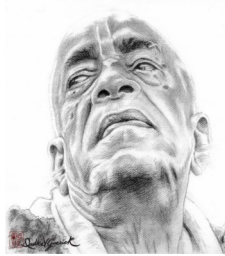


Volume 6 | May-August 2017

ISKCON Sannyasa Ministry Newsletter

Srila Prabhupada on “What is a Sannyasi?”



As there are hairs and nails on the body and sometimes we separate these parts from the body similarly when the material energy is separated from the service of the Lord it is inferior energy. Inferior energy is not false but temporary. The same temporary energy when surcharged with Krsna consciousness it transforms into supreme energy by the supreme will. By this will any energy can be transformed into another just like electronic energy in a refrigerator or in a heater, to an ordinary layman, he sees cold and hot but to an electrician he sees electricity. So when one is engaged in the service of the Lord that person is already in the spiritual energy, and a sannyasi is to transform himself from the inferior to the superior, spiritual energy. If your consciousness is absorbed in Krsna you are always a sannyasi." (SPL to Jayananda, 29th September, 1967)

From the Sannyasa Minister:

Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita (16.1) identifies three important qualities of a sannyasi: fearlessness, spiritual knowledge and purity. These qualities are manifested in devotees who sincerely try to please Lord Sri Krishna, especially by serving the acarya in disciplic succession by strictly sadhana bhakti given by him and assisting him in his mission of preaching the message of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. A sannyasi, being freed from household responsibilities, generally has the opportunity to fully engage in sadhana bhakti and preaching. This gives him an opportunity to easily come to the spiritual platform of awareness of his eternal spiritual identity in blissful Krishna consciousness. The qualities of fearless, transcendental knowledge, and spiritual purity are automatically achieved when one is situated in full Krishna consciousness through the activities of pure devotional service.

In this 6th issue of the Sannyasa Newsletter, Srila Prabhupada explains how matter is transformed into spirit. There is also a profile of a senior sannyasi, Subhag Swami and Lokanath Maharaja presents to Srila Prabhupada his plan for a study retreat. There is also an article about the Sannyasa Mission Committee, and the assigned missions for present sannyasis and sannyasa candidates.

Your servant,
Prahlanananda Swami



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Sannyasa - Study & Preach
- Sannyasa Mission Committee
- 2017 Sannyasa Missions
- Sannyasi Profile: Subhag Swami

Website:

www.sannyasacandidates.com

Email (Secretary):

brajsunderdas@gmail.com

PROFILE: SUBHAG SWAMI

His Holiness Subhag Swami Maharaj spent most of his early life in Kolkata, Srila Prabhupada's home town. Although born in an aristocratic family, Maharaja never had any attraction towards material opulence. Since his childhood, he always preferred the simple way of living. He was very fond of hearing the pastimes of the Lord, associating with saintly persons, and visiting temples. Maharaja was a bright student during his school days. He completed his intermediate studies from the Scottish Churches' College, Kolkata, where Srila Prabhupada also studied.

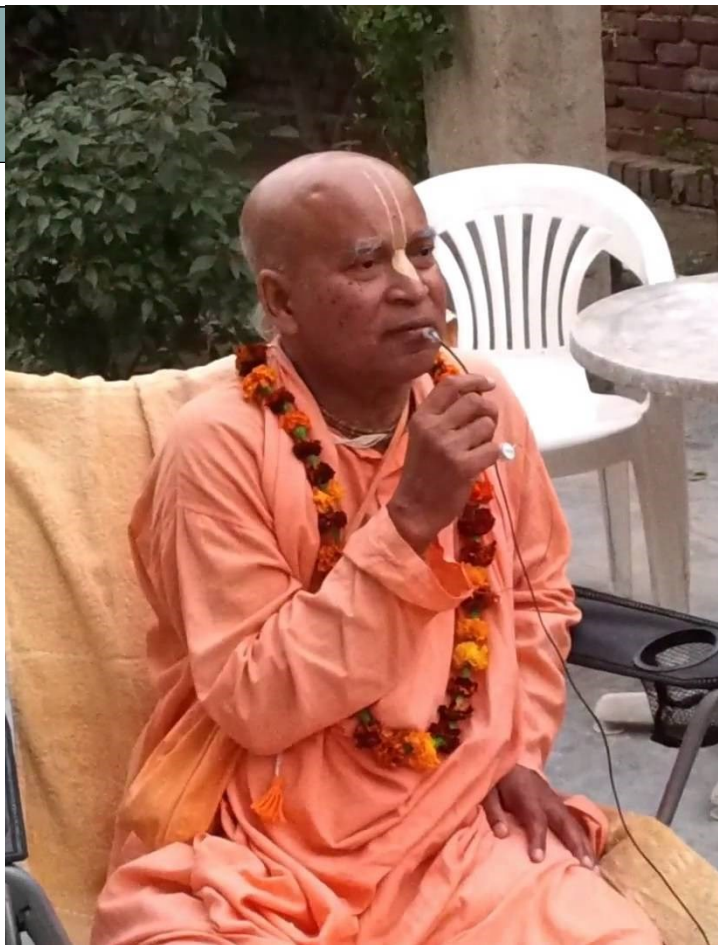
While studying in London, he was introduced to Krishna Consciousness in 1970 and soon joined Sri Sri Radha Londonisvara temple in its early days.

