

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS  
OF ISKCON MAYAPUR

# Mayapur katha

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



## Service to Pancha-tattva

**MK:** *Now more than a month has gone by since the large Pancha-tattva Deities were installed. What is your experience, as head pujari, of Their service been so far?*

**Jananivasa Prabhu:**

Major thing is cleaning Them. We have to keep Pancha-tattva clean and so far this is proving to be the biggest difficulty. At the moment we are using the Ganga mud to polish. We take it off with a wet sponge and then we polish again with a dry cloth. At the moment we are doing it once a week, but probably we will have to increase it to twice a week, so the Deities bodily brilliance can be maintained.

Even if you touch the Deities with your finger it leaves a mark, it is quite difficult not to touch the Deities while dressing Them. Garlands also make a mark on Them.

**MK:** *At what time the polishing gets done?*

**J:** After mangala-arotik. We are usually doing one Deity a day. It requires 5 pujaris at a time to do one Deity. Also two matajis are coming in to assist with sorting the jewelries and clothes.

**MK:** *What matajis are coming?*

**J:** Nirgata and Sradha Mataji's are coming every day to help after mangala-arotik. They are sorting everything out and giving to the pujaris.

**MK:** *Are these matajis doing this service inside the altar?*

**J:** Yes. They come strait after mangala-arotik. It is still not very organized yet, we are making some cabinets to keep everything tidy.

**MK:** *So, after mangala-arotik there is a lot of activities inside the Pancha-tattva altar. How is all this organized?*



Gauranga Mahaprabhu

Interview  
with  
Jananivasa Prabhu



*From these verses it is apparent that the chanting of the maha-mantra or the Vedic mantras must be accompanied by severe austerities. In Kali-yuga, people cannot undergo severe austerities like those mentioned herein - drinking only water and eating only air for many months. One cannot imitate such a process. But at least one must undergo some austerity by giving up four unwanted principles, namely illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication and gambling. Anyone can easily practice this tapasya, and then the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra will be effective without delay. One should not give up the process of austerity. If possible, one should bathe in the waters of the Ganges or Yamuna, or in the absence of the Ganges and Yamuna one may bathe in the water of the sea. This is an item of austerity. Our Krishna consciousness movement has therefore established two very large centers, one in Vrindavana and another in Mayapur, Navadvipa. There one may bathe in the Ganges or Yamuna, chant the Hare Krishna mantra and thus become perfect and return home, back to Godhead. [SB 6.5.27-28 Purport]*

## Prabhupada vani

*A first-class brahmana does not accept any rewards from his disciples or yajamanas. Practicing austerities and penances, he instead goes to the agricultural field and collects food grains left by the agriculturalists to be collected by brahmanas. Similarly, such brahmanas go to marketplaces where grains are purchased and sold wholesale, and there they collect grains left by the merchants. In this way, such exalted brahmanas maintain their bodies and families. Such priests never demand anything from their disciples to live in opulence, imitating kshatriyas or vaishyas. In other words, a pure brahmana voluntarily accepts a life of poverty and lives in complete dependence on the mercy of the Lord. Not very many years ago, a brahmana in Krishnanagara, near Navadvipa, was offered some help from the local Zamindar, Vraja Krishnacandra. The brahmana refused to accept the help. He said that since he was very happy in his householder life, taking rice given by his disciples and cooking vegetables of tamarind leaves, there was no question of taking help from the Zamindar. The conclusion is that although a brahmana may receive much opulence from his disciples, he should not utilize the rewards of his priesthood for his personal benefit; he must use them for the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.*

[SB 6.7.36 Purport]

*It is the desire of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu that the benevolent activities of the sankirtana movement, which was inaugurated five hundred years ago in Navadvipa, be spread all over the world for the benefit of all human beings. Unfortunately, there are many so-called followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who are satisfied simply to construct a temple, make a show of the Deities, collect some funds and utilize them for eating and sleeping. There is no question of their preaching the cult of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu all over the world. But even though they are unable to do so, if anyone else does it they become envious. This is the condition of the modern followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The Age of Kali is so strong that it affects even the so-called followers of Lord Chaitanya. At least the followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu must come out of India to preach His cult all over the world, for this is the mission of Lord Chaitanya. The followers of Lord Chaitanya must execute His will with heart and soul, being more tolerant than the trees and humbler than the straw in the street.*

[CC Adi 9.47 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.*

EDITOR: .....Padmalochan Das

DESIGN//LAYOUT: .....Vrindavan Lila Devi Dasi

TYPING:.....Bhn. Irine

PRINTING: .....Purananda Nitai Das

ph: 245-279 e-mail:

[padmalochan.AC BSP@ pamho.net](mailto:padmalochan.AC BSP@ pamho.net)



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**J:** Polishing is done after mangal-arotik, five pujaris are doing one Deity.

**MK:** *Are they doing one at a time, or each Deity has five pujaris polishing simultaneously?*

**J:** No, we are only doing one Deity a day. Five pujaris are polishing one Deity and next morning they polish another one. Raghunath Prabhu is coming to help with polishing and also other devotees come to assist.

**MK:** *So, one Deity a day gets polished and two days break. It means that each Deity is getting polished once a week.*

**J:** Yes, but we may do it twice a week, because They don't maintain the brilliance we want, unless we find some other polishing method. We may try soap berries, which you can get in Navadvip market. I am still hesitant because they make a lot of bubbles and we will have to use a lot of water to wash it off. I am afraid it would be too messy - while pujaris try to dress other Deities, water splashing everywhere... But people say that these berries are leaving a thin film-like coating on the surface, so the shine may stay longer. We will try that.

**MK:** *But you are washing Them now anyway.*

**J:** Yes, but it is all done with wet towels. Other Deities are getting dressed at the same time; we don't want to spoil Their clothes. We will have to experiment until we find something suitable.

**MK:** *While one Deity is getting polished, do the other Deities get any kind of bath?*

**J:** They all get wiped with towels every day.

**MK:** *Wet towels?*

**J:** No, it's kind of dry. Even if you wipe Them with a wet towel and if it is not dried immediately it will make a mark. We have to be really careful.

**MK:** *So, the biggest task is to keep Them gleaming?*

**J:** Yes. Also dresses have to still catch up. At the moment Pancha-tattva has only a few dresses. Also turbans and mukuts - we still have to work on that. We will have to spend some time to bring out the mood of the Deities, to see what suits Them the best. It takes some time. Like at the moment They have quite big mukuts, I think they are too big. It may not be. Like at the

moment the main piece - the mango shaped chandrika - is very big and the pujari's stick that first, so to balance it they make everything else big too. We will have to try and see different things to bring out Their personalities.

**MK:** *Who is making the mukuts?*

**J:** The biggest ones were made by devotees during the festival, a lot of devotees were helping. Now we will make some more in our dress making department. It's the same method as making jari dresses, embroidery on the cloth, but then we cut it out and mount on the thick card. Ramadevi and her mataji's are also making some fans and different things for the mukuts.

**MK:** *How many matajis are involved in Deities seva now?*

**J:** I am not really sure. Krishna Madhuri is heading one group, they are making jewelries, most of them are making at their houses, like Titiksha Radha Devi Dasi and her daughter are making a lot of earrings and mukut pieces also. There are quite a lot of matajis doing jewelry.

Ramadevi also has her team. She engages different mataji's at different times. Keshavi Mataji is doing most of the designing work, her daughters are helping her. Bhakta Gana Mataji has her flower team.

I don't really know how many mataji's are involved in all these different services.

**MK:** *Hrimati Mataji managed to put together a dress for Pancha-tattva !*

**J:** Yes. She just came and said 'I would like to make a dress'. And she did it by herself actually. It was very tuff. Luckily it was during the festival. Russian mataji's were here. I went down in Radha-Madhava's basement one time, in that room where they prepare Gopi's hair usually, and it was completely full up, about thirty mataji's were sitting down and they were all helping with sewing on the little mirrors. She is lucky to have all that assistance. It was a great boon. She relieved the sewing room, where Ramadevi was completely overloaded with work.

**MK:** *How many dresses Pancha-tattva have now?*

**J:** I think it's eight day-dresses and four or five night-dresses. We dropped that Harinam-chadar one, because a lot

of devotees thought it was too simple.

**MK:** *How many pujaris are involved in Pancha-tattva's seva?*

**J:** Fourteen pujaris in the morning.

**MK:** *And through the day?*

**J:** Well it's just aratik, same pujaris are doing offerings and aratik.

**MK:** *How many pujaris are serving on Radha-Madhava's altar?*

**J:** About ten.

**MK:** *How many offerings do Pancha-tattva get?*

**J:** Same amount as before, eight.

**MK:** *Is bhoga offered to them on five plates?*

**J:** No, one - very big plate - I cannot lift it. There are eighteen to twenty preps.

**MK:** *How is it carried to the altar?*

**J:** A young strong pujari carries it.

**MK:** *Does Pancha-tattva get the same menu as Radha-Madhava?*

**J:** Yes, same preparations, but bigger quantity.

**MK:** *Is it same quantity as before the big the Pancha-tattva came?*

**J:** Yes, I don't think we can increase that plate, it's huge.

**MK:** *How do the Deities take rest? Do they have beds?*

**J:** They have a big mattress with bed sheets. I want to install a Salagram there; I already have bed and everything. It would be more convenient. I am waiting when we get everything down little better, get cabinets, put everything in order, and get little more use to the Deities. Otherwise I am frightened if we put little Salagram there, he may get lost in all the mess of the morning dressing process - someone may walk or drag huge clothes here and there and not notice a little Salagram. I want pujaris to get use to the Deities and used to moving around, used to where things are and put dresses and jewelries in particular order. Then we can install Salagram. Then we will put Salagram to bed. Because even the small Deities are too heavy to put to bed, They are really heavy, actually. To put five of Them in bed and one pujari comes to wake Them up in the morning - he will have to be a heavy weight lifter.

**MK:** *So, They are just invited to Their mattress?*

**J:** Yes, we invite Them to take rest.



*Gadadhara's lotus face*

*on the 19-th of April 2004 we celebrated Gadadhara Pandita's Appiarance Day*



## Little piece of Mayapur History

*interview with H.H. Kadamba Kanana Swami*

ing, Long building and the hut in the front, the Bhajan Kutir the kitchen and the prasadam hall and the Goshala.

Now there are so many buildings. We could have never imagined that things would develop so quickly. It is explained in the Chaitanya Caritamrta that by the mercy of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu difficult things become easy and without His mercy even easy thing become difficult. There is no doubt that only by the special mercy of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Mayapur has developed so much. I hope Lord Chaitanya will allow me to continue coming, because time spend in the Dhama really surcharges us with transcendental energy.

**MK:** *When did you spend time in Mayapur in the past?*

**KKS:** I came to Mayapur in 1985, prior

to that I had been six years in Vrndavana. Just before Mayapur I had been for a break in Australia, a good place for getting strong and healthy and Bhavananda Prabhu, who was my spiritual master at the time, had requested me to go to Mayapur. Initially I got involved in making arrangements for the festival. They asked me to oversee the construction of some temporary buildings. One day Bhavananda suddenly stood behind me and said; "Do you like construction? I replied; "Not particularly." Then he said; "Good, you can be in charge of the construction of Srila Prabhupada's Samadhi." I was shocked!

At that time the Samadhi had been standing in a half finished condition for a number of years because there were no funds to complete it. The basic concrete shell,

**MK:** *We see you coming every year to Mayapur.*

**KKS:** Yes, this is my great fortune. Mayapur is of course the spiritual world. But how much I am able to see? When I first came here, in 1978, there were a few buildings, the Lotus build-

in other words the superstructure of the main columns and the dome, was there, but otherwise the building was far from finished.

**MK:** *When was it started?*

**KKS:** In 1979. Pancaratna Prabhu was involved in those days, he would be able to tell more. They worked on the foundation. They told me in Mayapur that in relation to the big temple, Prabhupada had said that it would be constructed on some sort floating foundation, he is even supposed to have made some sketch of it, because the Ganga is also flowing underground. Anyway the Samadhi does also have such a floating raft foundation.

At that time Tamala Krishna Maharaja approached Ambarisha Prabhu, who donated one million dollars. It took some time to make the necessary preparations and in '86 the work started again. This building originally was conceived by Surabhi Maharaja, who is from Holland, as I am, and therefore as it turned out he had requested Bhavananda to get me involved in the project. Once Surabhi showed me from some architectural book, how he had taken inspiration for the Mayapur Samadhi from the Dome in Florence.

In 1986 we were desperately looking for a designer and just then Matsya Avatara Prabhu, a disciple of Srila Prabhupada, came for a personal visit of Mayapur. Matsya Avatara Prabhu is also a very, successful professional designer from Florence, Italy. His father was already involved with Italian architecture, so it appeared that Krsna had made an arrangement to send the right person and Matsya kindly agreed to this service.

The GBC body liked his designs very much and allocated an additional million dollars from BBT fund. Then there was enough to complete the building.

**MK:** *Was Matsya Avatara Prabhu living here then?*

**KKS:** He was not living here, he has a professional studio in Italy. He would come for regular visits to Mayapur and then we would discuss many, many details. We would prepare the meetings well and have all necessary drawings and engineers ready for consultation. Then we would place a big meeting table and chairs right on the construc-

tion site itself. Then Jayapataka Maharaja and Satadhanya Prabhu, who was regional secretary at the time and sometimes other leaders would join the meeting to give their input. Matsya Avatara was expert, not only as a designer, but also in dealing with people.

Everyone in the meeting would present his own ideas of what should be done and Matsya said; "Oh that's a very nice idea" and then just like a college professor he would begin to explain that because of various rules of design, the idea although very good was not suitable and then he would make a design and everyone would say, "Oh, very good!".

I was project coordinator, and had to make sure we kept within a time schedule and budget, there were twenty five devotees, some 35 hired staff members and some 500 labors.

**MK:** *Where were they all living?*

**KKS:** The labors were coming on their bicycles from the surrounding villages. The engineers were living on the site along with some special craftsmen from Rajastana.

**MK:** *Did you live in Mayapur before you were invited to take up this task?*

**KKS:** I had been in Vrindavan from '78 to '84 and I actually wanted to stay there, but then they send me to Mayapur.

**MK:** *Why you were chosen for this work? Do you have some skills in this connection?*

**KKS:** First of all I had a connection with Surabhi Prabhu, the architect, because we were both from Holland. And although I had no experience with construction, I had learned in Vrindavana about managing big projects in India.

**MK:** *Since when were you in India?*

**KKS:** Since 1978. But before I joined I had also come to India many times.

**MK:** *Why were you coming to India before ?*

**KKS:** Well, because India is obviously the country which has spiritual life.

If you had spiritual interest then India was the obvious place. There was a magic bus, which I took from Amsterdam, Holland, all the way to India. Three weeks over land, it was

very cheap. I stayed in India and tried to live a simple life in a spiritual atmosphere. The first temple I ever visited was a Ram temple and soon I began to regularly chant, 'Sri Rama Jai Rama Jai Jai Rama'.

**MK:** *Did you join ISKCON in India?*

**KKS:** The first time I ever stayed in a temple was in Vrindavana, but then I left and joined in Amsterdam.

**MK:** *Did you meet Srila Prabhupada on your earlier trips to India?*

**KKS:** No, no. I never met Srila Prabhupada in person. That is why it was really nice to become involved in finishing His Samadhi and to do some personal service to Him in that way.

