

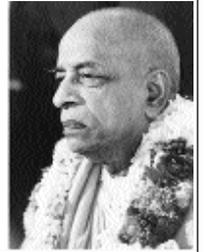
A NEWSLETTER FOR THE
RESIDENTS OF ISKCON MAYAPUR

Mayapur katha

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

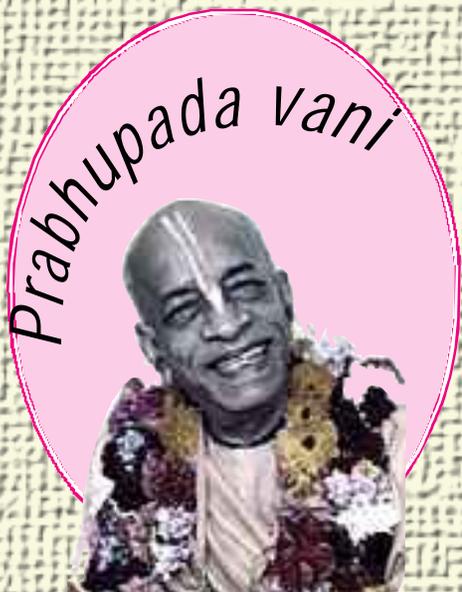
VOL. 4 NO 2

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



*On March 3, 2004,
as a gift for Srila
Prabhupada's 108 birthday
celebration, His
followers from around the
world will install seven-foot
tall Pancha tattva Deities
here in
Sri Mayapur*





Satsanga means the association of the devotees. Sat means devotee. Sat means God. Om tat sat. Or everything is asat. Asat means temporary. This material world is temporary. And sat means spiritual. So sat-saiga means spiritual association. Sat-sangan mukta-duù-sangam. The more you associate with sat, with devotees, then you become, more you become liberated. Sat-sangan mukta-duù-sangam. Duù-sanga. We are in the material world, we are simply in association, bad association, duù-sanga. So if we want to get rid of this bad association, we must associate with the devotees.

Bg. Lecture London Aug 17, 1973

We are opening so many centers because to cooperate between devotees and devotees. Even there is inconvenience, don't give up the company of the devotees. Even I am not devotee, with the company of the devotees, working with devotees, I become devotee. Association has got such power. **S.B. Lecture Vrindavan August 13, 1974**

Bhaja sadhu-samagamam, "Only associate with devotees." This will be the right. We are establishing different centers, not for sense enjoyment, but for good association of devotees. If we miss this, those who are working, those who are managers of this institution, they must always know that we cannot make this institution or this center as a brothel. There must be such management and or such arrangement that we must have always good association for advancement. That is required.

Bg. Lecture London August 26, 1973

"Anyone who is intelligent, he should associate with persons who are trying to elevate themselves for self-realization." That is called sat-saiga, good association.

And what is the result of good association? Now, because, if we make good association, the santàu chindanti. Santàu means the persons who are sadhu, who are pious. They can cut off by their words our attachment with this material world. They can cut off.

Bg. Lecture New York, September 4, 1966

When the day for Prabhupada's departure finally arrived he gave last instructions to Acyutànanda and Rämànuja.

"Just pray to Lord Krishna that I can go to America," he requested Acyutananda.

"How can I?" Acyutànanda replied. "You'll be leaving me."

"No," Shрила Prabhupada replied, "we'll always remain packed up together if you remember my teachings. If you preach you will become strong, and all these teachings will be in the proper perspective. When we stop our preaching, then everything becomes stagnated, and we lose our life. Even here in India people think that they know everything, but they are wrong. There is no end to hearing about Kãñëa. God is unlimited. So no one can say, "I know everything about God.' Those who say they know everything about God do not know. So everyone will appreciate you. Do not fear."

'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.*

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Update on the Pancha-tattva Deities

FROM JANANIVASA PRABHU: Lord Chaitanya was cast very successfully, He came out very-very well. Deity remained in the mold for seven days to cool down, then we took it off and did some cleaning, there were some burs - when clay mold is drying it shrinks little bit and little cracks come, so when they pour the metal it goes into those cracks too and when the mold is open you can see it like inverted wrinkles, they are sticking out little bit. They took most of them off when we were still there. Later on they will do more fine cleaning and finishing work.

Nityananda is ready to be cast and Gadadhara is getting ready, they are applying the clay on the wax model of Him. In the meantime Bharat Maharaj Prabhu is finishing the details on the faces of Advaita and Srivasa.

May be by December the Deities will be here in Mayapur and the finishing of finer details on the face, hands and feet will be done in Mayapur under our supervision.

Ganga and Bhagavatamrita Prabhus were managing our trip and dealing with stapatis financially. Bharat Maharaj Prabhu is doing all the artwork with his wife helping him. I was there to approve things. Shyama Murti Prabhu also went, he is metallurgist and his business was to put us all in anxiety. But, there were some other devotees from Sri Rangam, they are working in BHTL, it is a huge electrical company, employing about ten thousands people. And they were also metallurgists - it is their business. So we consulted with them as well and they also gave us some advise. It was successful.

FROM GANGA PRABHU:

MK: Prabhu, what's the latest news on making the big Panchatattva Deities? What was actually happening on the site where the Deities have been cast?

G: On the 14th morning according to the auspicious times we did yagya to call for auspiciousness for doing this great work. That night after preparing all the metal we started the casting of Lord Chaitanya.

Fires were lit up with fire taken from the yagya and placed into kundas or furnaces where they make fire. They had special crucibles (pots) in there for melting the metal. Jananivasa Prabhu personally performed puja and the placing of the fire. Many devotees came from Mayapur, Puri, Madras, Sri Rangam, and other places to participate, so there were about seventy devotees having kirtan continuously.

The work was going on from 9 PM till about 1.30 AM. There were one hundred specialized workers. To melt three thousand kilos of metal is a huge job. We only used two thousand four hundred and twenty five kilograms for the Deity, the remaining metal is for the pedestal, which we have not yet cast.

Jananivasa Prabhu had collected wonderful offerings from the devotees in the form of gold and silver jewelry. We took out all the stones from earrings and rings and kept them all. We made a list of all the devotees who contributed them.

We melted all the donated gold and silver into solid lumps and weighed it - it was eight hundred and sixty five grams

of gold and one thousand seven hundred and twenty six grams of silver. We cut these lumps of gold and silver into small pieces and Jananivasa Prabhu personally put it in each of the crucibles (pots) an equal amount of gold and silver. There were fifty melting pots.

MK: How the metal was melted, in these pots?

G: Crucible is a special type of pot, made of clay, sand and something else - it is a special mixture. There were fifty such pots - ten on each fire. They were heated on coal fire and there were fans blowing on the fire to make it hotter and they put an iron plate on top. Metal had to cook for three hours to melt.

The form of the Deity was inside the ground facing down and inclined. Before they were ready to put the metal inside they had to remove the wax and after that they baked the clay shell, so it became as hard as a brick. So, when they poured the metal inside it took on that shape. The metal was poured through the feet, there were five holes with pipes and through them the metal was poured.

MK: How the metal was poured, by some kind of machine?

G: No-no, by hand. Two persons were picking up the pot with a special tool and one man with big pliers tipped it inside.

MK: It must of been incredible temperatures...

G: Yes, that is why they were doing it at night. Also they had to do it very fast, not to let the metal cool down. That's why there were a hundred workers - each two men were picking different pots of hot metal and were continually pouring it inside.

After seven days we opened up the mold, it was still very hot. We opened the back first, then slowly turned it around and opened the front. The Deity was hard, but still very very hot. It looked good - the work was successful. We distributed prasad to all the devotees who came there and had a kirtan. Even stapati was surprised how well the Deity came out - so beautiful without a defect. Now they are working on Nityananda and of course work is going on simultaneously on Lord Chaitanya, they are polishing the Deity. Bharat Prabhu is still there with his wife, Bhakta Gana Mataji - they are working on Gadadhara and Srivasa and they will stay there until they finish their work. He is the beauty expert. He makes sure that the Deities will look correct and beautiful.

MK: When will the next casting be?

G: On the 8th of May we will cast Lord Nityananda. We already purchased metal for Him. We will leave from here on the 5th of May to go there.

MK: Where did you purchase metal from?

G: From Pundichary, it's a place near Tamil Naddu.

MK: How long it will take to finish all five Deities?

G: The stapati wants to do it quickly, within next three months because the rainy season will start and even if a drop of water goes inside the pot it will burst. And also they need bright sun to dry the clay around the Deity. So, within three or four months all the Deities will be cast. Then there will be chiseling work and polishing. By the end of the year the Deities should be here in Mayapur.

MK: How do they turn such a big Deity?

G: They have cranes and a bridge-like thing made of metal. When we will bring the Deities here, we will put each one on a truck filled with sand. Indian roads are not very good and sand is good shock absorber. U

Bhakivedanta National School opens



Interview with H.H. Bhakti Purusottama Swami

On April 14, we have opened the Bhakivedanta National School. According to the city master plan there should be a school to educate the neighborhood children.

We have a big project coming up here. Srila Prabhupada said that in ten miles area people should not go hungry. So we are responsible that the surrounding area is prosperous and people have good food, good education, and good health.

For that purpose we have Mayapur Vikash Sangha and also as a part of the Mayapur city, we acquired three acres of land here for the school. This is our humble start of the English medium Bhakivedanta National School, where children from Hindu, Muslim and all kinds of families can come and study together.

We are starting from KG-1 this year and each year we will add one class more. So far, we have seventeen students already enrolled and two teachers to start with - Rasa Sundari Devi Dasi and Vamsi Priya Devi Dasi. But once the school gets started we hope that many more students will join us from the surrounding area. The local Head Master of Bhaktivinoda Institute, Gour Babu, kindly agreed to take responsibility for the school. He is very experienced and a well behaved personality. He will be our chief administrator.

Interview with

Ananda Vardhana Das



MK: Please tell us about this school.
AV: The Bhakivedanta National School opening ceremony was inaugurated by H.H. Jayapataka Swami Maharaja on the 14th of April 2003. It took approximately one year to build this much what we see here (one floor &

bathroom are completed and there are arrangements made to build up another floor).

MK: Where the funds for it came from?

AV: This school is totally sponsored by Bhakivedanta Educational Trust, U.K. Rameshvara Das is in charge.

MK: How big is it going to be and who are the students?

AV: There are seventeen students between three and five years old. Gradually we will increase by adding one class every year as these students will grow, they will go up one level and we will take new little ones after them on the level they just left. So, thus the school will grow up with its students. Children from outside families will attend the school, we even have students from Muslim families.

MK: What are you going to teach them - only academics, no philosophy?

AV: We are going to teach them academics and also our ISKCON philosophy.

MK: Are the Muslim families aware of it?

AV: Yes, they know.

MK: What is the schedule?

AV: They will start their studies on the 17th of April. At first, classes will be held from ten to twelve AM every day and later we will extend the time up to one o'clock.

MK: Where are you getting the teachers from?

AV: So far there are two lady devotees from our community, Rasa Sundari Mataji and Vamsi Priya Mataji, who are going to teach. We are looking for qualified devotee teachers to expand this facility. U

Festival Heroes

MK: *This Goura Purnima Festival was a big operation. Who was involved in the arrangements?*

Bhakti Purusottam Swami: We are very fortunate to be able to serve in Sri Mayapur Dham by the mercy Srila Prabhupada who gave us and the best part of it is that we are given this great opportunity to serve the devotees from all over the world. The Goura Purnima Festival is a special chance to do that. This is our duty to make everyone who comes here feel that they come home.

