together to make this happen. Many of us can be directly involved in planning and executing the ambitious construction proposals, while others can work on a more personal level to make Mayapur the kind of place which will attract the mercy of Sri Sri Gaura Nitai and Srila Prabhupada. Everyday, we can put our personal ambitions and doubts aside to participate in the grand scheme.

MK: *You said it is going to take the combined efforts of all devotees, both within and without Mayapur to make this project become a reality. How do you see it? What input do you expect from both within and without Mayapur?*

A: First, it is necessary to create a shared vision, based on the desires of Srila Prabhupada for Sri Mayapur Project. Then a sense of mission has to be adopted for the project as the front line of preaching in Kali Yuga. This is the birthplace of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the yuga-avatar. All ISKCON devotees have to come to this realization, and support the project. There has to be a united front, and that will only come when there is a

sense of urgency in the preaching spirit. Otherwise, it will simply become another asset to squabble over.

MK: *You said Mayapur is not the easiest place to get to. What is SMP (Sri Mayapur Project) doing about it?*

A: We are examining options to improve access. Of course, for the government to improve the roads would be the best for the entire region. But we are also looking at water transport.

MK: *Have you also considered balloons, as some devotees were suggesting?*

A: No, we have not thought of balloons - a bit risky.

MK: *Would it not be something very exciting for people to come out to Mayapur (on a balloon...)?*

A: Yes, it could be exciting for a few visitors. Ultimately, we will have to have a number of options. Srila Prabhupada had ambitious plans for Sridham Mayapur. He not only wanted to build the international head quarters for ISKCON, but to create a place, which would attract visitors from around the world, and challenge modern atheistic thinking. The centerpiece of this plan would be the Temple of Vedic Planetarium.

MK: *Is SMPDC actually ready to build something? When is it going to start?*

A: We are nearing the point of execution, depending on funding. We hope to start next year.

MK: *What is the first thing that will be built? Can building of the city start now without waiting for the big temple?*

A: I have always believed that the temple will attract other development, so I see this as a primary starting point, along with the avenues.

MK: *How and when did you hear about Mayapur for the first time?*

A: I first heard about this plan in Detroit in 1976. Srila Prabhupada had come to stay at the Fisher Mansion, which we had recently purchased as the new temple. We were sitting in Srila Prabhupada's splendid quarters at the mansion, as he explained about his plans for

a Vedic Planetarium. He turned to me and asked how I liked the idea. I said it sounded very nice, so Srila Prabhupada asked me to help finance it.

At the time, we all had a good laugh, but I realized many years later, that Srila Prabhupada had at that moment, planted the seed of what has become my main engagement in devotional service. I had never been to Mayapur, so it seemed like a far off dream. Today I see that Srila Prabhupada had the perfect service in mind for me and many others.

MK: *When was the first time you came to Mayapur?*

A: I first came to Mayapur briefly in the early eighties.

MK: *Were you at all involved in Mayapur development before 1998?*

A: Of course, ever since 1976 when Srila Prabhupada asked me to finance the Temple of Vedic Planetarium, it has been in the back of my mind to become involved.

My participation was of a gradual nature. In the early nineties, I was founding director of the ISKCON Foundation, which was focused on trying to upgrade the fiscal, fundraising, and congregational activities of ISKCON North America. The problems were deep and systemic. I think we were able to help in a small way, but there was a lot of resistance. Always in my mind was the thought that we will not be able to build the Mayapur Project unless we upgrade the standards of ISKCON management. I think the corner has been turned, due mostly to sincere attempts to address mistakes of the past.

MK: *What is your personal involvement (position) in the Mayapur Project at present?*

A: I have been fortunate of late to be asked to become Managing Director of the SMPDC. Over the years, the SMPDC has carried the vision of Srila Prabhupada through the planning stage. A project of this magnitude encompasses many hours of planning, strategizing, and improvising to make it happen. Many devotees have given much of their lives to bring these plans to

fruition. Thanks to them, and the mercy of Sri Pancha-tatva, things have evolved to a point of execution.

MK: *What impresses you the most about Mayapur?*

A: Myself, and many others who are associated with this project, see the Mayapur Project as a beacon of light in this age of Kali. From Mayapur, the message of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu will be broadcast to the rest of the world for generations. What we are able to accomplish in the next several years is just a beginning, but it is crucial. Some may doubt that we will ever accomplish our goal, others will criticize our efforts. We have to have faith in the vision of Srila Prabhupada, and move forward, against whatever obstacles, knowing we have his blessings.

MK: *When you took up this position of managing director, were you fully aware of everything about this project, or there were surprises to discover?*

A: I would not say that there were any surprises. I knew it was going to be a challenge, especially trying to create some order via email. I have always thought that the project has a life of its own, and is progressing according to our ability to handle the responsibility. No one is indispensable, we are simply servants.

MK: *How do you deal with surprises if any comes?*

A: I tend to like to work in teams, which irritates some people, but I find wisdom in consensus building.

MK: *Is everything going the way you want in running this Project?*

A: Things are not going fast enough for me. Being somewhat passionate, I want to see progress in a hurry. Dealing with setbacks and red tape is frustrating. Things tend to move slowly in West Bengal.

MK: *How do you deal with challenges?*

A: I try to be patient, realizing that there are some things that are well beyond my control. At the same time, I have to be vigilant and persistent.

MK: *How do you deal with people if they turn out to be not how you expected them to be?*

A: My philosophy is to let people be themselves. Everyone has abilities, which can flourish if not stifled. At the same time, if someone disgraces the movement or project, this is a big disappointment.

MK: *What other devotees have been involved and are involved in this Temple project?*

A: Devotees involved in temple development, Pada Sevana Prabhu, Abhirama Prabhu, Harikesa Prabhu, Jayapataka Maharaj, Sridhar Swami, Naresvara Prabhu, Pancaratna Prabhu, Sadbhujia Prabhu, and many others.

MK: *Do you believe that ONE person would build the Adbhut Mandir and Bhaktivinoda Thakura will take him by his hand to the spiritual world?*

A: This temple will be built by many, many devotees always aspiring for the mercy of Bhaktivinoda and Srila Prabhupada.

MK: *What keeps you informed on what's happening in Mayapur while you are not present here yourself?*

A: Mostly through email and an occasional phone call.

MK: *What kind of news about Mayapur is most important to you?*

A: I like to hear about the preaching activities, and about cooperation between devotees to push the project forward.

MK: *Do you tell people about Mayapur in karmi business circles?*

A: I find that in India, many important leaders are very excited about the Mayapur Project. Even in the US, people are intrigued by the concept of a Vedic Planetarium and ideal spiritual community.

MK: *How much awareness about Mayapur do you perceive out there, in the world in general, and in America in particular?*

A: Unfortunately, the level of awareness about Sri Mayapur is very limited. America tends to be myopic in its news reporting, and when they do focus outside the borders, it is usually war or disaster.

MK: *What do you feel will be the best advertisement for Mayapur that will appeal to most if not all*

people?

A: I believe that Srila Prabhupada wanted to emphasize the non-sectarian spiritual nature of Krishna consciousness. In this age where there is quarrel between so many parties due to religious affiliation, God is being blamed. People do not understand the transcendental loving nature of the Supreme Personality. This understanding can easily be attained by chanting Hare Krishna. This simple process has been given to us through the mercy of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the Acharyas. The Mayapur Project is the broadcast tower of the Holy Name and Mahaprabhu's mercy. This is the only antidote for the mayhem of modern times.

MK: *Does your family share your interest in Mayapur?*

A: Lately, I have been spending more and more time in India, getting ready to help fully launch this program. Sometimes my wife, Svaha devi dasi, comes with me. She is a Bengali, so she is very familiar with the culture, and is also very dedicated to the Mayapur Project. When she is not with me, she is at home with our children in Florida, where we live.

MK: *When did you get married? Tell us about your wife, please.*

A: We were married in 1984 in Australia, and live near a large devotee community in Alachua, USA. My wife, Svaha Devi Dasi, was initiated by Bhavananda Prabhu. We met in Australia in 1984. She is a Bengali, who grew up in Jaipur and Australia. She received a PhD in Biochemistry the year after we were married.

MK: *How many children do you have?*

A: We have two daughters, Amrita and Anisha, who are both in school in the US.

MK: *Are your parents still alive? How did they react to you becoming a devotee? Are they favorable to it now?*

A: My mother is still alive. They were very upset when I first became a devotee, and actually threw me out of the house. Over time they came to appreciate the culture, and later, they both came

to the Detroit temple for the grand opening of the Bhaktivedanta Cultural Center.

MK: *When did you join ISKCON?*

A: I was initiated by Srila Prabhupada in 1975.

MK: *Please tell us the story of your initiation.*

A: I was initiated in Hawaii, where I had gone to spend time with Srila Prabhupada. I was the only candidate at that time, so it was very personal. Hawaii is a very sweet place, and my memories of Srila Prabhupada in Hawaii are very sweet. He was very relaxed and at home in Hawaii.

MK: *What did you do in life before meeting the devotees?*

A: I had been reading and chanting for about two years. Before that I was a student at a college in America. I was searching for something outside of what I was being offered. I found that something in Krishn Consciousness.

MK: *Does it mean that you came in contact with the devotees in 1973?*

A: I did not join until 1975. I did not go through a normal temple training like many devotees. I was living in seclusion in the mountains, and began chanting and reading. Later, I began to correspond with Srila Prabhupada, and purchased the temple in Hawaii. We would meet there whenever Srila Prabhupada was traveling.

MK: *Who did you meet first, who convinced you first, who helped on the way with advice and whatever other help? What are the names of all helpful devotees in your life?*

A: I then moved to Detroit, after initiation in Hawaii, where I more or less moved into the temple, where Govardhan, the temple president looked after me. My situation was a bit unique as many devotees wanted to have influence on me, but Srila Prabhupada made it clear that I was only to deal with him directly.

MK: *Where did you get the idea in the first place to go to the mountains and read and chant?*

A: It was my idea to go to the mountains. After the turbulence of the sixties, I was looking for some

peace and quiet.

MK: *What mountains were they?*

A: The Rocky Mountains in the US.

MK: *How did you know about Srila Prabhupada, where did you get His address to correspond with Him?*

A: A friend Atulananda Das introduced me to chanting and reading, while I was in the mountains.

MK: *Did you accept this philosophy easy, or had doubts?*

A: I accepted the philosophy very easily. It made sense to me, and fulfilled my expectations about spiritual life.

MK: *What did you do when you joined the temple (some service)?*

A: In Detroit, I helped work on the new temple restoring the old Fisher Mansion.

MK: *Would you like to tell as a story or two from your experiences in Krishna Consciousness?*

A: After initiation, when I moved back to Detroit, the temple was still in a small building. The deities were on the third floor. Srila Prabhupada was coming to visit in the summer of 1975, and we were busy trying to get the building ready as well as look for a new temple. The devotees had built a palanquin to carry Prabhupada up the 3 flights of stairs. He arrived at the temple, took a look at the palanquin, and decided to walk. We all laughed, after all the work the devotees had done.

I had picked Srila Prabhupada up at the airport in a white Lincoln Continental from Ford Motor Company, which we had completely decorated inside with marigolds. Every morning I would take Srila Prabhupada on a drive to the park, and in the evening take him to a preaching program. I would drive through mud and bushes to make things comfortable to drop him off. When I returned the car, it was a mess, covered with mud and scratches and full of flowers.

When we would arrive at the temple for greeting of the deities, we would be standing in front of the curtain waiting for the opening, and you could hear Govardhan, the TP, who was a complete perfectionist, screaming behind the curtain "hurry up, hurry up!". Srila Prabhupada

would just stand patiently. It was very sweet.

MK: *What other services did you perform for Srila Prabhupada?*

A: I had purchased the temple in Hawaii for Srila Prabhupada, and whenever he would visit, I would meet him there.

After initiation, I continued to serve Srila Prabhupada by helping to develop the infrastructure of ISKCON, wherever I was living. The two main services Srila Prabhupada asked me to help with were the Vedic Planetarium and dioramas. Although we installed a wonderful doll exhibit in Detroit, I still feel that I want to help develop the diorama preaching. It is on my 'to do' list for Srila Prabhupada.

MK: *How does being rich reflect in trying to practice devotional life?*

A: I have been fortunate to have been given many services to do by Srila Prabhupada. I have seen that many times when people have a lot of opulence, they become frustrated trying to buy happiness. Srila Prabhupada taught me how to properly engage Laxmi. Without this training, I would have been lost like so many of the people I grew up with. Wealth can be a terrible hindrance or boon in the practice of devotional service. That is why it is such a blessing to have the association of a bonafide spiritual master. He can clear away the fog of illusion, and make one's path unambiguous.

MK: *How does it feels to be famous because of being rich?*

A: When you have wealth, you have some protection from the nastier aspects of Kali-yuga. This is an illusion. You may be a first class prisoner, but you are still in prison, and your days are numbered. I can see that since the time I was born, there has been so much advancement of the degrading results of the age. Practically, there is no effective antidote to this fever. The only way is the soothing relief of the Holy Name.