**MK:** *Who are you initiated by?*

**KKS:** By H.H. Jayadvaita Swami.

**MK:** *Did you have a family when you came to Mayapur?*

**KKS:** Yes, I was married and living here with my wife, we had no children. We were doing service here until 1990, when I became temple president of ISKCON Vrindavan. Then we went back to Vrindavan, it felt like going home because that's where I really started in spiritual life.

**MK:** *When did you become a sanyasi?*

**KKS:** I received sanyasa in 1997 in the Bhaktivedanta Manor in England.

**MK:** *Was the Samadhi finished by the time you left from Mayapur?*

**KKS:** It was not completely finished, but the Vrindavan situation was very problematic, they really needed someone there and the GBC decided that I should go back to Vrindavan.

**MK:** *When you went who took over the finishing of the Samadhi?*

**KKS:** Sadbhujia Prabhu took over. In 1993 the work was supposed to be finished, but the opening was in 1995.

**MK:** *Were you involved in other things also while you were in Mayapur?*

**KKS:** In '85, the construction of the new temple for Radha Madhava was going on, up to that time the Deities had been installed on the ground floor of the Lotus building and the temple for Nrsimhadeva was also being build I also helped a bit with that.

Along with Satadhanya Prabhu we also went to Jaipur at times for the carving of the gopis. Sometimes I was there all alone, and the carver's were asking me



things like shall we chip off a little bit of the face here? And I did not know what to say, because you can't put it back on if it is wrong! It was not clay. I felt really unqualified for this task and was afraid to make a mistake...

**MK:** *At the time of construction of the Samadhi was there any talk about Vastu?*

**KKS:** Not so much. See, Prabhupada's Samadhi was constructed at this place because Prabhupada wanted His house there. And it was squeezed into a space, which is much too small. Normally, you should have grounds around a building, where in one glance you can see the whole building from bottom to top. So, when you stand on the edge of the land you should see the full building. So, the Samadhi grounds are much too small for the size of the building. Surabhi was the architect and he knew that. But the reason why he put it there was because Prabhupada wanted his house there, next to the pukur (the pond), a natural pukur was already there. Therefore they had to construct something with the pukur, so Surabhi included that in the design.

He really is a very brilliant and innovative architect. So the direction of the building became kind of controlled by the size of the plot and by the pukur. So, it was not based on Vastu. And Prabhupada was not concern with Vastu either. When He made the first building in Mayapur there was no consideration of Vastu. Talks of Vastu came up with town planning, about the big temple and the lay out of the Mayapur city. At that time some traditional ideas developed like around the temple should be brahminical buildings and gradually it should go out, so the most spiritual varna should be the closest to the temple and slowly go out. So, principals like that were discussed.

I think that Vastu is not so important. Actually Vastu is a part of the karma kandha section of the Vedas. Through Vastu one can counteract inauspicious influences in places.

However, the chanting of Hare Krishna makes everything auspicious. The Dham is so auspicious. Therefore Vastu is so secondary actually. Everything is surcharged with Lord

Chaitanya's energy, mercy is in all directions here is overflowing with mercy, Lord Chaitanya just pouring it out. Therefore just being anywhere in the Dham is auspicious. But that doesn't mean we can not use Vastu in some design, when it's practical.

**MK:** *You saw the plans for town in the beginning. How the present days plans compare to that, are they in line with original idea?*

**KKS:** No, things have changed many times. I think it's all going on by Lord Chaitanya's transcendental arrangements. Many different temple designs have been made over the years. Some were beautiful, some almost impossible to build, because of technical or financial restraints. At present there is a design, which is realistic according to our budget, so they say that the work will start very soon. That will be a tremendous boost to this movement, when the whole world's attention will be drawn to Mayapur because of the amazing temple city which is appearing there. It will be an extraordinary opportunity to spread lord Chaitanya's mercy all over the world.

Mood in Mayapur is distinctly different then in Vrindavan, where mood is very much 'Krishna', wherever you go you feel like Krishna just left, just gone around the corner - 'did anybody see Him?', like He was just here five minutes ago. Mayapur is not at all like that.

But in Mayapur Lord Chaitanya is doing something right now to make this Dham happen out of nothing and things are just mushrooming out of the ground. And this is what you see. Anybody who has not been here for sometime is going to say: 'O, god! Where all these buildings are come from? Where is everything come from? Where all this prasadam come from? Look at these flowers!' Anything grows here, anything develops here, anything is almost effortlessly becomes big. Nothing is small in Mayapur, even Jayapataka Maharaja is big and he thinks big, he wanted the biggest Samadhi, bigger then Rama-Krishna's Samadhi - and that's what we got for Srila Prabhupada. That's the mood here, just the big mercy. I think in Mayapur we have seen how this Dham is developing by Lord

Chaitanya's arrangement, so we don't know what is going to happen next. We are all waiting for this big temple, we are all waiting for many-many devotees to come. Now we installed the Pancha-tattva Deities. When Prabhupada was in different cities, like in London, in Paris he named the Deities London-Ishvara, Paris-Ishvara, in other words designating the Deities as the controllers of these cities. But, here in Mayapur we see that Prabhupada is designating the Pancha-tattva.

Pancha-tattva are the Deities for the whole world. Therefore with coming of Pancha-tattva something is going to happen, it is going to have effect on the spreading of Krishna Consciousness all over the world, it is going to have effect here in Mayapur, things are definitely going to accelerate, there is no doubt.

**MK:** *You are traveling around the world. Do you see devotees talking about big Pancha-tattva coming in Mayapur?*

**KKS:** Of course, everyone is excited about it. How many devotees came for the installation!

When the Vaisnavas are gathering for the glorification of the Lord then the spiritual world becomes manifest.

**MK:** *We already had Pancha-Tattva installed here, the small ones.*

**KKS:** Now we have big Pancha-tattva Deities, something will take off now. Big mercy, something extraordinary, we are waiting for that.

**MK:** *What do you expect to happen?*

**KKS:** The Panca Tattva are opening the floodgates of the storehouse of Love of God. That's for sure. But how they will exactly do it, nobody can say, that is the special unknown adventure of Lord Chaitanya's Sankirtana movement. From Mayapur so much mercy will come out and then all that will return to Mayapur in the form of so much development.

**MK:** *What do you mean?*

**KKS:** In every town and village there will be devotees and they will all come to Mayapur and they will do service in the Holy Dhama and the spiritual nature of the Dhama will become more and more revealed. So, I think we will see miracles happen in our lifetime. U

*Interview with  
Dayaram Prabhu*

*co-director  
of ISKCON Mayapur  
Chandrodaya Mandir*



**MK:** *Please tell us your story, Prabhu.*

**Dayaram Prabhu:** I came to Mayapur in 1982 for the first time, when I was studying in IIT in Bombay. It's an institution that gives independent education to the Indians. I was studying there and many devotees that were at the same hostel were interested in Krishna consciousness. Madhu Pandit das, Mahasundra das were in the same hostel for about three or four years, they were senior to me. We were doing computer science but in a different branch.

They had some spiritual desires, so I used to make fun of them. I thought that they are funny people, as nowadays everyone is into technology and science and not into spirituality or religion. Although I was quite a moral person because of family upbringing, I did not have interest in spiritualism as such. Well, there was a little interest in Krishna and the Gita, though I never studied it. I got the Gayatri mantra when I was eight years old and continued to chant it for a year or two, but consequently I stopped it. My family is cast Brahmanas, so upayana-samskaras were done - that kind of interest, but there wasn't a deep spiritual interest or understanding.

Some of the boys and Mahasundar used to chant the Mahamantra, and we would make fun of them, we would tease the Hare Krishna's from our side on the

opposite balcony. Mahasundar was the main man, he was my classmate who was studying in IIT also and he was very much interested in Krishna Consciousness. He used to chant and he was a top student. In exams he was always on the top marks but he was doing all this and we would make fun of him. He is in Bangalore now. He actually got married so he left and is working outside now.

So, I and some of the boys made fun a lot and we would call Madhupandit Baba Krishna and Mahasundar Baby Krishna, like that. They were studying, but also practicing Krishna Consciousness seriously - getting up early, chanting, reading and sometimes putting tilak. So we used to make joke on them. Anyway, Mahasundar was serious enough and he came to us and said: 'why are you making jokes? Why you don't read some of the books and try to understand?' So, I went to the IIT library, they have a huge library, and one section is dedicated to philosophy and there were a lot of books of different Indian philosophers, mostly Shankaracharya's works and also works of different English authors. So, I got Prabhupada's books - the whole Bagavatam was there. So, I got some books and started to read them and somehow that slowly-slowly changed my understanding.

Then they took me to the temple one day. Then they wanted me to come to Mayapur. Somehow I liked Lord Chaitanya very much and I wanted to go to His place.

Nobody was there to check on us, because we were staying in a hostel and parents were in their house, they didn't know what we were doing. So, without anyone's knowledge we just took a train and came to Mayapur in 1982 or maybe it was 1983. We ran away from the hostel, nobody knew. IIT supposed to be a very top institute in India, but they give a lot of freedom. If you attend the class or not nobody bothers, as long as you do well in the exams, and as long as you are not breaking hostel's rules - in other words using drugs or getting drunk - a lot of freedom is there. So, we used that to come to Mayapur

for a few days. Gaura Purnima 1982 or 83. Mahasundar, myself and Kapila, who also came with us, he was at that time working in one company in Bombay. He used to come to the hostel sometimes to discuss philosophy so he was also with us, we went together. Virachandra was another person. We all were not initiated at that time. We liked Mayapur very much, we became interested and I wanted more and more to come to Mayapur.

Murari Gupta was in-charge of accommodation then. We would talk to him with sweet words and praise him and somehow or other convince him to let us stay. He would let us sleep on the veranda of the Long building free of charge, no rooms, and no festival fees, only charge us for prasadam. We would have to use a lot of mosquito repellent on our bodies there were so many mosquitoes. We used to carry our own bed sheets - sleep on it, pack it up in the morning, spend the day, and at night time go to bed at ten o'clock. We didn't have money for rooms, but Prasad we did have to pay for. I had scholarship from the government and that took care of my ticket money. It was about 200 rupees a month, which was quite a lot of money those days. Somehow or other we were managing to come for the festival.

I got initiated when I was still studying in IIT. I was initiated in Mayapur in 1983 or 1984 I am not sure. Once I came I wanted to come every time for the festivals, so every year I came practically.

Back in Bombay I was going to the temple. That time Devakinandana Prabhu was New Bhakta Program in-charge. That was 'zonal acharyas' time. He is a disciple of Jayapataka Swami, I am too, so he used to give us special treatment, a nice place to stay. Then there was Ramsada Prabhu from Germany, Prabhupada disciple, he used to like us - me and my friends, he used to take us around, come to our hostel sometimes, cook special feast for us sometimes. Bhima Prabhu, who was Sankirtan in-charge then, used to send us to distribute books. During Christmas and summer vacations I

was distributing books in Nasik and other parts of Maharashtra. Those days we did not have enough books to distribute, so at night time we used to go to the press and still books from the press before BBT got them, because if we would go to BBT go-down they would give us less books. We needed few thousands to carry with us, so we could go on for two-three days. Bhagavad-Gita became very famous.

Sadhana Sidhi Prabhu was our Sankirtana leader, also Amiya Vilas Swami, brahmachari then, was traveling with us. He used to go to sleep at 6 PM and Sadhana Sidhi used to get angry with him for not distributing books until late at night.

He was very austere himself. He used to send us all distribute books and he would cook rice, but he would not take out the stones, so every time you bite there was a stone. I said: 'what is this, prabhu?...' He said: 'you don't know? You should put a lot of dhal, then stones sink to the bottom and you eat from the top.' Anyway, it was fun, we were very young.

Ones we were distributing books in the train station when suddenly police came, everyone started to close down. We also started to close down because police did not want anyone to sell things on the railway bridge. Suddenly one man started to shout at police: 'Hey, you are not stopping prostitution and so much nonsense. They are distributing God's books and you coming to show your power on them!'

Police caught him and caught me also, and Sadhana Sidhi run away. He took the books, folded up table, put it in wagon and was gone. So, there was me, one devotee and that poor man - police took us to the station. Eventually they made us sign something and let go. We got to the temple at 4-5 o'clock in the morning...

When I finished my study I could not continue any longer with post graduation and all that, go to the West like most of my friends. I just wanted to come to Mayapur. So, when I finished with exams, same evening I came to Mayapur. I did not wait for getting a degree, I just gave my exams. To get a degree you need a project, recommendations by professors. I just have bachelor of technology. Most students from my

batch went to the West. Somehow I could not put myself through an interview for a job or write exam to go to the West. I just send a note to my father, saying that my bicycle and luggage are here, please come to pick it up, and I was gone. No one knew where I was gone to. If I went to see them first, mother would start crying and whole thing, I did not want to face my family, because attachment was there. They took care of me, they are very loving parents. They did not know where I went to, they thought I went to the West somewhere, joined the temple. There was a rumor that I would go to Sweden to do some computer programming for Harikesha Maharaj. So, I let that rumor be there, because my parents will not be able to go to Sweden to get me out.

**MK:** *When did you come to Mayapur to stay?*

**D:** I came to Mayapur in 1985, May.

**MK:** *What were you doing after you came here?*

**D:** I joined New Bhakta Program for sometime. I was put in the boundary wall. I was already initiated, but did not know Bengali and could not join their classes, I thought I should clean. They wanted me to do some program (on computer) for Nama Hatta. But then they could not use the data base because most of Nama Hatta members do not know English, so they could not feel out forms. I also did few things on computer for Jayapataka Maharaj and became his secretary for a short while. Then there was a problem at the construction of Samadhi and I became a site in-charge. Kadamba Kanana was in-charge of the construction and I was site in-charge, on the spot, and Laghu Hari from

Germany was go-down man. We were together for some years.

Then I left that, at that time there was some problem in the Big Kitchen. Shyamasundara was in-charge then. There was a lot of discussion about it and brahmachari's started to push me to be in-charge of the kitchen. Mahashringa Maharaj was general manager then, Nitai Chand Maharaj was president. They had a meeting and asked: 'who can run the kitchen?' Nobody wanted to say anything, they all got scared. I asked brahmachari's: 'how comes you were going on complaining and now you are going back?' Then they turn on me and said: 'you run the kitchen'. I said: 'I don't know Bengali. I never cooked in my life. I don't know what to buy.' They said: 'No, no, we all like you, you run. We will help you.' So, I became a kitchen in-charge. There were a lot of difficulties, I did not know anything about kitchens, but brahmachari's helped me a lot. I was a front man to take responsibility. I discovered some cheating was going on with purchasing and managed to stop it. One supply man was asking me: 'why are you not buying from me as before?' I said: 'because your prices are too high and goods aren't good quality'. Then he threatened me, he said that as soon as I go out of gate he and his friends will teach me a lesson (bit up). There was a big crisis at one point, kitchen did not have any money left, but somehow with devotee's help I was managing, they were very enthusiastic to see that kitchen run successfully.

Then I was put in the treasury, because there was some problem with accounting and I had to sort that out too.

*the article will continue in the next issue*

### ***Interview with Prema Manjari Devi Dasi, wife of Dayaram Prabhu***

**MK:** *Hare Krishna! Tell us something about this little boy.*

**Prema Manjari Devi Dasi:** Our son's name is Kanjan netra Das, he was named by Jananivasa Prabhu, it's the name of Maha Prabhu. It means one who has 'kanja' meaning lotus and 'netra' means eyes. Devarishi Prabhu did the chart for him and another outside astrologer also did his chart.