So, this year we tried our best to serve and many devotees were working very hard, such as Madhava Hari Prabhu, the security in charge; Ananda Vardhana Das was looking after cultural programs; Bhadracharu Das had taken responsibility for all ceremonial things; Purananda Prabhu was dealing with all the details of fund raising and giving gifts; Naru Gopal took full responsibility of accommodation; Nitai Prasad Prabhu was responsible for Shantipur festival, boat festival; Sankarshan Nitai Prabhu was also looking after different festivities; Padma Nayan Prabhu and all Guest House devotees worked hard day and night to feed all the devotees throughout the festival, Janmastami Das along with his assistants arranged the MIHE courses. Vaikunthapati Prabhu did the layout for all the festival brochures. So many - Vrajanatha Das, Vedaasara Das, Amrita Karan Das, Param Doyal Das, Keshav Das, Advaita Acharya Das, Bhagavatamrita Prabhu, Hemahari Das. And matajis - Sankalpa Devi Dasi, Allhadini Radha Devi Dasi, Latika Bhakti Devi Dasi, Manoraksi Devi Dasi.

MK: *And you? We heard that you had collected money to put up the festival and to feed devotees free prasadam.*

BPS: I was there. But, these were the real persons who were working hard. So, I was there to coordinate and make sure that the devotees were getting good treatment in Mayapur.

MK: *Where did the donations for prasadam come from?*

BPS: I went overseas to collect. Devotees mostly from U.K and America had sponsored the prasadam. Also few Indian temples - such as Bombay, Delhi, Baroda, Bangalore, Tirupati had contributed towards the festival expenses. U

Safari's blissful sufferings

By Vakreshvari Devi Dasi

I am Vakreshvari Devi Dasi, serving in the office of H.H. Jayapataka Swami. I was born in Ukraine and met devotees in Kiev in 1987, but started to follow everything from 1988. After first Prabhupada Marathon, I was asked to do translating and editing work of Srila Prabhupada's books into Ukrainian language. So, I joined the Ukrainian BBT for the next seven years. We were based in different cities and countries at different times. I was initiated by Harikesha Prabhu (Swami then). After seven years I left BBT and came back to Kiev, where after completing Bhakti-shastri program I started to teach in the Vaishnava Academy in Kiev. I was doing this for one and half years. Then in 1999 I came to India, in Vrindavan, where I met my Guru Maharaja and he invited me to Mayapur to serve in his office. I came, then I had to leave to get visa and since 2000 I am still here. I got reinitiated by Guru Maharaja on Goura Purnima 2000 and from that year on I always go on Safari.

This was my fourth Safari. I very much like to go on these adventures trips with Guru Maharaja and the devotees. This year we went on the same route as Lord Chaitanya when He went to Jagannatha Puri. At first He was going by land to the place, named Sri Rampur and from there He went to Puri by boat through Panihati. And we followed this route, stopping at all the places Lord Chaitanya stopped. In each of these places we held big preaching programs, it was like a big preaching expedition.

Why is it called 'safari'? Before it used to be a 'tour'. Few years back the word 'tour' had been replaced with 'safari'. Tour usually means something very well planed and you basically can expect things to go in a particular way according to the plan. Safari means adventure. Even though it is planed and Marichi Prabhu is very efficiently trying to

handle the moving situation and keep everything sane, yet on every Safari there is always something unexpected happening and it can happen in any place we are visiting at any time. This Safari was no exception, even, I would say, it was the most unpredicted one. It was the most austere and the most ecstatic Safari so far as I remember. Austerity and ecstasy were going hand-in-hand. The austerity was like a thread on which were shining the pearls of very ecstatic preaching programs.

We had five boats - one for matajis, one for grihasthas, one for Brahmacharis, one for sanyasis and one was a kitchen To Sri Ram Pur. We went by buses and then by boats to Kardaha, situated before Panihati as you go down stream. This is the place where Lord Nityananda Prabhu lived and His children were born - Virachandra Prabhu and Ganga Mata Gosvami. There was a beautiful temple and we also saw the samadhi of embolic cord of Virachandra Prabhu and his sister. Ganga is the Holy river, non different from Lord Himself. So, we were expected to be clean in our bodily affairs. We are living beings, so we had to eat and sleep and go to bathroom. So we had an ecologically friendly toilet at the end of each boat - a big plastic container (100 litres) on top of which were built small stairs and small platform with a hole. We were being warned that we were only allowed to use three drops of water - one in front, one in back and one in the mouth, otherwise the container will fill up very quickly. But no one fol-

lowed that instruction, devotees were washing their clothes and pouring the soapy water there, so soon we had a problem. Some heroes - Doya Nidhi with Seva Swarupa and Nila Madhava Prabhus - had to empty the container with great difficulties. Eventually toilets got locked up and we had to use them by schedule, which was worked out. We were trying to do everything we needed while we were on the land. In every place we stopped at we were greeted by the local Nama Hatta devotees and taken straight to the place where the program was arranged. They were greeting us as if we were some kind of demigods. Of course, we were traveling with Guru Maharaja, H.H. Kavichandra Maharaja, H.H. Bhaktisidhanta Maharaja and also Makhanelal Prabhu, disciple of Srila Prabhupada.

Few times we were spending night on the land, in some arranged accommodation and the interesting thing is that it was on such nights when storms hit. It happened two times as far as I remember, in Kardaha and in some other place. In Kardaha our boatmen took the boats far from the shore, so they would not get smashed up. But second time it happened we were preaching on one of the programs when the storm came and two of our boats got smashed very badly and one of them drowned. These were the boats of matajis and grihasthas. So, sixty devotees with their luggage were distributed between the other three boats. We still had three days left to the end of Safari.

I would like to acknowledge the heroic behavior of our Mayapur brahmacharis, who were saving our possessions at their life's danger while also trying to save the three other boats from smashing. They had to dive in the dark in the storming waters to save our luggage.

Somehow, the boatmen managed to repair one of the boats somewhat. But when matajis came there with all the luggage we



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Appreciations by students:

Manidip Das:

I would like to congratulate Manasi Ganga Mataji for her hard work, coming to Gurukula in the morning and working until dusk, trying to improve the Gurukula standards and trying to make the children happy. I think that she should be appreciated by all of Mayapur community.

Dasa Avatara Das:

Manasi Ganga Mataji is a very hardworking personality and she spends most of her time trying to help the Gurukula. We really appreciate her presence in the school. Thank you very much.

Gouravani Das:

I would like to thank all my academic teachers for their fun and productive classes, especially Janu Prabhu, all my friends for being good friends and most of all Manasi Ganga Mataji for changing the breakfast menu and for all of her kindness and support.

Manasi Ganga Mataji with her son Rishabha



Story of Manasi Ganga Mataji

By Gurukula boys

Q: Thank you for coming here today, we would like to ask you some questions. Firstly, we would like to know a little about your background. How did you join the Krishna Consciousness society?

MG: When I was eighteen years old, I was a typical teen-age girl living in New-Zeland. I had just finished school. I left the year previously, so I spent a year working. I started with good intentions that I would go to work and save money to go to University. I had an attraction for bad association, so we used to party and spend our money, engage in intoxication and other things, but I became quite depressed from that because I could see although we called each other friends, we were all very self-interested. For example, if we went to a party together and somebody became drunk or sick the others would all go off to enjoy and they wouldn't help the other person. So I began to see that the life-style that revolved around so-called material enjoyment was very self-centered and unsatisfying. And also I looked at people who were older

and who followed the same lifestyle and I could see that their lives were not going anywhere, they were dirty and unmotivated, they were bums, you know. So I was becoming a little wreckless with that lifestyle and so when I was eighteen, my auntie at that time was going to the Hare Krsna Temple, but she was not telling anyone in the family, she was keeping it a secret, so we noticed that she was not eating meat and eggs. On Christmas day our family had a big get together and she took me for a walk on the beach. She started preaching to me that I was wasting my life, that I should start thinking about who I was, that I was a soul and not a body, and that everything I had been programmed to believe at school - that we're just a combination of chemicals - she challenged it all, and at that time I was a devotee of Charles Darwin, I was very strongly for science-atheistic - our whole family was quite atheistic, so I was challenging and debating with her. She got my mind to think due to her strong arguments. She started taking me to the Sunday Feast where all the devotees were chanting and dancing and I was really nervous, because I thought that the devotees were always on opium, and lived in dark rooms and shared each others clothes, wives and so, I thought they were a bit strange and I didn't want to go.

I thought it was like a fad, a frenzy thing to do amongst young people, I never liked to follow the trend, but somehow I went and tolerated the chanting. It was interesting that I didn't chant, I just stood up and clapped and then there was a lecture by Jaya Srila Prabhu, who was the temple president and it was brilliant. It was all of Prabhupada's basic philosophy, but for me it was something very high, amazing and wonderful. I've never heard such things before and it appeared to us that there were many questions unanswered by Christianity and science. But I had a doubt, that practicing Krsna Consciousness meant following a lot of austerities and I'm not the person who was attracted by a lot of austerities. So I was saying if I had to work hard and follow austerities how it will be of any benefit to me in the future, because '...in my next life I won't remember who I am from my last life - it'll be like a stranger. If I enjoy and commit sins now how will it be in the future' - I thought I was saying something intelligent but a devotee came and preached to me, he said: "Even if you don't know who you will be in your next life, it'll be you who will experience the sufferings. You should think now about how you are acting because that'll affect your future". So, anyway I was interested, they gave me some books to read and I

took them home. At that time I was just in between jobs so to speak - I was a dolebulger - so I had a lot of time for reading, so I used to sit and read the books, they were quite unusual ideas, God was blue, God had four hands, God was lying in outer space, bubbles were popping from outside of his skin, it was quite unusual.

From the viewpoint of science or Christianity it was unusual. I had read a lot of other things from the Bhagavad-Gita that were very logical, about the soul, about desires, about lust, about the nature of this world and all were very believable and very interesting, so these other things, may be I cannot prove them but I'll just temporarily accept them and I'll carry on reading and see what happens, I'll give it a try.

So I started to practice Krishna Consciousness, I gave up eating meat, I struggled to give up cigarettes, I stopped drinking and all these other things. After one month of practice, I felt a big burden of karma lift off my shoulders, I felt really enlivened and it became such an obsession for me to learn more and more and really started practicing the lifestyle full-heartedly. Then, I only wanted to associate with the devotees, I only wanted to listen to devotional music and I just thought that, since this is an important thing, I should not waste time, I should try it, experiment and see what happens. I didn't have anything to lose. After one month the devotees organize a big music festival, it was called 'Sing Waters'. The year before I had a terrible time there, I went as a junior hippie and got sunstroke and alcohol poisoning. I had all my things stolen, I was beaten up and it was a terrible festival.

The next year, going with the devotees, was such a contrast. The devotees were all happy and cooperative. It was such a nice time, without any intoxication. So then I decided I wanted to move into the temple. Six weeks from meeting the devotees, I moved into the temple.

Q: *What type of services have you engaged in over the eighteen years of your devotional life in ISKCON?*

MG: Although I was focused a lot on fundraising for the temple, after I got married and I got a child, I couldn't travel so much, so I served in Gopal's restaurant for many years and I would always do fundraising for marathons. I used to make a lot of lasagna, pizzas, pasta, samosas and other things. Later on, my husband and I became the pujaris for the temple and when I was doing that I would cook breakfast for the devotees every day. Later the situation at the temple changed, they were not able to support full-time pujaris, so my husband and I started a baking business, making hundreds of samosas, loaves of bread, vegetable pies, savories, biscuits and fudge. We were distributing them all over Christchurch. We carried on like that for a few years and then my husband was offered the position of head-pujari in Auckland temple and we were engaged in Deity worship there. At that time we were very concerned about education for our son. Our small home school had diminished to four girls and Rishab, so every kid was wearing a skirt and he was the only one in a dhoti. We visited Mayapur and everyone in the family, without discussing anything with each other was attracted to the Gurukula. We decided to go to New Zeland, to make arrangements to stay in Mayapur, so I was able to stay in Mayapur due to the good fortune of having a small family. We're very lucky and now we've been living in Mayapur for about three and a half years. We want to stay here for as long as possible.