MK: *What was the single thing/event that made the most change in Your life?*

A: I would say the most signifi-

cant event in my life was meeting Srila Prabhupada. It completely changed the course of my life, and is still the major force in my life today.

Srila Prabhupada, out of His causeless mercy, came to America at an advanced age, to give this medicine to the suffering fallen souls of the western countries. He wanted to give all conditioned souls a chance to achieve salvation through the chanting of Hare Krishna. What he accomplished in a little over ten years is miraculous. What he left for us to do is his love for us.

MK: *Is there anything else you want to say to our readers?*

A: Srila Prabhupada has requested all of us to cooperate with each other in his absence. It is going to take a tremendous amount of cooperation to build and operate the Mayapur Project. In order to cooperate, we have to act according to our higher natures. I am seeing the influence of Kali waiting to derail the progress of carrying out the desires of Srila Prabhupada in Sridham Mayapur. These efforts in Mayapur are a direct assault on Kali's kingdom, and will be attacked vigorously. We all need to look within our own hearts to see if we are acting according to our best nature, putting aside personal desires and aspirations to support the mission. I am sure we have the capacity and means to carry out this assignment, and united, there is nothing we can not accomplish.

Over the last several years, we have seen ISKCON attacked from many sides. For myself personally, I see this Mayapur Project as an affirmation that the movement started forty years ago by Srila Prabhupada is alive and well, and continuing to expand in a big way. I pray that all of us can put aside petty differences and misgivings to come together with love and respect under the umbrella of this grand vision. We can build the house Srila Prabhupada is inviting the whole world to live in, in the beautiful land of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sridham Mayapur. ♦

Srila Prabhupada's Bhajan Kutir



by bhakta Karna

The Bhajan Kutir was built in 1971. In the early days there were no houses and buildings as we see here today within ISKCON property, except this bamboo hut that stood alone in the midst of the fields.

To this very day this hut is known all over the world as Srila Prabhupada's Bhajan Kutir.

As one enters inside the large gate of ISKCON, naturally one's whole attention will be drawn towards Srila Prabhupada's Bhajan Kutir because of the simple looking hut and their merciful Lords Guar-Nitai, who are standing there smilingly, giving Their mercy openly. The sweet transcendental mellow of the maha-mantra, emerging from the hut, makes one feel transcendently welcomed.

Adi Guru Prabhu (Prabhupad disciple) had been taking responsibility as in-charge for the last decade.



There are around 15 devotees, who are serving here. These devotees have been consistently singing Hare Krishna maha-mantra day in day out. These 15 devotees are divided into groups. And in every group there are three devotees. Every 3 hours the kirtan party changes. These devotees have to struggle hard to remain awake and do kirtan all night long. Some live within ISKCON and have their respective room for staying



on the boundary wall. Others live outside. These devotee's only service through, which they can show their love and offer to Prabhupad is to keep the 24-hour kirtan going, and they do it wonderfully. Their spontaneous cry of the Lord's name is the source of inspiration and happiness to the listener and onlooker. These happy devotee-kirtaniers are expert in the art of singing and playing karatals and mridanga in different tunes and they become even happier to see the visitors join them and doing nice kirtan.

Karna: How the 24-hours kirtan started and from which point of time has it begun?

H.G. Adi Guru Prabhu: In 1977 Srila Prabhupada was sick in Vrindavan. Three of His sanyasi disciples asked Srila Prabhupada if he would allow them to look for a good doctor for him from any part of the world. But Prabhupada denied it by saying: "no, my doctor is Krishna, prasad is charinamrita, medicine is Harinam - and if possible you all can arrange Harinam kirtan in all ISKCON centers, especially in Mayapur, Vrindavan, Delhi and Bombay. Arrange for 24-hours kirtan".

Under His desire every body tried. 24-hour was not possible in Vrindavan, Delhi and Bombay. It frequently stopped during arati time, even in Mayapur also. Bhakti Caru Maharaja and Jayapataka Maharaja tried so much, but were unsuccessful. Anyway, after many attempts fifteen devotees are now doing this 24-hour Harinam kirtan with no difficulties. By the mercy of Srila Prabhupada the 24-hours has

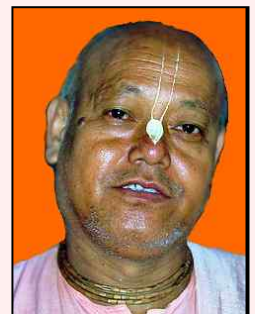
become effective and devotees from different part of the world listen to the kirtan.

When Srila Prabhupada was in Mayapur He would sit here and perform kirtan. He told His disciples not to destroy this house. He said: "this house is my very life and soul. If it becomes old repair it again". So, that people can know and understand that Prabhupada had lived here doing his bhajan in such austere situation.

We have a few words from the present in-charge of Bhajan Kutir,

Sundar Nitai Prabhu:

We hold kirtan here, in Bhajan Kutir, every day. Three of us would do the kirtan. When the temple is closed a lot of guests come to Bhajan Kutir.



They take rest and take part in the kirtan. After kirtan they become happy and it makes us happy as well. By following the kirtan schedule our whole life has been engaged in performing kirtan. Kirtan groups change every 3 hours, devotees have their individual style of singing. In this way we manage to keep kirtan running continually. Those, who are finding some problem or difficulty in doing their service, they inform their in-charge and we look for another engagement for them. Thus, by Prabhupad's mercy we are carrying on this service.

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When you get sick in Mayapur, what do you do?

?:
A:

Ramaniya Devi Dasi said:

Chanting Hare Krsna, I depend on Krsna. I don't go to doctors, unless it's very-very-very urgent or important. By Krsna's mercy I have good health.

Pitambara Das said:

I say, those people who call themselves doctors, which can only know two names for the medicines - antibiotic and penicillin - that's himsa. Last festival, 2004 Radanath Swami sent five doctors and one of those doctors saved my life, because these people that call themselves doctors at the dispensary here, they are a joke. I have no idea of their names, they are death personified! No, it's really true they know two antibiotics, I had one friend from Sweden, he had a little bacha (child) with him - they gave the kid same antibiotic as to adult - they only know two things. It's a joke. And fortunately, OK, it's good to die in Mayapur, but, it's so interesting that you took up this question, I have been meditating on that, I did full pranams to Radanath Maharaj's disciple - he saved my life during festival. Thank God! - there was someone educated, but you know these two guys, who sit in the two small chambers on boundary wall... than it's even the bramacharis they know more than these two, 'doctor' Narayan is one, with very bad teeth. I mean that's my experience I only live here nine years, so what do I know? Hmmm...

Atul Krsna Das said:

Usually when I get sick I take more rest, and then take some drugs from the dispensary - whatever they give me usually, I try to get some antibiotics. I go to dispensary on the main gate. Usually I always get the same thing, the flu. And if bad then I just have to take antibiotics to get rid of it.

Bhaktajanapriya Das said:

I call some medical help, if I am sick I have to take help from the medical. It depends on what type of sickness, if it's little fever I don't go to the doctor I just take some medicine by myself. And if it's a little more serious then I will go to the ayurvedic doctor trying to avoid the allopathic, I go for homeopathy or ayurvedic - in Navadwip, at Oladevitala. And pray to Krsna, like if you wish then I know I can be cured, or that I can have nice health so that I can serve God better, that way - because without His sanction the medicine will not work.

Phani Sevaka Devi Dasi said:

It's depends if it's little or if it's heavy. If it is heavy I have to find a good doctor. And, sorry, I can not find a good doctor here, in Mayapur. I must go to Calcutta, if it's simple disease I just have to take rest and sleep nicely more hours, but it's not good, I have to go to Mangala-aratik everyday, but it's OK just to sleep for more hours to take care of this body, then it's OK, but my own experience when I am very sick, have a very big headache, nobody can do anything in Mayapur, so I have to go to Calcutta to find some specialist.

Maha Laksmi Devi Dasi said:

If my children get sick I go to Homeopathic doctor, Devnath, Vikas Sanga or Adi dev Prabhu, Namahatta. And myself I just take maha-tulasi and pray.

Sevika Radha Devi Dasi said:

I take maha-tulasi and charinamrita. Whenever I try to take medicines doctor gives, I have side-affects. When I take charinamrita, and maha-tulasi I get better.

Amrita Devi Dasi said:

I am going to Navadwip to the Dr. Oladevitala, while I am staying at home I am waiting to recover and praying, that's what I am doing normally.

Padmini Radha Devi Dasi said:

As long as it's not an obstacle to our regular sadhana it's OK, otherwise when it becomes difficult to get up for mangala-aratik, then you really feel 'OK, Krsna, help me, because I need this body to serve You'. Usually we try to go to the homeopathic doctor from Mayapur Vikas Sanga, Kavita, she is in the lab and she is a part of the Mayapur Vikas Sanga. We try to avoid the allopathic medicine as much as possible. Kavita is from Mayapur she stays there at the land department and goes to the villages. Since she knows us, she is very close to my prahbu, so sometimes we just call her up and tell her. Like for a few days I was completely down all the time feeling completely tired and very sleepy, I have to just lie down. I had to go to her, blood pressure was low and she gave some medicine and I feel better. She is our medical help, until now we have nothing else has been required. She can be found, usually in the morning, I think, before 8:30, she has a mobile and you can call her up and fix an appointment, or she comes to the Mayapur Vikas Sanga office, but usually her business she has to go the village and do some visits, so it's not very regular so it's better to call her on mobile and fix an appointment: ph # 9434056807

Interview with Dayaram Prabhu

Continued from the Summer issue

interview by Vrindavan Lila Devi Dasi



Dayaram Prabhu, co-director of ISKCON Mayapur has a lot to think about... his life is very much a part of Mayapur History.

MK: Prabhu, in the last interview we left you in the Kitchen. What happened with you next, after that?

Dayaram Prabhu: So, kitchen was in 1987, I think, or 1988 and then, the temple authorities wanted me to get involved with accounts department next, so they put me in accounts and I was told to go through the different deposits and expenses and make a statement and see where the funds are gone. I went through it and made a report and it was liked by Satyadhanya and Kadamba Kanana Maharaj who was Kadamba Kanana Prabhu then. Then there was a problem with Nitaichand Maharaj having taken sannyas and not interested in continuing with land purchase. Naresvara and Harikesa Maharaj wanted somebody to do purchase of land, so they put me in-charge of land acquisition after treasury.

MK: How long were you in the treasury?

D: I was in the treasury for maybe 6 months to a year. GBC did not want Nitaichand Maharaj to continue to be involved with purchasing land. So they had nobody else to buy land and I was told to buy land. But nobody taught me how to buy and what was the situation. I never bought land in my life. They gave me a lot of money and gave me the office. I remember buying the first piece of property - one property somewhere near the road.

MK: What land was it?

D: Probably Maharaj's school might be built on that

land, Bhakti Vidya Purna Maharaj, I think. I didn't buy it, it came for sale. I didn't buy it, I didn't know what to buy. They came and told me the price and showed me a map. I didn't understand anything. So I told two more devotees who were there, should I buy or not buy. They told me, no, no this is expensive and we decided not to buy that land. But the same land I bought after 3 months for double the price. So that was my first lesson, by making a mistake. I learnt that it was a mistake. Then I had to learn everything properly. There was nobody to teach me. I went to Navadvip, there was a deed writer. I forgot his name, I begged him to please teach me how to purchase land and what is land. And he taught me in half an hour and gave me the philosophy of land. Govinda Babur was his name, I think. So once he taught me then I started to know. Looking at maps and reading land books in Bengali. My Bengali wasn't very good so I could not read. Then I decided I must know what I am doing, so I started reading land books. So, I became very good at it and I could easily buy the land.

MK: So, you studied the law?

D: I found that many people did not know what is the land law in Bengal, so their papers were not correct. I had to learn myself.

Then a lot of litigation started. People who sold the land they wanted it back, or they tried to put their boundary into our land. So, litigations became a necessity to protect the property of ISKCON. A few trusts were formed with different devotees.

Then (it may not be in exact order) came a 'picnic party' problem. Picnic parties started to come to Mayapur. It was around 1989-90. Especially during December, January, February - huge number of people would come on their buses, trolleys, flat back riksaws and vans with huge speakers and blaring out the Hindi music. They used to come with liquor, goats, chickens and make a picnic. They would put up fires and slaughter chickens, goats - right on the road, then they play music, dance, get drunk and start fights. Sometimes some drunkards would come to our temple and attack devotees, also they would go to the nearby Maths. In one Math they entered the temple room and beat up a pujari. It was becoming more and more difficult, especially in the three months - December, January and first part of February. This is month of Pousha in Bengal, when Bengalis do picnics. Somehow they chose Mayapur to be a picnic place - here is Ganga, they can go on a boat.

MK: Were they coming from far away, not just locals?

D: They would come from Kolkata, Borampur, Krishnanagar, from different parts of Bengal. They drive out here in the morning, by 10-11 they would arrive, go on the bank of the Ganga, or up by the road, rent a place from the villagers. Then they start 'enjoying' their senses, and often there would be a clash between different picnic groups. Someone would start to tease girls from another party, so other party would attack them and they would end up fighting, sometimes with blood-shed. Sometimes we would be attacked, also many western devotees. Girls would sometimes get chased by these drunk boys - it was a big mess.