**MK:** *Did they agree?*

**PM:** Yes, pretty much, but the other astrologer gave lot more details. He said that he would be as intelligent as his father (thank God not his mother) and he will





have a lot of creative intelligence and will probably create something for the world. This sounds like a proud mother speaking (laughs). He will definitely be a devotee, religious minded. Very strongly religious and and he will travel and be a teacher in the religious field, a preacher.

**MK:** *What is he doing now, in the beginning of his life?*

**PM:** He is a good boy really, he just laughs and talks the whole day. He doesn't want to drink milk or go to sleep during the day and at night he sleeps from 6.30 to 5 or 6 in the morning, he just gets up twice for his feed and he's fast asleep again. So I don't mind if he's up the whole day if he's sleeping at night, but he doesn't like to eat and he doesn't like to sleep during the day. He just likes to talk, talk, talk and laugh and play. I am just running behind him the whole day.

**MK:** *How was it for you to have your first child quite late?*

**PM:** I had difficult, very difficult delivery and after that I was very sick, I had malaria and jaundice together. I had a very high fever and my stitches got infected. It was really difficult because my water bag had burst for 36 hours and I had no contractions, they tried to induce, but I didn't get any. I don't even know what the pain of childbirth is, as I had no contractions. I got a fever so then they thought maybe he was getting an infection, then he passed a little bit of stuff inside, so they had to cut me up and get him out. He was in intensive care for one week and I was in the nursing home, when I came home

he was with me. I was so exhausted from the whole thing, my stitches getting infected and having Malaria and Jaundice together.

I was feeding only once or twice as I was so weak I couldn't hold him and that time the doctors didn't know what I had so they were telling me not to feed him, because they didn't know what it was. He was having some trouble....

**MK:** *Was your husband with you?*

**PM:** No. We were in Bangalore when I realized I was pregnant and even though Kanja was conceived in Mayapur, we went back to Bangalore. We did garbhodana samskara here, but I didn't know I was pregnant until I got to Bangalore and then I was in bed for three months, because I had some problem and then my husband brought me here. He came to Mayapur to drop me here when I was in my fourth month and then I stayed in Mayapur alone, Nirgata mataji was staying with me. My husband couldn't stay with me because he had his service in Bangalore. He used to come once or twice for a week and go back to Bangalore again.

Then he came for the delivery, I went to Calcutta for the delivery and he came and then he only stayed for the delivery and the next day he was gone back to his service.

It was such a difficult time after delivery women usually go through a mild depression because the hormones are all changing. It's so heavy on the body and you need your husband, but he was gone. Then I felt really sick and he had to come and spend so much time with me because of that. I was also with my

parents.

Then my Father left his body, he was a heart patient. He was sick but he was only 64 years old, it's not very old. But of course, the Kali Yuga is progressing and I don't know if I will make it to 64.

I am in Mayapur now. If my husband is traveling around then I will stay here, but if he's in Bangalore then I will go to Bangalore, because it would be very difficult to travel around with Kanjan netra.

**MK:** *Thank you, we hope to hear more about your son in the future. Now let's hear something about you, tell us your story.*

**PM:** I started coming to Mayapur as a little girl. My Father used to make some deity outfits. Actually, Adridharana Prabhu's wife, Nirguna Mataji, first came to my father's shop and ordered some dresses for the deities in Calcutta temple, Radha Govinda. My father had a shop with saris and dresses, you know, the bridal wear that they use for the deities. Special saris, special wedding dresses, Indian ladies wear them to their weddings. So they used to make it and Nirguna Mataji first came to my father's shop and she made him a life member and he used to make outfits. It used to be in New Market, well just outside of New Market. So we started coming to Mayapur like that. I remember coming and Bhavananda Maharaj was here and then Sri Srimati started coming, at that time she was Shashi Shekhar, she was initiated by Bhavananda Maharaj.

I remember coming to Mayapur as a little girl and my Father showing the dresses to Bavananda Maharaj. Srimati Mataji (Shashi Shekhar then) used to come to our house. My room had a separate entrance to the outside, so she used to come and stay there. My Father really started liking her, whenever she would come to Calcutta she used to stay in our house. I was studying in England at that time.

When I was young, first I was studying in Calcutta, then I went to a boarding school in Darjeeling. It's in the Himalayas, in North Bengal, a girls boarding school - very nice Christian school, very-very beautiful. The nuns were so nice, so straight and it was wonderful.

**MK:** *How comes your parents put you in a Christian school?*

**PM:** My parents put me there because they were the best schools in India and my parents wanted me to have the best education.

**MK:** *How many brothers and sisters do you have?*

**PM:** I have an elder sister and a younger brother, and my sister and myself were in the girls school and my brother is five years younger, so my parents thought when we came back then they'd send my brother. But he never went, because mothers are more fond of sons and she never let him go. Anyway, so then I came back from Darjeeling and I was in Calcutta for one year and I went to London to study at university. When I was there I was working so hard and studying very hard and at that time I was thinking that there has to be something more in life, I can't just waste my life.

**MK:** *How old were you when you came back from school?*

**PM:** I was 15 when I came back, 16 when I was in Calcutta and 17 when I went to England and at 18 years I became a Hare Krishna in England. Then I came back after studying in England and I used to come to Mayapur for my holidays and I wanted to join at that time but then Bhavananda Maharaja had just left, so Shashi Shekhar Mataji was taking shiksha from my Guru Maharaja, Bhakti Caru Swami. She was asking him weather I should join full time or should I carry on studying? He told me I should study, I should not give up

my studies, which was a very unusual answer at that time. At that time everyone was saying 'join full time, everything else is 'maya'', so he told me to continue studying and I was studying in London and I got my first initiation and then my second initiation.

First initiation - in Mayapur, and second in London. Then, after that I joined in 1990 full time in Mayapur. Before that I was just coming, spending all my holidays here and most of my time in Soho Street temple in London, and I used to go to the Manor also, but more to Soho Street.

When I came back to Mayapur in 1990, I was staying with Srimati Mataji, that time she had taken re-initiation from Harikesha Maharaja, so I used to stay with her, and I used to do service in the park - the Harinama Parikrama, I was doing that with her, and I used to travel up and down to Calcutta. I used to stay in the ashram - I was the only one staying in the ashram, I was living on her balcony. I used to do the full park project and at that time we had some local boys coming from Mayapur and they used to help. Sometimes there was another mataji, a disciple of Jayapataka Maharaja, she used to help in the evenings sometimes and sometimes Vinoda Vani Mataji used to help, wife of Bhakta Rupa Prabhu. But I was full time and I was often go to Calcutta, and I would preach there. I used to go collect in Calcutta for the project. It was such hard work. I did that for a few years and in 1993 I was so tired and my guru Maharaj sent me to South Africa, I went to Capetown, there I was doing book distribution and I became Sankirtan leader for the matajis there.

I came back to India and Guru Maharaj wanted me to do book distribution in Calcutta, because we were getting close to Prabhupada's centennial year and he really wanted us to do book distribution in Calcutta, which is Prabhupada's birth place.

At that time he had finished translating Chaitanya Caritamrita into Bengali and it had just been published, so we used to go to offices and distribute Bengali Chaitanya Caritamrita in Calcutta. That was under Adridharana Prabhu. We used to go to Boro Bazaar, all the offices, the main commercial areas. We used to go and distribute sets there.

It was a very-very successful program, we were distributing like six seven sets every day.

**MK:** *How many books that was?*

**PM:** There were three of us, and in a set there were about eight or nine books. At that time a set was selling for eight or nine hundred rupees. It was a lot of money. It was a lot of money for a Bengali office going person. But somehow with Krishna's help it went very nice, very reciprocal.

Then I went back to South Africa, I went to Durban - book distribution again.

Sometimes I did a little pujari work. And then I came back to Mayapur. Then I became my Guru Maharaja's secretary - that was really nice. Actually, he brought me to India, that was in 96 or 97, he got me to Bombay and he was starting the shooting for the Abhai Charan serial. I was the only devotee on the set. There was another congregational devotee, two of us, and everybody else was like normal crew. I was there for sometime, then I left for so many reasons.

I was Guru Maharaja's secretary and I used to travel with a group of other devotees, we used to travel with Guru Maharaja around India and we were spending a lot of time in India at that time. We used to travel as a group of secretaries. I did that and then I got married and once I got married the whole world changed.

**MK:** *How did you get married?*

**PM:** My Guru Maharaja was trying to get me married for a long, long time because it is very unusual for Indian girls to join fulltime, it's not the done thing and also I read sometime that Prabhupada also didn't want this. So, I wanted to join and my parents were flipping out, they were just freaking out that I wanted to join all these westerners, all hippies, drugs, CIA - we had such a bad reputation in India at that time, you know.

**MK:** *Was not your father already involved?*

**PM:** He was just a Life-member, but fulltime is different. And also I was an unmarried girl, only seventeen or eighteen. But, then my Guru Maharaja is very kind - my mother told him that 'there is no good Indian boys in your movement, who is she going to get

married to?' He told her, 'anyway, I will take personal responsibility for her', he said, 'even if ISKCON doesn't take care of her, I will take care of her'. He said "I'll make sure she gets married to a good boy" - and that's a very heavy responsibility to take, because you just don't know what a young girl will do at that time the senses are so wild.

He was trying for many years to get me married and he would always propose somebody and then he would say, 'what do you think?' And I would always tell him what I thought, you know... Oh, dear!

And he would say, 'yeah, yeah ok... forget it, this is not nice'.

So, he never used to just tell me, 'ok you marry him' and that was it. He was not like that, and there were so many proposals and I would always tell him this and that.

**MK:** *You were not getting nervous that you are getting older and still not married?*

**PM:** I was, but there was nobody that I really thought I could get married to, and finally my Guru Maharaja said, 'I can't find anyone good enough for you, if you like someone let me know'.

**MK:** *O-ho-oo !*

**PM:** ...well..., actually, my god-brother and my god-sister Balaram and Subhadra, I was staying in their house then, they were renting Adhikarta Prabhu's house, anyway, they were always thinking would she get married - to this one or that one... What about him?...

Of course, he was such a nice brahmachari, I thought it would be nice, so then Balaram told my Guru Maharaja. And then Guru Maharaja told Balaram how to ask him - to first ask him if he is interested in getting married, don't tell him my name and this and that.

At that same time he was writing to his Guru Maharaja telling him that he wanted to change his ashram, he already separately came to that decision. I didn't know what what he was thinking. I came to know only because I was my guru Maharaja's secretary - in that position you get to find out things.

**MK:** *O! So, you got to find out what*

*was on his mind?*

**PM:** No, he was just thinking of changing ashram, he didn't know it was me. Even Balaram just asked him if he wanted to change his ashram, and eventually, my Guru Maharaja spoke to Jayapataka Maharaja, then Harikesha Maharaja spoke to my Prabhu and told him that 'it's ok, if you want to get married, the brahmachari's will forgive you if you get married'. (it was such a scene (!)).

Anyway, eventually, Jayapataka Maharaja also told him that he should change his ashram, at that point he knew it was me. I think his Guru Maharaja wanted him to consider me because he knew I was a Mayapur girl and that I wouldn't take him away, because he always wanted him to be in Mayapur.

So, like that, it just happened, and then... Hare Krishna... - he was taking so long to make up his mind. I think for a brahmachari it is very difficult to change ashram. He was taking some time - he took a long time - like one year or something, long-long time...

**MK:** *So, he kept you waiting long. Were you in anxiety - what if he changed his mind?*

**PM:** I was in a lot of anxiety. Then Harikesha Maharaja left...

**MK:** *Did that push him over the edge?*

**PM:** After that happened, I think he realized that it was time to change and he changed into white, and then the whole temple was looking at me, when he changed into white - everybody knew by then. You know, Mayapur, you can't keep a secret, everybody seems to know.

**MK:** *Then what happened?*

**PM:** Anyway, then we got married.

And then... we got involved - we were married only for three months when the whole Calcutta problem started. My God (!) - it just took the life out of us, and after that, when the problem was finished my husband and I were so fed up that we just wanted to leave and go for a break, you know, just go. But we didn't have any money.

**MK:** *You were not supported for your service?*

**PM:** From the temple we get only a little maintenance, from Mayapur temple, and that's not enough for anything - as

we have so many guests and senior leaders coming to our house all the time, you know. It's wonderful also because they come for meetings and it's all to do with Krishna Consciousness and you can't be rude to them, so Prabhu invites them for prasad. Our maintenance doesn't cover it, as everything is so expensive, phone calls... We live in a rented flat - the temple gives us - so, this rented flat and little maintenance, everything else we pay for. All the electricity we pay for, phone calls, everything. Prabhu wanted to go to America to get money together. Then we started a little business here.

**MK:** *You were the clever one to do that! How did you get it together?*

**PM:** I was desperate, desperate... - I didn't want to go from Mayapur. Everyone thought that I was the one who wanted him to go to America. It's always the women they blame, always the woman... - and, Oh! I just didn't want to go. I just wanted everyone to realize it was not me (!) I mean, I'm a very stubborn person and once I get something in my mind, so... And Krishna is so kind, because somehow it just worked.

I'm really happy that Krishna is so kind to us. Now I just need to be a mother. I'm tired .....

**MK:** *How comes your husband got involved again in the same type of thing in Bangalore?*

**PM:** We wanted to do this incense business, so we went to Bangalore, because that's the place to go to start an incense business. We didn't want anyone to know we were there, because we knew - as soon as they found out, they would pull us in, so we didn't tell anybody we were there. But, then the news broke out, of course, and everyone wanted my husband to take up the Bangalore responsibility.

So, we called Jananivasa Prabhu - my husband has a lot of respect for Jananivasa Prabhu. I think he is one of the devotees he respects the most in our movement, so he called him and he asked him to pray to Radha-Madava and to let us know whether Radha-Madava wanted him to do this or not, because we were so tired. Since we got married that's the only thing we did, we never had a break, we were exhausted, exhausted, exhausted...

So, he called Jananivasa Prabhu after three days and he said 'you can chant for



millions of lifetimes in the Holy Dham and you may not get Krishna's mercy, but if you serve the Vaisnavas, then you will certainly get Krishna's mercy'. If the Vaisnavas want you to do this then you must do it.

So, we ended up in Bangalore.

Then we came to Calcutta, for Ambarisha Prabhu's program, he had come last year in December and that really helped change the whole media impression about ISKCON Calcutta, we had all these years of negative and horrible publicity and he came and the whole thing was positive, and since then we haven't had bad publicity in Calcutta.

At that time, just for two days we came to Mayapur and that's when Kanjan netra came. [ed: Go to the top of the article]

**MK:** Hare Krishna. Thank you. Anything else you want to add?

**PM:** We would like to beg all the Vaisnavas to please bless all of us that we may serve Srila Prabupada and all the Vaisnava's always and Kanjan netra will grow up to serve Srila Prabupada and the Vaisnava's. U

## Interview with Jananivasa Prabhu

*Pancha-tatva instalation abhishek with Sridhar Swami standing behind Nityananda*

*continued from page 3:*

**MK:** Are you planning to do any improvements on the lighting in the altar?

**J:** Now I think we have sufficient lighting, but we don't turn it all on in the day time or at mangal-arotik.

**MK:** The small Pancha-tattva is not lit up very well.

**J:** Yea, They are kind of down and forward now and all the lights are pointing at the big ones. Otherwise, we have nine halogen lights, one thousand watts each! - Plus all the spot lights. I think we have sufficient lights; it is just the angle the small Pancha-tattva is standing.