Q: *What has been your most exciting experience in Gurukula?*

MG: Actually, to be entirely truthful, I find that every day is quite exciting with the Gurukula students, there is always something new everyday. Either, there's some boy cracking his head open, everyday is interesting, but we've had some highlights, which were some of our

pilgrimages we made. Also it's very nice to see the boys dancing and chanting, going crazy on the disappearance day of my spiritual master (Srla Tamala Krishna Goswami), everyday is exciting and interesting.

Q: *What has been your greatest challenge here?*

MG: I find that, apart from living in India, and coping with the different climate and the enormous amount of ants and mosquitoes, the main challenge in Gurukula has been to balance my sadhana and my service, because I'm a little passionate and I like to engage myself in many services, so that's a challenge. And also now that I'm more involved in administration, then sometimes you have to make decisions affecting friends and the lives of other community members, that's always difficult. That means that you might experience some resentment from people who don't like your decision. So, that's really difficult.

Q: *How do you think your role will change with any possible future changes in the Mayapur educational system?*

MG: The main essence of my service here is to have a friendly relationship with the Gurukula children and see that their day-to-day needs are taken care of. I don't think that that will change a lot, but I would be very happy if we get a new principal and administration that is very supportive. If I get some free time I can start cooking class again!

Q: *We the boys are our future hope, how is the Gurukula shaping our future?*

MG: OK. So... one practical way in the asram is that the boys learn to become self-sufficient. They learn how to wash their own clothes and organize their own lives.

Sometimes opulent, sometimes austere, they're fairly disciplined, I think that these qualities will help them in their future lives. As far as academic training, the boys have been given a balanced education

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Interview with *Hari Sauri Prabhu*

SYDNEY, APRIL 2, 1972, INITIATION:

Prabhupada: Yes. How many rounds you will chant?

- "Sixteen rounds a day"

Prabhupada: Yes. So your name is Hari-Sauri. Sauri means learned scholar, and Hari, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. "One who is a learned scholar in the science of Krishna." It is a great science. Krishna consciousness, we don't take it very insignificantly. It is a great science. And Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, "Anyone who knows this science, he becomes spiritual master. It doesn't matter what he is."

"So whatever he may be, the only qualification - if he knows the science of Krishna - he becomes spiritual master. So Sauri, one who is learned, Hari-Sauri, one who is learned in the science of Krishna. So try to be a learned scholar in Krishna science and deliver the whole world. Thank you. Hare Krishna. Next man."



MK: *What impressions did you have from this year's festival?*

Hari Sauri Prabhu: I was not here for the last two festivals. I've been in Australia. Overall, I was quite impressed; it was organized very nicely. I thought everything was up to a good standard. There were plenty of things for the visiting devotees to keep them occupied. I especially liked the direction the management took in trying to provide everything for free and in trying to accommodate people as much as possible in a friendly manner. It makes a big impression on everyone - the festival is free, it is very elaborate, there are the pandal programs, special festivals like Ratha-yatra, Ganga-puja, the boat festival... And then, on top of that prasadam is free for the three weeks, which is very impressive.

It will generate a lot of good will for Mayapur, and it really makes devotees feel that they have come home. When you go home you don't expect that you are going to be charged for anything. At home you expect to be looked after and people there will go out of their way to make sure you are comfortable, happy and having a good time. And I felt that mood was there quite a bit.

I think Bhakti Purussotama Maharaja was the obvious generator of that kind of good will. He seems to understand what people would like to have when they come for the

festival and he is doing his best to deliver it. I think he was very successful at it. The festival was a big success - it was excellent.

MK: *Is it your personal opinion or is it also based on what you heard from other devotees?*

HS: My comments about the festival are based on my own experience, after coming to Mayapur festivals since 1975, and also comments that I heard from the devotees who are visiting. Everybody was very enthusiastic - they really appreciated practically every aspect of the festival. That's not to say that it can't be improved. But mood was very, very good.

MK: *Do you have any suggestions for improvements?*

HS: Sure, we can always make things better every year. When you go to places like Tirupati and see how they are putting their festivals on... they have had hundreds of years of practice and 100,000's of people go to their festivals. Everything is highly organized - everything is very 'pucca' in the way it is presented and in the way people are being looked after.

We need to maintain a very high standard every year, not just one or two years, but every year the devotees should be dealt with in a very exemplary fashion. They should have a good experience of their visit to Mayapur and if they do, they will carry that goodwill to every country in the world and they will tell every-

body there that it was a fantastic experience, the festival was great - there were so many varieties of things to do - seminars, parikramas, one day festivals like Ganga Puja, boat festival, Ratha-yatra, etc. Plus it was all for free.

So, the festival should grow every year, that's why I was telling you about Tirupati. It has such a good reputation that more and more people are coming all the time. In the same way, the festivals we are having now are actually very small-scale compared to what they will be like once the new temple gets built. When that happens we will have ten, hundreds of times more people coming for the festival and on Gaura Purnima the entire area will be jam-packed. We have to develop our expertise in dealing with very, very large number of people; it's going to be a huge operation. So, this is good training for the Mayapur devotees who are now dealing with 1500 or 2000 devotees for the festivals and in future they will be dealing with 10,000 devotees.

MK: *What was the number of devotees this year?*

HS: There were 1,800 registered participants. Out of that some people came for just a portion of the festival, like someone was here just for parikrama and then left. In the 500th Anniversary festival in 1986 we had just over 2,000 devotees staying on the property, which was the biggest festival we had till that

point. Now it is becoming a regular thing. So, we are gradually building up the capacity and our expertise to host devotees as the numbers increase. In the future we will have an unlimited number of people coming here, no doubt about that.

MK: *So, you are saying that we are still on the training stage. Do you have any specific suggestions for improving things?*

HS: Well, obviously in future we will need a lot more facility for hosting devotees - a lot more hotels and facilities for housing people, feeding people, etc. The only complaint I have heard about this festival is that some of the accommodations, in places like Gada building were not clean and there was a huge amount of noise. Some people complained about that. So that is something to look to improving, but, overall, people were happy.

MK: *You were here with Srila Prabhupada previously. Could you say something about Mayapur development that you see now? Is it going in line with what Prabhupada was envisioning?*

HS: I was here with Prabhupada in 1976 and 1977 and it is actually during that period the first plans were presented to Prabhupada for the main temple, the Adbhuta Mandir and also the first ideas for the development of a small city encampment around the temple. In both cases I do not think either of them was anything like what has been developed now. That is not to say that the new plans have anything wrong with them. But the initial plans were kind of seed ideas, from which things could grow. Prabhupada himself did not go into a lot of details about what He wanted. He rather was encouraging the devotees to think about this themselves.

The only thing He was very specific about is that there should be a planetarium, based on the fifth canto of Srimad Bhagavatam inside the actual temple and the other thing that He was very clear about is the size and the number of Deities that should be present in the main temple. He did specify the life-size

Deities of Radha-Krishna and Pancha-tatva. He also said that all the disciplic succession should be represented there by murtis of each of the previous acharyas. So, those were the main things, but He left a lot of the blanks to be filled in by his disciples.

MK: *You said all the Disciplic succession. Does it mean not only what we have on the altar now, but actually all the way back to Krishna?*

HS: My understanding was that He wanted at least all the way to Lord Chaitanya and if possible the whole disciplic succession as it is listed in His books.

So, we have Radha-Madhava and Astasakhis, next year we will hopefully have full size Pancha-tattva and also we are going to see the start of the main temple within a year or two.

It seems that there is some new determination coming up to see that the temple is built or substantially completed by the end of the lifetimes of Prabhupada's direct disciples. If that could be achieved that would be a very wonderful thing.

I heard two things about the building of that temple. Apparently, at one time Prabhupada said that it would be built essentially by one person and in another time He had said that it would be built by the combined effort of all the devotees around the world. So, let's see.

MK: *Which out of these two statements was the last one?*

HS: I don't know which was the latest, I was told both things. I remember Harikesh told me that. It is not something I heard directly from Srila Prabhupada. Harikesh told me both things, that he heard it from Prabhupada.

Certainly Prabhupada expected that BBT would supply the majority of the funds. Let us see what happens. Right now the BBT is nowhere near in as good shape as it used to be in the mid-70's, it was really going well at that time. Now it is struggling to fulfill a lot of its obligations. But that may change.

Prabhupada definitely envisioned that when the temple was built it

would attract people from all over the world. He gave us an impression that it would be the number one pilgrimage place on the planet and I do feel confident in seeing the way things are developing that if the temple is built it will actually gain that role as the premiere pilgrimage site of any religion anywhere on the planet.

MK: *There are two basic opinions among devotees about how things should be built in the city.*

One is that everything should be built according to vastu because it is vedic.

Another one is that Srila Prabhupada did not mention vastu when He designed the Lotus building or gave His instructions how the Long (Chakra) building should be done. And that Prabhupada's first consideration was always practicality for preaching - may be even at the cost of some inferior rules.

What is your view on this point?

HS: As far as the development is concerned, Prabhupada definitely insisted that we should do things very wonderfully. In those days of course most of His leading disciples were Americans. And He said: "You are from America. You should do things very wonderfully as the Americans do things." He didn't want things to be done in second or third class fashion.

In that respect I would doubt He would accept buildings like the present Pancha-tattva Temple. That place has been highly criticized and deservedly so. It is not up to the standard that Srila Prabhupada wanted for any stage of the development of Mayapur. We are not here to build temporary things that look like go-downs. We cannot have second-class buildings like that for our Deities. Unfortunately we seem to be stuck with that place. But in the future I hope the devotees will realize that everything they do from the smallest thing to the biggest thing has to be first class because it is going to be a symbol of the best of what is Krishna Consciousness - that is what our Mayapur project is all about. This is the heart of the

movement. And that is the way Srila Prabhupada saw it. He saw the Mayapur development as being an example for the rest of the society to follow. Everything from the smallest bookstand to the biggest, the temple, where we have the Deities and tens of thousands pilgrims coming in. It has to be up to a very, very high standard, and that will definitely please Srila Prabhupada.

But if things are done in a slipshod, cheap, expedient kind of fashion - you just do things to get them finished without really considering every detail how they look and the image that they present - then we will end up with a low class facility. And people will judge us by that.

When you have a million people coming to your place, you want those million people to go away with the very best impression in their own minds and giving the very best impression to everybody they meet. If a million people come here and experience the facility we have - they will go away and each one will tell at least ten other people they know or may be more than that (20, 30, 50...) - so it goes out to ten million, twenty million, fifty million people what ISKCON Mayapur is like. So, we have to realize the scale we are doing things on. It's going to be unprecedented.

MK: *Do you believe that the success of this temple is dependant on how rightly it is built according to vastu?*

HS: One of the nicest features of the current plans for the new temple is that they are designed with every aspect of sacred geometry and all the vastu features are taken into consideration. And if we do things according to the directions of sastra they are sure to be successful. So, if the information is there how to do something properly why should we not do it? Sure we can always chant Hare Krishna and that will correct things. It's like the Deity worship - there are simple standards and there are more complex standards. Prabhupada was not against us improving things and bringing them

more in line with shastric advice and direction. We are building, so why should we not follow the vastu instructions if they are available to us? These are divinely inspired understandings of how to make every aspect of your living space sacred. So, let us do as much as we can to make everything as sacred as possible. Even if it seems somewhat mundane, it is not mundane when it's done as a service to Krishna.

MK: *What considerations did Srila Prabhupada have when He designed the Lotus building and chose the position of the Long building? May be you know, because you were close to Him?*

HS: As far as Prabhupada designing anything... Prabhupada was not an architect, but Prabhupada was directly inspired by Krishna in everything that He did. So, whatever Prabhupada thought about, whatever ideas He came up with, we can take that as directly inspired by Krishna Himself. So, if you do things the way Prabhupada said, you are assured to get the best result - there is no doubt about that.