So, it became a big problem and we had no control of what was happening on the road side. So, we decided to do something about

it and we got all Gaudiya Maths together and we made petitions, went to the Panchaet and got them to write some letter. Then I got some local friends and devotees and we made up a gate right up by the culvert - on the road when you go to Yoga Pitha there is a place where water is running under the road. So we set up there and stopped all the parties and sent them back forcefully. One government officer, the in-charge of police station was supporting us, but then Communist party got upset and they wanted to throw us out. So, they put pressure on higher-ups and they said that ISKCON is stopping people from entering Mayapur in this gunda-like way. And there was big fight and problem, physical fight. So, we did not know what to do. We were trying to stop them and they would say that it is not our business, this is government property, anyone can go on the road. Then they put pressure on the local Panchaet, who gave us the letter, to withdraw their letter and the person who gave us that letter was humiliated and abused by the Communist party. It was a big problem, almost became a challenging situation.

So, we did not know what to do. Tatpur Maharaj, one of Gaudiya Math Swami, he was more experienced, actually his Guru was more experienced (Bharati Maharaj), he has an asram near Hutor Ghat. He was very much for protecting the Dham and he was very much upset about all these picnic parties. He wanted to stop it and he was pushing all of us, he was very happy that I went and took lead in stopping them. I told him that it will not be possible to physically stop them, because Communist Party is the ruling party, they don't want us to do it - no matter how much I try, the Police will come from Krishnanagar and throw us away, and nothing we can do, just end up in jail. So, we decided to file a petition in the High Court. I did not know so much about courts, but Tatpur Maharaj was very committed - every day in the morning he would offer arotik to the Deities, cook Prasad for his Guru. His Guru was very old then and only two of them were staying in the Math. Then He would catch a 6 AM bus and go to Kolkata. All day he would go from court to court and late at night he would come back on the last

train. He did it so many times. He met a lawyer, Debvrata Benerjee, who was a very pious Bengali gentlemen, who felt pity and wanted to help. I was also introduced to him and we met together. He said, 'don't worry, I will do my best'. Then he went to the senior consular, Shaktinath Mukherjee, who became very friendly and led us to one famous lawyer, they all promised they will help and get court to give an order. So, it was one year of hard struggle. Tatpur Maharaj put most energy into it, more than me. He and Debvrata Benerjee worked very hard on it and they got the court order to stop the picnics. It was in 1991-92, it was big, one of happiest moments in my life - that we got an order against the government. We got the order and we showed the copy to superintendent of Police and Chive Secretary and told them 'now you have to come and stop the picnics, if you don't come you will be disobeying the court'. Police were still reluctant, so we continued with our program at culvert (where the small bridge is), but then we found that it was also creating problems - all the busses would come in, but they could not go back and had to park here and there, there were a lot of jams and chances for an accident, and the Maths, who were beyond the bridge were affected and they were complaining. So, we decided that we should shift it to the railway crossing, about twelve kilometres from here. There is a little village called Chauvacha, so we requested the local people there to help us and we set up a check post. So there we stopped the picnic parties and on the big days, like December 25, January 25, 23, Gaura Purnima, we got some Police to stand there, by pressuring them, it was a serious court order we had, so they had to obey. So, picnic parties became less problem and for the last 12 years we don't have this problem.

MK: *How come picnic parties were a problem at that particular time? Before that there was not such a problem?*

D: Picnics were coming since 1988, but then they increased in number from 1988 to 1990. Huge number of people, 500-600 busses, huge jams - Saturdays, Sundays, holidays - huge parties were coming.

That was the first time I saw the power of the Court, which could stop

even Government from doing wrong things.

Then next problem was - the people were buying the property and putting up shops in front of their property. From the road certain amount of land is government land and they were putting their shops there. Nothing we could do to stop them.

MK: *Do you mean outside the gate?*

D: Yes. The shops were there from 1987 and we did not take any action in those days. Now no more shops can come because we got a court order.

So, again there was a big problem between the Communist Party and us.

To stop more shops coming we got permission to plant trees, but again the Communist Party came into picture and forced the order to be withdrawn, they sent their cows to eat all the young trees. Then we planted trees again and we put a fence, then they got government to remove the fence and destroy the trees. There was a lot of business interest - the Communist Party, the Riksaw-walla Union would sell this land, not actually really sell, but take money and put people there to sit. The land is owned by the government, but the government is sleeping, no one going to do anything. So, local people make money out of it, they sell it. So, to stop that we had to take shelter of the Court again. Again we put the trees and the fence, and got the Court order 'Status Quo', that nobody should be allowed to pluck these trees. Thus trees were able to grow, and once trees are grown, no one can chop them, because it is very serious offence - to cut a tree without permission from the government and one can go to jail for chopping a tree. So we planted the trees and put the guards. Now these trees are grown and we are quite satisfied that there will not be any more encroachments in front of our land.

MK: *Where are those trees?*

D: In front and along the back road. We planted them in 1992-93, just two or three lines of trees. That stops encroachments from coming. So, some Parties did not want that. There were a lot of complicated stories, I just told you in brief, many people were involved, lots of vested interest was involved.

This problem went into 1993-94. It was

very tense. The local MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly), local representative of State Assembly, he is on the block - Navadvip town and Mayapur in one block. He is elected from there. So, he been told that either you remove this fence or you won't get elected any more. So, he could not remove the fence because we got the Court order. He promised to communists to remove the fence and put the shops in that place, but he could not do that. So, he got very angry and he made promise to kill me, to make sure I was dead. He told his people 'lets see how long this guy lives, he will be finished in no time'. I got a lot of threats on the phone 'get out of Mayapur, if you stay here you will be finished', and there were attempts to kill me, but I was not hit any time. Harikesa Maharaja told me to get a revolver and I got personal revolver and I was carrying it with me, I still got it. I got licence from the government to carry a revolver, so if any time I feel fear or apprehension I can use it to protect myself. So, Harikesa Maharaja told me 'don't worry about money, just go ahead and get a revolver and licence', so I got it, police were also informed of it. These life-threats were going on for about two years - phone calls, letters, 'your head will be chopped off if you walk out', etc... But after two years it became lighter. That was going on through to 1996.

Then Harikesa Maharaja was fired up to finish the construction of the Temple, so he wanted me to buy land, develop different businesses. So, he encouraged me to start business. Russian devotees wanted spices, so I was supplying them.

MK: *Who you were dealing with?*

D: Sanyasa, Kamala-mala, later Brahmananda (Armenian one) also came into picture. They were buying spices from me, I sold them 7 containers of spices, huge containers, made a lot of profit there. Also I sold rice, thousand tons of rice to Poland and Russia also. Harikesa Maharaja, Naresvara Prabhu were supporting this, we made a lot of profit. The profit was used for building the brahmachari asram for Sankirtan boys.

But I also had some losses and the business did not go well after that.

At that time we were meeting in

London for Mayapur Development, I had to go there twice or trice a year. Harikesa Maharaja was pushing me to get the land situation together.

But in 1998 Harikesa Maharaja changed ashram and also because of these business activities I thought that it was not proper for me to remain as a brahmachari, so I thought to get married. So, in 1998 I got married to Prema Manjari. She was a Mayapur devotee for many years.

Just after our marriage Adridharan and Madhu Pandit started to fight with GBC, pushing the ritvik philosophy. In 1999 GBC expelled them from ISCKON, and Adridharan declared that Kolkata temple is independent from GBC. So, GBC were looking who could take care of the legal fights, because we had to file lawsuits in Kolkata High Court. Satyadhanya, who was engaged before in legal work, was not so enthusiastic because he had a family to maintain, he wanted to earn money, so, thus, it fell on my head, although he was more experienced and more competent than me (at that time at least). Initially he was helping me with advice, but then he had to move out, he said he could not go on like this, he is old and has to make money for his family. I could sympathize with him... So, he left and the whole thing fell on my head. And from 1999 till 2002 it was more or less one-pointed fight in Kolkata. In 2002 we got a court order in our favour that we can run Kolkata temple without any interference from Adridharan Das. Somehow, by the mercy of vaishnavas and Mahaprabhu we got the temple, also Guru Sada Road property back under ISKCON control. Adridharan was kind of defeated, now there is arrest warrant against him. He is hiding from police either in Bombay or Bangalore. Anyway, we don't know his whereabouts.

So, after this I thought maybe it is time for me to make some money for my family. I was thinking to go to America because I had no personal money left to have an apartment or have sufficient security for my future, as family men we need to have funds. My friend, with whom we were studying in Bombay, he started his own Software company in America. He offered me a job for five thousand

Dollars a month to join his company. It isn't a lot in America, he offered it to me just to begin with, and go up from that. He was very gracious, although I was out of the feel, he thought I could pick up in two-three months. He is a friend, he is a devotee also, he wanted to help me. So, I decided to go there, but my wife was not interested, she wanted to stay in Mayapur, or in India. I told her that we don't have money and we can't just continue like this. So, she started the business, selling Krishna figures. She bought figures from Radha-Krishna Prabhu from Chowpati and was trying to sell them. I thought she is going to loose money and we will end up in a bigger debt, but somehow or other, some mercy of the Lord - this business worked very well, and we made good amount of money. She started rolling that money and selling more and more. In one year's time I found that she made very good amount of money. Then I saw that she was right - not just telling me not to go to America, but she was doing something practical.

MK: *Is it still going on?*

D: Yes, still going on, but much less now. I thought she has her desires and she had contributed financially to the family, I shall honour her desire and do something in India. So, after Kolkata case finally closed up we went to Bangalore to start some other business, because we thought that this figure business will not last long, so we started incense business. In Bangalore we were searching for different incense and going to different courses on fragrances, etc. Both of us also did course called Kanuj on finding natural fragrances.

We went to visit devotees there and found them in a very distressful condition, they were not allowed to go to the temple, for which they contributed for to build. Madhu Pandit instructed guard not to let them enter the temple. Some devotees shifted their homes closer to the temple, so they can go to mangal-arotik, but they are not allowed to enter the temple and just go on their balcony to offer obeisancies to the Cakra on top of the dome, like Haridasa Thakur used to do in Jagannatha Puri. Many devotees started to push me to 'do it, but I was tired after three years fighting with

Adridharan in Kolkata courts. One day we had forty proceedings in different courts - from Low Court to Supreme Court. I had hardly any help, my health was going bad, so I did not want to do it, but Bhanu Swami, Jayapataka Maharaj, Gopal Krishna Maharaj, Bhima Prabhu, Bangalore devotees, congregation - everybody were pushing me. So, I did not know what to do - should I do it or not. I did not want to do it. But all vaishnavas were asking and I could see that this man was walking off with temple - it is no good, and this will destroy this movement in the long run, because everyone will start to make their temple independent. No one was ready to take on the fight, so we thought maybe it's my ego that I don't want to fight. I was thinking I did one, I don't want to do another one. I did not understand what was the right thing to do. I called Jananivasa Prabhu and asked him what I shall do. I asked him to pray to Radha-Madhava and if he feels They say I should do - I will do, if They say 'no', I won't do. Jananivasa Prabhu was saying that I should take rest for some time. I said, 'Ok, rest, but after that should I do or not?' Jananivasa Prabhu then prayed to Radha-Madhava, I also asked Pankajangry Prabhu to pray. Jananivasa called me after three days from this talk and told me - I should do it!

I said: "Prabhu, but I am really tired, exhausted, this, that... look, during Kolkata fight I could not chant my round properly, my reading of scriptures has gone down". He said: "Don't ever think that by your own endeavours you can chant Krishna's name, you can only chant Krishna's name by the mercy and blessings of vaisnavas. So, if all the vaisnavas want you to do it, then you should do it. If they bless you, then you can chant Krishna's name nicely". I said: "So, OK, do you think this will please Prabhupad?"

He said: "Yes, this will please Prabhupad".

So, excepting his authority, which I respect very much, I decided to take up the Bangalore fight and from then on this is my service at present. The fight is still continuing.

MK: *Is there any progress?*

D: Well, progress is there, but it is not there... as long as we don't get property in our control, just the paper progress has no value. So far it's all paper progress. Actually recently we lost in the Supreme Court, so already it will take a lot of work to get it back on the right track again. Otherwise the only option to wait for the main suite to be heard, which will take many many years, and try to win. But Madhu Pandit trying to delay the matter, trying to make the hearing not take place. We found some way of reopening the issues. How Krishna...

MK: *How long it can go on the way it is now?*

D: Six months or six years, ten years - I don't know. Right now we have two options, if they work out, then it could go on six months. Otherwise we shall wait for the main trial, which can take six to ten years, litigations are very slow, procrastinating and Madhu Pandit has the court injunction in his favour - he is enjoying sitting in the temple, he doesn't want any hearing to take place. High Court and Supreme Court refused to interfere, so he is sitting there very strong right now. So, that's the situation in brief, I guess.

MK: *Quite a story...*

D: You see, you asking of my experiences in Mayapur - I can't remember every detail, from 1988, a lot happened.

