



Dear Maharajas,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

We are pleased to introduce you to the Sannyasa Newsletter. This is a reformed and revised version of the journal published a few years ago. The aim of this newsletter is to increase the communication between the Sannyasa Ministry and the current ISKCON sannyasis, and to strengthen the relationships amongst the sannyasis.

Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu has instructed His followers to serve all living entities by trying to awaken Krishna consciousness in the hearts of whomsoever they meet. Certainly, the mission of all ISKCON sannyasis is to, intelligently and enthusiastically, serve this instruction through following the teachings and example of Srila Prabhupada.

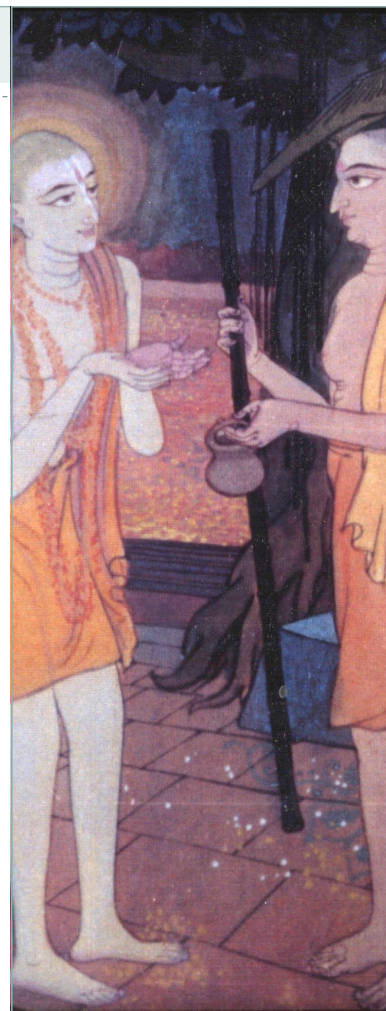
In this publication, there is an inspirational instruction from Srila Prabhupada and an article by Bhakti Rasamrita Maharaja on the acceptance of sannyasa in Kali-yuga. In addition there is also a profile on Bhakti Prema Swami as well as a report by Rupa Raghunatha Dasa, a sannyasa candidate, on his mission on behalf of the Sannyasa Ministry to three West African countries.

The Sannyasa Ministry, besides its regular Standing Committee and its members, has expanded into different sub-committees such as a sub-committee for assessing sannyasa candidates, one for communication through the newsletter, one for education and training, and another for sannyasa positioning.

I hope you find the newsletter enlivening and enlightening. We also welcome your input in the form of articles, questions, and participation in the various Sannyasa Ministry committees.

Your servant,

Prahladananda Swami



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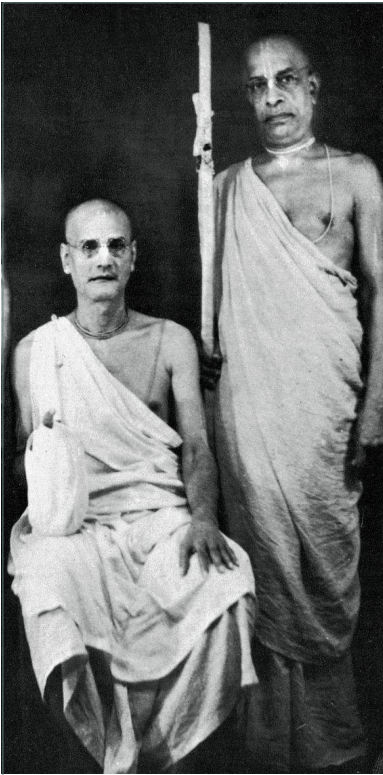
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FEATURE ARTICLE: SANNYASA IN KALI YUGA

By Bhakti Rasamrita Swami

The question may arise why ISKCON is offering the possibility to enter the sannyasa asrama as sastra states that sannyasa in Kali-yuga is forbidden.

As a response to this question, below is an excerpt from a lecture given by Bhakti Rasamrita Swami at the Sannyasa Candidate Training Seminar in Mayapur (February, 2012).

There is a verse in the Puranas that states that sannyasa is forbidden in Kali-yuga:

*asvamedha gavalambha
sannyasam pala-paitakam
devarena sutotpattim
kalau parca vivarjayet
[Cc. Adi 17.164]*

In this age of Kali, five things should be avoided: one is performing sacrifice by offering cows; performing sacrifice by offering horse; and

oblation offering to the forefathers with meat; and then to get child by the husband's younger brother. Maybe it was practiced formerly. According to Vedic rituals, the husband's wife... That is permanent relation; there is no divorce, nothing of that sort. But in case of the husband being sick or dead, the women was allowed, if she has no children, to get children by the husband's younger brother. Devarena. That is also now not allowed. So these five things are not allowed in this age, Kali-yuga: sacrifice offering cows, sacrifice offering horse, sannyasa—renouncing family life—sannyasa order, offering oblations with meat to the forefathers, and begetting children through the husband's younger... These five items are forbidden.