But, looking in context also, let's say that the Lotus building was designed by Prabhupada - He gave ideas for the wide verandas and the nice arch-ways and that particular kind of architecture and it is very attractive. It is a great building, the Lotus building.

When He ordered devotees to make the Long building, at that time that building ran down the boundary of our land. He said: "Now we are going to close that boundary by building a building the full length of it". Now, of course, we have so much more land. Prabhupada was considering how much land He had and what could be done within the limitations of the facility we had at that time.

MK: *So, was His priority the practicality?*

HS: Yes. His attitude was always to make the maximum use of what you have available to you at the time. When He built the Lotus

building He had that much land available to Him. A little bit later we got more land and He immediately built the Long building. He had a boundary wall built to mark our boundary on the front there, down Bhaktisidhanta road. Now we have grown beyond that and Prabhupada's ideas would naturally grow beyond that as well.

MK: *Do you feel that it was an emergency type of practicality or Srila Prabhupada was setting an example?*

HS: Srila Prabhupada described His preaching as opportunist. It means that whatever opportunity is open to you - immediately grab it and utilize it to the maximum extent for presenting and spreading Krishna Consciousness.

You can take it as an example. As He got more land, He immediately occupied it, immediately utilized it. His vision was much grander, on a much bigger scale than the amount of land that we had in those days. Even when he was sitting in the grass hut at the front when we had only one biga of land he was immediately thinking of building a huge temple which would attract people from all over the world. His ideas were going way beyond that one biga. In 1976 we were trying to acquire 330 acres of land, but now there is more available to us. So if you can get more - take it. But immediately He wanted 300 acres, so He could build this big temple.

MK: *There is an opinion that to make access to the Deities as complicated as possible is very auspicious by vastu - to make people work hard to see the Lord is supposed to be good for them (example is Rangaji temple in South India).*

HS: I don't see why doing something according to vastu means that it is going to be impractical. It can be vastu and practical at the same time. What is wrong with that? We should do things in the best way possible, but at the same time be practical and if there is a question of sacrificing one for another, I would think that Prabhupada

would always go for what is the most convenient for the public to get access to Krishna Consciousness. But I don't think that the two are mutually exclusive - practicality and vastu. As I said, Prabhupada wanted to do things in the best way possible. Vastu is considered the best way possible to build, so why not do it if it's practical to do it. That's all.

It's very clear - Prabhupada had very far-reaching visions for the future of Mayapur. We are only scratching the surface of that right now. We are just beginning to see the size of the development that will be going on.

But, I think that after we install the life-size Deities of Pancha-tattva, that in itself is going to start attracting even more people. The same when Srila Prabhupada's Samadhi was opened, the number of people visiting Mayapur increased exponentially, it's become a huge attraction. Similarly, I think when the large Pancha-tattva are installed that will result in a big increase in the number of people. And when the main temple gets built it's going to be unbelievable.

MK: *This year a lot more of Srila Prabhupada's disciples came for the festival. Do you think it is some kind of accident or there is some more to it?*

HS: It is hard to say why more Prabhupada disciples turned up this year, but I think, as you get older in Krishna Consciousness, the sentiments, especially to the Dhams also start increasing.

We are getting older, the majority of Prabhupada's disciples are hitting their fifties - that's the time when you start thinking where you want to spend the last years of your life, start lining yourself up to face death. And it is quite possible that many direct disciples of Srila Prabhupada are thinking that in ten or fifteen years time they will want to retire to the Dhams - Mayapur or Vrindavan, get themselves a little place or something and maybe participate in the activities that are going on there.

That is a possibility.

It may also be... like for instance I met a few devotees, who have not been to the Dhama for 20-25 years and they had a very good experience of it and they expressed their desire to come more regularly. There is a natural sentiment and I think that will increase. And again, if devotees feel that their reception is very welcoming they will be more encouraged to come.

A lot of Prabhupada's disciples left active service in ISKCON during the 80's and 90's because they felt that they weren't dealt with very nicely. I am not saying specifically in Mayapur, but in ISKCON in general. If they can come back to Mayapur and have a good experience that will improve the general image of ISKCON as a society and give them more confidence again. So, if they have a good experience here and go back and tell their friends, soon we will see further increases.

MK: *Anything else you would like to say?*

HS: I think that one of the main attractions has also been the Mayapur Institute of Higher Education. Janmastami Prabhu is doing exemplary work in setting that up. It has become a part of the institution of the Mayapur festival now - for devotees to come here and go for MIHE courses. Devotees who are serious about their spiritual development want to go deeper and deeper into various aspects of devotional life and they enjoy having courses taught by experienced devotees to help them achieve that.

Where is there any better place to do it than here, in Mayapur? Mayapur is supposed to be the center of Krishna Consciousness and that means that it must be the center of the educational process of Krishna Consciousness, it should show devotees what devotional service is really all about by teaching directly the devotional arts and sciences.

The MIHE has definitely been a major contributing factor in making this festival more and more success-

ful - the fact that there is a month or more of courses going on. This year they had about 240 registered devotees. If the standard is kept up then I think that will increase. **U**

Story of Manasi Ganga Mataji *continued from p. 7:*

and although is not delivered as professionally as on outside. School would do, I think they are learning a lot and they have a good chance of success in their GCSE exams, although we're not able to facilitate academically bright boys, as an outside school might be able to do. The boys are gradually being prepared for a life of service in ISKCON, learning how to have nice relationships with devotees, etc... Also in the future we want to arrange for our older students to come into contact with senior devotees internationally and in Mayapur community, for apprentice situations. So we would like to build up contacts between the different departments in Mayapur and the Gurukula.

Q: *Do you like to comment on anything else?*

MG: Just that, what a wonderful group of students we have in the school and that they are all very sincere, charming boys. And, of course, no one is perfect in this material world and when we live together on a daily basis, you can focus too much on what needs to be improved.

On behalf of the school, I'd just like to apologize for all our imperfections and any decision in the past that may have upset anyone. We're trying to improve and at this point the management is very approachable, if you feel like you have some suggestions for us, you are very welcome to speak to us or make an appointment at any time. We would be very happy if devotees could give us their feedback and just request the blessings of the Vaisnavas on our school, it's quite a difficult task to keep something going every day.

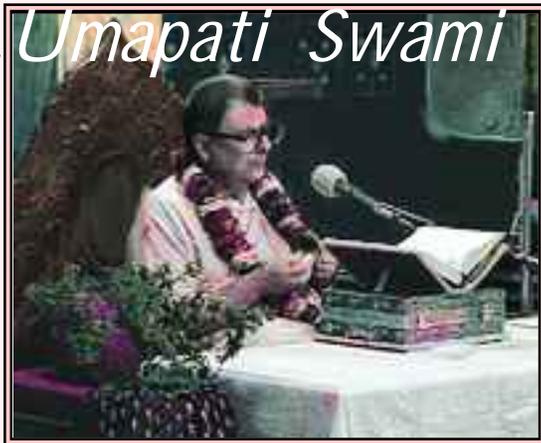
Hare Krishna!

Interview with H.H. Umapati Swami

From Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita, 1966, New York:

...After Wally received his beads and his new name (Umäpati), he returned to his place beside Howard and said, "That was wonderful. Getting your beads is wonderful."

...Prabhupäda was happy. He arranged that prasädam be distributed to all the devotees and guests. The fire, the prayers, the vows, and everyone chanting Hare Kãñëa had all created an auspicious atmosphere. Things were going forward. Now there were initiated devotees in the Western world.



MK: *What did you think about festival arrangements this year? How was it for you?*

Umapati Swami: I liked the festival arrangements a lot. Everything was very convenient for me. The prasad was certainly very good. The temple programs were very fine. The special occasions like bathing the Deities, the parikrama - everything was very well arranged, I didn't have any problem with anything.

MK: *Did you go on parikrama?*

US: I only lasted one day, the first day - Narasimha Pali, Hari-Hara Kshetra.

MK: *Where did you take you prasad?*

US: Mostly I took GBC prasad and after that finished - with the rest of the devotees. Prasad was nice.

MK: *After how long have you come to Mayapur?*

US: After six years.

MK: *How is it in comparison?*

US: Oh, amazing progress. In all ways - in the service, in the arrangements, in the expanding of the buildings - everything, it seems to me it is moving in a very positive direction here.

MK: *Did you find anything, which needs improvement?*

US: Well, everything was very smooth. Of course things could be always better, but the room was nice, the prasad was nice, the festival arrangements were nice. There wasn't anything that I had any trouble with. Everything I needed was

supplied. The service in the Guest House, Vamsi-bhavan, is very-very good - anything I needed was immediately taken care of.

MK: *And other devotees you know, how was it for them?*

US: Everybody seemed to be comfortable. I didn't hear any complaints about anything. The weather was cold, but I think we can't do anything about that.

MK: *Did you notice anything different in the festival arrangements from the last time you came for Goura Purnima festival?*

US: I think it's a nice arrangement now that there are no festival fees and the prasadam is free. They get donors to pay for the prasad. I think this is a very-very smart idea. It will encourage those devotees to come who don't have so much money. It was not a problem for me, but I understand that for devotees from poor countries, this was a problem. So, I think it is a nice improvement that these things are free. I could spend more money on getting this very nice room, because I didn't have to pay for the other things.

MK: *Is there any particular event you especially remember?*

US: I was very pleased to see this project developing. We had the kirtan to dedicate the new temple, The Adbhuta Mandir. That was a very wonderful program - the whole atmosphere was very nice. We got rained out. Everybody agreed that it was an auspicious sign, that the

demigods were pleased by our kirtan and by our enthusiasm for the Mandir.

MK: *Please give us a little history about yourself.*

US: I joined in 1966 and was in the first initiation.

MK: *When did you come in Mayapur for the first time?*

US: In 1976 I came to India for the first time and stayed in Vrindavan and first time I came to Mayapur was in the early 1976. Srila Prabhupada was here then.

MK: *Did you stay for the festival then?*

US: No, I returned to Vrindavan for the festival.

MK: *You said Prabhupada was here that time. Do you remember what He was saying about Mayapur at that time or did He have any specific plans?*

US: Well, Prabhupada was always very enthusiastic about the project. But, at that time I did not have any particular conversations with Srila Prabhupada, I stayed in Mayapur just a few days.

Srila Prabhupada gave class every day and one time I went on the morning walk with Him. That was the only time I was with Srila Prabhupada in Mayapur and we didn't have any special interactions. He was very busy.

MK: *What was He busy with?*

US: Well, he was busy with a lot of things... At that time they were painting the boundary wall. The

wall around the compound had paintings from Chaitanya Charitamrita on it that was done by Pandu Das. And each painting had a verse from Chaitanya Charitamrita. There was one verse. Prabhupada asked: "Where is that verse from?" Pandu said: "I wrote that and translated it into Bengali". Srila Prabhupada said that we should not do that - there should be verses from Chaitanya Charitamrita.

MK: Can you tell us about your service now?

US: No. But I am also doing a website. [note - Umapati Swami is preaching in places off the main road]

MK: Could you tell us about your website?

US: Originally we started with the Chakra website, that was started by Vipramukhya Swami, Madhusudani

Radha Devi dasi, a disciple of Jayapataka Swami, and me. We started along with Tamala Krishna Maharaja to counteract all the philosophical deviations that were going on. At that time there were not very many devotee websites. For a while I stopped working on 'Chakra' and a few years ago I came back to it.

I opened a website: www.dipika.org, and I try to make the website in such a way that devotees would be happy to get on it - read about preaching and some nectarine news. May be, some discussions of problems, but I don't want to make it the main focus of the website. I am managing, so I have to deal with problems and I don't want to deal too much with the problems on the website too.