**MK:** There is a lot of cloth in the altar now, all the canopies, curtains, etc. How do you clean all this cloth?

**J:** We have a vacuum cleaner. The canopy on the ceiling will stay, but back drop we can change regularly. We are thinking to paint the back of the altar with some scenery.

**MK:** Glass also looks very good, special effects glass.

**J:** Hmm...

**MK:** Do you have any more plans for the grand abhishek of big Pancha-tattva Deities? Like every year on Gaura Purnima?

**J:** People are asking. We could make a Brahma-mahotsava festival. In great South Indian temples they have this festival, celebrating the day when Deities were installed. It goes on for days and weeks sometimes, like in Tirupati. They have different functions. Here it is more or less coincides with Gaura Purnima festival. We could have it at that time.

**MK:** It was so spectacular to see all



*these colors and honey and ghee pouring over Them! And if it is every year - imagine how many more devotees will come here to see it [and hopefully participate too].*

**J:** Yes. Now everyone knows what to expect. At the time of installation no one knew what to expect, even I did not know what to expect. It was overwhelming and spectacular.

**MK:** It can be even more spectacular next time! Imagine - all the assembled devotees streaming onto the altar from one side, pouring all these wonderful substances over the deities and go down from another side... What more spectacular can we see?!

**J:** Yes.

**MK:** So, has this idea had been discussed to do it next year? Do we have a hope to see it again? Are you into it?

**J:** Yea, yea.

**MK:** What kind of hair does Pancha-tattva have?

**J:** Puri Maharaja and his group from Scotland sent the wigs. Sivarama Swami arranged it. We gave them measurements a little late, so they sent another set for the time being, which they put together quickly. The proper ones should be here any time now. They are still coming, so we will have

two sets actually, so we will be able to arrange Their hair nicely, while other set is in use.

**MK:** So, you have tricked them to donate two sets instead of one?

**J:** ... (chuckle)...

**MK:** Is it synthetic hair?

**J:** Yes.

**MK:** Who is looking after Their hair, combing them?

**J:** Same mataji's, headed by Nirgata Devi Dasi will take care, but they did not have time yet, because the other set have not come, and Pancha-tattva is still wearing these wigs all the time. Nirgata and Shradha Matajis are coming to the altar in the morning before darshan to arrange the hair quickly, but later on they will do it in the same place where they arrange Radha-Madhava's and Gopi's hair.

**MK:** How often do they do that?

**J:** On Radha-Madhava's altar hairs get changed every week. I don't know how long it takes mataji's to arrange them, but once a week we are changing Deity's hair.

**MK:** Pancha-tattva have quite big shoes, what are they made of?

**J:** They are wooden shoes, made of teak wood. Tulsi Vallabh Prabhu (he used to be Bh. Thomas) made them. Now he is

making different designs, beautiful shaped shoes, different design for each one. He will make these and we will have them silver-plated.

**MK:** *How many pujaris it takes to dress one Deity?*

**J:** One or two. Now they are getting experienced, so even one can do.

**MK:** *How do they fit the turbans?*

**J:** We have a table there and they put a stool on top of it.

**MK:** *Are all five Deities dressed simultaneously?*

**J:** Yes.

**MK:** *Do devotees come to you with suggestions how to serve Pancha-tattva better?*

**J:** Yes. One suggestion was how to make even light and cut down reflections. It will take some experimentation.

**MK:** *Can you cut down the sharp reflections on Their faces? That would be great! - It distracts the attention from the actual face features.*

**J:** Some devotees say we can. Krishna Prema knows about light. I told him: 'you come and experiment'. I tried before to do it in Radha-Madhava's altar, I didn't find it very successful. We were shining light backwards on the white umbrella, putting white sheet in front, etc.

**MK:** *Are you going to try that in Pancha-tattva's altar?*

**J:** Yes, I invited Krishna Prema to come and experiment with it.

**MK:** *Did he come?*

**J:** Not yet.

**MK:** *Do you see any increase in how many people are daily visiting Pancha-tattva's temple? (Before you were saying that not so many people came there, they all wanted to be in Radha-Madhava's temple and some Vastu corrections to the building were going on.)*

**J:** Yea, yea.

**MK:** *Are there more donations now than before?*

**J:** Yes, it's much more.

**MK:** *What do you connect it to - the new Vastu corner or the big Pancha-tattva being there?*

**J:** No, if you want to start something new than you may take advantage of Vastu, but in a Vishnu temple Vastu is not that important.

**MK:** *In Radha-Madhava's temple there are a lot of things to take notice off, but Pancha-tattva's temple is still quite*

*plain. May be if there would be some more active engagement for people they will be more interested there?*

**J:** Yes, we want that the visitors be encouraged to make their bhoga and garland offerings to Pancha-tattva. Usually it all goes to Nrisimha Deva. It is more convenient there.

I would like that people come and make all these offerings to Pancha-tattva. It would be nice if people who come to Mayapur be encouraged to worship Pancha-tattva - the Deities for this age. They should worship Lord Chaitanya here.

**MK:** *May be Pancha-tattva's mahaprasad should be sold in Their temple, so people have more reasons to go there?*

**J:** Yea.

**MK:** *What is going on with temple extension? Why the windows on the top flow got filled in?*

**J:** We were planning to have an exhibition, dioramas there, but the main thing is a video show continuously going on. People will come, pay something; sit down - a group at a time. It may be an animated thing. We were discussing during festival with devotees from 'Avatara' studio of America. It will be about how Lord Chaitanya is, how He descends in Navadvipa and propagating chanting the Holy Name, and what is the Yuga-dharma. Just to let people know who is Lord Chaitanya and what they should be doing in Kali Yuga. Make it very authoritative.

**MK:** *Do you mean it would be similar to exhibition in Radha-Madhava's temple?*

**J:** No, this should be more of a visual thing. We were thinking of putting dolls, but multimedia show makes more effect, people like to see something made with modern technology, really world-class, it makes a big impression. Most people don't even know that Lord Chaitanya is God, they think He is a saint. So, we need to present all the authoritative statements from the Vedas, how He is predicted to come, about His mother and father, etc. So, they will go away, knowing that Lord Chaitanya is Krishna Himself, who appears in Kali-yuga to give Yuga-Dharma.

**MK:** *Who will do the multimedia*

*presentation?*

**J:** We spoke with Krishna Prema Prabhu, also with Bharat Prabhu. This type of presentation speaks more than ordinary diorama exhibition.

**MK:** *So, then after watching the show they can come down and offer bhoga and garlands to Pancha-tattva.*

**J:** Yes. It could be connected to each other, when they come down we will tell them 'now you should offer something to Pancha-tattva'.

**MK:** *Anything else?*

**J:** Well, another thing I would actually really like is that after this experience of Gaura Purnima, when we had 72-hour kirtan in Pancha-tattva's temple - that was beautiful, it was building up, building up - that's what really made the whole festival happen, it really brought everything to life. Of course we have got 24-hour kirtan ticking along in Bhajan Kutir, but when it is like that, so many devotees and so enthusiastic - the whole atmosphere is so surcharged - people come and just get overwhelmed by it, they don't bother to see things that are out of place or some faults any more.

Srila Prabhupada said that the managers should see that nothing else should be heard in Mayapur except for the Holy Names - *Hare Krishna maha-mantra, Pancha-tattva maha-mantra and Gopala-Govinda-Ram-Sri-Madhusudana.*

This will make our center spiritually perfect.

So, that would be really nice if we could establish this in Pancha-tattva temple.

**MK:** *May be you should do some special puja to Pancha-tattva to attract Ahindra Prabhu to come here and establish this program. His kirtan really made this festival happen.*

**J:** Yes, he doesn't do bhajan or anything like that. He strictly follows the maha-mantra kirtan.

The two highlights for the next year's Gaura Purnima Festival will be reunion with continuous Prabhupada-katha and kirtan.

**MK:** *This year the usual pizza indulgence during festival had noticeably gone down, especially during those three days of continuous kirtan. It seemed like almost everyone was in kirtan.*

**J:** Good.

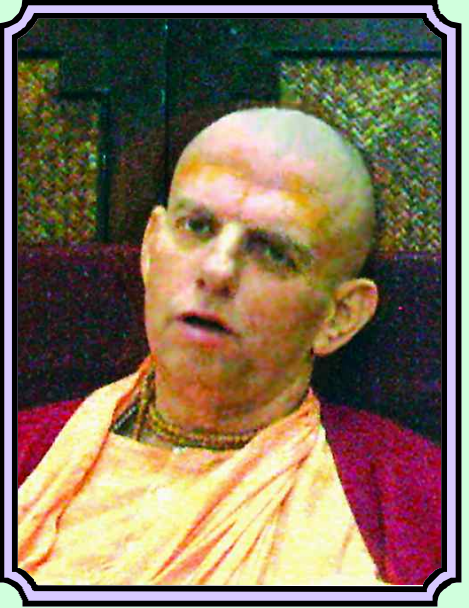
**MK:** *Thank you, Prabhu.*

**Hare Krishna.**

# Memories of His Holiness Sridhar Swami Maharaja

*Based on talks in Laguna Beach  
and Los Angeles given by  
H.H. Giriraja Swami*

( 14-th and 15-th March 2004 )



by Radhanath Swami,  
Radha Gopinath Mandir,  
ISKCON Chowpatty

*Today (14/03/2004), Sridhar Swami Maharaja departed this mortal world to enter into the eternal pastimes of Srila Prabhupada. Actually he is always involved in those eternal pastimes, but we can know that Srila Prabhupada has called him to assist on another level. Sridhar Maharaja is noted by all as one of the most faithful, dedicated associates of Prabhupada. He came to our movement in the 1960s and from that time without break or hesitation he was immersed in service of Guru and Krishna.*

*In our last meeting, with tears in his eyes, he said to me, "There is no one in this entire planet that I love more than Giriraj Swami Maharaja because, when I first came to India, I saw his complete surrender to Prabhupada. I wanted to be like him; I wanted to learn from him how to be a disciple." At that time, the phone rang and when he picked up, it was Giriraj Maharaja from California. They spoke for some time, and Sridhar Maharaja gave the phone to me. I told Giriraj what Sridhar Maharaj had said. There was complete silence. I could hear Giriraj Maharaja's voice choking. That was the love the two of them shared.*

by Giriraja Swami:

We now have a special opportunity and responsibility to honor and glorify His Holiness Sridhar Swami Maharaja. My own association with His Holiness Sridhar Swami goes back to Bombay, over thirty years ago. Srila Prabhupada had requested disciples from America to come to India to help him there, and in particular with his three main projects - Bombay, Mayapur, and Vrndavana. From 1972, His Holiness Sridhar Swami Maharaja served Srila Prabhupada in India, mainly in Bombay.

When we got permission from the municipality to build on Hare Krishna Land in Juhu, Bombay, Srila Prabhupada wanted Sridhar Maharaja to take charge of the construction materials. Sridhar Maharaja had a hefty build, like a football player, so Srila Prabhupada thought he would be appropriate to keep track of the construction material and make sure none of it was stolen. But Sridhar Maharaja (he wasn't a sanyasi then, so Sridhar das Brahmachari) said he didn't want to look after the construction material; he wanted to preach. I was the temple president in Bombay, so I was going back and forth between Srila Prabhupada and Sridhar Maharaja. Srila Prabhupada again said he should look after the construction materials, so I went back to deliver the message to him, but Sridhar Maharaja insisted, "I want to preach!"

Maharaja had never really preached much in India before then, and we didn't know how well he could preach to the aristo-

cratic Indian gentlemen we were mainly approaching at that time. But he was so sincere in his desire to preach that he became one of the best preachers in India, and one of the best preachers in the world. I have told this story to illustrate Maharaja's sincere desire to preach, and his strong determination to serve Srila Prabhupada and the mission even in ways that may not have been easy for him.

In India, Srila Prabhupada had introduced the life membership program. And he actually based the society's progress there on the membership program. He said that making someone a life-member was almost as good as making them into a devotee. He also said that he introduced the life-membership program as a way to distribute his books, because if someone became a life member by paying a certain subscription, they would get a set of Srila Prabhupada's books and a subscription to 'Back to Godhead' magazine.

Eventually, Sridhar Swami led one of the life membership teams in Bombay. I was the membership director, and the other leaders of teams were Sridhar Swami, Lokanath Swami, Jagat Purusa Prabhu and Haridas Prabhu (who since then has become a producer of Krsna conscious television programs). Those were our main teams. In the early 1980s, Sridhar Maharaja became the Juhu temple president, and so he increasingly joined me in cultivating the most important people in Bombay. And between 1984 and 1990, when I was unable to return to India because of visa problems, Sridhar Maharaja deepened his relationship with many of our most important members, and they really came



to love him deeply.

Later, about 1991, Sridhar Maharaja began the fund-raising-by-mail program in Juhu. Many devotees criticized the proposed program, saying it would never work. To prepare the letters and post them would cost more than two lakhs rupees (Rs 2,00,000), and where was the guarantee that we would ever get the money back? Yet in spite of all the negativity, Maharaja took the risk. (Srila Prabhupada had said, "To preach means to take risks.") So, Sridhar Maharaja took the risk, and the experiment proved to be successful.

The first effort itself made money, and subsequent mailings proved even more profitable. Soon, Maharaja received invitations from centers in India and abroad to help them organize fund-raising-by-mail campaigns, and the campaigns proved to be successful everywhere. They became one of the most reliable sources of income many temples had. Even today, the BHISMA office, started by Sridhar Maharaja, raises funds for the Juhu temple by mail.

More recently, Sridhar Maharaja started the VAST program (Vedic Applied Spiritual Technology). This pioneering program uses the latest multi-media methods to teach the corporate sector stress management and time management - all in relation to Krsna consciousness. Maharaja always tried to find innovative ways to present Krsna consciousness. He studied experts in various fields and applied what he learned to Krsna consciousness.

Eventually, Sridhar Maharaja was given the responsibility to initiate disciples, and he took his duty very seriously. He was very sincere. Maharaja initiated one of his earliest disciples, a devotee from Croatia, in his first initiation ceremony at Juhu. Maharaja named him "Mayapur das" and instructed him to be a servant of Mayapur. Even up to the end, Maharaja was very sincere in his duties to his disciples and in his care and affection for them. He really cared for them, and he loved them very much. At the same time, he cared for devotees and people in general, and I think this is one of his most remarkable traits: his almost universal care for others. He really was like an ocean of love.

In Kartika of 1999, Sridhar Maharaja and I met in Vrndavana. One morning we went to the Bhaktivedanta Ashram at Govardhana, where I was to meet His Holiness Indradyumna Swami and choose a Govardhana-sila to worship. Indradyumna Swami gave me his deity of Gopesvara

Mahadeva, and he gave Sridhar Maharaja silas of Lord Nrsimhadeva and Varahadeva. Earlier, Indradyumna Swami had told Sridhar Maharaja, "I will have something for you when you come to Govardhana." Sridhar Swami was a great devotee of Lord Nrsimhadeva.