If you consider the matter carefully, then you can see that there is something more to be considered. We see that in both, the vaishnava and mayavadi sannyasa sampradayas, sannyasa was taken. Sankaracarya for example took sannyasa. Many other sannyasis of the Mayavada School are also there. Furthermore, the acaryas of all of the four principle Vaishnava Sampradayas also took sannyasa like Visnuswami, Nimbarkacarya and others In our own sampradaya too, we come across sannyasis like is Prabhodananda Sarasvati, Madhavendra Puri and Isvara Puri. When Mahaprabhu was in his pauganda stage – the age from five to ten, his brother - Visvarupa - took sannyasa. At that time, Mahaprabhu was known only as Nimai.

In the Sri Caitanya-lila, Adi-lila, Srila Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami describes that Jaganatha Misra and Sacidevi, were filled with grief when Visvarupa had taken sannyasa. However, Nimai pacified them. He said, "What happened is good. Visvarupa has taken sannyasa. Now Visvarupa has delivered his ancestors from both sides". After some years, of course, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu himself took sannyasa. Following in his footsteps, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura also took sannyasa and initiated many of his disciples too into the renounced order of life.

On one hand, we have a sastraic quote that appears to say that sannyasa is forbidden in Kali-yuga and, on the other hand, we have the practical examples of so many great acaryas in all sampradayas including that of Mahaprabhu Himself, of taking up sannyasa. So, how does one reconcile this?

In his purport of the verse - Adi 15.14 Srila Prabhupada writes:

“It is sometimes said that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu disapproved of the acceptance of the sannyasa order in this Kali-yuga because in the sastra it is said: “In this Age of Kali, five acts are forbidden: the offering of a horse in sacrifice, the offering of a cow in sacrifice, the acceptance of the order of sannyasa, the offering of oblations of flesh to the forefathers, and a man’s begetting children in his brother’s wife.” (Brahma-vaivarta Purana, Kṛṣṇa-janma-khanda 185.180)

Nevertheless, we see that Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself accepted sannyasa and approved of the sannyasa of His elder brother, Viṣvarūpa. It is clearly said here, bhala haila,—viṣvarūpa sannyasa karila pita-kula, mata-kula,—dvi uddharila. Therefore, should it be thought that Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu made statements that are contradictory? No, actually He did not. It is recommended that one accept sannyasa to dedicate his life for the service of the Lord, and everyone must take that kind of sannyasa, for by accepting such sannyasa one renders the best service to both his paternal and maternal families. But one should not accept the sannyasa order of the Mayavada school, which has practically no meaning. We find many Mayavadi sannyasis simply loitering in the street thinking themselves Brahman or Narayana and spending all day and night begging so they can fill their hungry bellies. Mayavadi sannyasis have become so degraded that there is a section of them who eat everything, just like hogs and dogs. It is such degraded sannyasa that is prohibited in this age. Actually, Śrīla Sankarācārya’s principles for the acceptance of sannyasa were very strict, but later the so-called Mayavadi sannyasis became degraded because of their false philosophy, which propounds that by accepting sannyasa one becomes Narayana. Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu rejected that kind of sannyasa. But the acceptance of sannyasa is one of the items of the varnasrama-dharma. How then can it be rejected?”

Thus, Śrīla Prabhupada explains:

First, sannyasa is part of varnasrama dharma, it is one of the four āśramas. So, how can you say that sannyasa cannot be there in Kali-yuga. There is no injunction that varnasrama should be rejected in Kali-yuga. Mahāprabhu himself took it.

Second, we can understand that the prohibition of this verse in the Brahma-Vaivarta Purana is specifically meant for certain classes of people. Firstly, it is meant for those mayavadi sannyasis who live some form of degraded lives. Prabhupada says: “They loiter in the street just to fill their bellies and they eat many times substances that a sannyasi should not be eating”. Even Sankarācārya was very staunch. He set very high standards of conduct for sannyasis. But many of his followers, down the generations, became loose. Śrīla Prabhupada says in the purport: “Such degraded sannyasa wherein a mayavadi thinks that by accepting sannyasa he becomes Narayana, that is prohibited”.

Elsewhere, in the Sri Caitanya Caritamrita (Madhya 18.109) we hear: danda-grahana-matrena naro narayano bhavet, meaning, “...Simply by accepting the order of sannyasa, one is immediately transformed into Narayana”. Śrīla Prabhupada says that people, who practice this principle or this philosophy, have a degraded conception and therefore such a sannyasa is forbidden.