I want to deal mostly with preaching and service to other devotees -

like looking for another devotee, we even have a place where you can go and look for a husband or wife.

And, very important, the website has to be philosophically correct and very loyal to Srila Prabhupada. My view is that Prabhupada is not mistaken and Vedas are not mistaken about anything.

Yet the devotees who think that they know better than Srila Prabhupada, better than the Vedas do not have any chance of really attaining Krishna Consciousness. I want to have a website which will help people to get out of the material world, not keep them in it. I want this website to be purely an instrument for Srila Prabhupada.

MK: Thank you. *Hare Krishna.*

kirtaniya sadva hari

By Gopa Mukherjee

Q: Prabhu, which part of Bengal are you from?

Kamal Gopal Das: I am from a village of the name Birghasha in Midnapur district.

Q: Are your family members devotees?

KG: I have my mother, three brothers and their families. They are grastha devotees.

Q: How old are you?

KG: I am 35 years old.

Q: Tell us something about your previous life.

KG: From my childhood I loved to sing kirtanas and bhajans. When I was a child, I was going to a "Harinam Sangha" in our village to hear kirtana and bhajan.

Slowly I started to sing with them. In our family everyone loved music, they inspired me to learn to sing, I started to take lessons from a music teacher named Ranagjit Gosh. I learnt *Padavali* kirtan and bhajan from him. Then I learnt classical songs from Vishannath Mahanta, *Padavali* from Kinkar das and I also learnt Baul Sangit. After finishing my school I joined with the same "Harinam Party". We were going out for kirtana and bhajan programs. Six month of the year I was spending out on the programs and the rest of the time I was teaching people in our village.

Q: How did you come here?

KG: When I was a student one Asimananda Maharaja from the Gaudya Math came to our village. I was going to him everyday and listening from him about Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Vaishnavas, about ISKCON and Srila Prabhupada. I heard so



Kamal Gopal Prabhu in the day kirtan

many stories about Srila Prabhupada and Mayapur ISKCON from him that I made up my mind to come here to enter a pure and spiritual life. He gave me many of Srila Prabhupada's books to read. I read those books sincerely and was inspired from that. I loved to listen to his preaching. Everyday I was going to him and slowly I started to go outside with him for preaching and pandal programs. He helped me a lot to come to spiritual life. I was very happy to get his company. After finishing my studies I was wandering in different places with "Harinam Party" and I was singing *Padavali* kirtan and bhajan. About ten years of my life I

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Interview with

SATYA NARAYANA PRABHU

MK: Prabhu, how did you like this year's festival?

Satya Narayan Prabhu: I was not really participating in the festival program so much. I spent my time associating with my god-brothers and god-sisters, talking about old times in Mayapur, worshipping the Deities together, taking prasadam together - these simple things are very enjoyable. I think we all feel that we are making advancement when we come here. It is a very simple thing to come here, but I think it is critical for development in Krishna Consciousness to associate with the Holy Dham and with each other.

MK: Where did you stay?

SN: In the Gada building, it was fine, no problem at all.

MK: Did you see something that needs improvement?

SN: One thing would be nice if it is possible to clean the pathway to the Ganges and clean the ghat. It is not clean and people do their dirty business there - it is not pleasant. It should be cleaned up and some nice plants planted there and the ghat itself could be cleaned. It is the entranceway for most of the devotees and pilgrims to the Ganges. It would be the proper way to glorify the Ganges, if the pathway to Her was clean and fresh. So it was a disturbance to see how it is kept now. That is my only complaint.

I thought the festival was very nice and I felt embraced by the hospitality and I feel very appreciative for that.

MK: What did you think of prasadam arrangements?

SN: I was always invited by friends

to eat with them, so it was wonderful.

MK: Have you spent time in Mayapur previously, when Srila Prabhupada was present?

SN: Yes, I was here serving on the Nitai-Pada-Kamala boat, we were preaching.

MK: Can you tell us some story?

SN: Srila Prabhupada was very interested in having the boat. Nitai-Pada-Kamala was going from village to village. I was the Pujari on the boat for one long period. After the Mayapur festival the storm season begins and we would take the boat out after Goura Purnima. So, at one point we were at the place where the mouth of the Ganges widens. You cannot see either shore. It is like you are in the open sea.

So, one morning I was dressing the Deities - the same sankirtan neem Gour-Nitai Deities that are going now out on the parikrama. The boat was moving nicely when suddenly on the horizon it got very black. This blackness came over the boat very quickly and the temperature dropped suddenly and there was no wind. So our sails went limp. And then within about two minutes the boat almost turned over from the tremendous wind and the waves and the boat started to surf on the waves. The boat started to rock back and forth very dangerously. As I was dressing the Deities at the time, I looked down to get some jewelery and when I looked up Lord Nityananda was gone. He flew out through the curtains and landed on the lap of one brahmachari - because the boat was going crazy. I was in deep shock. At the same time the water was getting to the windows, the boat was tilted to such an extent that the water almost started to come in the windows, which meant that we were about to go down to the bottom of the Ganges. The problem was that they could not release the rope, which was holding the sail. Normally you would release the sail and boat would go upright. But they couldn't release it. So, one of the boatmen broke off the vegetable knife, put it in his teeth and climbed the mast. He hit the rope very hard, so the rope broke and the sail came down and the boat went upright.

We were saved.

We were very nervous about the Deity flying out of the altar. Later Bhavananda, who was the captain at that time, asked Srila Prabhupada: "Srila Prabhupada, we had this terrible storm and the Deity flew out through the curtains, off the altar, He may have touched the ground. We are wondering what offence we had committed?"

Prabhupada asked: "Who was the Deity?" Bhavananda told Him that it was Nityananda Prabhu. Prabhupada said: "O, Nityananda, He is a very controversial character, very unique. No problem."

So, everyone was relieved.

MK: When did you first come to Mayapur?

SN: In 1974 and I stayed for a few years. Then I went back, I joined the Library Party and went all over Asia. Then I came back in 1980 and had been put in-charge of BSCT - Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust. Also I produced the first two Mayapur magazines, which were describing about Mayapur. I arranged to have writings done and I was the photographer. Then I flew to Hong Kong and printed them there. The other BBTs took them and distributed them around the world. I left in 1984 and came back years later. Now I am coming to the Dhams twice a year.

MK: Can you tell us about any pastime or exchange with Srila Prabhupada you had here in Mayapur?

SN: I would go to Srila Prabhupada's rooms on the second floor sometimes. I remember once, He came out and put His beads on the window shutter and went to the rest room. He looked at me and said: "Watch these". Then He came out, took the beads and walked to the banister and watched the construction of the Long building. It was just starting. He stood there a very-very long time and it seemed like He wasn't just looking at the building, He was looking at the whole project. In my view, He was seeing the Vedic city. He stood there a very-very long time and that feeling was amazing that He

was appreciating Mayapur and also designing the city in front of me. It looked like that. He was thinking. He was looking at the construction for a very long time.

MK: *What makes you come to Mayapur every year?*

SN: Srila Prabhupada told all of His disciples to visit the Holy Dhams every year to recharge our spiritual batteries. And then go back in this enlivened state to preach in our respective country. So, that's something that I am trying to take to heart, so I come to the Dhams twice a year now every year. I feel that it keeps me enlivened for my various services. U

Interview with Dvijabara Prabhu

MK: *What did you think of the Goura Purnima Festival this year?*

Dvijabara Prabhu: It's not really my thing, festivals. I don't like crowds... I just like to be somewhere where things are going on nicely, where things are not neglected or some things are given too much attention.

MK: *But when you think about it, what Krishna tells you from your heart?*

D: For me everything is nice. Because if I am not directly involved with it how can I say... I don't know the details that bring about certain situations, so there is no point to give my point of view because everybody can see the same result. What is nice for me may not be for someone else or the other way around. I lived here for five years, so it is difficult, the vision compares to the past.

MK: *When were you living here?*

D: I was here from the beginning of 1983 to the end of 1987. That is a long time back...

MK: *How does it compare to now?*

D: It is very much different because Mayapur has expanded so much.

Without being involved directly I cannot really give a good perception - there is a risk of criticizing unnecessarily or praising unnecessarily. It is not easy to see things in the proper perspective. Like when the festival comes near everything is made nice, but for those who are staying here all year along things are very different.

MK: *When you arrived in Mayapur this time, with the festival mood all around, what was your first impression?*

D: I came before the festival. I do not come to Mayapur in a festival mood. In a way it is like coming home. As soon as I come here I identify myself with Mayapur.

As soon as you see Prabhupad's achievements, I am very happy to be here, confident that everything is going on by the mercy of Srila Prabhupada. Also anyone can come in and do some service in the project, which is the will of Lord Chaitanya, and the vision of the previous acharyas. It is fortunate if one can adjust and do something for it. It will go on, it does not matter if we all leave - there will be someone else to take over. The Lord is within the heart. He will bring more devotees. So it is for us to keep that desire to be part of it.

MK: *What did you find expanded since the last time you were here?*

D: Everything - the buildings, the attraction, Bengali residents, Bengali people, who are increasingly attracted to Sri Dham Mayapur. I did not visit any new buildings, but I see that things are maintained.

Good things should not be done only when the festival is coming up, but should be maintained all year long. That is the proof that we are really serious about what we are doing. If we are in passion we want to put some smoke in the eyes and make everything nice and attractive for the festival, but if we are in the mode of goodness we will do it the whole year long and increase, become

more and more responsible and surrendered to the mission that Srila Prabhupada has given us - doesn't matter which department we work for.

Anyway festival was very good, allowed us to meet everyone and to see that Krishna Consciousness is going on.

MK: *In comparison with the previous festivals you saw how was this one - was it better or worse or about the same?..*

D: I see that certain standards that were set by many devotees, as soon as those devotees are no longer there, those standards have not been properly handled and decrease... gradually, devotees will lose interest...

MK: *What do you mean?*

D: Any department - temple maintenance, general maintenance of the place, cow maintenance - anything... Big things are made of many little things, so you cannot be general on anything. If you look at little details - they speak for everything. General outlook may be nice. Like if you have something not very attractive you paint it over, but it doesn't change the structure.

MK: *Like?*

D: [For example] It is not the business of the vet-doctor to collect, his business is to make the cows happy. It cannot be achieved simply by vaccination. Cows are persons. Like with devotees, you can not treat everyone the same, for in that way someone will get too much attention and someone too little, because we are all persons, we are not all the same. ...

MK: *Can you say something about any detail you noticed?*

D: It's not my thing. I am sure that every devotee living here knows, Krishna tells them within their heart what can be improved, what has to be maintained and what has to be discarded.

MK: *Thank you Prabhu.
Hare Krishna.*

NEWS: *Construction of a widows ashram has begun on the edge of Grihastha Housing area by Sri Mayapur Project. They are planning to complete it within six months.*

Interview with Gyana Samudra Prabhu

MK: *How long have you been away from Mayapur? Did you notice any changes when you came back this time?*

Gyana Samudra Prabhu: I was away for about two years now. I was surprised to see that departments in Mayapur became a lot more efficient. The management has become much more efficient than ever before.

MK: *What do you mean by that?*

GS: It is not so difficult to get things done, not like before. You just go to the manager and things move, very quickly. Like, for example, I needed to pay a bill and the devotees were very cooperative, all those devotees have been in those positions for a long time, they are very dedicated devotees. And they knew how to handle complaints or handle the objections constructively and they were very efficient, professional and mature in the way they handled the problems, especially during the festival time - so much pressure was put on them.

MK: *Whom did you deal with?*

GS: The telephone department, Electricity department, MAC.

