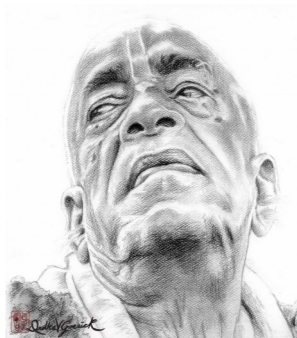


Volume 7 | Sept-Dec 2017

ISKCON Sannyasa Ministry Newsletter

Srila Prabhupada on “What is a Sannyasi?”



"Now you are sannyasi, sannyasi means responsible, you must be responsible for the spiritual progress of the devotees, to see that the right standard is being observed in all departments. Just as I am doing. Sometimes I go to the bank, sometimes keep accounts, sometimes preach, hold the class, write books, sometimes cook—sannyasi should be expert in all departments, and he should distribute his experience to others, that's all. So I think you are the right man for assisting me in this way in the European continent, and Krsna has brought you to the right place, so with great enthusiasm go forward. Thank you very much." (SPL to Pusta Krsna, 8th Nov, 1972)

From the Sannyasa Minister:

This seventh issue of the Sannyasa Newsletter includes a variety of information about sannyasa and sannyasis, ancient and modern. In this issue, Srila Prabhupada explains the practical side of how an ISKCON sannyasi should engage his energies in diverse services in Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's sankirtan movement, while Kripamoya Prabhu's article gives us a history of the various aspects of etiquette and austerity that classical sannyasis in the varnashrama system were expected to follow. Ekalavya Prabhu's article tells us something about the present organization of the Sannyasa Ministry and then we are also told about the services and qualities of one of ISKCON's senior sannyasis, Bhakti Caitanya Maharaja.

Your servant,
Prahlanananda Swami



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Sannyasa Dharma & Ramanujacarya
- An Expanding Ministry
- Sannyasa Training
- Sannyasi Profile: Bhakti Caitanya Swami

Website:

www.sannyasacandidates.com

Email (Secretary):

brajsunderdas@gmail.com

PROFILE: BHAKTI CAITANYA SWAMI

Originally from New Zealand, Bhakti Caitanya Swami joined the Hare Krishna movement in London, early in 1973. Almost a year before, as a philosophy student at Auckland University, he had first seen his future spiritual master walking across the campus with his followers. Srila Prabhupada initiated Bhakti Caitanya Swami later in 1973, giving him the name Raghur Das. Eleven years later in Mayapur, the order of sannyasa was awarded to Bhakti Caitanya Swami who is an initiating spiritual master for many devotees around the world.

Bhakti Caitanya Swami initially served in the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust and also distributed Srila Prabhupada's books from 1973 until 1980. Then Bhakti Caitanya Swami moved to South Africa, where, from 1980 to 1982, he served as temple president in the rural community of Cato Ridge. Thereafter he did fund raising for the building of the Temple of Understanding in Durban, which opened in 1985. This extraordinary temple combines modern design with traditional Vedic architecture and is one of South Africa's landmarks. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims and tourists visit each year.

From 1985 until 1988 Bhakti Caitanya Swami served as regional secretary for South Africa, and he then participated in an outreach project in Johannesburg from 1988 until 1991. From that time until now, Bhakti Caitanya Swami is mostly engaged in traveling and spreading Krishna consciousness in an authoritative and accessible way. His permanent base is Durban, where his gentle and saintly presence provides stability.

After joining the GBC in 1998, Bhakti Caitanya Swami's assignments have included Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Estonia. Furthermore, he acts as co-GBC for Mauritius, Northwest Russia, Eastern Siberia, Western Siberia, Latvia, South Africa, and Lithuania. Bhakti Caitanya Swami has served as chairman of the GBC in 2002-2003 and as vice chairman in 2001-2003 and then again in 2010-2011. Within the strategic planning team effort, Bhakti Caitanya Swami is involved in the team building committee.