During the same stay in Vrndavana, Sridhar Maharaja and I did Govardhanaparikrama together, followed by a group of devotees. We had wonderful krsnakatha all around Govardhana Hill. Although we both were ill, we did the full parikrama barefoot in the hot sun, and only afterward did we take prasada at the Bhaktivedanta Ashram.

Within a month, we both were in the hospital - he in a coma, with encephalopathy from hepatitis C, and me on the verge of a heart attack, about to have cardiac bypass surgery. Later, Maharaja praised the power of that parikrama - that it put us both in the hospital so quickly. He told me, "The only reason I went all the way around was to keep up with you." I replied, "But, Maharaja, the only reason I went all the way around was to keep up with you!" Such was our relationship, and such is the mercy of Giri-Govardhana.

Anyway, two years earlier, Sridhar Maharaja had been diagnosed with hepatitis C and cirrhosis of the liver, a severe condition that, in the course of time, proves to be fatal. After Kartika, Maharaja's condition deteriorated, and some liquid, called ascites, accumulated in his abdominal cavity. He had nearly twenty or twenty-five liters of fluid, which caused massive swelling in his legs as well. So he returned to Bombay for tests and treatment.

In Bombay, Maharaja was admitted in the Bhaktivedanta Hospital at Mira Road, which is run and staffed mainly by devotees. There, Maharaja had a further reversal; he went into a coma. Soon, His Holiness Tamal Krishna Goswami and some of Goswami Maharaja's close friends - Giridhari Swami and Kesava Bharati Maharaja - came from Vrndavana to Bombay to meet Sridhar Maharaja in the hospital. Maharaja was so grateful to them for coming all the way from Vrndavana to be with him, and their visit had a very deep effect on him.

From then on, one of the main themes in his life was how much he appreciated his Godbrothers, how much he wanted

their association. He would say, "My Godbrothers are my life," and he felt, as a humble Vaisnava, dependent on them. Even at the end, when he was in Canada, just before he left for Mayapur, he was asking different Godbrothers, "Please help me. Help me to chant the holy name." He was very, very humble.

Eventually, Sridhar Maharaja was discharged from the hospital, but his condition remained delicate. Many devotees suggested that he return to Vrndavana and spend his last days there, hearing and chanting about Krsna.

Again, he was so sincere that he accepted the advice of his Godbrothers and well-wishers. But soon he felt, "This is not me, just to sit and chant and hear in Vrndavana." Again he came to the same point: "I want to preach." So, Maharaja stayed in Haridas Prabhu's vacant flat at Mira Road, and he would meet devotees and friends - and preach.

In April of 2000, Maharaja was again admitted into the Bhaktivedanta Hospital in an early stage of hepatic coma. Later, he had difficulty breathing and actually felt he might leave his body then. But he recovered from the crisis, and soon he got the idea that he would like to travel again. And he was adamant.

To travel then, from the medical point of view, was a doubtful decision, but Maharaja was determined. His first stop was to be Santa Barbara, where I have a small ashram. He wanted to visit, to spend some time with me and to rest and recuperate. Thus, in May of 2000, he and his very faithful and wonderful servant, Mayapur das, somehow got on a plane and reached Los Angeles. From the Los Angeles airport they came straight by car to Santa Barbara, but by the time he reached the ashram, he was in a terrible condition. We were shocked. Already he was already terribly sick, but he had caught the flu in Bombay before he left - although the symptoms didn't manifest until he reached Hong Kong. Some devotees said that he shouldn't have traveled at all, that he was too sick to travel, and that the disease was affecting his discrimination. But in retrospect, I see it as his love and his desire to serve and preach. In fact, sometimes I think that he risked his life just to come and visit me.

So, he came, and we spent some time together. He was on a very strict diet that he didn't much like, and he would cheat a

little now and then. One night I went out to a preaching program. Although he wasn't well enough to come, he encouraged me to go. So, we left him in the care of Mayapur das and one lady devotee, named Kunti, who could cook in case he needed anything.

After I left, he decided that he wanted to indulge himself a little; he asked for veggie burgers and French-fries, which were not at all on his diet. Kunti dutifully prepared the veggie burgers and chips, and Mayapur reluctantly served them. Maharaja ate them, and he was in very jolly spirits.

In Bombay we had two highly aristocratic life members, very affluent, yet very devoted - Mr. Brijratan Mohatta and Mr. M. P. Maheshwari. Every Sunday, they and their wives would come to Juhu. Out of their deep affection for Maharaja, these two gentlemen began to call him "the jolly swami" because he was always so jolly. The name stuck, and a few years ago, Maharaja's brother Stuart actually wrote an article about him called 'The Jolly Swami'. It was a nice article and was published in a magazine in Canada. Recently, this nickname became even more popular - and deservedly so - because Maharaja remained so jolly, even up to the time of death.

So, happily enjoying Kuntidevi's tasty burgers and chips, "the jolly swami" was in a very jolly mood indeed. The next morning, however, he wasn't quite so jolly - or he didn't manifest his mood. In fact, he wouldn't get up. We thought, "He must be exhausted." Time passed, and still he wouldn't get up. We waited, tried again, waited, and tried again. Finally, we realized he was in a coma, so we rushed him to the hospital, to the emergency room. He was eventually put in the intensive care unit. (Later, Maharaja would phone and say, "I want to come to Santa Barbara and have some more of Kunti's 'coma burgers.'")

Physiologically, there was a certain course to be run, and the doctors were confident that he would come out of the coma. It just had to be treated in the proper way and the condition would reverse itself.

Again, in the hospital, Sridhar Maharaja's great affection and care came out. Because of the liver's malfunction, it wasn't able to take out the toxins - that was the basic problem. And eventually the toxins go to the brain and cause encephalopathy. If the toxins in the brain reach a certain point, the patient goes into a coma. Then the process of coming out of the coma and toxic influence

is gradual. In a way, you could say that at first Maharaja was sort of delirious. But the beauty of his delirium was that his goodness came out freely: He just wanted everyone to chant. He wanted everyone to become Krsna conscious - the doctors, the nurses, the nurses' assistants, the room cleaners. He really just wanted everyone to become Krsna conscious.

And then, too, he would think of his brothers in Canada. He really wanted them, Malcolm and Stuart, to become devotees. He would talk to us about them, not completely coherently, but with great love and care. And he would talk with them, as well as with his mother and sister (who were also in Canada), on the phone. He saw some spark in them that he wanted to fan. He really wanted them to become devotees.

When the crisis began, we informed his family. His sister, Fiona, was just wonderful - so helpful and responsible. And eventually, his brother Malcolm came down to Santa Barbara and stayed with Maharaja and us for a while.

Also, Hridayananda Maharaja visited Maharaja in the hospital. And again, Sridhar Maharaja was so appreciative. The two of them joked a lot, and soon Sridhar Maharaja was discharged and came back to our ashram. Despite his trying medical condition, he really was "the jolly swami," so friendly to the nurses and staff and everyone.

(After some days, the bill from the hospital came - for almost \$30,000. Maharaja studied it carefully. Finally, he concluded: "I want my money. Tell them they can take back my consciousness!")

From then on, despite his hepatitis, he would travel a lot, sort of like Prabhupada - more or less six months in India, based in Bombay, and six months traveling. He would visit London and Croatia and Slovenia, and he would always attend the New York Ratha-yatra. He made a point always to go to the New York Ratha-yatra. And he would regularly visit Alachua, Los Angeles, Vancouver, and even Brazil. He had many disciples in Croatia and Slovenia. Many of the young people there became initiated by him.

In September of 2001, His Holiness Sridhar Swami, accompanied by Nrsimhananda Prabhu of ITV, came specially to Carpinteria for our Vyasa-puja. There he said: "For me, in my stage of

life, if I have learned even one little lesson, it is dasa-dasanudasa. Cultivate service to the Vaisnavas and you will get everything. We need a family in which we can love and trust each other and not fear. We have to preach to so many materialistic people. Their very aura is permeated with lust and greed and anger, and there is a possibility of getting infected. But if we can come to a community of friends, of brothers and sisters, where we love each other, care...

I am not talking of superficially saying something, but where we really care deep down inside that this person is suffering and care, even materially. Prabhupada cried when he saw people suffering materially in the material world. So, what to speak of exalted Vaisnava devotees: we should care for them and love them. This is our family."

January 14th, 2003, marked the twenty fifth anniversary of the grand opening of the Juhu temple, and Sridhar Maharaja took the lead in arranging the silver jubilee celebrations. He wanted every devotee, who had ever served in Juhu, especially in the time leading up to the grand opening - which was basically when Srila Prabhupada was personally present - he wanted every one of them to come. The Juhu temple had a modest budget to help devotees with their airfares, but eventually another very nice devotee in Bombay, Krsnacandra Prabhu (Hrishikesh Mafatlal), gave several lakhs of rupees to pay for devotees' tickets. Any Prabhupada disciple, who had served in Bombay, Sridhar Swami tracked down. He phoned and personally requested him or her to come and then offered free tickets, as required.

So many came, and the reports of that event were extraordinary. People couldn't believe it. Everyone there felt that Srila Prabhupada had manifested himself again. Even His Holiness Sacinandana Swami, who hadn't served in Bombay earlier, but happened to be there for the celebrations, said that he felt Srila Prabhupada's presence descend in a very tangible way. And everyone gave the credit to Sridhar Swami. He deserved the credit because he got so many devotees to come, and he made wonderful arrangements for them - with help, of course, from devotees from Chowpatty and Juhu. And when it was time for the devotees to give their remembrances of the early days of serving Srila Prabhupada in Bombay, he wouldn't allow the gurus and sanyasi's to speak. He said, "We hear them all the time; we

want to hear others." Of course, that they also spoke, too, but mainly he wanted to give others the chance to speak. He really was *pandita sama-darsinah*: he really saw everyone equally. He truly saw the soul, and he appreciated everyone. He appreciated everyone's good, and he wanted to encourage everyone.

Anyway, it was a wonderful event. Once, I phoned, just to be part of the celebrations, and the receptionist in the guesthouse in Juhu picked up the phone. I asked for Maharaja, but he didn't happen to be right there, and it was going to take time to find him. They were going to look for him. In the meantime I asked, "Who else is there?" Just then, Jagat Purusa Prabhu was walking by. I said, "Okay, I'll speak to him." Jagat Purusa was in high ecstasy. He wasn't speaking; the ecstasy within him was moving him to speak. And he said that he had not experienced such bliss in Krsna consciousness since the time he was actually in Bombay serving Srila Prabhupada. He was just went on and on, emphasizing that it was the most memorable occasion of his life, and I think everyone pretty much felt the same way, because they felt Srila Prabhupada's presence. What more do any of us want? For us, the highest perfection is to be with Srila Prabhupada, and Sridhar Swami, I feel, was instrumental in creating that situation in which Srila Prabhupada was pleased to manifest himself in such a vivid and personal way.

After a few days of recuperating from that major effort, Maharaja wanted to travel again, so he came to Los Angeles. That time his schedule didn't allow him to come to Santa Barbara. Also, I think he was a little upset because I hadn't come for the celebrations in Juhu, so he didn't want to come to me. I went to him, and he was wonderful - as usual. After Los Angeles he went to Vancouver. While he was there, I began to consider that I had offended him because I didn't go for the celebrations in Juhu. I don't think I could have gone, but at the same time I was concerned that I had offended him. So I phoned him in Vancouver to apologize and explain why I couldn't come, even though he had so much wanted me to come (and so many others also had wanted me to come). I asked him to forgive me. He was very gracious. He was sorry I hadn't come, and he did want to understand why I hadn't. But he said I didn't commit any offense or anything.

So, we would frequently talk on the

phone, and we would meet whenever he came to Los Angeles. Then, last November, he phoned from Bombay and told me he was planning to go to Vancouver in April and spend four to six months there. I i I replied, "I will definitely come and spend time with you there." Soon thereafter, however, I got an e-mail from him saying that he had been diagnosed in Bombay with liver cancer, and that he was going to Vancouver immediately to see if he could get a liver transplant, which was his "only hope."

He flew to Vancouver. The first day he went for tests, they found three places where cancer had affected his liver, which prima facie made him eligible for the transplant. But they still had to do more tests. When they did the next tests, however, they found more cancer - and because the cancer had spread beyond the limit allowed for transplants, his "only hope" was dashed. He was ineligible for the transplant because the cancer had spread so much. So it seemed like he was soon to leave his body.

I was very distressed. I phoned him, but he wasn't answering on his landline. I then got him on his cell phone. I asked, "Where are you?" He answered, "I'm shopping." He seemed so jolly - like always. But then he confirmed my worst fears: "The doctor says that I could go at any time. Phone me back later. We have to talk."

After that, we would speak every day, usually twice a day. And we had wonderful talks. The question arose whether he should go to Mayapur - and when. He decided he would go to Mayapur, and eventually, in consultation with his Godbrothers, he concluded he should go as soon as possible.

He had three desires, as he told me: "I just want to survive until I reach Mayapur. Then, if possible, I want to live to see the Panca-tattva installed. And then, if possible, I want to live until Gaura-Purnima. And then - whatever." (He meant, of course, "And then - whatever Krsna wants.")

With these three desires in his heart, although no one knew how much travel his weakened body could bear, Sridhar Maharaja flew to London. There, Indradyumna Swami joined him. (Maharaja's sister, Fiona, had informed Indradyumna Swami of the doctor's pro-

nouncement: If Sridhar undertook the journey, he probably wouldn't make it. And she added, "If that happens, I want someone to be there with him.") So Indradyumna Swami flew to England to accompany Maharaja onward towards Mayapur, and he was very apprehensive.

In London, devotees had rented a room for Maharaja in a hotel near the airport. He was so sick and weak that he could hardly walk. The devotees just had to get him from the airport to the nearest place possible - as soon as possible.

Because the news had spread that Maharaja was going to Mayapur to leave his body, many of his disciples from Europe - mainly from Croatia and Slovenia - came to London to meet him. They were crying because they knew they would never see him again. He told them, "You can cry when I go. You can cry for a few days, but then you have to get back into your service, and then you have to be happy." I was used to phoning, so I called Maharaja at the hotel and spoke a little with Indradyumna Swami there too.

Sridhar Maharaja wanted to reciprocate with the disciples who had come to be with him. He said, "The king is good for the people, and the people are good for the king. I never had my own family, but when I had disciples, I was able to benefit tremendously. I felt emotions I thought I never would. I just don't think it will stop. When we love one another, we are together".

Then he told his disciples, "When I leave, we can be together in more significant ways." He said that love in separation is actually stronger. And we do experience that when we are with people we love, we may take them for granted. But when they are gone, we realize how valuable their association was and how much we love them. And the feelings become more intense than when we were with them.

There were some disciples who didn't have second initiation, so Maharaja decided he would initiate them. But because of his disease, his brain didn't always function properly. Toxins went to his brain, and then, too, he had to take a derivative of opium to kill the pain, as prescribed by the doctor.

Anyway, he decided, "Okay, I'll give second initiation - but all together, all five at once." He began reciting the gayatri mantra for them, "Om bhur..." - but then he couldn't remember the next word. He



asked Indradyumna Swami, "What comes next?" Indradyumna Swami pronounced the word, and Maharaja repeated it to his disciples. When Maharaja couldn't remember the next word either, he told Indradyumna Swami, "Look, why don't you just say each word, and then I'll repeat it, and the disciples will hear it from me."