He was formally initiated by Srila Prabhupada, Founder Acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, in 1971. After serving at the temple in Bury Place, Bhaktivedanta Manor and few other temples in England, he returned to India in 1974 to help with writing and translating Bengali literature.

Srila Prabhupada personally trained him for a period of seven years in the scientific understanding of Vedic Culture, which aims at enlightening all inquiring souls, especially students and the scholarly-minded intellectuals, about 'the Ultimate Reality' and 'the meaning and purpose of the human form of life.' Srila Prabhupada gave His Holiness the specific service of translating Gaudiya Vaishnava scriptures and his own books from English to Bengali. Srila Prabhupada also instructed him to preach Krishna Consciousness all over the world.

Subhag Swami Maharaja has travelled all around the world. His preaching activities take him to the far corners of the globe. Outside of India, Maharaja preaches in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Australia, Russia, Europe, Brazil, Canada and America.

Subhag Swami Maharaja has translated many books of Srila Prabhupada from English to Bengali such as Krishna Book, Teachings of Lord Caitanya, Teachings of Lord Kapila, Teachings of Queen Kunti, Nectar of Instruction, Sri Isopanisad, Matchless gift and Easy Journey to Other Planets.





Study & Preach *By Lokanath Swami*

A short while after my sannyasa initiation, I tried to obtain permission from Srila Prabhupada to go to Vrindavana to study his books. I had returned to Bombay after the ceremony and continued my services and preaching there for a while. After a while it dawned on me that as a sannyasi, it was important to have extensive knowledge of the relevant scriptures. I needed to become more serious. It felt crucial that I spend more time reading Srila Prabhupada's books. I had a definite plan of action and I wanted Srila Prabhupada's approval. I sought Srila Prabhupada, found him free and went to disclose my thoughts to him.

I began my conversation by suggesting to Srila Prabhupada, *"Since taking sannyasa initiation, I am getting many more preaching opportunities than before. I feel that I should have a better understanding of scriptures. Will you please grant me permission to go to Vrindavana so that I may engross myself in serious study of your books?"* I looked expectantly at Srila Prabhupada. I thought my desire was reasonable and justified and there would not be much resistance from Srila Prabhupada. Much to my surprise, Srila Prabhupada's response was an emphatic *"No!"*

"I understand. You want to study", he said. *"But I want you to preach. Study right here in Bombay. You study here and preach here."* Srila Prabhupada's words were final and I fully understood and surrendered to his instruction. Those were the pioneering days of our movement, the early days of Krishna consciousness. These were demanding times. We did not have the luxury of taking off or going anywhere for extended study retreats. There was a shortage of manpower in Bombay. There was especially a shortage of Hindi preachers to preach to the locals in their vernacular. Being fluent in Hindi, my services were much needed right there in Bombay. So I continued with my preaching activities and somehow I found a way to increase my studying a little, but not as much as I would have liked.

It was not long however, that Srila Prabhupada himself asked me to leave Bombay. Hamsaduta Dasa was going on a preaching mission and wanted me to join his travelling party. Gopal Krishna Dasa wanted me to stay in Bombay as there was much work to be done there. Srila Prabhupada had also wanted me in Bombay. Yet he sanctioned my travelling with Hamsaduta. The reason behind this was simple. When it came to preaching or a practical plan to expand the mission, Srila Prabhupada would always approve. The knowledge that I wanted to acquire in Vrindavana would come with the practical experience of preaching and hearing.

The instruction of the spiritual master therefore supersedes one's own plans because a pure devotee like Srila Prabhupada has the spiritual potency to understand what is needed for Krishna's service.

Sannyasa Mission Committee

How is it determined which sannyasi or sannyasa candidate will travel and visit a particular centre? Why are some centres visited by many sannyasis and some centres rarely, if ever, are visited?