MK: *Maybe you can tell the most memorable stories, especially in relationship with devotees who helped you a lot, who you appreciate.*

D: Many devotees helped. One person, who helped the most in all these fights is Kasinath, he is teaching in the Gurukula. He is a very wonderful person. He may not be an ISKCON devotee, but he is very truthful and honest person, and he always stood by ISKCON.

One memorable experience I have - when government tried to take over our land, they sent 20 policemen with guns and all the local communist party people came, maybe four hundred. So, Kasinath got almost another four hundred people from the villages to support us. And they stop police from entering our land. Many devotees also went. This was the year Gour Govinda Maharaja left this world, 1996.

MK: *Why police was trying to enter our property?*

D: They were saying that some government land involved - just wanted to take over our land and give to some people to sit on it.

MK: *Where is that property?*

D: Near the Jalangi. Huge piece of property, right near the river side - from Gurukula up to Jalangi. That land. We had to protect that land. We got a court order. There was a lot of fight. We actually found out that the government was trying to take over our land without our knowledge. Suddenly we found that about thirty policemen moving in with gun-machines...

MK: *What is the position on that land now?*

D: We are cultivating that land, it's under our control now. So, Kasinath is the person who helped the most and in the Land department we had Nimai Prabhu that time, then Pada Pankaj Prabhu, who was with me. Then Pranavallabha, Bhadracharu. There was one devotee, Pitavas Prabhu, then Gour Nam Prabhu, Shyamasundara. For the fight it were mostly Nimai and Pitavas Prabhus, they were always in the front, fighting.

MK: *Who is Shyamasundara?*

D: Shyamasundara Prabhu was an accountant. Now he is pujari in our Diety Department. Then Vedaśara came forward, he was looking after different problems.

One of the happiest moments was when we got a court order banning the picnics, second time - when we got a court order stopping government to remove the trees. We had many many good happy moments, when we found that we succeeded in protecting ISKCON property, few happy moments we had.

MK: *Do you want to say something about your personal life?*

D: Personal life was not much. One person, who really cared for me before my marriage was Isan Prabhu, Nepali devotee, who is serving in the Lotus building. He was like my younger brother, he used to love me so much. Some devotees really loved me as I remember. From 1992 to 1996 there was such a fight - I used to go early in the morning, after japa and come back late

afternoon, because I had to go to meet with this politician, that politician... this government officer, that police officer... I would come back late and miss Prasad, so Isan was keeping Prasad for me. I used to have cold Prasad, so he felt bad about it and started to make hot rice for me, hot subjee. And I was not very good, little lazy, I could not wash my clothes properly - brahmachari is supposed to wash, and I was washing, but sometimes it would be too many unwashed close, so at night time before going to sleep I would wash and next morning I would be able to wear the same clothes, it became very dirty. So, Isan started to wash my close.

Another devotee from South America, I don't know why he used to like me so much, his name Laksmikantha. He did not speak English properly and I could not speak his language, but somehow or other he stuck with me. First thing he would do when he came to Mayapur was come and clean my room completely. He would throw me out of the room, throw my things out, clean everything and make sure not one paper was misplaced. He would make whole room very clean. Every time when there was some problem he would come and stand next to me. I was worried that he will beat somebody and end up in a fight, I was telling him not to come, but he would not listen, just come and stand next to me like my body guard. Somehow I got a lot of affection from different devotees.

MK: *Where is Laksmikantha now?*

D: He is in America, I have no idea why he is not coming any more. When I left from here I think he felt it, he said "no one is there for me, you are gone". He can't write English. But sometimes he write something to me and I reply. He is very nice, good hearted person. I did not do anything for him, I don't know what I did for him that he loved me so much. He used to come and stay with me, we used to walk together, chant our rounds, sometimes buy some fruits and eat them together. He used to bring me gifts when he would come to Mayapur, like coat for the winter, bags, always was asking me what I want. That was even before I got involved in the leadership positions from 1986 he showered his affection on me. He was a very very coura-

geous person. He was trying to marry some Japanese girl, those girls came, I tried to talk to them and it did not work out.

Also many senior devotees are very nice and merciful and supportive of me. Apart from local devotees, Harikesa Maharaj was very loving.

MK: *Are you still in touch?*

D: Not recently. But he always liked me and I also liked him. I still have a lot of appreciation for him, for all the service he has done.

Naresvara Prabhu also was very very supportive and helpful during those trouble times, especially within ISKCON, with Nitaichand Maharaj - Naresvara is a very strong man standing next to me. And when he wanted to do something he stood by his words.

Also local devotees - Bhadracharu, Pranavallabha, Bhakti Purusottama Maharaj, they also were very helpful and supportive. It was a team, also Radha Charan Prabhu. He usually did not come out, but he took care of all the government contacts initially -with top police officer, District Magistrate, etc.

MK: *Where is he now?*

D: He is president of Saint-Luis temple in America. He is there for the last two-three years, we are in touch. And initially when I got involved in kitchen, the person who supported me the most was H.H. Jayapataka Maharaja. He knew that was a difficult job and there could be a lot of difficulties either created by somebody or just coming my way. He used to come regularly to make sure everything is running nicely in the kitchen, he was the one who stood behind me so strongly. It was his support and encouragement that made me run the kitchen, I could not do it otherwise. At that time Harikesa Maharaja was there, but he did not understand the kitchen issue so well. Other devotees were afraid of Shyamasundara, but somehow or other I was able to face this guy. Jayapataka Maharaja went out of his way to make sure I could run kitchen well.

MK: *You are his fighting man.*

D: (laughs) Also Jananivasa, Pankajanghri Prabhus are always helpful, they always praying to Radha-

Madhava, Nrisimha Deva, and now Pancha-tattva, for success. We actually got Guru Sada Road property on Nrisimha Caturdasi. And in 2000 I was standing on the roof of my in-law's house looking at Ratha-yatra - Adridharan and his men was dragging Rath through the streets - I was praying to Jagannath: 'Next year when you come out if You please let us serve You, I will make sure that Jananivasa Prabhu will come and serve You. So, next year we got a court order to get Jagannath Deities for Ratha-yatra Day. Jagannath tricked me - I was promising Him Jananivasa Prabhu coming to worship Him and that we will offer you ten thousand coconut laddus - so He came out to get that, and then went back again. I was thinking that if Jagannath comes to us then we will get the temple also, no need to pray for temple separately, but it did not happen then - Jagannath came out, but temple did not come. Jananivasa Prabhu came to worship Jagannath and Radha Duti Prabhu arranged for ten thousand coconut laddus. I told Jagannath: "now You are going back after seven days, if You want us to worship You we will have to have the temple, otherwise we can not even enter there". So, He eat the laddus, got His puja and went back.

MK: *I remember He left one shoe behind.*

D: O, really, I don't remember that. After Ratha-yatra in one and half months we got the temple, on the 9th of August 2001, Janmastami Day. And after less then a year we got Guru Sada Road also.

MK: *Was it the biggest fight in your life?*

D: Yeah, my heart was paining, because I was fighting with own men. I was just doing it as a duty.

MK: *Which case is more important to you Kolkata or Bangalore?*

D: Both are important. But Kolkata was more important, because Mayapur can not survive without Kolkata. Bangalore is more distant to me, but it is much bigger temple, much more value in the property.

MK: *Do you think this situation can repeat in some other place?*

D: Well, if this temple comes back I don't think anyone would dare to do such a thing in the future. So, this is a

good lesson to be taught, we need to get this temple back and keep Prabhupad's movement united, and make sure that in future no other temples, in India at least, think like this - just to separate themselves from ISKCON. They have to work how Prabhupad wanted under the authority of GBC of ISKCON.

MK: *What is the situation here, in Mayapur?*

D: Mayapur is under control of ISKCON, registered in Bombay. We are sending all accounts to Bombay. And whatever court orders we have managers of the institution are signing. Prabhupada registered ISKCON in Bombay and every temple in India is accounting to Bombay.

MK: *Is there anything to stop the same situation happening here?*

D: Right now we have got an order from the court saying that this is a branch of Bombay office and if anybody doesn't do here properly the Bombay Governing Body can suspend or remove that person. This happened recently in Delhi, the president of Delhi temple tried to go the same way as Adridharan das, but he had to resign, he been suspended by the board. He did not go to Court because he knew that the Court will not support him, as this type of situation has been already established in Kolkata case, very clearly. Madhu Pandit's case (Bangalore) started before the Kolkata case came through, so if we win there also, then in the future no one else will dare to do the same. It's important to establish that everyone belongs to the same institution. As for Bangalore, I hope that Krishna fulfil the desire and prayers of His dear devotee, Jananivasa Prabhu. Ultimately we are instruments, Krishna's desire is final, we can only try, results are not in our hand.

MK: *Thanks for this explanation. Would you like to say few words about your family?*

D: Our marriage is a very difficult marriage. First of all I was a brahmachari for many years and it was difficult for me to adjust to the idea of getting married.

MK: *How did you decide to go for it?*

D: I think around 1997 I started to feel that I should get married. By that time I was not able to maintain brahmachari life properly, was more and more difficult to control the mind. I was doing business and my mind was becoming

less and less strict, thinking of opposite sex sometimes. So, I was thinking that it was not proper to wear brahmachari dress with such mind set, I thought that it would be better to put on white clothes. But when I expressed that desire, everybody was saying: "no-no-no, you are a good brahmachari, you should stay brahmachari". It was whole big scene about it. Jayapataka Maharaja and Harikesa Maharaja wrote to me, "you should just stay brahmachari, don't waste your life, you are meant for being brahmachari, nothing wrong with you". Then I said to them "at least if not get married, let me put on white, I am feeling very uncomfortable wearing saffron, because one should not entertain thoughts of the opposite sex if they wear saffron". Though may come, but then one should reject it. If one keep on entertaining such thoughts - it's a trouble for brahmachari. We can't control thoughts, they will come because it's the nature of human body, but if one wears saffron they should not entertain such thoughts. In the past I could reject it, but I noticed that slowly I started to actually entertain such thoughts, so it was not very nice. Then I thought that I should wear white, but they would not let me wear white. They said: "no, if you wear white then you will get married". So, it went on with both of them, not allowing me to put on white clothes. Then Harikesa Maharaja said: "alright, if you insist then you can put on white, no problem". Then I had a problem - I did not know how to change from saffron to white (laughs), so I started to fade my clothes slowly-slowly to lighter and lighter colour. I wanted to put on white, but somehow had a mental problem about it, to be truthful, even I already told to everybody - this is what happening, I should put on white, but somehow still had this trouble. Then Bhakti Charu Maharaj and two other persons approached about marriage to Prema Manjari. I did not say 'yes' or 'no', because I was not sure what I was doing and was confused. Some people said to her 'then forget it', but she kept on waiting, thanks to her. It was my fault - I was not saying 'yes' or 'no',

was telling that I need to check my horoscope, etc, different things was coming to mind. Then I asked my mother to find a girl from our community (in Maharastra), but she said: "you have already spoiled your life, why should you spoil someone else's life, you go and find some girl like you. Who will stay with you?". So, that possibility has gone. Then in June-July 1998 I went to a meeting in Bombay, about ritviks, many GBCs came, and the news about Harikesa Maharaja's trouble came at the same time. So, after that I came back and put on plain white - so, it took me one year to do this. Then our horoscopes matched well, out of all the girls Prema's was the best match.

MK: *What 'all girls'?*

D: Two or three proposals were therefrom Kolkata and from South India. My friends tried to arrange for me. But Prema's matching was the best, and also she is a full time devotee, those were congregation members. So, sure, she has sacrificed more than them. At that time I was not understanding all the aspects of grihastha situation. I was thinking that I just get married and continue with my service. I put my conditions also, I wrote down my expectations and asked her to write down her expectations. So, we exchanged our lists of expectations and came to an agreement.

MK: *What is that!???*

D: (laughs) I don't remember what I wrote, just something that I can do, and things that she can't expect me to do. I gave it to her. (laughs) Her mother got upset with me when I turn up in there house with this huge list of conditions. (laughs) But, I told her that it's better to be clear before marriage, write down everything we agree and don't agree.

MK: *What were your conditions, tell at least one, for example?*

D: I don't remember.

MK: *We will ask Prema Manjari... Prema, do you remember?*

Prema Manjari Devi Dasi:

I remember!

Dayaram Prabhu: Well, one thing I remember was that I can't be expected to change baby's nappies, that will be your job. (Now, just recently, I did change it one time.) (laughs) So, I told them that 'in future you can not complain, I wrote it down beforehand'. So, she agreed to all that and we got married.

MK: *microphone to Prema Manjari...*

PM: He said that I have to be responsible for the children, he would never change children's diapers, and that I should be responsible for the house, and I should not be running behind various Gurus and doing service and neglecting my family, he said that he is the boss of the house. And I said 'yes, but you can not be a dictator, you have to understand that I am a person, I have feelings and that I love my Guru Maharaj and other vaishnavas and I would like to serve them sometimes. And if I am to be responsible for the house then I don't want to go and make money, you should make all the money...' - on and on... Everything is opposite now - he is changing the diapers and I make money... and he listens to me when he thinks it's right...