MK: *So, it was easier to deal with them than before?*

GS: Very easy, very easy. I thought this is fantastic. They worked with the efficiency of the West. It is very-very good. And, of course, there were no floods for two years, so more money is being put into the infrastructure, instead of repairing everything, which takes so much money out of the infrastructure. I see that the money is going into expanding. The fountains are going nicely, the lights... Money is being spent on details, which to me says a lot. I am more attracted and impressed by details than big things.

MK: *How is the mood in general?*

GS: I have not met enough devo-

tees to understand the mood. I have only been here for two weeks. But it seems to be a good mood in the temple and amongst the brahmacharis. Deities look very beautiful, Radharani is smiling, seeing the service the devotees are performing.

MK: *Did you notice anything that could still be better?*

GS: Well, just as long as we cooperate with each other and understand each other's feelings, I think our movement will become more mature in that way, so as we grow older we become more sensitive to each other's feelings. If we don't, then we are losing out on the Lord's mercy. Relationships are very important. We all have to serve our prison sentence and fortunately by Srila Prabhupada's mercy we are serving it in the association of devotees. We should never forget it. And we should make it as easy as possible for everyone around us - we are all in the prison house together and Maya makes it hard enough already, so why make it harder for everybody else...

MK: *How was the festival?*

GS: I was not here for the whole festival, but I thought that efficiency with prasadam arrangements was fantastic and the fact that it was free is just amazing. I spoke with some locals, they were so happy that there was free prasadam.

MK: *Did the local people also get for free?*

GS: O, yes. I think that the cooks should be congratulated and the mothers who prepared and cut up the vegetables. There were a tons and tons and tons and truckloads of bhoga, that was prepared. The cooks must have spent nights and days cooking. I am sure they have the mercy of the Lord. The hospitality was fantastic.

MK: *Many devotees who live here*

are facing problems with supporting their families. Generally, they have to go to the West and collect to live here for a few months and then again go out - it's a circle not many devotees know how to get out from. Since you had a successful business here before, could you give a few tips to devotees who may want to take up a similar task?

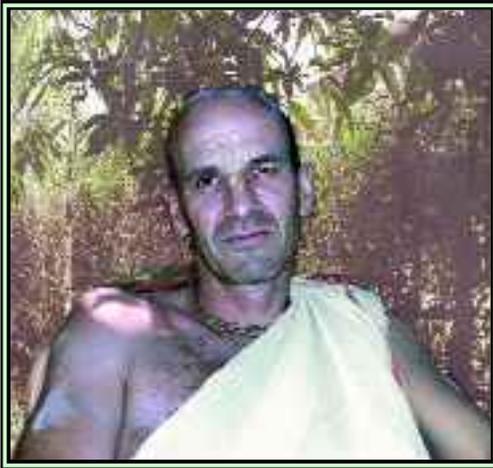
GS: You want tips? One has to see that Mayapur is attracting an international market. When we had our restaurant we found that the temple was supplying the wrong food. Like a lot of Eastern-block devotees could not eat rice, they had to have breads. So, we started our bakery with that understanding that there is need for a bakery. But there is a need for other things as well. We should be in a hospitality mood. Who wants to, there is a hospitality business there - accommodation. I congratulated devotees looking after my house. There is a business in that. Houses, whose owners have gone overseas, could be rented out - there are commissions involved. So many vacancies are here.

MK: *It is kind of already going on...*

GS: Not professionally. I have a maid who comes and cleans the house, pucca, like in Vrindavan, and she guarantees to come. My gardener looks after the grounds even when I am away. And tenants come and look after my house while they are attending the MIHE courses through the year. So, there is definitely an income in that area for someone. There is an income in looking after devotees needs (those who attend the courses through the year, what to speak of devotees who are just visiting the Dham). Hospitality business is there.

MK: *Who gave you the idea to do a restaurant before?*

GS: Guru Prema gave me the idea,



being an Italian he could see the business there, he already was running that restaurant and I got it from him when he went to Australia. I saw that there is a need and it would be stupid of me just to throw it away.

MK: *Why did you leave Mayapur?*

GS: Why didn't I come back? Well, it wasn't because of the devotees. I found that my daughter needed better education. That is may be something that needs to be addressed. I am sure that there are other parents like me. I do not want to belittle the efforts that are being made, especially with the Day school. It is fantastic what they are doing. But I think there are some vacancies there and the MAC could address it. But now I have a girl who is fourteen years old and she is very-very bright, she is getting scholarships in the West and if I could see that there is the same sort of education program here, in Mayapur, I would be back here tomorrow. The life-style here is fantastic, the devotees are fantastic, the Deities are very beautiful, the Ganga is flowing. I wont be able to come for another four years.

MK: *What are you doing in Australia?*

GS: I am overseeing a farming community in Australia, outside Melbourne. It is our duty to give our association to devotees and try to help them, to nurture them. I think devotees should be treated like eggs [gently]. We are not all senior devo-

tees, and even our senior devotees need to be treated with a little compassion. If you are vaishnava - please show some compassion. Even to our senior devotees. I think we are putting too many expectations on our senior devotees. They have problems too like you and me. And I am sure they would appreciate a little personality. If we become mature children, then a mature child is able to help

the parents. We should become compassionate, work on ourselves to develop this quality. This is what Lord Nityananda is preaching. And relationships between each other should be also in the mood of Lord Nityananda, we should not judge any devotee, we should be helpful to any devotee. If a devotee falls down we should be there to pick him up, help, give some strength. We should not belittle him. Because it may be us who falls down next and then who is going to be there to help us out. Therefore we have to become very strong in ourselves and compassionate with every living entity - our wives, our children, the leaders.

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

GS: When I first came I was a brahmachari. It was about 1978. Prabhupada had already left then. I didn't come here when He was present. Bhavananda was in-charge then. I came with lots of devotees - half of an airplane. We had mid-air kirtan, jumping high. We were over two hundred devotees. We came over and took up most of the Long building. Australian yatra. We came for the festival.

MK: *How was the festival then?*

GS: It was nice, but we all got sick. We all had amoebic dysentery. In those days they used to cook with old oil, the oil that comes from the bottom of the can. So, the devotees became very-very sick. When we were bringing them back it was like coming back from a war - many

came out of the plane on a stretcher. The brahmacharis were passing blood. At that time the doctor's room was full of devotees. There was a stool house opposite the surgery, which was in the boundary wall, and there were more devotees waiting for the doctor in the stool house than in the surgery. Devotees were putting up with those austerities. After Mayapur we would go to Vrindavan, devotees would leave here in wet dhotis and saris from constantly cleaning themselves. We had a four-hour bus drive to the airport, stopping often because everyone had diarrhoea. Then we got on the plane to go to Vrindavan for the second leg of our purification, which was just as bad. We had nice festivals, kirtans, dancing, but the prasada is definitely improved.

MK: *What about the kirtans?*

GS: Well... Those days' kirtans were sweet. But, Bengali kirtans - they sing like gandharvas and their instrument playing - no one can match their drumbeats. I think you had to be very very stone-hearted to stand stiff-legged in the kirtan.

MK: *Do you have anything to say to devotees who are staying here?*

GS: If you can stay here, then you are a very fortunate person. You can only stay here by the mercy of Lord Nityananda. Means you have to adopt the mood of Lord Nityananda. Sometimes it appears to be a little eccentric to do that, but Vaishnavas are eccentrics, they are not so much interested in adoration or profile or fame, anything like that... All they want to do is to serve the Vaishnavas, they want to be a servant of a servant of a servant. Devotees in Mayapur have certain personality, like Padmalochan Prabhu or Sadbhuja Prabhu, you can call them little eccentric. They have a personality and we have to appreciate those moods. We cannot expect devotee, especially in Mayapur, to work or behave in a

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STORY OF Maha Laxmi Devi Dasi

MK: *Tell us about yourself and how you came in contact with devotees.*

Maha Laxmi Devi Dasi: H.H. Jayapataka Swami came to Orissa with Padayatra. They were going by bullock cart to Mayapur. I met Guru Maharaja in 1985 in Jaleshvar.

MK: *Did you already know about ISKCON?*

ML: My friend was a devotee and I had Vaishnava association. We went to meet Padayatra and there I met Prabhir Krishna Prabhu. He told me that Guru Maharaja is coming and I should meet him. One morning after Guru Maharaja gave class I came to him and asked if I could write to him. He asked me what I was doing and whether I was chanting maha-mantra on beads. Then he gave me prasadam. On that program I bought Bhagavad Gita. At that time I was a student, going through the teacher's training education. I was doing MA in Sanskrit. So in my studies I needed to read Bhagavad Gita. I was reading Srila Prabhupada's Gita and absolutely loved the way it was written. As I was reading it I felt that devotion to Krishna started to increase in my heart. I started to serve Krishna. I had small vigrahas of Krishna-Balarama. When I was eating I would also feed Them, when I was going to sleep, I would put Them to sleep too. I stayed in my home at that time. Then Dvarakadish Prabhu told me that devotees are coming to our village to do Namahatta program. I went to see and liked it very much, there was a very nice kirtan, then devotees gave class in my house. They were looking for a place and when I heard about it I said: "Come to my house".

MK: *What year was it?*

ML: 1985. Then I finished my education in 1986 and being appointed for the work as a teacher in the girls school in Soro town. I was living there, practicing japa, cooking for my deities. There was one Mataji, disciple of Gour Govinda Maharaja, she told me to chant 16 rounds every day. So, since 1987 I am doing 16 rounds of japa. In 1989 one friend of mine was going to Mayapur and I went along. Here I got initiated. Guru Maharaja named me Maha Laxmi Devi Dasi. Then I went back to Orissa and carried on working in government school as a primary teacher. I used to preach about Krishna to the kids. Every Sunday afternoon kids from my class would come to my house and we would have a Krishna Conscious program, I put tilak on them, Tulasi mala, they would offer flowers to Krishna. Thirty-fourty or more kids would come to those programs. We were having very beautiful kirtans, they were singing 'Hare Krishna' so beautifully and enthusiastically. And after I was distributing prasadam to them.

The schoolmaster found out that I was preaching to the children and got upset with me. They gave me very little money and refused to pay more. So, I had to leave Soro and go back to my village to my parents house. There I was doing Nama Hatta.

MK: *What is the name of your village?*

ML: Mundavanya. Mundavanya Namahatta Sanga. There I started to teach in the local school. If some student felt sick I would stroke the kid and he would feel better. They were very surprised about it and were saying that Krishna must be giving me special power. In the class I put one copy of 'Bhagavad Darshana' magazine, where was the

picture of Sri Sri Radha-Madhava and Krishna-Balarama, we were offering garlands and flowers to those pictures. After class finished I would distribute the prasadam-flowers to the kids. I would offer a garland to the picture of Sri Sri Radha-Madhava and when some student would show the best result in his studies and answered the lesson I would give him the garland as the prize. They always felt happy about it and loved me very much.

MK: *How long were you there?*

ML: From 1991 till 1995. All my students became bhaktas. Often in the class I would tell them to chant japa, Hare Krishna, silently, so other teachers would not hear what was going on. The kids where so much into it, they would start off quietly, but then their chanting went on louder and louder, so I had to tell them to slow down, because other teachers did not like that. Children liked Krishna-katha and Harinam. Sometimes villagers invite teachers to their house, kids go wild - I would tell them to sit down and be quite and they immediately calm down and start asking me to tell them a story. And of course, it was Krishna-katha.

MK: *What is your parent's occupation?*

ML: My father was also a teacher, high school master. He also liked Krishna. My grandfather and grandmother were devotees of Krishna. In my house they were always making Krishna festival. In Damodara vrata so many people would eat in our house. When I was in the womb, my mother was reading Srimad Bhagavatam. My grandmother is a devotee and she instructed my mother to read Bhagavatam every day while pregnant. At home they had one volume of Bhagavatam about Krishna's lila. So, my mother read this every day, it was Kartik month. I was born on the last Ekadasi of Kartik in 1962.