So, they got through the first two lines. Then Indradyumna Swami, who himself was exhausted from his long flight from South Africa, couldn't remember the next word. So Sridhar Maharaja asked, "Are there any brahmanas in the house who know the next word?" Then one brahmana told the word to Indradyumna Swami, Indradyumna Swami repeated it to Sridhar Swami, and Sridhar Swami repeated it to the disciples.

Sridhar Maharaja remarked, "*Harer nama harer nama harer namaiva kevalam*". We don't need this Gayatri mantra. Hari-nama is enough." Then he started quoting:

*harer nama harer nama,  
harer namaiva kevalam,  
kalau nasty eva nasty eva,  
nasty eva gatir anyatha*

["In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy the only means of deliverance is the chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way." (Cc. Adi 17.21)]

*krsna-varnam tvisakrsnam,  
sangopangastra-parsadam,  
yajnaih sankirtana-prayair,  
yajanti hi su-medhasah*

["In the Age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship the incarnation of Godhead, who constantly sings the name of Krsna. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Krsna Himself. He is accompanied by His associates, servants, weapons and confidential companions." (SB 11.5.32)]

*kaler dosa-nidhe rajan,  
asti hy eko mahan gunah,  
kirtanad eva krsnasya,  
mukta-sangah param vrajet*

["My dear King, although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: Simply by chanting the Hare Krsna maha-mantra, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom." (SB 12.3.51)]

He quoted all these verses in glorification of the Holy Name. Indradyumna Swami exclaimed, "Maharaja, you are perfectly quoting all these verses about the Holy Name, but you can't remember the Gayatri mantra?!" Sridhar Swami explained, "The Gayatri mantra is just meant to assist us in chanting the Holy Name. The real thing is chanting the Holy Name. The Gayatri mantra just supports it - helps us to become purified - so we can chant the Holy Name."

You may have heard how Maharaja arrived in Calcutta. Jayapataka Maharaja had sent his van to pick him up, and Sridhar Swami lay unmoving in Jayapataka Maharaja's bed in the van all the way from the airport to Mayapur. In Mayapur, thousands of devotees came out to receive him with kirtana - sometimes roaring and sometimes sweet.

Now, another result of Maharaja's disease, because his liver wasn't processing different materials in the body, was that his body would fill with liquid (as before). It would become bloated. In Canada, as well as in India, doctors would remove five to seven liters of liquid from him at a time. That was part of his discomfort. Anyway, after the installation of the Panca-tattva, he had a physical setback, maybe because of the exertion and excitement in the ceremony. The situation looked grave, and in the evening he asked for devotees to come and do kirtana in his room. He didn't know what would happen, and it looked like he was going to leave. Maharaja's servant, Mayapur das, informed the devotees. So devotees came. Senior devotees and disciples alike gathered in Maharaja's room, ready for the worst. As Maharaja lay silently on his bed, they performed kirtana, most of them crying, seeing that the end was near. Somehow a devotee managed to call a doctor, who entered the room and came to Maharaja's bedside. The doctor was serious and grave, and he began to feel around Maharaja's body as Maharaja lay motionless on his bed, his eyes closed. Maharaja's abdomen was completely bloated from the accumulated liquid. The doctor put his hands on Maharaja's abdomen, squeezing it gently to assess the situation. Then Maharaja slowly opened his eyes, looked in the direction of the doctor, and said, "It's a boy".

Everybody cracked up. Maharaja was so funny, even in the most dire of circumstances. The devotees were going mad.

They didn't know whether to laugh or cry. The situation was so critical, yet Maharaja was so funny. Anyway, Maharaja told me that story on the phone - I think he rather liked it.

So, *jivo va maro va*: a devotee can live or die. Both are the same. Certainly that was true of Sridhar Swami: He could live or die, because if he lived he would serve Krsna here, and if he died he would serve Krsna in the next life. For Sridhar Swami, life and death were the same (*jivo va maro va*).

Thus, he was truly fearless and jolly. He really had no fear of death. Although he wanted to stay so he could preach, he wasn't afraid of death. He knew he would continue to serve Srila Prabhupada in the next life.

A few days before Gaura Purnima, Indradyumna Swami came to say farewell to Maharaja. At Maharaja's room he met Mayapur das, Maharaja's servant, who told him, "Maharaja is in the shower." From inside, Sridhar Swami overheard the talk and shouted out, "India! Is that you, India?" He used to call Indradyumna Swami "India" - short for Indiana Jones, because Indradyumna Maharaja is such an adventurous preacher. (Sridhar Maharaja would show off Indradyumna Swami to people, who came to his room. He would say, "This is our Indiana Jones, but he is the real thing! This one is the real thing!")

So, Sridhar Maharaja called out, "India! Is that you out there?"

"Yes, Maharaja."

"Come on in!"

"But, Maharaja, you are in the shower."

"So what? Come on in."

He went in, and there was Maharaja with nothing to cover him but the air (and water from the shower). Sridhar Maharaja said, "Don't worry about it. We are not these bodies!"

Indradyumna Swami was choked up, because he was feeling he would never see Maharaja again. This was it - saying good-bye. So, he said, "Maharaja, I have come to say good-bye." Maharaja said, "Don't say good-bye."

India replied, "I may never see you again in this life."

Sridhar Swami responded, "Don't you know that old song?" And he sang: "Happy trails to you, until we meet again." And that was it. That was it.

So, I think that is a good conclusion,

especially for India: "happy trails" - because his trails take him all over the world. Yet all of us, in our own ways, have our own trails and paths in devotional service, and Sridhar Swami wishes that they be happy - until we meet again.

I wanted to phone Maharaja every day, but the way it worked out with the time difference and all the difficulties in just getting through to Mayapur, it averaged about every third day that I would speak to him. The last time I spoke to him, two days before he left, he was having a very good day. The previous day was a bad day, but the night before, they had given him some medication to help him. When I spoke to him that last time, he was having a very good day, and we had one of the best talks I have ever had with anyone in my entire life. We spoke mainly about the Mayapur project and Srila Prabhupada's mission. It's really something that I'll cherish for my whole life - the experience of it and the lessons in it.

That was Thursday, March 11th. The next day, Friday, we installed beautiful brass deities of Gaura-Nitai in our Santa Barbara ashram. They had come from Vrndavana, originally commissioned by Mother Kirtida for Tamal Krsna Goswami. I felt Their coming was also part of Sridhar Swami's mercy, because he so fervently desired that the glories of the Panca-tattva be spread and that we build the "wonderful temple" for Them in Mayapur. So, two representatives of the Panca-tattva had come, and I felt that was his desire.

Then I told Maharaja, "I don't know if I will be able to phone you again before then, but the Deities have come and we will install them Friday evening, and by your mercy we'll try to serve Them and Their dhama." Now, whenever I look at Their beautiful forms and their appealing faces, I feel we have to do something for Them - we have to build Their wonderful temple - as Sridhar Swami always reminded me.

So, I think this may be Maharaja's main contribution in recent years, at least to me, in my service: He impressed upon me - and upon our entire movement - the importance of the Mayapur project, of the "wonderful temple" (adbhuta mandira) that Nityananda Prabhu had desired for the service of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and that Bhaktivinoda Thakura had envisioned. (One day, when Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura was chanting japa on the balcony

of his house in Godruma-dvipa, he looked across the Jalangi River to Mayapur, and he had a vision of a transcendental city with a magnificent temple rising like a mountain in its midst.) Maharaja's whole life was dedicated to Srila Prabhupada, and I think he felt this was one of Srila Prabhupada's main desires that was left to be fulfilled. And he felt that we had to do it; we had to do it. He felt it would benefit the whole society, and the whole world. He would quote Ambarisa Prabhu, who said, "This will be the tide that will make all the boats rise." So, although Sridhar Maharaja left so many wonderful legacies for us in terms of his personal qualities and activities,

I think one legacy that may serve to unite the movement and fulfill one of Srila Prabhupada's main desires is his inspiration to push on the construction of the adbhuta mandira in Mayapur.

When I was a new devotee, maybe less than two years in the movement, I approached Srila Prabhupada one day while he was getting his message on the veranda of the Calcutta temple: "Srila Prabhupada, I have been thinking about what pleases you most." Srila Prabhupada was so pure he took every word into his heart. He replied, "Yes." I said, "The two things that seem to please you the most are distributing your books and building the big temple in Mayapur." Srila Prabhupada smiled with great appreciation: "Thank you very much."

So, those were Srila Prabhupada's two main strategies for spreading Krsna consciousness, and Sridhar Swami helped him in both. In his early days, Sridhar Swami was instrumental in developing book distribution in North America. And in his later years, he was very involved with the Mayapur project, planning and raising funds for the "wonderful temple." And by Maharaja's mercy, on Gaura Purnima, standing in front of the Panca-tattva Deities in Laguna Beach, I got the inspiration: "Now it's time for Mayapur. Sridhar Swami understood that long ago. Now it's time for you [me] to join the effort, too." And that was important for me in other ways as well - to let go of the past: "Forgive and forget. Now let's all work together for Mayapur, for Sridhar Swami, for Srila Prabhupada, to build the wonderful temple."

Sridhar Swami asked me to speak about my experiences of Srila Prabhupada

related to Mayapur. For one, in 1973, Srila Prabhupada came to Calcutta from England - so enthusiastic and excited about Mayapur. Tamal Krishna Goswami had gotten the first land in Mayapur, we had observed the first Gaura Purnima festival there, and now Srila Prabhupada had come with the plans for the first building. There was a detailed discussion, but at the end Srila Prabhupada said, "If you build this temple, then Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura will personally come and take you all back to Godhead."

Now I think, "That might be my only hope, so I'd better get to work. We'd better build the Mayapur project, because I don't know how else I will ever get back to Godhead."

His Holiness Sridhar Swami has given me a lifetime of work in service to Srila Prabhupada. Although *jivo va maro va*, to live or die is the same for a devotee - and certainly that was true of Maharaja - my own feelings are mixed.

I think, "Now he has left so much service for me, given me so many instructions." (I think the same about Tamal Krishna Goswami.) "So I must stay and execute his mission." Even though part of me misses them terribly and wants to be with them, mainly I think, "They left me so many instructions. I have so much service to do for them here."

\* \* \*

## EPILOGUE

Three days after Sridhar Maharaja left, while on my daily walk in Santa Barbara, I suddenly began to feel blissful, and I felt Maharaja's presence.

Then, I imagined that he gave me two instructions. The first was, "I am still here. Be happy." And the second was, "Just be yourself. Each one of us has his own contribution to make, so just be yourself and make your contribution." And then he left.

After he left, I considered what had happened. Clearly, his two instructions were meant not only for me. They were meant for everyone. And his instructions covered all points. Especially his last statement had said it all: "Just be yourself and make your contribution."

*Thank you, Maharaja. We love you.  
Hare Krishna.*

**Interview with  
Rangi Gaur Prabhu,  
a sankirtana devotee**



**MK:** Please introduce yourself.

**Rangi Gaur Das:** My name is Rangigaur Das. Before Initiation my name was Raju Khan. I am 26 years old. My Date of Birth is October 31, 1977.

**MK:** What background you have come from?

**RG:** My father is Panchanan Khan. He is working in a medicine shop. He is also a devotee chanting 16 rounds everyday, but not an initiated devotee. My mother is Gita Gopi Devi Dasi. She is an initiated devotee. She took initiation from H.H Jayapataka Swami Guru Maharaja in 2002. She is a house-wife. My childhood was very simple. As a child I used to join Harinama with my grandfather. My grandfather was a great devotee. I finished my primary education at our

Bankura primary Goenka School. My birth place is Bankura town. I finished my higher Education at Bankura Goenka High school. I passed my Madhyamik examination in 1995.

When I passed Madhyamik examination, then I became a private tutor (or teacher), I got involved with a coaching center and there I taught many students.

**MK:** So, you were teacher before. How did you join ISKCON?

**RG:** Yes. Everyday I was going to teach in a house that was a devotee's house. The devotee's told me to join the Namahatta Sanga and to hear their Gita class. One Sunday I came to the Gita class and started to go to Gita class every Sunday. Then I started to come for evening arati every day. Then a few days after, I started to go to every mangala-arati and began to chant the Holy Name, four rounds every day, then eight rounds, then sixteen rounds.

One mataji gave me the first information about ISKCON. She is a disciple of H.H Jayapataka Swami, her name is Madhavi Mandira Devi Dasi. In 1997 at our Bankura town there was a pandal program - fifty ISKCON Devotees from Mayapur Namahatta joined this program. They did Nagar Sankirtana, drama and gave Gita class. I was inspired by seeing this program. Then I decided that when I finish my education I will join ISKCON temple. I came to

Mayapur for Gaura Purnima festival, had a darshan. And, then I came again on March 19, 1999, that was the year of Jayapataka Swami's 50th Vyasa Puja celebration.

I passed my H.S Examination in 1998 and on the 19th of March 1999 I joined and for four months took a training course in the New Devotee Program. After finishing my training I joined Sankirtan Department and went with Travelling Sankirtana bus to North Bengal to distribute Srila Prabhupada's books. I took my first initiation in 2001 from H.H Jayapataka Swami Maharaja. I am now very happy.

**MK:** What is most inspiring in your devotional service?

**RG:** Two Prabhupada lectures inspired me to distribute books - "If you want to please me, then distribute my books", and "one book sold is one step ahead in our Krishna consciousness."

I have gone on book distribution with TSKP-6 bus group for 5 years. Now I am staying in Mayapur, I preach and distribute books on the book table No 3, which is opposite the front gate.

I am happy here and my spiritual life is very peaceful.

I want to be distributing Srila Prabhupada's books forever. I pray to all vaishnavas to bless me.

Hare Krishna. U

## Grihastha enterprise

### interview with Shayammurty Prabhu

**MK:** How long you have been living in our Mayapur community?

**Shayammurty Prabhu:** Since May 2002.

**MK:** How did you decide to come here?

**SM:** My son, Ram, was here in Gurukula from 1996. So every year we would come here and were attracted to live in this place and decided to permanently shift here.

**MK:** How did you decide to put your son in Mayapur Gurukula?

**SM:** We came with a yatra one year and since then my son was very persistent that he wants to be in Mayapur, finally he came here in 1996 and joined Gurukula. From then we used to come often and slowly were introduced to Mayapur.

**MK:** Were you visiting once a year?

**SM:** No, I would come, then my wife and daughter would

come separately, so two-three times a year we were visiting.

**MK:** How did you decide to move your whole family to Mayapur?

**SM:** We saw that it's a nice village like place, more like a health resort, and of course it is the Dham.

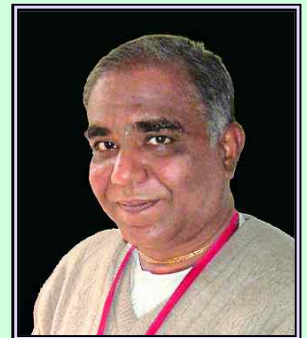
**MK:** Where are you from originally?

**SM:** We are from Madras.

**MK:** When were you initiated?

**SM:** In 1997 at Madras Rathayatra. My wife and daughter got initiated at the same time. We all got initiation from H.H.Jayapataka Swami. And my son has some kind of 'nyaya' from Bhaktividyapurna Maharaj.

**MK:** Is he initiated by him?





**SM:** No, he is not initiated really, he just got a sacred thread from him for chanting mantras and doing jagya.

**MK:** *Did you come into some service here or did you just come with hope for the best?*

**SM:** Actually, Naru Gopal Prabhu encouraged us to come to Mayapur and gave us the service of looking after the drinking water plant. So, we started our service in Mayapur by looking after the water plant. There was not so much engagement for me, and I wanted to do something, which could support us and be a good service for the community here.