MK: *So, what conditions did you put down?*

PM: my conditions were: *that he had to provide, not just sit around and expect me to do everything. *I said I would listen to him, but he could also give me a hearing and after considering everything decide finally. *We should be friends and respect each other.

MK: *How is it now?*

PM: It's like that, it's nice. He turned out to be much better than I thought he would be.

MK: *microphone to Dayaram Prabhu... - how is it for you?*

D: She is definitely better than I thought. I did not know her at all then. We were scared of each other. I just wanted to put everything into writing that I don't get blamed later on. But now our marriage is going on OK, we don't think of divorce.

MK: *Good. And then...*

Dayaram Prabhu: Then right after our marriage the case started in Kolkata. It was very difficult life. We could not live as a husband and wife anywhere. We had no place to stay in Kolkata during fight. We had place in the Lake Avenue, where Life-member collectors were living, collecting for Mayapur. So, I could not live there with my wife, so we staid in her father's house, which is quite shameful in India. But we had no choice. And my mother used to make fun of me, saying that 'O, you left home, saying that you want to stay in ISKCON, but you are staying in in-law's house instead'. And my uncle was saying: 'O, Dinesh (my karmi name), I

thought that you left home in search for Krishna, but you found a gopi for yourself. What is this? What's wrong with you?'. They all made a lot of fun at me. Because for them I was a sanyasi (wearing saffron), so how you can get married then?..

MK: *So, they did not like that you got married?*

D: No, they were happy about it. My mother saying that the best thing I did in my life is that I got married. But, at that time they were joking about it a lot. And then I stayed in in-law's house, it gave them even more things to poke me about. Then we got this property on Motilal Neru Road, in 2000, so we shifted. We had a separate room there - me and Vidvan Gauranga Prabhu, we were two grihastha couples sharing one flat. All day we were out, busy from 7AM till 8 PM - we did not have time to associate with each other. So, we decided not to have children, because our minds were so disturbed with all these court cases...dreaming of courts and law books. She said we can't conceive a baby like this, consciousness would not be so good. So, we decided to maintain brahmachari, till we got Kolkata back. This fight involved her also, because when police came she had to face them also, they arrested her and put her in jail.

MK: *Why did they arrest her?*

D: When Adri sent police to arrest me, they arrested her also because she was next to me. Adridharan got a court order to be able to enter the temple, but he tried to come in with his men to take over again. I told them that only he can enter, not the others, but he set police on me. Then they came to the office and Prema was there. She told them 'this is my house, I can't let you go in', but they just arrested her as well and put in jail. Her brother, who came to visit, also got arrested because he was standing next to her. So, her family also suffered a lot because of all these fights.

Her sacrifice may not be obvious and seen, but for long time she was cooking for me, doing my secretarial job, keeping the room clean, washing my clothes. She started business. If she did not start that business I would have been in America now, on a job. I already told everyone that my last

responsibility was to get Guru Sada Road back and after that I can not be responsible for anything else in the future. I told them a year in advance, everybody accepted that 'OK, go where you have to go', but because of her I am continuing. About Bangalore her and Jananivasa Prabhu pushed me that I have to start. And I had some problem with GBC, so I resigned, I said that I will not do this any more. But she said that I should finish Bangalore case, because there is not anyone to look after that, Prabhupada won't be pleased if you walk off. So, she is also pushing me to do the service. A lot of credit goes to her for these Kolkata and Bangalore fights.

MK: *You are a co-director of Mayapur too. How active is your role in that?*

D: I don't do anything active, actually I wanted to resign, but somehow they told me to continue - MAC and other co-directors. I told them that I will deal only with things that no one else can do - land problems and litigations. Only in those situations I will get involved, unless Bhakti Purusottama Swami ask me to get involved in some other issue. Otherwise I want to keep out, because I don't want to take on too many things and not do one thing properly. So, my focus is Bangalore and Kolkata left-over litigations to make sure that ISKCON is protected, and to look after Mayapur land properties. Sankarsan Nitai was assisting me in that, but he has no experience with courts and law, so I take care of that. As far as day-to-day management - I generally support Bhakti Purusottam Maharaj, he is the man on the spot. I believe that the person on the spot, who takes responsibility and headaches should make decisions, not someone sitting thousand kilometres away. So, I can give advice, but don't make decisions except for land, litigations, government problems.

Sometime some devotees come to me for some help and guidance, those who worked with me in the past and I do help them, I also help people, who stood by ISKCON or fought, who sacrificed, who took risks. I would like to see that they are taken care of, not just left dry because I am not here. Apart from that I don't get involved, I don't read MAC resolutions, or get involved in sewage problems. It's very time consuming. There is three directors, eight MAC-members, they can take care of it.

MK: *Thank you. Hare Krishna. ♦*

When you get sick in Mayapur, what do you do?

A:

Lila Madhuri Devi Dasi said:

Ayurvedic system, means adopting the nutrition to the need of the moment.

I kind of have some knowledge of it myself and also I take help from the doctor in Navadwip, I don't know his name, in Oladevitala.

I do nothing else and sleep a little bit more.

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Lila Vrindavana Devi Dasi said:

First of all I go to the Main Gate medical center. If that doesn't help then I go to the local Mayapur Hospital, near Yoga Pitha. They usually help. Why I don't go there in the first place - because they usually have two hundred people lining up to see a doctor for free. They are very expert and have ample experience - if you get to the doctor, they know what they are doing. You can get doctor's darsan for thirty Rupees if you don't want to wait in line. These doctors saved my baby twice and me one time. When glorified Krishnanagar child specialists did not find what was wrong with my baby, these doctors immediately identified pneumonia and gave instant help. So, I do respect them. You can see them for 30 Rupees in any time of day or night, 24-hours, doctor is living right there. If you want for free - go in the morning, there is huge crowd of people, doctor have no time to even look at people, simply ask what's their problem, writes prescription on a piece of paper and they go and get it, they have free medicines and injections, they have all kinds of medicines, in ISKCON we did not find such medicines.

Bhakta Priya Devi Dasi said:

First of all I try to diagnose myself - what disease it is I got now? If it's something I already had before, I don't bother for doctor - go and get medicines myself. If it is something new I go to see Gour-baba in Caitanya Mission and also do a search on the Internet - what traditional and non traditional medicine offers for that condition, I am trying to find the course for this disease. Some simple diseases can be taken care of by simple herbs and spices. I have a book on herbal healing from Russia. I have experience that when all kinds of doctors and medicines did not help, the herbal answers that I found in that book did help me. Regarding doctors that available here, I prefer Gour-baba. I tried the doctors in the boundary wall, one doctor comes from Krishnanagar - he is good doctor, but prescribes lots of expensive medicines, to make money, and I end up not using even half of them, and I am trying to avoid allopathic medicine in general.

Ali Krsna Devi Dasi said:

I am going to the Dr. in Uladevitala and I am seeing him you know, and she has some fever or something then I have my allopathic medicines from my Dr. in Bombay I keep those in case of emergencies, for fever, otherwise the ayurvedic doctor in Oladevitala because I trust him the most, he has good medicine it helps her. It would be nice if they had a nice doctor here.

Ratnavali Devi Dasi said:

It would be nice to have 24-hours medical shop here, sometimes I get really sick I need some particular medicine, I can not expect when I will get sick, I keep a stock of it, but sometimes it happens that it finishes and I really need it, it would be nice to have twenty four hour medical shop. It is nice that they have brought from Krsna Nagar some good doctor, weekly once he is coming here, that's an improvement. Previously he was coming once on Sunday, now he is coming on Monday 1-3 PM, it's written on the board over there.

Only once I showed to him recently I didn't have to much need to see the doctor, but at least I know that if I need I can make an appointment to see that doctor at the time, but I can not wait for a week every single time, sometimes you need to go to the doctor, I can't say "OK, sickness you please prolong after one week when the doctor comes you come back!" I can not say that, but he is a good doctor, fortunately at that day doctor came and I was sick, on Sunday, and so it worked out for me, otherwise it would be very difficult.

Otherwise, without him I don't feel really comfortable to go to any doctor over there (boundary wall Medical center), I don't know what they are going to give, and is it really worth while going.

This doctor from Krishnanagar helped me very much, he had good knowledge and it worked immediately, he could understand. Otherwise every time I have to go to Navadwip that's what I was doing when I got some serious complications, a general fever and cold or whatever I could go here, but if some extra care is required then I go to Navadwip doctor that's the only option that I have right now, it would be nice if we have some more facility.

Family matters

Interview with Vidvan Gauranga Prabhu by Vrindavan Lila Dasi

MK: Tell us your story, Prabhu.

Vidvan Gauranga Das: My father was a Life-member in Chennai (Madras) and he got the Srimad Bhagavatam set. At that time there was only one type of life membership. Now you can either get Bhagavatam set or not. So, he got Srimad Bhagavatam set. I was 13 or 14 years old, so I was very attracted to the Bhagavatam and I liked the paintings very much. I read all the way up to the eighth canto.

And then I saw something in the newspaper that time: in America, West Virginia, Kirtananda Swami did not pay the taxes or something like that. I did not know that Kirtananda Swami was already expelled from ISKCON (the newspapers didn't report that also), they simply referred to him as a Hare Krsna. So I thought the Hare Krsnas don't pay their taxes? They should be paying their taxes, this is the law of the land. So, I misunderstood the Hare Krsna movement as people who don't even follow the laws of the land, so I stopped reading the books.

After one and a half years or so, I again came in touch with their Ratha-yatra festival in Chennai as there was Ratha-yatra every year. I came in touch with the devotees again and I started chanting. I started taking guidance from Ganga Prabhu, who was temple president there, Bhanu Mararaja was there, other devotees were there and they were preaching and I tried to follow. Then I moved to Davangere in Karnataka, where I was admitted into a medical college.

After one year, I joined ISKCON's Bangalore center. I did not finish my medical education as it goes on for 4½ years, but I only did the first year and I joined ISKCON. I had written my exams after one year of studies (I was first in the college for one of the subjects in that year, I was told.), and then I went on holiday to my home. From home, I directly joined in the Bangalore temple. But then my parents didn't like it. It was a big issue, so then I came to Mayapur. I was here for two months. I liked Mayapur very much, especially the Gurukula. Then I had to return to Bangalore. Somehow I had to be back with my parents and they readmitted me in the same medical college to continue my studies. But, again, I left the college and came back to Mayapur. That was in 1989-90.

MK: What were you doing the next time you came to Mayapur?

V: I was in HH Bhaktividya Purna Maharaja's Gurukula. I was studying and teaching - at that time in Gurukula that's how it was - you studied something, then you taught the younger ones something else. I was studying Bhakti-sastri, from Chandrasekhar Prabhu, who is now preaching in the Orient. He was the Vice-Principal of the Gurukula. A brilliant, competent person, he was 15 years old.

MK: How old were you?



V: I was 18.

MK: You did not mind that your teacher was younger than you?

V: No! He was a very pure-hearted devotee (now also) and so I was one of his students.

MK: What happened after the studies finished?

V: While I was in the Gurukula, I had taken initiation from Srila Jayapataka Swami Maharaja. After a few years, I joined a College Preaching Department, which was conducted by one Gauranga Das. He was a nice Italian devotee. He was assisted by Sacidulal Prabhu and Gopal Raj Prabhu, all disciples of HH Tamal Krsna Maharaja. Sama Veda Prabhu was also there in the team. Gopal Raj Prabhu is now in Vrindavan and Sacidulal Prabhu is now in Bangalore. We were preaching in West Bengal, even in Kolkata. This was for two years or more. Then I joined my Guru Maharaja's secretariat in 1995-96 and was serving my Guru Maharaja and his assistants. That went on till 1999-2000.

When a legal case was going on in Kolkata, my Guru Maharaja requested that I help Dayaram Prabhu, who was selflessly struggling on behalf of ISKCON and ISKCON's GBC in the courts. So, I was helping in Kolkata for more than a year. Then I was back in Mayapur for a few months, and then again I was involved in assisting Dayaram Prabhu for a legal case in Bangalore, again on behalf of ISKCON. When I was in Bangalore my wife became pregnant. We came to Mayapur to see the big Panca-tattva installation and then we decided to just be here in Mayapur and serve.

As of now, I am serving in MIHE as one of the teachers. I had taught in MIHE before also, but as of now I am one of the resident teachers. I taught the Bhagavad-gita portion of Bhakti-sastri for one group of students this year.

MK: When did you get married?

V: In 1999.

MK: How did that happen?

V: In 1998, I requested my Guru Maharaja for permission to prepare and enter householder asram. As a part of my services to my Guru Maharaja, in 1998, I was with him in Bangalore. At that time, the ISKCON Bangalore

center under the leadership of Madhu Pandit Das had officially accepted ritvikism and protesting against the GBC Body. Many things were happening at that time. So I was instructed by my Guru Maharaja to help the local congregational devotees who were loyal to the GBC Body. So, I was there for 4-5 months, maybe a little bit more. It was at that time that some of the senior congregational devotees, an integrated group, worked out a marriage arrangement between myself and Bhaktin Swarna (now Suvarna Krsna Lila devi dasi). She had wanted to marry a practicing devotee from Mayapur, so that she could reside in Mayapur, I also wanted a devotee wife who would agree to reside in Mayapur. So it clicked. When I got married, my Guru Maharaja was there in Bangalore and he gave his blessing. Then we came here and within a few months time I joined the legal service in Kolkata, that I had already mentioned before.