His special interests include filming, photography, and parikrama (visiting holy places of deep spiritual import). The splendid outcome of these interests can be seen in the impressive series of appealing documentaries of holy pilgrimages in India and festivals around the world and in books such as Vrindavan: The Playground of God and Traveling in the Service of Srila Prabhupada, Volumes 1, 2 and 3.



Sannyasa Dharma

By Kripamoya Dasa

Practically everyone has now heard the title 'Swami' and knows that it is mostly used in reference to a spiritual person, a holy man, who travels and dresses in orange robes. It is worth investigating the ancient order of sannyasa to see how they lived, before we continue to examine some modern versions of the sannyasa life and how they are related to the guru-disciple relationship.

According to Sanskrit etymology, the word samnyasa or 'sannyasa' means 'renunciation' or 'abandonment'. It is a tripartite compound of san (collective), ni (down) and asa (from the root as, meaning 'to throw' or 'to put'). So a literal translation of the word would be 'laying it all down'.

Sannyasa is part of the varna and ashram system, a system of social organisation found within the Vedas and practised for thousands of years. The purpose of any kind of progressive human society, the Vedas say, is so that by collective endeavour the maximum number of people can be simultaneously healthy, peaceful, prosperous, and spiritually enhanced. The varna-ashram system flows naturally according to psycho-physical propensity and life-stages, and provides the maximum level of opportunity for yoga and spiritual attainment, the ultimate purpose of human life.

There are four life stages for brahmanas in the varna-ashram system. The student life of the brahmachari is meant for studying and developing good character; the married life of the householder or grihasta, for raising a family, developing wealth, performing religious deeds and giving in charity; the life of the retired person is meant for performing austerity and developing gradual detachment; and the life of the sannyasi for withdrawal from the world and a life of renunciation.



The Sannyasi Guidebook

There is a teacher – and a manual – for everything in life, and similarly there is a great deal of advice on how to be a sannyasi. One of the more famous manuals originated from someone who created hundreds of sannyasis himself: the great mediaeval Vaishnava, Srila Ramanujacarya (1017-1137).

The great acharya had several people in his life that he regarded as gurus. One of them, Yadava Prakash, was a philosophy teacher when Ramanuja was a boy. At that time, the teacher regarded him as an annoying child who did not fully understand the Upanishads. Later on in his life, however, he had a complete change of heart and submitted himself as a humble student of the

grown-up Ramanuja. When Ramanujacarya required a guidebook for his renounced monks, he asked his former teacher to use his knowledge of the scriptures to compile one. The result was Yati-Dharma Samuccaya. The Sanskrit word Yati is another word for sannyasi, or renounced person. The book includes many details derived from the writings of ancient sages. It explains how a man should live when in the fourth stage of life, what he should wear, how he should beg for his food, how he should eat and travel, and how he should keep his consciousness elevated and his behaviour chaste to the life of an ascetic. Here are some brief extracts:

Appearance

One who is an ascetic should carry the triple-staff, or tridanda.

One should either be shaven-headed or one may wear one's hair in a top-knot. If shaven-headed he must shave his head on the lunar day that falls between the 14th day of the growing moon and the first day of the dark (new) moon. He should not shave during the four-month long monsoon period.

One should dye one's cloth using the reddish-orange rock gairika. These three things may be white: one's upavita (the sacred thread draped on the left shoulder of all brahmana males), the strainer (small cloth to strain out insects from drinking water), and one's teeth.