Janmastami Prabhu originally created this facility for the Day School, they needed a computer facility to train the kids. Now it's a good place for devotees to come and use the computers and go on the Internet. We have six computers in service.

**MK:** *Who bought them?*

**SM:** Janmastami Prabhu, from his personal funds. We are paying him back slowly.

**MK:** *So is this run as a business now?*

**SM:** Yes. Janmastami Prabhu gave it a boost by investing in the computers and the Day School is providing this accommodation, paying the rent for it. We provide a service for the school for kid's education - they come to learn computers here.

**MK:** *So you are making money from the other people who come here to use the Internet?*

**SM:** Yes. We use this money to pay telephone bills, paying back the loan and for our family survival.

**MK:** *Does it bring enough?*

**SM:** Yes, we are able to survive and we are also trying to improve.

We having training courses for those who wish to learn how to use computers. We are having both devotees and outside people coming here to learn.

**MK:** *How much are you charging for the course?*

**SM:** It is two thousand Rupees per month.

**MK:** *What do they learn?*

**SM:** Internet and Office work is the two most common demands.

**MK:** *How long is the course?*

**SM:** From three to six months, depending on what they want. Lots of devotees took courses here last year and they are very happy, also a lot of visiting devotees from other places.

**MK:** *How many hours a week does it take?*

**SM:** Three days in a week, two hours study.

**MK:** *How much time does the school service take?*

**SM:** The school gets free education for the children, it takes about two hours in the afternoon. They come four days a week.

**MK:** *Did you move to this service from the Water plant?*

**SM:** Yes. There was not much service for me there. I am a profession-

al engineer, so I did not see much point of being stuck there. Here I am able to make a living, as well as to give free education to the school children and I do not depend on the management in my business. I make money and do seva and I think other grihasthas should also start their enterprises, through which they can support themselves and also do some free service to the community.

**MK:** *Yes, you are a very good example of that. How many days a week is the Institute is open?*

**SM:** We are open seven day a week from 8 AM to 8 PM, so every day it is open.

**MK:** *What kind of line do you have?*

**SM:** We have wireless connection, plus the land line. We are using the servers like VSNL, BSNL, and Reliance. If we don't get one, we connect to another one.

We also provide the Internet telephone service. You can telephone and speak with US, Europe, Australia, South America, etc, for 10 Rupees per minute (except for Russia and South Africa, the land lines there are little more costly). We have some special hardware to phone, connecting through the Internet.

**MK:** *How many devotees are using this facility?*

**SM:** A lot of devotees come here, they are really appreciating that such service is here, in Mayapur. We are trying to make them feel comfortable to come and work here. We are also doing short crash courses for the visiting devotees - how to use internet, how to work on computer.

**MK:** *How much you charge for the crash course?*

**SM:** Last year we charged thousand Rupees for a three day full time course, eight hours of instruction. It is also beneficial for visiting devotees - they can come to India and learn computers very cheap.

**MK:** *What services are your family members doing?*

**SM:** My wife, Titiksha Radha Devi Dasi, is engaged in the Deity Department, my daughter, Vaikuntha Laxmi Devi Dasi, for three years was serving with GBC secretary, helping Divyambara Mataji, she was also serving in the JPS office. Now she is helping me in the Computer Institute, she also

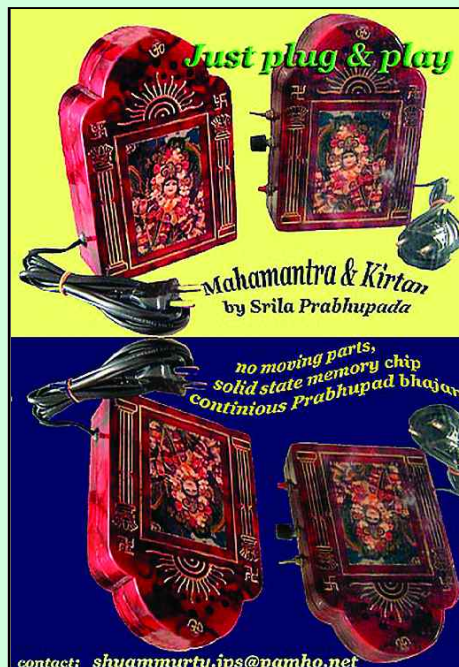
serves the Deities. My son is serving in MIHE, he is a webmaster for MIHE website, [www.mayapur.info/mihe](http://www.mayapur.info/mihe), he is also doing all kinds of computer work for Janmastami Prabhu.

**MK:** *What were you doing before you came here?*

**SM:** Personally I was running a lot of manufacturing industries and computer training. We had a big institution in the heart of Madras with fifty computers and hundreds of students. I was the owner of that institution and also used to teach a little bit, we had a lot of teachers there. Basically I was always doing my own thing, I was not employed in the past.

**MK:** *So you are basically doing the same thing now, but there it was on a bigger scale.*

**SM:** Yes. Still that institution is running, we sold it to someone. I like to



make my own income and be self-sufficient.

**MK:** You also have these 24-hour Mahamantra players, tell us about it.

**SM:** This is something, which my future son-in-law, Rama-Giridhari Das, is making in Bombay. He is a computer engineer and as part time he is manufacturing these Mantra-players. I am just marketing it here in Mayapur. He is also selling them in Bombay. It has two tunes recorded on a chip - Srila Prabhupada singing Maha-mantra and Srila Prabhupada chanting japa. This player has no moving parts and lasts for a very long time, there is no wear and tear.

**MK:** Does this take a battery?

**SM:** This model is running on direct current. We are going to introduce a portable model with batteries.

**MK:** What controls does it have?

**SM:** You can adjust the sound and there is a switch for changing tune.

**MK:** Anything else you want to say?

**SM:** More small and medium size enterprises should be set up here in Mayapur. In this way grihasthas can survive here and also offer some seva to the community without depending on the temple. We should develop this kind of co-existence.

**MK:** Do you have some suggestions for more enterprises to open?

**SM:** So many opportunities. Someone can set up a cottage industry, locally so many small products could be made. Another thing is a bank, so devotees could get loans easily and securely. Sankirtan Department need so many items, various stores here require so many items like brass bells, karatals, etc. All these things could be manufactured here as a cottage industry. In this way devotees could be self-employed - if ISKCON provides first aide support, some facility to set up.

**MK:** Do you mean like - you got this place from the Day School and initial investment from Janmastami Prabhu?

**SM:** Yes, like this. We can make co-existing arrangements.

**MK:** You are very clever. Thank you. Hare Krishna. U

## bad, bad, bad...plastic bag...

*interview with*  
**Satsevak Prabhu,**  
*owner of the Supply Store*

**MK:** We heard that you had faced some difficulties recently, something to do with giving out plastic carry bags to your customers. Could you tell us what was that about?

**Satsevak Prabhu:** I was not at the shop at that time, when some men came and asked for a carry bag as a customer. My labor was there and he gave them a plastic carry bag. Then they asked to give them all the sizes and types of carry bags we have. My labor refused, saying that we are not selling plastic bags. Then they revealed themselves as government officers and demanded to get every type of plastic bag we have. So, he gave. They made him sign on each bag and they took that with them. In their office they examined the bags and most of them weren't permitted. The shop-keepers are giving carry bags because customer demanding. But if these people from government ban the factory, which makes them, that would be better. I don't know what they are doing, I think they are not going right

way about it.

**MK:** What office did they represent?

**S:** West Bengal Government, Parivesh Bhavan, means Pollution Board. They are protecting the environment.

**MK:** What kind of plastic did they ban?

**S:** Anything under 20 microns thickness.

**MK:** Are the thick plastic bags still allowed?

**S:** Yes. Better not to use, that's the best, if really need then the costly one is there.

**MK:** So, did you switch off to paper bags?

**S:** Yea-yea. Newspaper bags.

**MK:** What about brown paper bags?

**S:** Yes, brown paper bags are better, but they are costly for these types of goods. It would cost me at least ten times more than newspaper bags.

**MK:** How much are those?

**S:** Thirteen Rupees per kg for newspaper bags. But brown ones are sold per piece. One bundle is two hundred Rupees, like that. This means that one brown bag will cost two Rupees. So, if you buy potatoes for four Rupees your paper bag will cost you two Rupees on top.

**MK:** Why don't you put a sign 'Bring

your shopping bag with you' or something like that?

**S:** I have not done this yet,

but I started to sell shopping bags and to most of my customers I advise to buy one and reuse each time they go shopping - bring the bag along.

**MK:** When this ban on plastic carry bags was passed?

**S:** They are telling one year. But we are not reading newspapers. They said that it was announced in all newspapers.

**MK:** What is the punishment?

**S:** They make shopkeepers to pay money.

**MK:** How much?

**S:** Five to ten thousand Rupees.

**MK:** How much did you have to pay?

**S:** ...three thousand

**MK:** Anyone else being punished here?

**S:** They turned electricity off in Nimai's shop because he didn't pay.

**MK:** What if they find you using plastic carry bags again?

**S:** There will be more money to pay and they can even close the shop down.

**MK:** Thank you. Hare Krishna. U



## WELCOME *Bhavya Giridhari* to our community



Nrisimha Pali Das and Srimati holding their first son, Bhavya Giridhari. He is also the first grandson of Bharat Prabhu and Bhakta Gana Mataji.

*of having a baby?*

**Srimati:** I was not scared, but it was very painful.

**MK:** *Where was he born?*

**Srimati:** In the hospital in Kolkata.

**MK:** *Did you have to go to the hospital?*

**Srimati:** Well, everyone was warning me and saying that this is the first baby, you don't know what might happen, so I thought it's better not to take any chances the first time. And also my baby was late.

**MK:** *He didn't want to come out?*

**Srimati:** No.

**MK:** *Did he get out by himself eventually or with medical help?*

**Srimati:** No, he was born naturally. Ramadevi delivered him, they were so kind at the hospital to let her do it.

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

**Srimati:** Not any time soon!

**MK:** *You want to forget this experience first?*

**Srimati:** Yes.

**MK:** *He is very fortunate to begin his life in Mayapur.*

*Hare Krishna. u*



**MK:** *Congratulations with the birth of your first son. When was he born?*

**Srimati:** He was born on 13th of December, it was Srila Bhaktisidhanta Saraswati's Disappearance Day.

**MK:** *What is his name?*

**Srimati:** Bhavya Giridhari. Bhavya is the name of Lord Balaram, it means auspicious, attractive, handsome and beautiful and Giridhari is Krishna's name.

**MK:** *All your family members from both sides are staying in Mayapur. Do they help you?*

**Srimati:** Yes, everybody helps.

**MK:** *Who chose the name?*

**Srimati:** We chose the name. We chose Giridhari before and after he was born Prahlad Nrisimha Prabhu made a chart, and according to that, the first sound should be 'Ba', so we named him Bavya Giridhari.

**MK:** *Were you scared to have your first experience*



## In memory of H.G. Krishna Chandra Das,

*father of Jalatala Mataji*

*(Bhima Prabhu's father-in-law), who past away in Mayapur*

by Jalatala Devi Dasi

My father, H.G. Krishna Das was born in Calcutta at Tollygange Road in 1920.



From his childhood he used to like Jagannatha.

He was Srila Prabhupada's nephew. Srila Prabhupada had a childhood Rathayatra cart in his Tollyaguange house with Jagannatha, Balaram and Subhadra. When Krishna Chandra was young he used to play Jagannatha Ratha with his friends.

Krishna Chandra was initiated by the age of 14 by Krishna Nanda Goswami when he was just 28 years old. In his karmi life he was a professional camera man in movies. He did many Bengali pictures just like 'Sati Behula', 'Heymahamanav', 'Mira Bai' etc. Afterwards he joined in a newspaper called Basumai Newspaper.

When Srila Prabhupada went first to America he came himself to this newspaper to put an advertisement. The day he came there Krishna Chandra met him.

When Srila Prabhupada was in householder life he was in Allahabad, Krishna Chandra used to go with his brother to

Allahabad to stay in Srila Prabhupada's house. Srila Prabhupada had a bicycle, so Krishna Chandra Das used to ride it.

As Srila Prabhupada was a business man, he used to bring some toothpaste to Krishna Chandra and his brother and distribute to them in the Tollygange house. Srila Prabhupada had come to his brother Purna Chandra's house many times. Purna Chandra was the father of Krishna Chandra, they had a big orchard in Tollygange, so Srila Prabhupada used to come and enjoy.

At the age 74 Krishna Chandra came to Mayapur Dham to stay. He used to go to the temple everyday. All the devotees used to like him and he also was very friendly to all the devotees.

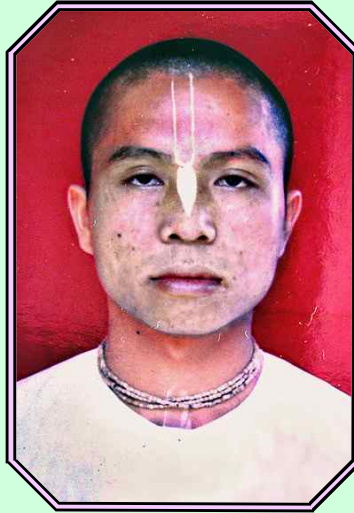
At the age of 84 he had a fall one morning as he got out of bed and broke his leg. He was sick

for a few months, but never forgot Krishna. He used to pray to Radha-Madhava to go again to the temple. He had the desire to leave his body in Sridham Mayapur. On January 9th 3.30am he passed away. Krishna is so kind that he fulfills everyone's desire. Hare Krishna. u



# Story of Bhakta Sanjai's departure

By Bh. Karan,  
a friend of Bh. Sanjai from the  
same village in Asam



Bhakta Sanjay Terang, age 22yrs was born in 1982 in a village called Terang (Howraghat) in the district Karbi Anglong, which is located within Assam (northeastern part of India). From his young age he was very incline to devotional service. From the age of 5 he started worshipping various demigods such as Durga, Saraswati etc. However, he came from a non-vegetarian background, but still he abandoned meat from his tender age. He had one elder brother and one younger sister.

In spite of them being non-vegetarian (before joining ISKCON), however, his parents would never interfere in their son's spiritual pursuits, rather they would encourage him to proceed ahead. He would go to school, but at the same time would participate and get involved in different spiritual activities. After realizing and getting much awareness of the support, encouragement and suggestion from his parents he became more exited and overwhelmed so much so that he wasn't very much satisfied with his present service. Later on at age of about 14 to 15 he accepted Lord Shiva as his worshipable lord.

Often he would join with a group of people who were also spiritual practitioners, but would hardly follow the principles of the scripture. Gradually, with the passage of time, his spirit and his eagerness and willingness to perform devotional service greatly intensified. Never was there a time when he was neglecting his devotional service. Many times he would have to separate from family members, relatives and friends and would join with preaching

programs (demigod worshippers) for about one or two months. He was so attached to reading scriptures that he finished reading many Vedas and Puranas including Ramayana and Bhagavad-Gita (though not Bhagavad Gita as it is). Having more faith on the Lord and himself he sometimes couldn't resist to share with his parents, brother and sister the realization and ecstasy he was experiencing.