MK: So, now you are father. How do you feel?

V: It is a learning experience for me. Now I have to become more responsible. I have to become a serious devotee, I have to become an example. It forces me to become humble and tolerant. Children learn more by the actions of their seniors then what they are told to do.

MK: What is your son's name?

V: We call him Mukund. His full name is Mukunda Hari. My mother-in-law calls him Caitanya. I am told that his horoscope indicates an auspicious future. He is supposed to become serious in spiritual life. We want all the devotees to bless him, so that he becomes a proper Vaisnava and an asset to Prabhupada's movement. Even when he was in his mother's womb, his mother read out a translation of the entire Srimad Bhagavatam. She was putting on different lectures by senior devotees for his spiritual benefit.

MK: Where was he born?

V: Krsnanagar.

MK: In which hospital?

V: At Sunview Nursing Home, it is a private nursing home, not a government, or Christian one. She was admitted for a few days.

MK: So, are you planning to live in Mayapur now?

V: Yes, we would like to. Hopefully Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu permits us to live and obey His instructions properly here. ♦

Interview with Suvarna Krishna Lila Devi Dasi by Vrindavan Lila Dasi

MK: How does it feel to be a mother?

S: It's like my Prabhu says, a learning experience. The mother has to be very tolerant. Previously I was never tolerant, but now my baby is teaching me tolerance.

MK: How old are you?

S: I am 24.

MK: Do you have anything to say about how he was born or something special?

S: Nothing so special - he was born like any other baby. But I had to suffer pain both - before and after his birth. Because he had the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck tightly thrice, I could not deliver him normally. So, we had to go for a caesarian operation. Then the doctor told me, "Here, look there are three tight rings around his neck!" Anyway, the baby was safe because the doctor did it at the right time. Just before going to the operating theatre, I pleaded to the doctor, "I don't want a caesarian, please. She said, "If you want your baby alive, then you must cooperate with me." Then I said, "OK, if you want me to go to the operating theatre, then I want my Prabhupada autoreverse maha-mantra japa-box to play the Hare Krsna mantra along with my Deity pictures in the operating theater. Only then I will come." Then the doctor instructed the nurse to get "whatever she wants." Then they put on the maha-mantra japa-box all through the operation and the deity pictures were there. I was constantly hearing. The amazing thing was when all this was going on in the operating theater, one male doctor was talking about Krsna. He was asking me, "Who was the chariot driver of Arjuna?"

MK: Right during the operation?

S: Yes. Because I was conscious, only the lower part of my body was made numb. I could see and I was conscious. And then he asked me,

"Do you know who wrote CaitanyaCaritamrita?" I told him, "It was Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami

who wrote it". He said he is a life-member, "since 1980 I have been going to Mayapur." I said, "Now you should come to Mayapur as we have new Panca-tattva deities, They are so beautiful. The temple and the deities are so beautiful."

Then, after a few minutes my son was born, then I requested the doctor, "Please put the maha-mantra japa-box to his ears. I want him to hear Prabhupada chanting Hare Krsna. They were very cooperative. They kept the maha-mantra japa-box near his ears, and he was hearing. Outside Padma Radhika Mataji was waiting. (She had kindly come to take care of me during this difficult time.) I had requested her to have the Vrindavana Shyama-kund and Radha-kund water and dust from Mayapur, all the auspicious items. I had asked her to put those on the baby as soon as he is born.

MK: Was she allowed to come in?

S: No, she was outside the operating theatre. I requested the doctor, "Now that he is born, can you please take him outside to show him my sister?" So they put him in a chair and took him and she sprinkled all that.

MK: They didn't complain?

S: No, that was amazing. They were very cooperative. Lila Vrindavana Mataji had given me Nrisimhadeva bracelet to wear, because I was very scared of hospital and operation. So after the baby got the sacred dust, etc. I gave the bracelet to the assistant to put on him. And this guy was wearing it so nicely. When we came back to the room he was wearing it. He was not crying because of wearing it. For two days I kept this item on.

Whoever came in to the room they were saying Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna. And there was one maid, she would always say Caitanya, Caitanya, Nandalal, Gopal and hearing Prabhupada's chanting Hare Krsna maha-mantra. All of those ladies and nurses took Prasad from us every day. And everyone who

came into the room said that all these years they have never heard the Holy Names being played loud day and night. Even the child specialist. He came on Independence Day (my son was born on 13th August and 15th August is India's Independence Day). That day they were putting on cinema songs in the roads and it was really loud. But I had made this Prabhupada's Hare Krsna mantra player much louder, so that we could hear the Holy Names. So, when the child specialist came in, he looked at the baby and he said, "I am not going to say 'good morning' to you today, I'm going to say Hare Krsna!" Then he told the baby, "Hare Krsna! Wake up!" That was amazing for me - because Prabhupada's chanting was had powerful effect.

MK: *Were you able to take Prasad while there?*

S: My mother was making prasada, and I asked Vamsi Priya Mataji to make some bread for me in case if mother comes late, I could take that.

MK: *How many days did you spend in hospital?*

S: Sixteen days, because I was too weak to get up and then they had to remove the bandages. Otherwise I would have spent four days in hospital.

MK: *So after that you came here?*

S: Yes.

MK: *You went to Vrindavan for some time?*

S: We went because the water was almost at the road level and everybody around said that it was about to flood. And I didn't know how to keep the baby here in case of a flood. He is so small. My husband suggested, "It's better to just go to Vrindavan, because we have to keep him in some dhama."

MK: *Was he OK on the train?*

S: Yes. I was in the upper berth. There are three berths - lower, middle and upper. I was sleeping in the upper because it is so spacious and it was not jerking much. So, he was OK, and we could handle the journey.

MK: *What's his name again?*

S: Mukunda Hari.

MK: Why do you call him Caitanya?

S: When I had just conceived in Bangalore, I had gone to my father's house for his blessings. And he blessed, "May you get a son like Caitanya Mahaprabhu!" A few months later he passed away. That was when I was in the seventh month of pregnancy.

So, then my brother and mother wanted to call him Caitanya because my father wanted to call him Caitanya.

When I had come in contact with Krsna consciousness, my father had initially opposed my taking to Krsna consciousness. He used to say, "Why should you express your devotional sentiments by chanting? You should keep your sentiments inside yourself and not show outside." I said "No, being devotional means that I should chant Harinama loudly." But he wouldn't, he never chanted the Hare Krsna Maha-mantra.

But after I got married, he had come to Mayapur once. He took bath in Ganga, and was in Srila Prabhupada's Samadhi hearing his japa. Then he became convinced that living in Mayapur is safe and that Krsna consciousness is so wonderful.

When I had conceived, I went with my husband to seek my father's blessings (as per custom). My father started to talk to my husband and began to remember his stay in Mayapur. He even requested my husband to be with me in Mayapur and not come back to Bangalore, "such a bad place." He told my Prabhu that Mayapur is the birth place of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, etc. and that all of us should just settle once again in Mayapur. Later my Prabhu told me, "Your father was preaching to me to go back to Mayapur on a permanent basis." My father was saying, "When I heard Prabhupada's chanting the Hare Krsna Maha-mantra, my legs were jumping to dance." He didn't like us to leave Mayapur and come back to Bangalore.

So, my father had changed his attitude towards Krsna consciousness. Even a day or so before leaving his body he was calling me up and say-

ing that he wanted to stay in Mayapur until I delivered the baby. For some reason he could not come to Mayapur. And so, we call our son Caitanya as a nickname.

MK: *Will your mother stay here all the time?*

S: She will stay here until Gaura Purnima. My brother is there in Bangalore, he is also practicing Krsna consciousness along with other devotees. My mother wants to be in Bangalore to look after him.

MK: *What's your mother's name?*

S: Mahalakshmi.

MK: *Who did the chart for your son?*

S: Devarsi Prabhu.

MK: Do you want to say anything about his chart?

S: One week after he was born we gave the timings. He said that the time he was born was the most auspicious among the days before and after he was born, 13 Friday, Trayodasi. Devarsi Prabhu said that that was the best time of the day. Jupiter and Mercury are in the first house in the horoscope.

MK: *What does that mean?*

S: Devarsi Prabhu says it means his whole chart is auspicious, spiritually strong. The future is left to Krsna, you know.

MK: *Yes, sure. Mercury is good for communications.*

S: Yes, intelligence.

MK: *May be he will be the next editor of Mayapur Katha?*

S: (laughter) He should also report Krsna Conscious messages all over the world.

MK: *Are you going to have more babies?*

S: Let's see what Krsna wants.

I beg all the devotees to bless this baby to become a simple and a staunch Vaisnava, a very strong Vaisnava and a fearless preacher. My husband wants him to follow the four regulative principles, chant at least 16 rounds a day and practice Krsna Consciousness in the association of the devotees with faith for his whole life. We beg the devotees to bless the child, so that he can be like that.

MK: *Hare Krsna!*

Coming to Mayapur after 30 years

MK: *Hare Krishna! Please introduce yourselves. How is Mayapur?*

Kanchanbala Mataji: Hare Krishna. My name is Kanchanbala Dasi and I have not been here in Mayapur since 1975. Madhusudhan Prabhu and I have arrived here and it is so beautiful here, it is such a spiritual transcendental transformation.

MK: *Do you recognize any thing here?*

Madhusudhan Prabhu: Only the temple.

K: But it took us a while to recognize where Madhusudhan slept.

M: yeah... not the temple but the lotus building, where the temple previously was that's the only building that was here when we came and other than that we saw the rooms on the front wall, front wall by the gate where I had a room and the rooms then where just an empty concrete room.

MK: *You were living in those rooms before?*

M: Yeah, when we came to Mayapur that's the room I had shared with a few other men and it was just an empty room nothing in it just a room no bathroom nothing no furniture just a concrete cell.

K: I remember I think the women's ashram was like a few hundred yards away, and I remember we slept on the roof, I don't remember the building though, just the location.

MK: *Oh! next to kitchen next to big kitchen*

K: Oh maybe, yeah, yeah, there was a big kitchen I remember it was in the centre, but I remember being on the roof out in the open

MK: *It's a building which looks like this*

K: Yeah, right, and just having a mosquito net and I slept on the roof it was like two or three stories up a lot of devotees would sleep in those days because you didn't have good water, and I remember just running down the stairs between the communal bathrooms.

M: There was a makeshift bathroom with one side for women and one side for men and it was just uh nothing much there except maybe a hole in the floor and devotees were using that a lot. That I know they were either there or just in the room trying to recuperate from the dysentery.

MK: *But you remember in 1975 right?*

M: Yes.

MK: *Was it festival time?*

M: It was a Gaura Purnima festival, we came here first although we went to Vrindavan that trip, but we came right away first to Mayapur.

K: I remember the temple room that we all circumambulate the altar, the deities.

M: Prabhupada would circumambulate with us all, then every time he walked past the big huge bell he would ring it a few times, so that was nice.

K: That was so nice we were chanting and dancing wildly. I remember that, very sweet.



Interview with Madhusudan Das and Kanchanbala Devi Dasi

by Vrindavan Lila Dasi

MK: *So how is it compared to today?*

K: Oh, it's like a whole transcendental city now.

M: Yeah, it is very beautiful. There's no comparison in anyway, because many devotees got sick right away, which made it very difficult. It's hot season, first time in India for many and many people got sick and that made everything difficult. Of course Prabhupada was there, so that was nice and so many devotees were there, so there was a sweetness, but it was difficult because it tended to be very austere, and now the austerity might be trying to get up in the morning but even that I wouldn't say there is very much austerity at all, in visiting at least.

MK: *What about sweetness?*

M: Sweetness, it is fantastic

K: Fantastic, Oh! And Srila Prabhupada's Samadhi is beautiful it's just so nice to see all tiled pastimes of Srila Prabhupada on the dome and just everywhere it's just, so relishable to see him.

M: I think part of the sweetness that's the best is just the devotees. Very humble devotees and friendly, blissful and I think that makes everything really.

MK: *How many more days will you spend this time?*

M: This time 6 days we are here.

MK: *And you went around for how many days?*

M: Well, we did some parikrama's for 2 or 3 days I think, that's about it.

K: We went to Jagannath das Babaji's Samadhi.

M: Visnu Priya, Visnu Priya's Lord Caitanya Deity that she worshiped and we saw Lord Caitanya's wooden shoes contained in silver, we got it on our head, yeah, and we took pictures.

K: We went to Mangachi.

M: Yeah, Mangachi and we met a very sweet devotee Jagat Bandu and we were taken around all these places by a very nice devotee Karna Prabhu, who was telling us all the pastimes in each place, but some of the places I can't remember now.

MK: *Was it difficult to get used to going somewhere, to get around, get to know where to go?*

M: Uh, it's so big here that a few times it was confusing where to go to find places.

K: I noticed the signs, but because we are new here it's hard.

M: Yeah, well it's so big here that if you accidentally go the wrong way you have a long way back, but it wasn't too bad just the occasional.