The third reason Śrīla Prabhupada gives in other parts of his teachings is that in this age of Kali most people are sudras by qualification and by quality and therefore they are unable to follow the rules and regulations. So, how can they take sannyasa? But if there are some people, who by dint of their Krishna consciousness can follow the rules and regulations, then there is no harm in taking sannyasa.

Another reason Śrīla Prabhupada mentions elsewhere is that in this Kali-yuga, which is the age of hypocrisy and cheating many charlatans will pose as exalted saints, as swamis and sannyasis, and

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fool the public just for profit, adoration, distinction, name, fame, prestige for material facilities, money, and so on. Obviously, such sannyasa is forbidden.

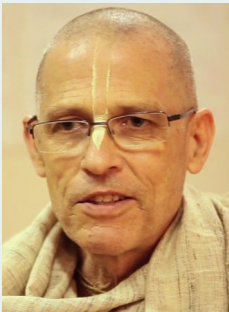
If we take a closer look at what our previous acaryas had said, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura specifically mentioned that there are three kinds of sannyasas, which He quoted from the Padma-Purana. One kind of sannyasa is called karma-sannyasa, the other is called jnana-sannyasa and the third one is called veda-sannyasa. Veda-sannyasa is the Vaishnava-sannyasa, the tri-danda sannyasa, which the Vaishnavas take. Jnana-sannyasa is the sannyasa that the impersonalists take. The Vaishnavas have a tri-danda whereas the impersonalists have one stick - an eka-danda because they follow the path of jnana. Moving on, the Karma-sannyasa basically refers to that kind of a sannyasa, which one takes within the varnasrama system when one gets old, but without the requisite spiritual knowledge or understanding, and without the qualifications required for sannyasa. Therefore, the jnana-sannyasa and veda-sannyasa are not prohibited.

Also in the Brahma-vaivarta Purana there are many verses where sannyasa appears in different places. However, the type of sannyasa mentioned there is this karma-sannyasa. Actually in the five prohibited items mentioned, that appear in the Sri Caitanya Caritamrita also, are part of karma-kanda like worshipping the forefathers, offers to animals in sacrifice and more. The sannyasa that follows the process of karma-kanda is forbidden. Nevertheless, Vaishnava sannyasa is not prohibited. This clarification is actually important.

“If by your presence in a center the devotees become enlivened, that is the sign of successful preaching.”

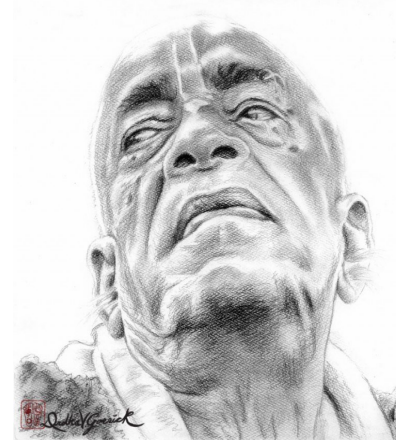
SANNYASA TRAINING 2017

Krishna Kshetra Swami, as part of the ISKCON Ministry for Sannyasa, is developing a training program for sannyasa candidates. The seminar will be offered for the first time after the GBC Meetings in Mayapur in 2017. All sannyasa candidates are requested to plan to be in Mayapur at that time.



SRILA PRABHUPADA ON SANNYASA

"Lord Caitanya is very pleased upon those who dedicate their lives for spreading Krsna consciousness. After all, He is the original promulgator of the Sankirtana movement So you may know that in travelling and preaching about Krsna, you are very much pleasing Him. This is the duty of a sannyasi, to travel amongst all our centers for elevating the standard of devotional service. If by your presence in a center the devotees become enlivened, that is the sign of successful preaching. It is not very difficult Just read from my books and try and explain the meaning in your own words. It does not matter that you are not so expert at Sanskrit. You just try to realize the importance of Krsna consciousness and make your life cent per cent engaged in Krsna's service—that is perfection. I can understand from your letters that you are following Krsna's dictation and are trying very sincerely to help me in spreading this great movement of Krsna consciousness, and for this I shall always be grateful to you for dedicating everything to assist me."



(SPL to Sudama, 26th January, 1973)

SANNYASI PROFILE: BHAKTI PREMA SWAMI

Bhakti Prema Swami was born on 31st December 1967 and came in contact with ISKCON in 1994. Later, he joined as a full-time devotee in 1995 in Mayapur. He received Harinama initiation in 1996 and subsequently Brahmin initiation in 1998 from Bhakti Charu Swami. Finally, on Gaura Purnima 2015, he received sannyasa initiation.