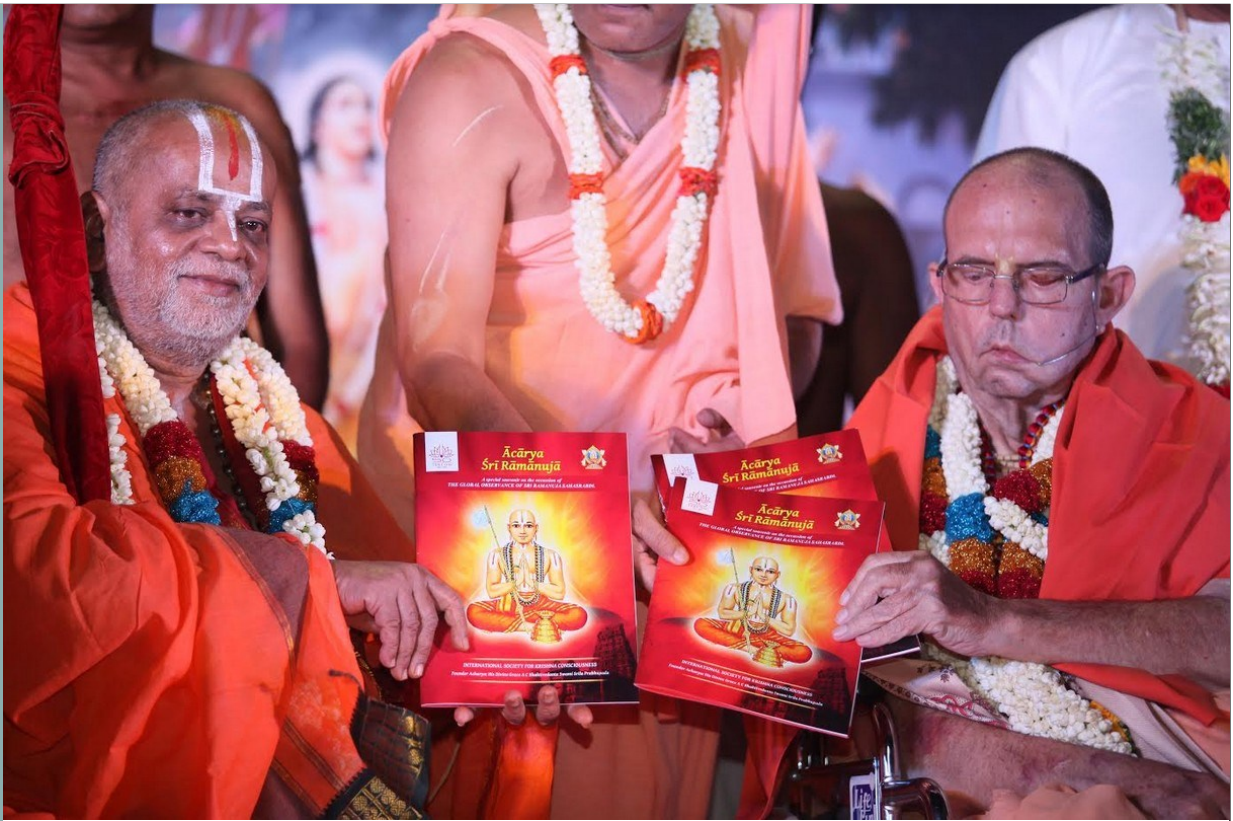
Behaviour

The sannyasi should be homeless, and be free from pride and anger. He may stay only one night in a village, but five in a town. He must not enter a home where the husband is not present, but may enter the threshold if it is raining.

The Ten Vows

A sannyasi must take ten vows as follows:

1. Not to injure anyone – human or animal - in word or deed. This includes the following nine elements: Causing anyone anxiety, causing pain, causing someone to weep, calumny (making malicious statements so as to injure someone's reputation), destroying someone's happiness, conquering someone, drawing blood, making someone grovel, obstructing someone's welfare, killing or acting as an accessory to killing
2. To tell the truth
3. To be honest in one's dealings
4. To live in poverty
5. To live in obedient service of one's guru
6. To observe inner and outer cleanliness
7. To suppress anger
8. To refrain from wrongful conduct in mental, verbal and physical acts
9. To always avoid carelessness.
10. To live in chastity. There are eight elements of 'broken chastity', as follows: To remember previous sexual actions, to recount them to others, to engage in amorous



play with a woman, to look at a woman, to speak in secret with a woman, to formulate one's intentions for sexual action, to make a firm resolve, to perform the act, the opposite of 'broken chastity' is chastity.