MK: *Where do you eat?*

K: Breakfast time we always ate in the Govinda's snack bar because it just had the suitable things that we could have that we like to have, a light breakfast

MK: *Like what?*

M: We had yogurt every day with just some sort of grain like a paratha, alu-paratha and samosa and before hand we would buy some fruit, some oranges and bananas, and have a light breakfast. And then we got invited to lunch by a very nice couple who live here, and they served us so much prasadam it was up to our neck! Which is good, because that's what Lord Caitanya wanted, the devotees to eat prasadam up to their neck! And all the other times we ate at three different prasadam halls. We ate at the life member prasadam hall, we eat at the visiting guests prasadam hall.

MK: *Gada building.*

M: And we ate at the lower tier prasadam hall which was excellent.

MK: *Big kitchen.*

M: Big kitchen. I didn't see very much difference in the prasadam.

K: And tomorrow we are scheduled to have Srila Prabhupada's maha-prasadam at Samadhi, we are so happy.

MK: *How did you get it?*

M: Karna Prabhu arranged it.

MK: *Amongst the prasadam hall which one was the best?*

M: I think they were all nice, the only thing... the big kitchen was a little hard to judge because all we did was go with our tiffin and we were not able to get the sweet rice we didn't have enough containers to get the sweet rice, but the prasadam there was really good, I don't know if there was a big huge difference one or two preps less, but it's hard to say because we only got the main preparations, so I don't know what other things they come around with, because we didn't sit there but I wouldn't hesitate to eat in any of those prasadam halls and feel like I was missing anything. Yeah, the one other lunch prasadam we had was at Mangachi that Jaga Bhandu cooked and that was very nice too. We bought some sweets on the way, and we bought vegetables and he cooked it all - vegetables, rice and dhal and we bought some sweets from the sweet shop and that was nice also.

MK: *Are you taking some Maha prasadam with you when you go?*

K: We want to get some Srila Prabhupada Maha prasadam, something dry to distribute to everybody.

MK: *Where do you live?*

M: Yeah, we live 10 to 12 mins from the temple by car, so it's not very difficult to get to mangal-arotik

MK: *Do many devotees from your temple come to Mayapur?*

K: Not that many have come.

M: Well, there's not that many devotees there, as far as I know, there are many Bengali devotees who are there, I don't know all their names, but I know Ramapati, he was at the Gurukula here, he is a young man. There are others, but I

don't know them all. There are other devotees - Nimai and her family came here last year, and Rajendrananda and his wife, off course, Bhadrinarayan comes, he lives in Santiago.

MK: *How many devotees are there?*

M: In Santiago, in the temple there is probably 25 and around the community probably another 25, and there are many Indian families, who come and give good support to the temple too, they come regularly.

MK: *Do you have a nice temple there?*

M: The temple itself is a building, I think it used to be a small movie theatre, so there is a large room for the temple room. The building, it was bought, but the inside is beautifully decorated, elite sculptures and paintings all around, very very beautiful temple actually.

MK: *Do you visit Mayapur info sometimes?*

M: Oh yeah, there is a Mayapur website, and it has all the info there.

MK: *Are you planning to come back to Mayapur in future?*

M: We are certainly planning to come back, I don't know when, within the next few years at least

MK: *Any suggestions?*

M: I have to say that seeing Radha-Madhava and the eight Sakhis is very wonderful and it's very nice to see Pancha-tattva, but the Pancha-tattva altar looks empty, there is just no decoration

MK: *Do you mean outside or inside?*

M: Inside there is just no decoration, it looks empty. It was shocking, I don't know if it was the difference between the two, you just look at the Radha-Madhava altar and it's lush with people and decorations, it looks full, and you go and look at Pancha-tattva and They are standing there, They are beautiful, but that's all, there should be something there - pictures, painting of Navadweep behind Them, something...

MK: *More flowers? Radha Madhava has more flowers?*

M: I wasn't really thinking of what should be there, but it's obvious... I don't know what it was, but everything that was standing there looked like, I mean I felt sorry for Them. Where is all the stuff? Where are all the goodies?!

So, it would be nice to see Them with all the proper treatment, with all Their paraphernalia.

MK: *Did you get to know some devotees, make some new friends?*

K: There is this couple we went on parikrama with.

M: Yeah, we haven't had enough time to really make friends, I mean we met people here and there, which was very nice. Karna, we spent a lot of time with Karna, we spent more time with him than anybody, we met many people, who were very sweet.

MK: *When you go back to Santiago would you advise someone to come to Mayapur?*

M: We already did. We already told someone, one close friend of ours in Santiago, we told her. Kripa Mayi Devi Dasi is the ex-wife of Indradyumna Swami, very nice devotee.

MK: *You told her by e-mail?*

M: Oh yeah, we already told her, that she has to plan on coming here. I think she was planning on spending most of her time in Vrndavan, We said: "No-o, before you get too attached to your plans in Vrndavana, you really have to put some time aside and come to Mayapur". ♦

Srila Prabhupada's Bhajan Kutir

continued from page 7:

Karna: Please tell us about yourself, Prabhu.

Sundar Nitai Das: When I was at home I used to go for school. After finishing my schooling I used to do some farming, cultivation of different crops and vegetables. After sometime I went to Vrindavan. In Vrindavan there is one Ashram, called Bhakti Ashram, I used to do akhanda Harinam there. They used to give me 300 Rs. While living there I contracted some sort of disease. They admitted me in one of the big hospitals. I stayed in hospital a few days. After getting full recovery I came back home. After staying home for few days I would go and visit Govinda Prabhu's house in Durlapur. Once Govinda Prabhu came to me and said: "you come to my house and bring the kirtan party also". We went to Govinda's house at 7 PM. When we reached there we saw a devotee from Mayapur sitting there. Seeing him we felt so nice and happy. Kirtan and classes were held that night. After the kirtan and classes were finished Gauranga Prema Prabhu (now Maharaja) started to speak to us. He said: "If you all can open one Namhatta that will be very good". We replied him: "Yes, certainly we shall have one Namhatta here, you please come to our village". Gauranga Prema immediately agreed. After that we went to Bhatim Ghram. There we managed to open one Namhatta center. From that Namhatta only I came to know about this movement (ISKCON). Then I came to Mayapur. I stayed for four days in Mayapur, then I went to Kolkatta Ratha Yatra. When I returned back from Kolkatta Gauranga Prema Prabhu admitted me in New Bhakta Program. In about 1988-89 I took initiation from H.H. Jayapataka Swami. And from 1991 again I stayed in Namhatta, where I did preaching for sometime. And again I left Namhatta and went to Haridaspur. After 5 years again I came back to Mayapur, in 2001. I approached Nitai Prasad Prabhu telling him: "Prabhu, I have come back from Haridaspur. Please could you provide me any service here?" Then Nitai Prasad Prabhu and Purananda Prabhu gave me a responsible service as a Bhajan Kutir in-charge. And here I am today as an in-charge of this Bhajan Kutir maintaining and looking after 14 devotees.

Karna: *There are other devotees, serving in Bhajan Kutir:*

Adi Guru Prabhu:

My name is Adi Guru Das. My father's name is Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad. My home address is ISKCON Sridham Mayapur. I have 10 people in my family. I am serving in ISKCON for the last 32 years and for the last 16 years I am serving akhanda Harinam in Bhajan Kutir.

I accepted this service by direct order of Srila Prabhupada.

Smaran Mangal Das Adhikari:

My name is Smaran Mangal Das Adhikari. My father's name is Santanu Roy. My village name is Buianhara, the district name is Dinajpur in North Bengal. I have 5 family members. Earlier I had a friend, who was the member of Namhatta. He preached to me and I also joined Namhatta and then become a full time devotee in Mayapur, and I am serving in this Bhajan Kutir over the past 10 years. I learned harmonium and bhajan under the guidance of Namhatta preachers. I like this service this meets the real goal of life. Before joining ISKCON I was a professional farmer. I feel very happy to serve here because I know by chanting of the Holy Name one can go back to Godhead.

Jagadish Debnath:

My name is Jagadish Debnath. I am the son of Ram Chandra Debnath. There is 5 members in our family including myself. My village name is Khejur Bagan. As a professional I had a handloom. Somehow or other I had managed to provide for my family. My life was full of frustration and grief. Now I am rendering service here in Bhajan Kutir for the last 8 years. My father was a kirtanier. He taught me how to play harmonium. Then I decided to learn more and started to learn music from one teacher. I really prefer to chant the Holy Name then any other services, so I like this service. My uncle Ganapati Das was a disciple of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and he introduced me to ISKCON. I am very happy to perform this service. My life is completely changed. Today I am honoring Maha-prasadam. No more

I am a slave of gambling, meat-eating, intoxication and illicit sex. This is the mercy of Harinam Prabhu.

Visva Mangal Hari Nam Das:

My name is Visva Mangal Harinam Das, I come from a large family, 13 members. I learned music by the mercy of Their Lordships. I have been here doing the service for almost one decade. I came to Sridham Mayapur in Gaur Purnima as a visitor. That night I decided to stay here. I asked one devotee in Bhajan Kutir 'may I stay with you?' and he said 'yes you can'. Since then I have been serving in Bhajan Kutir. Since childhood I was attached to the Holy Name. I really-really like to chant. So, because of this attraction I accepted this service. The bliss that I experience I could not express in words.

Govinda Gop Das Adhikari:

My name previously was Govinda Mandal. Father's name is late Dhuryodhan Mandal. I had 8 members in my family. My family lives in Durgapur. I am happy to do this service. I notice remarkable change in my life. By the mercy of the vaisnava's I could be able to learn music. Scriptures states that the chanting of Hare Krishna mantra is the only way to go back home, back to Godhead in this Kaliyuga. So, to make my human life successful I choose this service. Earlier I was working as a painter in Panagarh Air Base of IAF India air force. I came in connection with ISKCON through Namhatta preaching and book distribution.

Nami Gopal Das:

My name is Nami Gopal Das. My father name is Bhutatma Das. My village Bhatin Ghram in district North Dinajpur. We are 6 in our family. My Guru Maharaja instructed me to do this service. I feel very happy to serve here and feel myself fully protected. I learnt music in the Bhajan Kutir itself. I have already been serving here for 8 years. H.H. Gauranga Prema Swami once arrived in our village. I was influenced by hearing Harikatha from him. Then I purchased one cassette, Gita-gan and kept hearing that cassette again and again. Thus, I developed attachment

towards Lord's devotional service. And that impelled me to join ISKCON. Before joining ISKCON I was a professional farmer.

Bhakta Rupa Das Adhikari:

My name was Ravindra Kumar Haldar. I am from Bangladesh, district of Khulna. I am serving in Bhajan Kutir since 1999. I feel chanting of the Holy Name is the best service to Their Lordships. And earlier I was pujari of Lord Jagannath in Big Kitchen. So, after brahmachari kitchen was built and Jagannath deities went there, where only brahmacharis are allowed to serve, I accepted this service. When I chant the Holy Name I remember transcendental melody evoked from Sankirtan of Sriman Mahaprabhu. And I consider myself one of the insignificant parts and parcel of that Maha Sankirtan and I try to follow them with all my limited senses. This is the bliss I get when I chant the Holy Name in Bhajan Kutir. I find my life is proceeding in opposite direction than earlier. I feel by chanting of the Holy Name the mercy of Nitānanda Prabhu coming down to me through disciplic succession and make my life more and more peaceful and satisfied. I used to come often to ISKCON temple as a visitor, then I first saw this deity of Gaur-Nitai. First thing made me happy was this Harinam Sankirtan and I donated one Harmonium to the temple. Then I started to read the books of Srila Prabhupada. That is the cause of complete change in my life and I decided to join ISKCON.

My karmi life was just the opposite to the life in devotional service. I was completely beyond any rules and regulations. I would do whatever I would like to do. The conception of God was an utopia. The violation of four regulative principles was regular feature of my every day's life. And this was the cause of frustration in my life.

Now I am happy and I could learn music due to the influence of the Krishna bhaktas.

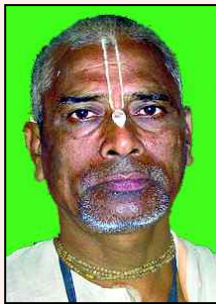
Sudhir Gour Das:

My name was Sudhir Chandra Roy, son of late Amantu Roy. I lived in a village called Bhatim Ghrām in the district of Dinajpur. We have 4 members in our family. Professionally I was a farmer, but I was active in CPI(M) (Communist Party) and secretary of a social welfare organization. I learned music in Namhatta. I am

serving in the Bhajan Kutir for the last couple of years. At first I read one magazine named Bhagavad Darshan and I joined Namhatta as a congregational devotee. Later on I join ISKCON. Mahaprabhu instructed us to chant the Holy Name and I receive that order through disciplic succession, so I decided to accept this service. Mahaprabhu even said that one should chant the Holy Name in association of devotee's and attain bliss. I feel my life has been changed completely.