Surprisingly, by his good fortune one day he happened to come across one of his own man who was an ISKCON devotee, who later on introduced him to this movement. From that point onwards he started worshipping Krishna and was one hundred percent convinced that he is the supreme Lord, and all the demigods whom he had worshiped before were all created by him. One day he asked of his father, requesting him to build a small temple where he can peacefully execute service to the Lord. The father seeing his son overly interested in spiritual life instantly built one small temple for him.

Because of his traveling in different places and living in a very unregulated way he would fall sick from time to time. But he was so determined and being so resolute that regardless of his bodily condition he persistently carried on with his sadhana and Bhajana. He became so attracted and impressed by Srila Prabhupada and his movement that he finally decided to go and stay in Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir (ISKCON.) He came to Mayapur for his Bhakta training with one of the devotees from the same place.

Bhakta Sanjay having a friendly and loving nature would amuse the other devotees and enliven them, keeping everyone in a cheerful mood. Bhakta Sanjay would do his service very wholeheartedly every time. He was so attentive to his service that whenever he was asked to do anything he would readily do it. Everybody liked him. He would tell and reveal his heart to his friends, the strong attachment he had for the Dham. He wouldn't even think of going back to his native land, however he was asked to go back and preach in his native land after having stayed for a few years. He usually would tell his friends that he would like to live in the Dham for the rest of his life.

After completing his Bhakta training for 5 months (3 months in Mayapur and 2 months in Calcutta) he came back to Mayapur from Calcutta and joined the Sankirtan department for book distribution, which was his preferred service. "Life in Sankirtan is so wonderful and enjoyable that I wish to carry on with it through out my life" he would tell occasionally to his friend.

Having so much bodily problem beginning with headache, backache (because of extra books he would normally carry), dizziness, etc, he would somehow or other bear it silently without making any complaint to others. At other times he would be chastised by his in-charge because of taking more rest on account of his weak body. Bhakta Sanjay had to undergo so much physical pain, but remained so steady and never thought of deviating himself from his service. One of the unique things one can find in him is his appreciation of other devotees.

Initially he was very much satisfied and happy in doing his service, but as his body gradually started becoming weaker and weaker with the passing of days, he became more and more incapable of doing it. After having gone through so many difficulties, which arose from his body, he finally decided

to change his department under the advice and suggestion from a few of the devotees.

At first he was not easily convinced to leave the Sankirtan department, which he had such a strong liking for. But the situation had forced him somehow. One day he was asked to approach the general manager for the purpose of finding him some service which would suit him. But every time he would go he would receive an unsatisfying response.

He was so much concerned and afraid of offending somebody that he, therefore, gladly accepted the same service without hesitation from the general manager. At last, the final advice of the General manager was given to him to join the Calcutta Sankirtan bus rather than join Assam Sankirtan bus. As a matter of fact, in Calcutta one does not need to change from place to place. One can settle permanently in one building and therefore one can get every good facility. Also it was a chance to recover from illness, whereas in the Assam party there was no such thing. Keeping himself full of faith in Prabhupada, Nrisimhadev and Radha-madhava, he took up the risk and marched forward in order to please them.

Walking down the busy streets of Calcutta with people rushing in different directions, he sometimes had to confront himself with the kind of people, whose business it was to just waste his time. The unbearable scorching heat of the sun would sometimes cause deep pain in his head, the noisy traffic jam and the polluted air which he had to breathe and got suffocated sometimes, the extreme anxiety and worries of the unexpected arrival of the cold heavy winter rains. This could lead him to high fever.

Bhakta Sanjay lost his bodily strength in his attempt to please Prabhupada. But Prabhupada mercifully had given him enough strength and blessing that he didn't give it up but rather proceeded more ahead. He was so obedient and respectful to his in-charge that he would not keep a single paisa with him. He would handover everything to

him, which pleased his in charge so much. He would even do a certain job, which no other devotees would even dare to do.

In order to relieve himself from the inconveniences he was experiencing, he would take medicine hour after hour repeatedly. He would lie down on the floor watching his friends holding arati which he would also love to do so much, but unfortunately his body would not allow him to.

Out of fear from being scolded from his in-charge, which, in fact, his in-charge wouldn't normally do, he was afraid even to ask for money for his medicine.

One day it so happened that after coming back from his whole day book distribution he found himself very weak and sick. He started shivering, the devotees thought it not to be so serious. He asked them to cover many blankets on him to get rid of the cold. The disease became more serious. His fever went up dramatically high and he stopped speaking. He was unable to stand himself up.

Realizing the situation to be quite unusual and not so normal the in-charge immediately rang up to Ganga Narayan Prabhu explaining the situation. Under such condition Ganga Narayan Prabhu suggested them to immediately take him to hospital and consult the doctor. He was admitted in the Shishu Mangal Hospital. It's said that the treatment done by the doctors in this hospital is very perfect.

After doing a serious analysis the doctor came to the conclusion that he had blood cancer. Every one was greatly shaken after hearing the news. An immediate call was given to Sachi Kumar Das (Sankirtan director). An emergency call was given to his family members on that very same night. The next morning, just after Tulsi-puja the message was being announced to all the devotees they were requested to pray for him. Every one was in shock.

On the first day, he could sense, perceive, react and respond slightly. The devotees realizing this to be a fatal disease started chanting, reciting

Bhagavad Gita verses, put the headphone on his ears of Srila Prabhupada's lectures, placing Nrisimhadev and Srila Prabhupada's picture above his pillow. The second day, the disease become worse then ever and he was unable to speak and see. The doctors did their work at best, but failed. On the 3rd day morning 3.30 AM, bhakta Sanjay left his body.

His body was brought to Mayapur by the Sankirtan bus. On the way to Mayapur just near to the Namhatta building, devotees welcomed him with kirtan. He was placed next to the Tulasi garden in front of the brahmachari ashram, where many devotees offered their respectful obeisances and garlanded him. Thereafter he was taken to Gaur Nitai (Prabhupada Bhajan Kutir), where he was allowed to have darshan by them (Gaur Nitai). After that he was taken on parikrama around Srila Prabhupada's Samadhi. After all these had been done, he was finally taken to Ganga, where he was bathed nicely and was cremated.

All the devotees felt so grateful upon him for all the service he had rendered and sacrificed his life for Prabhupada's pleasure. Devotees around the world getting the news from the website were all astounded and surprised. Two days later a feast was held on his behalf for all the brahmachari's in the brahmachari kitchen. Glorification of him was done on the same day

A couple of weeks later, during an announcement after mangal-aratik, a personal letter, which was sent to Bhakta Sanjay by His holiness Bhakti Caru Maharaj was read out in the temple hall.

H.G Nitai Prasad Prabhu (General Manager):

He was a hard working devotee, very cool, silent and sober. Guru Maharaja once told me not to make too much restriction to devotees coming from that area. I once asked him how he was doing and whether he likes Sri Mayapur or not? He happily replied: "yes, I like it very much". His departure was very glorious. U

# Experience of teaching Bhagavad-Gita

by Atul Krishna Das

I never really imagined that I'd be in Mayapur teaching Bhagavad-Gita. I was preaching in Bangladesh for 4 years then I decided to settle down and get married. Mayapur seemed like a good idea because there were flats available. I came, having gotten blessings from the vaisnavas, and set up an ashram in the grhastha housing area. Shortly thereafter I heard from my old friend and godbrother Prana Dasa about what Janmastami Prabhu was setting up at the MIHE. He suggested that I should get involved.



One day, out of the blue, Janmastami Prabhu stopped me outside the Samadhi and asked me if I'd like to teach Sri Ishopanishad during the up coming Bhakti-shastri course. I didn't really know Janmastami at the time, so I was a little surprised by his straight forwardness...I accepted the invitation, that was in May 2001, and I've been teaching Bhakti-shastri ever since.

Teaching Bhagavad-Gita is a very wonderful service. Bhagavad-Gita is a glorious scripture. Prabhupada quoted from Bhagavad-Gita more than any other scripture. On the basis of Bhagavad-Gita, Prabhupada established Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead all over the world. In his Gita purports, Prabhupada is writing as the world acarya and his audience is all humanity. I feel that I have received incredible mercy from Prabhupada and Krsna having gotten an opportunity to teach Bhagavad-Gita.

We incorporate Vaisnava Training and Education interactive teaching techniques in our classes. The style is more facilitation rather than lecture. For each lesson we identify particular aims and select learning techniques most suitable to achieve those aims. Sometimes we may divide the class into groups and request students to make brief presentations on some of the points we're covering. Sometimes we may request students to draw pictures of the main concepts. Sometimes we may even divide the class into half and have a mock basket ball game tossing around questions and answers for revision. As a facilitator, one can be very imaginative. These types of interactive learning experiences very effectively impress the imports of the sastra on the students mind. It also is a great way to keep everyone awake!

I can regularly spend up to 3 hours preparing a class. With five classes a week, one and a half hours each, along with the preparation, I find myself very absorbed. The course runs for three and a half months. Basically I have no time for any other interest throughout the whole course. I find it a very purifying and ecstatic engagement. I still spend a few months of the year preaching in Bangladesh and I find the study I do whilst teaching Bhagavad-Gita very supportive. We get very little opportunity for study whilst traveling in Bangladesh but I find that the teachings of the Gita always remain in my mind and predominate in my preaching. u

Dear devotees,

*Nityananda Das (also known as Nikhilanath Goswami), disciple of H.H. Bhakti Caru Swami, left his body on 16th April 2004 at 7.15am in Kalyani Hospital, West Bengal, India. He was 77 year old (D.o.B: 26th Dec. 1926).*

*He joined ISKCON Kolkata in the year 1986. He served there for about 12 years. Then he was serving in H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaja's Food for Life Program in Kolkata. Then in the year 2001 he joined ISKCON Mayapur. He was engaged as a cook in the Brahmachari Kitchen. He was a really hard working and sincere brahmachari through out his devotional life in ISKCON. In spite of his old age, he was really working hard in the brahmachari kitchen.*

*All the devotees of ISKCON Mayapur will be missing his association. On Gadadhara's appearance day we held a program to remember him and a large feast.*

Your servant,  
Sankarsan Nitai Das





<i>Name</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>How did you decide to take MIHE VTE Bhakti-sastri course?</i>	<i>Would you recommend this course to others?</i>
<b><i>Akhilatma Priya Das</i></b>	General Manager, ISKCON Kolkata	I had a keen desire to do Bhakti-sastri course. Due to my seva I didn't do that. H.G. Janmastami Prabhu repeatedly told me to do the course so I told him let us do it now.	In our Kolkata temple one devotee is much interested to do the Bhakti-sastri course by seeing me do this course. Maybe next year.
<b><i>Hema Lavanya Dasa</i></b>		I heard from several devotees, who took this course last year.	I would recommend this course to ever devotee who is serious about spiritual life. One gets a very deep understanding about the books which are studied. Personally I was unable to get so deep, by studying on my own. It is just like in the case of professional sports. Without an excellent trainer there is no question of advancement.
<b><i>Krisnagati das</i></b>	PR Manger ISKCON BBSR-IS (Orissa)	One of my spiritual friends told me about it. Also Bhakti Swarup Darmodar Swami informed me that such a course is very good in enhancing my understanding of sastra and personal application	It is very beneficial for every serious student, I am benefiting enormously. I shall definitely recommend to my god brothers/sisters to take up this course, especially in MIHE.
<b><i>Siva Chaitanya dasa</i></b>	Book Distribution (TSKP)	I have been encouraged by my spiritual master, H.H. Jayapataka Swami, to attend this course. I feel this is great pleasure for me to follow his instruction. I have also been supported by my authority HG. Simhesvara Prabhu, general secretary of ISKCON Malaysia	Personally I feel so much change in my habit of thinking after attending the B. Gita course. H.G Atul Krsna Pranhu is expert in presenting Bhagavad-Gita in a way, which is very much enlightening. Studying in the Dham, chanting the wholly name and hearing Krsna Ktaha is very purifying. I feel like some of the lessons spoken in the Gita are directed to me.
<b><i>Bhakta Pieter Boudewitn</i></b>	Temple Commander Bhaktivedanta Manor	I was told by associate devotee at the Manor who took course last year. Also Janmastami Prabhu asked me if I would like to do the course. I asked my temple president for permission, which he granted - mainly because of service - my study of Prabhupada's books was not enough and I felt the need to study them in the association of devotees.	I would recommend the course to others, though I would stress to them the need to be committed in terms of time to study and apply oneself.

## SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM 10.1.28

### TRANSLATION:

*Since that time, the city of Mathura had been the capital of all the kings of the Yadu dynasty. The city and district of Mathura are very intimately connected with Krishna, for Lord Krishna lives there eternally.*

### PURPORT:

It is understood that Mathura City is the transcendental abode of Lord Krishna; it is not an ordinary material city, for it is eternally connected with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Vrindavana is within the jurisdiction of Mathura, and it still continues to exist. Because Mathura and Vrindavana are intimately connected with Krishna eternally, it is said that Lord Krishna never leaves Vrindavana (*vrindavanam paritya jya padam ekam na gacchati*). At present, the place known as Vrindavana, in the district of Mathura, continues its position as a transcendental place, and certainly anyone who goes there becomes transcendently purified. Navadvipa-dhama is also intimately connected with Vrajabhumi. Srila Narottama dasa Thakura therefore says:

*sri gauda-mandala-bhumi,  
yeba jane cintamani,  
ta'ra haya vrajabhume vasa*

"Vrajabhumi" refers to Mathura-Vrindavana, and Gaura-mandala-bhumi includes Navadvipa. These two places are non different. Therefore, anyone living in Navadvipa-dhama, knowing Krishna and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to be the same personality, lives in Vrajabhumi, Mathura-Vrindavana. The Lord has made it convenient for the conditioned soul to live in Mathura, Vrindavana and Navadvipa and thus be directly connected with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Simply by living in these places, one can immediately come in contact with the Lord. There are many devotees who vow never to leave Vrindavana and Mathura. This is undoubtedly a good vow, but if one leaves Vrindavana, Mathura or Navadvipa-dhama for the service of the Lord, he is not disconnected from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. At any rate, we must understand the transcendental importance of Mathura-Vrindavana and Navadvipa-dhama. Anyone who executes devotional service in these places certainly goes back home, back to Godhead, after giving up his body. Thus the words *mathura bhagavan yatra nityam sannihito harih* are particularly important. A devotee should fully utilize this instruction to the best of his ability. Whenever the Supreme Lord personally appears, He appears in Mathura because of His intimate connection with this place. Therefore although Mathura and Vrindavana are situated on this planet earth, they are transcendental abodes of the Lord. U

# Goshala Report, as of March 2004

*By Nanda Krishna Das*

Milk cows - 63  
Heifer - 19  
Retired cows - 8  
Bulls (working) - 2  
Bulls (trainee) - 23  
Bullocks (working) - 2  
Calves: mail - 26  
female - 38

Total: 181 heads

Milk yielded - 5,900 liters.

One cow died and 12 new calves were born.

We are constructing a boundary wall and also a new paddock been made.

At the Goshala shop cow's by-products are available, such as:

- go-ark (distilled cow urine), which is curing 81 human diseases / Rupees 50 for a big bottle and Rs 30 for smaller size /;
- cow-dung tooth powder / Rs 10 /;
- Pancha-amrita / Rs 25 /;
- Ghee.

During last Goura Purnima Festival H.H. Jayapataka Swami distributed 50 bottles of Go-ark among GBC members as a new gift. U