Before joining the movement, he studied medicine and became a doctor. Following this, He served as the Head of the Medical Department in Mayapur temple from 1996 to 2001 and as a Brahmachari counsellor from 1997 to 2001. In the year 2000, he completed Bhakti Sastri Course and subsequently taught the same with the MIHE. In the year 2001, he was asked to serve as the Vice President of ISKCON Kolkata (WB) and served in that capacity till 2004. He was actively involved in temple management as well as youth preaching in Kolkata during these 3 years.

In 2004, Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaj started a new temple project in Ujjain (MP) and appointed him as the Temple President. In 2006, GBC gave him the ISKCON Global Excellence Award for significant contribution in opening a new Vedic temple in Ujjain. He served in that capacity till 2011 and is currently the Co-President of ISKCON Ujjain. He has had a very active involvement in preaching youth as well as congregation through various school/college/village-preaching programs.

He preaches in English, Hindi and Bengali in India, Bangladesh, South Africa and many other parts of world. He also established BSC – Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Chattravas (spiritual student hostels) to preach Krishna Consciousness effectively to youth. Under his guidance hundreds of students and congregation members are growing in the mission of Srila Prabhupada. His uniqueness is in his humble loving



relationships with everyone who comes in his contact and his melodious Vaisnava Bhajans with beautiful purports. His future plans involve youth preaching programs in central India, developing devotee village communities, establishing Vedic education and culture for sustained community growth.

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MISSION: AFRICA

The following report was written by Rupa Raghunatha Dasa after his recent preaching trip to Africa:

Dear devotees,

Please accept my respectful obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

First of all I want to thank the Sannyasa Ministry for giving me an opportunity to visit and preach in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Togo for three weeks.

Upon arriving in Ghana, I was overwhelmed by the warm reception given by the devotees there. I highly appreciate the work of the devotees and sannyasis who have previously visited the country and have trained and nurtured such wonderful devotees.

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Further, I also had a chance to meet the gurukulis. They, like all the devotees of the yatra, were extremely respectful. Attending the Guru Puja daily, singing and taking prasadam in the temple, they set a great example through their cheerful and spiritual attitude.

Also, I had an opportunity to meet Carudesna Swami at the Cote d'Ivoire airport. He took me to a Hare Krishna center, housed in a large building. Later, together with other devotees, we performed harinama in the surrounding neighbourhoods. In Africa, everyone, both young and old, love to sing and dance. Thus the people were naturally attracted to our kirtan party.

My next preaching destination was Togo where, three days later, Carudesna Swami joined me. Amidst our preaching tasks, we also discussed about other African yatras.

During the 21 days I was in Africa, I also had an opportunity to preach to the people I met at the airport. During my travel, I passed through a total of 13 airports. I started with Pune (2 times), then Delhi (2 times), Ethiopia (1 time), Ghana (2 times), Cote d'Ivoire (2 times), Togo (2 times), Casablanca (1 time), and Amam (1 time).

I returned, jubilant and satisfied, to Aravade, Maharashtra, India (the birthplace of my spiritual master, Lokanath Swami). I brought back good memories of three weeks adventure in West Africa.

Once again, I would like to sincerely offer my gratitude to the members of the Sannyasa Ministry. Always praying to Sri Sri Gaura Nitai for their mercy.

Your servant, Rupa Raghunath Dasa Brahmachari.

Members of the GBC Standing Sannyasa Committee:

1. Guru Prasad Swami
2. Bhaktivaibhava Swami
3. Sivarama Swami
4. Prahladananda Swami (chairman)
5. Bhakti Caitanya Swami
6. Hrdaya Caitanya Dasa

Team for Assessment of Sannyasa Candidates (TASC):

1. Bhakti Prabhava Swami
2. Hanuman Dasa
3. Krishnadas Kaviraja Dasa
4. Prahladananda Swami (facilitator)
5. Srivas Dasa
6. Srivas Pandit Dasa
7. Sruti Dharma Dasa
8. Vedavyasa Priya Swami

SPOTLIGHT: MINISTRY FOR SANNYASA

The ISKCON Ministry for Sannyasa is made of different committees. Two of them are the GBC Standing Sannyasa Committee, and the Team for Assessment of Sannyasa Candidates (TASC). There is also an educational committee headed by Krishna Ksetra Maharaja.

The TASC assesses the training and preaching performance of sannyasa candidates during the current / last year and makes recommendations to the Sannyasa Standing Committee, who make the final decision. The TASC also evaluates the eligibility of applicants for sannyasa to be put on the sannyasa waiting list.