Possessions

Water-pot (known as a kamandalu); water-strainer; fine thread and needle; clothes dyed reddish-orange; a sling bag; a begging bowl (kundika); a loincloth; a sitting stool; sandals; a ragged shawl; a cloth yoga band to fix the posture during meditation; an umbrella; and a string of rosary beads.

Of these, five possessions are obligatory: one's sacred thread or upavita, the danda, the strainer, loincloth and waistband.

Danda

The danda is composed of three bamboo sticks each three-quarters of an inch thick. They should reach up to the hair and should contain 6, 8 or 10 joints that do not protrude. 2 or 5 strings, known as mudras tie the three sticks together top and bottom. String made from cow's hair must be tied below the second section from the top.

"One who accepts in his mind the rod of chastisement for his speech, body and mind is known as a tridandi -- one who has accepted the threefold rod of chastisement." (Manu-samhita 12.10)

Begging

The sannyasi must live by begging. All his meals must be begged, but only once in the

day at certain times. There are five types of begging:

Madhukara – Begging ‘in the manner of a bee’, from either 3, 5, or 7 houses only. Such houses must not be deliberately selected.

Prakpranita – ‘Offered in advance.’ Sometimes the sannyasi may wake and find that the food has already been left for him, right where he slept.

Ayacita – ‘Unsolicited.’ The sannyasi has performed his morning rituals and is about to set off for begging, but food is given before he goes on his alms-round.

Tarkalika – ‘Contemporaneous’ – The sannyasi is proclaimed by a brahmana householder even as he approaches him.

Upapanna – ‘Offered’ – He is given food after begging. This may also include being fed at an ashram or monastery, where the food is brought by local devotees.

Each type of begging is good, but the timing must be observed: “Beg when the smoke from cooking fires has stopped rising, when pestles have stopped pounding, the meal for the family has come to an end and the remnants have been put away.” (So says the sage Manu)

The controlled sannyasi will beg and eat only after midday. These are the divisions of the day: Pratah is the morning, Sangara the mid-morning and Madhyama the middle

Sannyasa Training 2018

The third training seminar for Sannyasa Candidates will be held in Sri Dham Mayapur from February 14th - 16th. The seminar will be conducted daily from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm for a total of 9 hours. The training will be held at the Mayapur Institute new campus classroom / kutir.

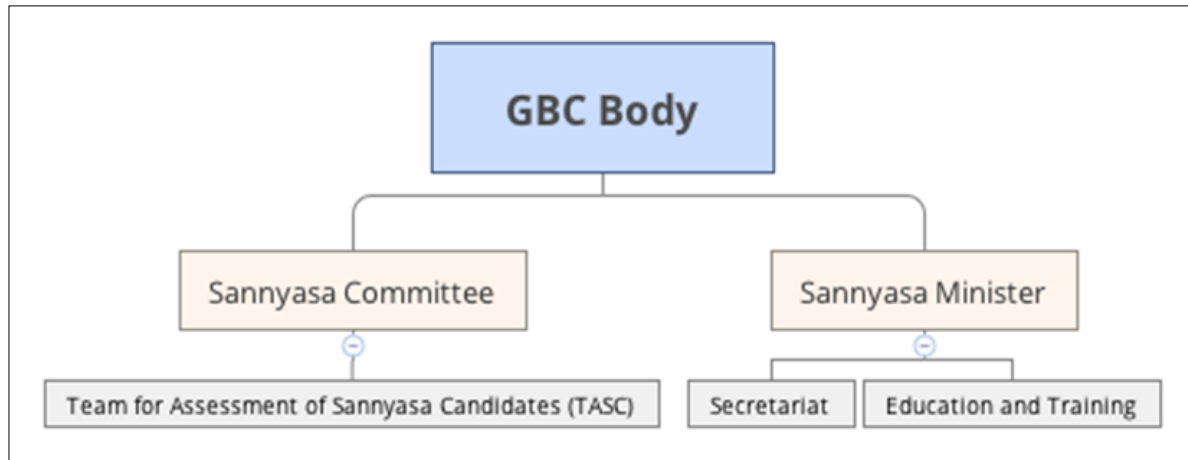
The training includes sessions by sannyasis, as well as presentations by candidates about their services in preparation for receiving the order of sannyasa. His Holiness Bhakti Rasamrita Maharaja has confirmed his attendance. We are currently working on additional aspects of the program.