My grandmother used to go to one other house to listen to Bhagavatam and she used to take me with her. I was very little, but when they would blow conch I



used to bow down. And even if I were in the bathroom, whenever I heard conch blow I immediately would bow down. My grandmother engaged me in collecting flowers for Krishna and washing Krishna's plate. My grandmother was observing Ekadasi, Damodara vrata and I was doing with her. She was saudiya bhakta, not ISKCON bhakta. They would eat fish and on Ekadasi they were taking bread (not rice). Their gurudev was doing like that, so they followed. But they had so much devotion for Krishna. I was always staying with grandmother, would go to the temple with her. And when my examination was to come I used to pray to Krishna for good results, otherwise my father would beat me. I would collect flowers and do puja like my grandmother was doing.

One day in Soro that was after my B.A training, I saw many people gathering in front of the local temple. There was a beautiful Deity. They had a festival then. I wanted to come in and take part, but the Pujari denied me entry. I felt very sorry. That night in my dream Krishna came in the form of a small child. Some time after I returned from Mayapur to Soro after getting initiated. In one-month time julan-yatra began. And people from that same temple told me to come to participate in the festival. When I came, there was a new pujari, pre-

vious one died, and the new pujari told me to come and do service, swing the deity. So, thus Krishna fulfilled my desire to serve that deity.

When there was a storm in Orissa. I was in my parents-in-law house. The wind was ripping houses to pieces. It was nighttime, all the lights had gone off. It was so dark that no one could see anything at all. Everyone was trying to get out of the buildings, because some of them were crashing down. My in-laws were calling me to come out, but I couldn't see anything and was scared. I just quickly grabbed my Krishna-Balaram deities and was standing with them inside the small room in the house and praying and praying - all night. Veranda, attached to the room flew away, roof of the house partially crashed... But the little structure I was in was still standing. And I was carrying on praying. When light came in the morning the people were very surprised how that little structure was still standing. Krishna-Balarama's mercy.

MK: How did you get married?

ML: When I went to Mayapur, one day Guru Maharaja said that women could not take sanyasa, they should be married compulsory. I told Guru Maharaja about my life, that my father wants to get me married, etc. I just wanted to carry on preaching in Nama Hatta, as I was

doing then. Guru Maharaja said that it is necessary for a woman to get married.

One day one devotee from Orissa gave me a letter to pass onto Bhadracharu Prabhu. I gave it to him by the Main gate - that was our first meeting. He liked me then. He thought to himself that 'this lady' would be good for him. It was the day after Guru Maharaja's Vyasa puja. Then he inquired about me from Prabhir Krishna Prabhu's father, he is from my village and he likes my Prabhu very much - like his son. Then Prabhu gave proposal to Guru Maharaja that he wants to get married. This proposal stayed for five years, only after five years we got married.

MK: Why so long?

ML: Guru Maharaja told my Prabhu to wait for six months. But Prabhir Krishna Prabhu's father went back to my village and told my father about this. And before six months finished my father came and told Guru Maharaja about the arrangement. He said nothing then, not 'yes' or 'no' - didn't give blessings. So we were waiting and waiting. In 1990 we gave proposal and in 1995 got married. Then Guru Maharaja said to stay in Mayapur.

MK: Did you stay in Mayapur since then?

ML: No, I was mostly in Orissa for some more time and Prabhu was mostly here. In 1996 we had our first daughter and in 1998 the second one. They were born in Orissa. I was still teaching in school there.

MK: When did you move here completely?

ML: One day in Gurupuja Guru Maharaja saw that I was looking sad and he asked me what happened, is everything OK? He asked me: 'Will you stay here, in Mayapur now?' and I said 'Yes!'. And he gave me his garland. After six months I moved in here completely. I still needed some medical help, which I was getting in my village, because my second daughter was still very small. So, it is three years now I am staying here. My third daughter was born in Mayapur.

Story of Maha Laxmi DD continued from page 19:

MK: Will you have more babies?

ML: No-no. It is very difficult to look after children.

MK: You are an experienced teacher. Do you do some teaching now?

ML: No, I don't have time now. My daughters are still small. Later I will teach again in the Mission School, which will be opened on the 12th of April. Now my seva is to make muri (puffed-rice) for Radha-Madhava twice a month.

MK: Which school are you sending your daughters too?

ML: Now in the Day School, before they were going to outside school, but it was not good. And after the Mission School will open they will go there. My eldest daughter is six years. Other two are staying at home for now.

MK: How many years has your Prabhu been in Mayapur?

ML: Twenty-five years.

MK: How old is he?

ML: He was born in 1958 on Ekadasi.

MK: Did he join ISKCON here?

ML: Yes, he came here with Bhakti Purussotama Maharaja. One preaching bus from Mayapur came to the place where he lived. They picked him up when they were leaving town and brought him here. Guru Maharaja liked him very much and told him to stay here.

MK: What services was he doing here since then?

ML: He was a brahmachari, regional director of Nama Hatta for Orissa, then General Manager, and CEO, president of Sri Mayapur Vikash Sangha. Before he also went for a while to South India and America. Guru Maharaja sent him there for some preaching work. Now he is the Life-member development manager here in ISKCON Mayapur.

MK: Thank you, Mataji. *Hare Krishna.*

Interview with Gyana Samudra Prabhu

continued from p. 17:

particular way that you expect a devotee to behave in. Even in our sampradaya, Jagannatha Dasa babaji was an eccentric personality. If anybody is staying in Mayapur for a long time then you have to study that person and try to understand how can he and why he is staying in Mayapur.

MK: When you go back to Australia will you advise others to come to Mayapur?

GS: Of course. We are always advising devotees to go to Mayapur, even if it is for a short while, just to recharge the batteries. If Mayapur is strong and healthy, then the rest of ISKCON will become strong and healthy. That is my realization. Mayapur is the hub of our movement. It is the capital of our movement, so if we cooperate and work nicely in Mayapur, then the rest of ISKCON will work very nicely. Everyone knows Radha-Madhava, everyone sees Radha-Madhava as the principal Deity of ISKCON. And Mayapur city is the principal city of Vaikuntha embassies of Lord Chaitanya's movement. So, if Mayapur is healthy, and the devotees are working cooperatively and happily then the rest of our communities around the world will be healthy and happy. u

'Safari' continued from page 5:

found that the whole thing was hardly holding together, everything is wobbling and moving here and there, even things, which you normally would expect to be solid, like walls and floor. Someone leaned against the wall of captain's cabin and the whole cabin with what ever was built on top of it also started to lean and almost ended up in the Ganga. Only two days more were left and we were hoping that somehow the boat would make it to the end of Safari. And then (!) we came to Sundarvan.

In this place Ganga is divided into hundred branches and it is not far from the place where She meets the ocean. There you cannot see the shores, it is like already being in the ocean.

So we went down one of the branches, on the both sides of which was situated Sundarvan, the famous place, where the biggest population of tigers in the world is living in the wild. Besides tigers there are living lots of other wild animals, including crocodiles and sharks in the Ganges. Devotees were very much aware of this and it was playing on their nerves - the strong feeling of danger. When Lord Chaitanya came to Sundarvan, His boatman refused to go there, but Lord Chaitanya asked him to go and He told His associates to have kirtan. Crocodiles were swimming next to the boat and tigers followed them along on the banks of Ganga.

Bhaktisidhanta Saraswati was writing about it in one of His little stories about one man who went to Sundarvan to get wood, although being warned by everyone not to go there. He was thinking that if a tiger comes he would just break off a stick and frighten the tiger away. But when the tiger came he did not wish to wait for the man to pick up a stick, but jumped quickly and eat him. The moral of the story is that the man was just like a yogi, who was relying on his own strength. But to reach perfection in yogic practice takes a long time and the tiger of his mind devoured him.

But some of our devotees (mostly Russian) decided to take a bath in the Ganga, in the place full of crocodiles - 'risk in Krishna Consciousness', Russians are very risky by nature. The faces of the local people when they saw it were indescribable - every one of them began to look like Jagannatha - so wide their eyes were opened. Fortunately, no one got eaten.

As we were proceeding down stream we left behind the inhabited places and entered a

verging wilderness of Sundarvan. Then we came to crocodile farm, where crocodiles are bred to be released into the Ganga and also for sale. Local men threw sticks into the pit and we saw huge crocodiles jumping few meters out of water, they were about two meters long from tail to their nose. And, of course, there was one devotee, who started to walk back and forth right on the edge of the wall of the crocodile's pit, balancing with his arms like a ballerina. And... devotees again took bath in the Ganga...right at the place where the crocodiles are being released to.

We finished our boat adventure in Dikka. When traveling by boat was over we made a drama based on Krishna's Lila on Manasi Ganga, when Krishna became a boatman. But we adapted it to the realities of our Safari and the drama was that Krishna had been with us on the Safari.

There were about thirty brahmacharis from Mayapur, who were doing a lot of service for the other devotees. We had very nice prasada, easy to eat and not over spicy, cooked in very difficult conditions by our Mayapur devotees. In this safari we had lots of wonderful devotees, who could do all kinds of things - dance & drama, singing. Vishvajit Prabhu was our kirtan leader. We had very nice singing matajis with beautiful voices - Mayuri Sakhi, Bhakta Priya, Jagat Kirti. They were responsible for the success of our preaching programs, Vishvajit Prabhu and these matajis were singing and playing instruments very beautifully, they conquered the local residents with their voices and bhakti. There were also two matajis-dancers - Radha-Madhava Devi Dasi and Marichi Devi Dasi. They did classical Bharat-natya dance. They conquered everybody with their sincerity and devotion and they also knew how to dance very well.

It was very romantic - the evening programs with candles and people were overwhelmed with ecstasy.

After Dikka we went to Remuna to take darsan of Kshira-Chora-

Gopinatha. This Deity was carved from stone by Lord Ramachandra. In this temple they have samadhi of Madhavendra Puri and Rasikananda Prabhu.

We were bathing in every place, which mentioned in the scriptures and where Lord Chaitanya took bath. Then we went to Bhuvaneshvar and saw river Mahanadi, the place to which Gadadhara Pandit followed Lord Chaitanya breaking His kshetra-sanyas vow. Then we went to Jagannatha Puri, after that we returned to Mayapur.

It is a huge task to organize such Safari and Marichi Prabhu, the manager of Safari, did incredible job. Also some very enthusiastic devotees were helping him to organize every thing - Sarva Sakti Mataji, Doya Nidhi, Seva Swarupa, Ekanath Goura and Nila Madhava Prabhus did everything necessary to assist devotees - they were serving prasada, helping devotees in different ways, collecting lost in ecstasy devotees from here and there when we were visiting temples, emptying toilets, etc, etc... Ekanath Goura Prabhu was our doctor, he was dispensing medicines, he knew who is sick with what, he was making chira with yogurt for the sick ones. He was father and mother for everyone.

These devotees have amazing attitude of service to other disciples of Guru Maharaja. When I went on Safari for the first time I was astonished to see their dedication and that's why I decided to surrender to Guru Maharaja - just by seeing the attitude of his disciples, their relationships with each other. I also wanted to have such quality.

Safari is a good training in detachment to the body. By the end of Safari I did not mind any kind of conditions and absolute absence of any comfort. I could sleep on the ceiling if I was told that this is the only space available. By the end of Safari even if there was not any kind of facility, I could still find some kind of facility to lie down and take rest somehow or other.

Last night on the Ganga we were crowded and packed up beyond

'possible' on the once crashed and somewhat repaired boat. Everyone was already asleep and I was going to take rest, when one mataji had some kind of attack and acute fever. I had to help her and call the doctor from the brahmachari's boat. Eventually everything had come down and I was ready to take rest. I found one small spot next to the captain's cabin.