In 1992, the GBC passed the following resolution: *“That the Sannyasa Ministry should coordinate the travel of ISKCON sannyasis to insure the following: ...Every temple in ISKCON is annually visited by at least one sannyasi, other than their local GBC.”* In pursuance of this resolution, the Ministry for Sannyasa Services, has turned its attention to the systematic organization of missions for sannyasis and sannyasa candidates as a key priority. The word "mission" originates from 1598 when the Jesuits sent members abroad, derived from the Latin *missionem* (nom. *missio*), meaning "act of sending" or *mittere*, meaning "to send".

Sending sannyasis to visit centres gives the congregation of those places an opportunity to interact and associate with advanced preachers who can motivate and inspire them. It is a win-win situation, as it also gives the sannyasis an opportunity to receive purification by performing their dharma of traveling and preaching. Sending sannyasa candidates on missions also helps us to evaluate them outside of the “comfort zone” of their regular preaching area. It is beneficial for them to experience wider travel and to see ISKCON from a broader perspective. Travel is the best education.

As the candidates travel, the Ministry receives reports on their performance from senior devotees. The Sannyasa Ministry relies heavily on these reports to assess the candidates and make recommendations to the GBC Body. However, these reports can be tedious for both the local managers who make them, as well as the Ministry to collect and review them.

It is also challenging to have confidence that these reports are accurate and comprehensive. The reporter may doubt that confidentiality will be maintained. The reporter may be a godbrother or godsister, close friend, or even a siksa disciple of the candidate, who feels obliged to only shower words of praise. The reporter may be very busy, and not understand the importance of submitting a substantial report.

Is there a better way to train and assess the candidates?

Officially, The Mentorship System has been in place for more than a decade. Candidates today are required to travel a minimum of two weeks a year with a sannyasi mentor, approved by the Ministry. The sannyasi mentor hears a class given by the candidate, and closely observes him. An annual report is submitted by the mentor about the candidate.

Now plans are being drawn up to increase the focus on the Mentorship System. Who better to train and evaluate a sannyasa candidate than a senior sannyasi?

Tentatively, for candidates, the idea includes:

Six weeks of travel each year with senior sannyasis

- Three weeks per year with two different sannyasis
 - ◊ In each three week period, the candidate will give two classes which the senior sannyasi will hear and assess according to a standard criteria.
 - ⇒ Those classes will be recorded and sent to another sannyasi to make an additional evaluation.
 - ◊ Each Sannyasi will send a report with suggested areas in which the candidate can improve. Those suggestions will be communicated to the candidate.

Missions for some candidates will continue. We plan to gradually place more emphasis on the expanded Mentorship System as per the reasons mentioned above. Missions for sannyasis are moving ahead. All sannyasis are encouraged to participate in the systematic preaching and traveling scheme. Those taking sannyasa this year, and in the following years will be especially recommended to serve together with the Sannyasa Ministry to strive to fulfil the mandate of the GBC, that every temple around the world should be visited by a sannyasi at least once a year.

2017 Sannyasa Missions

Devotee	Countries / Cities Assigned
Bhaktijivana Vrajananda Swami	South Africa
Rupa Raghunatha Swami	Africa (various)
Mahadyuti Swami	Russia
Bhakti Mukunda Swami	Malaysia, Burma and Myanmar
Asit Krishna Swami	Mumbai / Delhi, China
Adi Purusha Dasa (Bhubaneswar, India)	Kolkata
Vanamali Dasa (Mumbai, India)	East Africa / West Africa

2017 Sannyasa Missions (continued)

Devotee	Countries / Cities Assigned
Mahaprabhu Dasa (Hungary/ Romania)	Turkey
Raghava Pandit Dasa (Delhi, India)	Ivory Coast, Togo, Ghana
Santa Nrsimha Dasa (Jaipur, India)	Allahabad
Vishvvasu Dasa (Germany/Baltics/ Russia)	Switzerland, Austria and Germany
Premadata Dasa (Italy/India)	Burma and Manipur
Vrindavanchandra Dasa (Vrindavan, India)	Burma
Govindananda Dasa (West Bengal, India)	Burma
Venudhari Dasa (Mayapur, India)	Kolkata, Nepal
Priti Vardhana Dasa (Mayapur, India)	Finland and Czech republic
Asim Krishna Dasa (India)	Netherlands
Sundarlal Dasa (Mauritius)	France
Sutapa Dasa (United Kingdom)	Ireland, Nigeria
Radhashyamsundar Dasa (Vrindavan, India)	Kenya & Mauritius
Ekalavya Dasa (India/Middle East/ North America)	Sannyasa Ministry Sevaka.