Karna: *Some Bhajan Kutir devotees shared with us their experiences during 2000 flood:*

H.G. Govinda Gop Das Adhikari:



When the flood began the water started to enter inside the room. That time Adi Guru was the in-charge. He instructed us to go to Gada Bhavan. There one room had been kept vacant for us. We used to stay 14-15 of us in that room. For doing kirtan they had provided us a room on the 2nd floor. After doing kirtan for 5-6 days to our great surprise we found that the room, where we were doing kirtan, even that room, was also filling with water. If the room was filled with water, then where shall we go? Then our in-charge said: "wherever we may be, but we shouldn't stop our kirtan". Then we all decided to do kirtan on the veranda of the 3rd floor. When Prabhupada was been taken from there in evening 5 or 6.30 PM, we went to BBT gate, carrying Prabhupada. There we found that BBT gate was locked. So, I was carrying Prabhupada, sheltering him with an umbrella and waited there for half an hour. The information was then given to open the gate. At last the gateman came and opened it up. I told him: "let me suffer in the rain, I don't mind, but why Prabhupada has to suffer because of you? This is not fair". And he said: "Sorry, Prabhu, I do not know anything".

Radhaduti Prabhu (Big Kitchen in-charge) was greatly helping us. At the beginning of flood there was an arrangement for prasadam in the

Lotus Building. We went there for some few days and later on we were unable to go. It was such a huge mass of water that it was difficult to swim. We didn't stop singing maha-mantra. Even when we were taking Prabhupada from here we went singing the maha-mantra all along the way. Usually we sing a group-wise. So, that day was our group's turn.

The entire Kutir complex was submerged by flood. And as the water level began to drop down in due course of time, then we saw that the condition of the hut was awful. Everything was destroyed and devastated. Heaps of mud combined with straw, bamboo and various wastes has stored in our room and everywhere abundantly. So, a big maha-cleaning began. After cleaning, complete repairing and rebuilding Bhajan Kutir perfectly when we came back from Gada building.

H.G. Nami Gopal Das Brahmachari:

During flood time we began to move our stuff and belongings, which took us till sunset. Without wasting our time we hurriedly took all our things and put everything in Gada building. After transporting all of our belongings, of which, of course, few were still lying in a room, we at last began to move Prabhupada. And at that time we were surrounded everywhere with water. We had no way to move. By the Long building there was full of water. Then we decided to move by the road. And while we were moving on the road we were carrying books, tables, chairs and so many other things, with little water on the road, only 4 inches I believe. So as we started to proceed more ahead the level of water also started to increase. By the time we reached the BBT gate the water came up to our knees. We began to shout at the gateman like anything to open the gate. The gate was locked. And Prabhupada was drenched completely.

Few of our belongings were still in our room on the top shelves. We thought to not remove it that day since it was getting dark and we rather thought we shall move them out tomorrow. And in the next morning when we went to our room for moving out our things, to our great amazement, we found that the door was blocked with water. The chair and everything disappeared. One chair was found by one devotee nearby the Samadhi temple. Gaur Nitai went up on the roof of Conch building. Radhaduti Prabhu was being so kind enough for us he was somehow arranging our

prasadam. And once we got settle everything in Gada building, then we were been taken by boat for prasadam.

Karna: *We asked some of Srila Prabhupada disciples to share their memories about Bhajan Kutir:*

H.G. Murari Hari Prabhu:

Actually, the 24-hours kirtan started from 1975 most probably, I can't remember. I joined in 1974. So, that time there was no 24-hours kirtan. In 1976 the temple was being attack by the robbers and Radharani had been stolen. So much fighting was going on. That time Prabhupada ordered the devotees to do Nrsingha kirtan and 24-hours kirtan also began in the temple. The team was - Adi Guru Prabhu, Mayaman, Sarvagam Das, Satya Garaha Das, myself and of course Syamsundar, also some other people were doing 24-hours kirtan. We were doing kirtan one night and I was feeling sleepy and our kirtan stopped. At that time H.H. Jayapataka Swami was doing night duty all over the temple compound. He saw we were just sleeping in the temple. He came in and took away our instruments. He was calling us and said: "Why you people are sleeping here. It is not a place for sleeping. You

are all supposed to do kirtan, go and start doing kirtan! Prabhupada's instruction was to do 24-hours kirtan and if you just sleep that means you are making a little gap".

Actually, Sacidananda Prabhu and Prabhas Prabhu were the residents of Bhajan Kutir at that time and Tatva Prabhu as well. That was the starting point. I heard from Saciananda and Prabhas Prabhus how they actually were doing so much for this 24-hours kirtan, not being particular in-charge of it. Later on they gave in-charge to Adi Guru Prabhu. Before Adi Guru Prabhu, Saciananda Prabhu, Prabhas Prabhu and Tatva Prabhu - they were maintaining the Bhajan Kutir.

I was not here during flood. But I saw in the computer screen that Bhajan Kutir was completely flooded. Half of the roof was flooded.

H.G. Jananivas Prabhu shared a few words about Bhajan Kutir with us: I think it is in Vaishnava song-book that Acutananda Maharaja wrote to Srila Prabhupada in 1972 that "Bhaktisidhanta road has saved ISKCON property from being flooded. And Prabhupad wrote back saying "Bhaktisidhanta road has saved millions of people".

The first flood that we had was in 1971 and the water rose up and there were only 2-3 devotees.

Later during a big floods in 1999 and 2000 devotees all went to the

Long building. They were doing kirtan there. The water rose up to the roof of Bhajan Kutir, only the top part of the roof was still visible. Adi Guru Prabhu was in-charge of Bhajan Kutir at that time. The hut was not completely destroyed, but after the water went down everything was covered with mud. The straw was finished. The door came out.

The big Gaur Nitai deities, whom we see here today, were on the traveling sankirtan bus when they had a Padyatra from Dwaraka to Mayapur. They arrived for 500 birth anniversary of Lord Caitanya. And small Gaur-Nitai next to them are historical deities. We have a boat called Nitai Pada Kamala and we were preaching village to village. Prabhupad started that program and he installed these deities (small Gaur-Nitai) at that time. The bed behind Srila Prabhupada's murty is His original bed, but the asan is not original. More or less our Diety Department was the in-charge before Adi Guru Prabhu became in-charge. The big murty of Srila Prabhupada belongs to Namhatta and goes out for preaching every now and then.

I will tell you how this 24-hours kirtan started. There is devotee of the name Ganapati and he had a son named Shankar. He had something I can't remember, it was cancer or something and they took X-Ray. He was to have an operation. It was a kind of delicate operation to have. So we started 24-hours kirtan for that devotee. It was a successful operation. They cut open his belly. When they opened the belly they found there was nothing. Anyway, Krishna was manifesting His mercy through the inauguration of 24-hours kirtan. It kept on going since that time.

It's nice for people, when they come in the main gate the first thing they hear is the Holy Name. And when they are in the Dham and hear the Holy Name they get more purification. Practically everyone experiences that. Prabhupada wrote in one of His books that the Holy Name should go on. Nothing should be heard except the Holy Name.

It is also significant because in the beginning of the project Prabhupada sat in this Bhajan Kutir, He lived in this straw house. Now He has beautiful Samadhi and in future there will a huge temple. Prabhupada was staying here for some months, actually, preaching. ♦



Srila Prabhupada in Bhajan Kutir



above:

devotees singing 24-hour kirtan

right:

Bhajan Kutir, view from the Front Gate



ATTENTION !

Be careful of the thieves!

On the first day of the New Year, my friend and I were buying vegetables at the shop along the boundary wall. Suddenly, someone threw a kind of powder on my neck. It was so itchy and painful, so I took off my outer garment and went for some water to have a wash. Then my friend noticed that there was some money on the ground. She thought that may be from my garment, so she bent down to pick it up. As soon as she stood up again, she found that all our garments, bags, etc, disappeared.

It was certainly not pleasant to lose garments, money, camera, etc. in a few seconds. So, we humbly remind you: be careful of thieves! They may adopt any trick to attract your attention and then take everything away from you! And because they carry big bags, which hold everything they steal from you, you could hardly identify them even if they are nearby.

Please don't repeat our tragedy!

Hare Krishna!

Your humble servants, (who did not sign their names)

2.01.05

Nimai, the shop-keeper has confirmed this story. He said that these two Chinese girls were changing money to Indian Rupees in a money exchange place outside of the main gate and had been followed by some people, who spotted them there.

Kalpa Vriksha:

Hearing this Srila Gaurakisora became very disturbed and would no longer carry on a conversation with him. After the estate holder left Gaurakisora dasa Babaji said, "The trees in Navadwipa Dhama are all kalpa vrksa trees and this hypocrite rascal has very cruelly cut them. Now, he has come and told me this. Shame! Shame! Just see, Just see. If one just cuts one limb from the trees in Navadwipa Dhama I feel great distress. These different trees and vines in Sri Navadwipa Dhama are my eternal friends and associates. They are part of the pastimes of Lord Gouranga. After one's friends and associates have been killed, is it possible for someone to come and cut their dead bodies to pieces? This very cruel person will never be able to perform devotional service. He will simply enact the role of a Vaisnava, which will result in only his own inauspiciousness and the inauspiciousness of others."

Honey cost a lot of money, and especially if it's not at all honey...

There are men going around with buckets stuffed with bee-wax soaked in some liquid, which they claim to be honey. And, of course, they want a lot of money for this 'honey'.

We experienced that this 'honey' goes bad very quickly. Real honey you can keep and keep, and the longer it sits the more medicinal it becomes. So, this liquid is obviously not honey at all. It could be anything. It is well known in this area that these men mix crystallized sugar into a mixture, which resembles honey, and then add bee-wax for good effect.

Anuradha Mataji told us of a simple test to see if it's real honey. Take a clear glass/bottle with some clear water and drop a drop of honey into it. If it's real honey the drop should sink to the bottom in one solid piece.

With the 'honey' we were offered recently the drop disintegrated as soon as it hit the water... So, even though it looks impressive to see all these blocks of bee-wax floating in the bucket, do not take honey from a stranger without doing this simple test.

Hare Krishna.

Editor

Let's NOT pollute our spiritual city with junk



Plastic bag is very bad, Makes the future very sad. When you shop remember that, Cloth and paper use instead.

Letter to Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura (1910)

Saraswati!

"People of this world, who are proud of their own aristocratic birth, cannot attain real aristocracy. Therefore they attack the pure Vaishnavas, saying, 'They have taken birth in low-class families because of their sins.' Thus they commit offenses. The solution to the problem is to establish the order of daiva-varnasrama-dharma - something you have started doing; you should know that to be the real service to the Vaishnavas. Because pure devotional conclusions are not being preached, all kinds of superstitions and bad concepts are being called devotion by such pseudo-sampradayas as sahajiya and atibari. Please always crush these anti-devotional concepts by preaching pure devotional conclusions and by setting an example through your personal conduct.

"Please make great effort so you can start parikram of Sridham Navadvip as soon as possible. It is by those actions that everyone in this world will receive Krishna-bhakti. Please try very hard to make sure that the service to Sri Mayapur will become a permanent thing and will become brighter and brighter every day. The real service to Sri Mayapur can be done by acquiring printing presses, distributing devotional books, and sankirtan - preaching. Please do not neglect to serve Sri Mayapur or to preach for the sake of your own reclusive bhajan.

"When I am not present any more, please take care to serve Sri Mayapur Dham which is so dear to you. This is my special instruction to you. People who are like animals can never attain devotion; therefore never take their suggestions. But do not let them know this directly or indirectly.

"I had a special desire to preach the significance of such books as Srimad Bhagavatam, Sat Sandarbha, and Vedanta Darshan. You have to accept that responsibility. Sri Mayapur will prosper if you establish an educational institution there. Never make any effort to collect knowledge or money for your own enjoyment. Only to serve the Lord will you collect these things. Never engage in bad association, either for money or for some self-interest."

signed..... **Kedarnatha Datta Bhaktivinode**

SRI NAVADVIPA AND SRI VRNDAVANA ARE NON-DIFFERENT

The earth is the foremost planet in the entire universe and Gauda, Bengal, is the most elevated country on this earth. In Bengal, Navadvipa is the most incalculably auspicious tract of land in the entire cosmos.

The holy Ganga flows through this land, and the sacred waters of the rivers Yamuna and Sarasvati converge here into the Ganga. On Ganga's eastern bank is Mayapura, the direct manifestation and exact replica of Goloka Vrndavana in the spiritual sky. In the house of Sri Saci-devi in Mayapura, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Gauranga, appeared for the pleasure of His parents.

Towards the end of Dvapara-yuga, the Supreme Personality as Krsna had performed super-excellent and transcendental pastimes such as the rasa dance, with Srimati Radhika and all the young damsels of Vraja. As Lord Krsna, the son of Mother Yasoda and Nanda Maharaja, He descended to this material world with His associates, paraphernalia, the spiritual abode Vraja, etc. He brought with Him the highest precious treasure of Goloka Vrndavana, namely the parakiya-bhava, or the loving conjugal exchanges in the mood of a paramour lover. He had exhibited this mood in the rasa dance with the young damsels of Vrndavana.

That same Supreme Personality has now descended again to the material world in His own transcendental abode of Mayapura in Bengal and brought with Him that same spiritual, loving mood. But this time it is carefully camouflaged.

[Prema vivarta]