For more information about the program, please contact:
sannyasatraining@gmail.com



An Expanding Ministry *Ekalavya Dasa*

The GBC body created the Ministry of Sannyasa Services in 1988. The first Minister was Jayadvaita Swami. Since that time, the Ministry has expanded and continues to expand today.



All recommendations made by the sannyasa ministry are offered for review to The GBC body.

Prahladananda Swami is the Sannyasa Minister.

The Sannyasa Standing Committee establishes the principles and practices of the ministry. They review the recommendations of the Team for Assessment of Sannyasa Candidates (TASC) and accordingly make recommendations to the GBC.

Prahladananda Swami explains, “The Team for Assessment of Sannyasa Candidates (TASC) was formed in 2013 for the purpose of evaluating prospective sannyasa candidates in a more objective manner. We have brought a greater number of qualified devotees to our team, who also have more time to devote to this service. Thus our evaluation procedure has also become more thorough.”

The service description of the Team for Assessment of Sannyasa Candidates (TASC) includes; review the application of potential candidates, and receive reports about present candidates. Based upon their assessment of the applications and reports, the TASC makes a recommendation to the Sannyasa Committee, and subsequently to the GBC Body. The recommendations may include, acceptance as a sannyasa candidate, move up from the 2-year list to the 1-year list, be approved for sannyasa, etc.

The TASC makes recommendations as to where the candidates should be sent on missions. Other aspects of the sannyasa candidates progress like education and training as well as the mentorship system is also overseen by the TASC.

Education and training is an ongoing undertaking facilitated by Krishna Ksetra Swami. He conducted a special training seminar in Maypur in 2017 for the candidates.

The Secretariat assists in working on the sannyasa ministry website, vetting applications, collecting reports, communicating to organize missions, etc, and compiling the Sannyasa Ministry Newsletter which has 2 issues per year.

After candidates take sannyasa, the ministry continues to facilitate their missions as per the need of ISKCON. The Ministry endeavours to help ISKCON sannyasis in all respects.

Thus, the Ministry of Sannyasa Services is an expanding ministry which, with the mercy of Lord Krishna, Srila Prabhupada and all devotees, will continue to expand. In this way, we hope to fulfill the mandates of the GBC body and desires of Srila Prabhupada, to uphold the highest standards of sannyasa in ISKCON.

Ministry of Sannyasa Services:

- **Minister:** Prahladananda Swami
- **Sannyasa Standing Committee:** Bhakti Caitanya Swami, Bhakti Gauravani Goswami, Bhaktivaibhava Swami, Hridaya Caitanya Das, Prahladananda Swami, and Sivarama Swami
- **Team for Assessment of Sannyasa Candidates (TASC):** Bhakti Prabhava Swami, Hanuman Dasa, Krishnadas Kaviraja Dasa, Prahladananda Swami (facilitator), Srivas Dasa, Srivas Pandit Dasa, Sruti Dharma Dasa, and Vedavyasa Priya Swami
- **Education and Training:** Krishna Kshetra Swami
- **Secretariat:** Brajsunder Dasa, Citra Devi Dasi, Damodar Caitanya Dasa, Dharmatma Dasa, Dhruva Dasa, Eklavya Dasa, Priti Vardan Dasa, Sutapa Dasa, and Bhakta Vikas Chavan