Five matajis were sleeping on top of the cabin and I squeezed right next to it on the floor. In the middle of night the mataji sleeping on top of the cabin above me did not fit in (she was quite big in size) and fell down on me in sleep from the two meters height. I heard soft cracking sound in my rib and felt a huge pain. I could not breathe for some time and was stunned. Then I tried to do reki, somehow I survived till the morning. In the morning I tied the injured place tight, someone gave me a painkiller and life carried on. Devotees were helping me to carry my luggage. Mani Manjari gave pain balm to me. In five days I felt better.

For me the Safari was a test how to give myself to others who also have problems at the same time as I am having my problems, how to tie my false ego in a knot and serve others. 'trinadapisunichena...'. In this the most prominent example for me was my Guru Maharaja. No matter what is going on with him, he is always giving shelter to others.

For me Safari is the chance to be close to my Guru Maharaj and get absorbed in his personality. He was with us on the boats, the whole journey sharing everything with us and encouraging us. Safari is a chance for me to develop more love for my spiritual master. Srila Prabhupada said that prema comes first in relationship to spiritual master and through that to Krishna.

I am going on Safari just to see how other disciples love Guru Maharaja, to see how they love all who love him, and to learn from them how to love Guru. By seeing how much love these devotees have for Guru Maharaja I desire to have something like this develop in my heart. u

Kirtaniya Sada Hari

continued from page 13:

past like that. When I thought I should not waste my time, I should go to search out my sadguru. Immediately I came to Mayapur it was 1998. I came here and joined as a new bhakta.

Q: When did you become in charge of day-kirtan program?

KG: After one month of joining as a new bhakta Bhadracharu Prabhu called me and wanted to hear my Padavali and Lila kirtan, I sang what I knew, he was pleased and asked me to take charge of day-kirtan.

Q: What did you feel at that time?

KG: Everyday I was singing in the Temple arotic with everybody, but sitting in front of Sri Sri Radha Madhava for the whole day and singing kirtana for Them it was unbelievable to me, I was really very happy to get this service.

Q: Do you have a fixed time for this seva?

KG: Almost whole day, morning 10 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and again 3.00 p.m. till before "Sandhya Arati".

Q: Who is assisting you?

KG: Baliraj das, Nityaranjan das and Devadharm das, these three Prabhus are assisting me.

Q: How do you help people with your service?

KG: When I sing kirtana in the Temple so many visitors come and join us. They sing bhajans and kirtanas for Sri Sri Radha Madhava. I inspire them and preach to them by Hare Krishna Maha-mantra through my songs and so many visitors become devotees.

Q: Do you teach kirtana here?

KG: So many bhaktas are asking to teach them kirtanas, but unfortunately I have to refuse them. Because Srila Prabhupada tied our time so tightly that we can't go to Maya's world. Early morning Mangala-aratic, at 7.00 o'clock Darshan-aratic, then Bhagavatam class, after that my seva bhajan-kitana for Sri Sri Radha Madhava, so I don't have time for teaching.

Q: Besides this service, do you sing anywhere else?

KG: Yes, sometimes I go for ISKCON's outside programs.

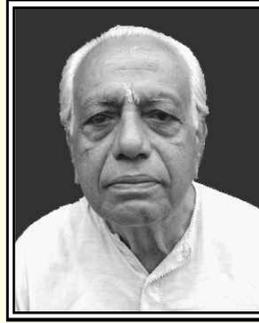
Q: Who is your spiritual master?

KG: H.H. Jaypataka Swami Maharaja is my spiritual master I got initiation in 2000 at Gaura Purnima time.

Q: How do you feel staying in Mayapur?

KG: I do not have any words to explain that, I think Sri Mayapur is not different from Gokula, Vrindavan, I got mercy of Sri Caitanya and Sri Sri Radha Madhava, Srila Prabhupada inspired me through his books to come here, so I want to follow his instructions whatever he gave us to be a good vaishnava, I need my Guru's blessings to do this seva properly, and I am very grateful to all the Mayapur devotees and outside visitors who are helping me to do this seva.

Hare Krishna!



INTERVIEW WITH
Mr. Chatterjee

*The personal
secretary of Sriman
Radhapada Prabhu*

MK: What do you think of the festival this year?

Mr.C: This festival is pleasing to everyone. Everyone can go to pandal, see the dramas, sing songs. Everyone can go to Tamala Krishna Maharaja's room and have kirtan up there. It is very-very interesting this year.

MK: What was the most interesting thing for you?

Mr.C: Seminars. It was not for so long, but anyway seminar is very good for us.

MK: Which seminar did you go to?

Mr.C: H.H. Bhakticharu Swami's seminar 'Srila Prabhupada - the ultimate authority for the whole of ISKCON'

Goshala Report

FOR FEBRUARY-MARCH 2003

by Nanda Krishna Das

Milking cows - 64

Retired - 11

Heathers (from six months old) - 10

Female calves (under six months old) -25

Bulls - 3

Bullocks - 16

Retired -1

Mail calves - 20

Total: 150

A meeting was held on 25.02.03 at Goshala with H.G. Balabhadra Prabhu. The following are the minutes of that meeting:

1. At present our Goshala has six bullocks, four of which are used for pulling a refuse cart. And two are pulling a cart, which is taking visitors around the campus;
2. All mail calves will be castrated at the age of eight to twelve months;
3. A house for pregnant cows would be built for proper care of both mother and baby;
4. New house for bulls will be made;
5. Purchase of a good camera to take photos of the cows, which would be sent to the their donors.

In the last Goura Purnima festival we gave out a collection boxes to the visiting devotees to take back with them to the respective temples and homes with the idea that through the year they will collect some laxmi to help support cows in Mayapur Goshala and bring the boxes back to Mayapur for the next Goura Purnima festival. Seventy five devotees took these boxes with them. U

Goura Hari Prabhu is introducing some of our Goshala cows to the readers of 'Mayapur Katha'

For few years now we have Gir (Indian breed) cows in our Goshala, they are very happy, this is a very good place for them, weather is just suitable and when they came here four and half years ago from Gujarat they were able to adjust very easily. Gir-cows are feeling happy in this weather and Holstein-cross cows are getting sick more often and Jersey cows are in between. They have a peaceful character. Jersey and Holstein-cross cows are western breeds of cows. They are giving more quantity of milk and Gir cow's milk is little less in quantity, but more fat.

This is **Amrika**. She is thirteen years old. Daily milking rate is 18 litres. She had four children, one boy and two daughters, one pregnancy ended prematurely. She is a Jersey cow. She has a peaceful character.



This is **Citra**. She is eight years old. She came to our Goshala four years ago. She has one son and another pregnancy was not successful. She is giving seven litres of milk daily.



This is **Kalindi**. She is nine years old. She has two sons and had one unsuccessful pregnancy. She is an absolutely black Holstein-cross cow. She was born in our Goshala.

This cow's name is **Krishna**. She is white in color. She had two deliveries - one boy, one girl. She is a ten years old Holstein-cross cow. Daily milk delivery is fifteen litres. She was born in our Goshala.



This cow's name is **Lalita**. She is a nine years old Gir cow (from Gujarat). For years ago she came to our Goshala with a party of cows from Gujarat. Daily milking is ten litres. She has three children - two boys and one girl. Her daughter is pregnant now, she is three years old. They are recognizing each other, she knows 'this is my mother'. So, Lalita is now a grandmother.

This is **Purnima**, eleven years old cow. She has two sons. She is giving thirteen litres every day. She is a black and white cow, born in our Goshala.



This cow's name is **Sachimata**. She is mostly black with a little bit of white at the bottom. She gives twenty-two liters of milk a day. She got four children, two boys and two girls. One of her daughters is a very beautiful black cow, named Moon-moon. She is three years old, but still drinking milk and has not been pregnant yet.

This is **Savitri**. She is twelve years old and has three children - two daughters and one son. After delivery for three months, she is giving twenty litres every day. She is a Holstein-cross cow.



Adapted from Dasharatha Suta Prabhu's translation of Srila Krishna Dasa's 'Sri Gouranga Lilamrita'

The following description is of when Chaitanya Mahaprabhu enters a garden and temple during the midday period, which is situated in the same spot that our ISKCON temple of understanding is to be built.

In this way Gaurachandra comes to the flower garden and beholds the splendor of the forest with his red tinged eyes.

This flower garden is a grandly expansive place. In all four directions are groups of very tall kadamba trees. At the base of the kadamba trees are dense screwpine bushes which are encircled by thorns.

Seeing this thorny forest from afar, the common people never come. Madhavi and malati jasmine-vines climb up and embrace the kadamba trees.

The pleasant south wind blows, carrying flower-pollen with its breeze.

In four directions are four paths formed with jewels.

In two directions are beautiful rows of bakula trees.

The forest blooms with small white kunda jasmine-buds, oleander, red amaranth, tagara flower-trees, groups of jewelled gardenias, nageshwara flowers and many other varieties of fragrant jasmines like jati, yuthi and mallika.

Bakula trees, clove-pink vines, pink trumpet flowers and guilders are beautifully manifested in row after row.

White lilies, yellow magnolias, and many red-flame trees are blooming.

Here and there are seen very enchanting jewelled altars above which the trees and creepers are formed like canopies.

The dark tamala trees are splendrous with their bunches of fresh sprouts and golden creepers that climb and encircle them. Temples bloom with trees of pinkish color accented here and there by flowering mango-saplings.

At the base of the trees are seen beautiful groups of rose-apple bushes, jackfruits and so many juicy limes.

The inner part of the forest is surrounded by groves of banana trees.

Some are bearing ripe fruits while others bear unripe green ones.

Rows and rows of coconut trees hold many, many fruits. Among the rows of betel trees are date-palms and wood-apple trees. There are sweet jujube berries, oranges, plums plus cardamom and clove vines.

All the fruit and flower trees are so full of offerings that their branches bend down and touch the ground. Pomegranates are bursting and soaking the ground with their juice. Edges of jujube berries appear very beautiful. There are so many varieties of trees that they

defy description.

In the center of the garden is a colorful temple. Just in front of it is a lake full of cool waters. The landing-steps are formed of crystal slabs. On the four sides are four bathing places inlaid with jewels. Surrounding the lake are lilies-of-the-valley formed of gold, white sephalika flowers, golden champaka creepers and moonlike mallika jasmines. All these beautiful flowerbeds line the bank of the lake and their reflection can be seen in its pure water.

From the weight of all the flowers, their stems bend down and caress the surface of the water.

Sweet little ripples move along with the gentle breeze. Lotuses of white, blue, red and more are in full bloom. These lotuses sway so much that the bumblebees cannot land on them. Greedy for honey, millions of bees fly all around.

Royal swans, storks, herons, partridges and many other birds playfully sport in all directions. The fish living in the water move about by the hundreds.

In a golden temple, upon a golden altar is Lord Gaura of golden complexion.

Surrounding Him are His associates also of golden complexion. [Pancha tattva]

Their limbs tremble out of pure prema and their eyes are wet with tears.

There are twelve gates supported by reddish-golden pillars.

On the outside are golden posts holding up a nice canopy. These gates are interwoven with garlands of mallika-jasmines. The top edges have clusters of hanging sapphires that sway to and fro. The east courtyard has groves of divine Tulasi plants. The West courtyard has groves of colorful flame-trees. The North and South have grasses of dark syamala color which bring to mind soft pillows to sit on.

Pet deer roam all about in search of grass to eat and they spread their eyes upon beholding the beauty of Gaura. A peacock alights from a magnolia tree upon seeing Gaura there and begins to dance in great happiness.

The trees and creepers are blooming with golden flowers. This forest is perpetually served by the six seasons. The sparrows chirp loudly and the cuckoos are all-pervading. Male and female waterfowl wander around on the ground.

Parrots see ripe bimba berries and peck them with their beaks. Bluebirds and doves sport within the trees.