

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS ISKCON SANNYASA MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

January-May 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE SANNYASA MINISTER

By His Holiness Prahladananda Swami

According to The Bhagavad-Gita, a Sannyasi is supposed to be refining the spiritual qualifications that he developed in the other ashramas. These qualities culminate in being situated on the spiritual platform, in full Krishna consciousness. They are: complete dependence on Lord Krishna, pure awareness of Lord Krsna, and a desire to serve Him out of love and affection.

Successfully performing one's duties in any ashrama will develop these spiritual qualities, but in the ashrama of Sannyasa these qualities can be concentrated on, and their development- accelerated. However, in this material world, the illusionary energy tests everyone and in this life not everyone who accepts Sannyasa may make it to the finishing line and go back to the spiritual world. But, as we can read in this newsletter, there are- glorious souls, who can serve as our examples, who do.

Your servant,
Prahladananda Swami



*“ISKCON Sannyasa Ministry Newsletter
supervised by Svayam Bhagavan Kesava Swami”*



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The main purpose of Sannyasa life is to be in constant companionship with the Supreme Lord, either by thinking of Him within the heart or hearing of Him through aural reception. In this age, hearing is more important than thinking because one's thinking may be disturbed by mental agitation, but if one concentrates on hearing, he will be forced to associate with the sound vibration of Kṛṣṇa.

(SB 3.24.35 Purport)

Those who have been trained for abstinence in material pleasures are called dhīra, or men undisturbed by the senses. Only these dhīras can accept the orders of Sannyāsa, and they can gradually rise to the status of the paramahansa, which is adored by all members of society.

(SB 1.3.13 Purport)

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.

(CC Adi Lila 15.14)



TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWS WITH AHIMSA SWAMI



Q: What do you like the most in *Sannyasa* life?

A: Just before I took *Sannyasa* I was reading two of Srila Prabhupada's lectures when he awarded *Sannyasa* to devotees, one of my favorites was Vishnujana Swami. When he was giving *Sannyasa* to Vishnujana Swami, Prabhupada said "*Sannyasa* means dancing and chanting, now you are taking *Sannyasa*, now your service is to help everyone else dance and chant." So that was a great inspiration for me. That is what I like the most. I don't know whether the physical body will be able carry out with that, but as we are where we are right now the greatest pleasure I get is when I see others dance and chant the holy names of Krishna.

*Transcription of Interviews with Ahimsa Swami (Name Changed),
Page 189, Sannyasis in Modernity by Yadunandana Swami*

Q: That is why you are so enthusiastic in *kirtan*...

A: Well, I don't know if I am enthusiastic; I enjoy it, I just feel carried away by it to a large degree and I just let it happen as much as one can; everyone has a different part to play in the *sankirtan* movement. I just think this is my part, there are other things we may apply, but at the moment that is my part, as much as I can. And other things, speak about Krishna when I get the chance, try to chant and dance. Speaking about Krishna consciousness and spreading the *sankirtan* are two main activities. I get great pleasure out of dramas, I act, I direct, I write. I get great pleasure out of anything that goes reciprocal, positively reciprocal with others, great pleasure in serving *prasadam*. My pleasure comes when I see others happy. And I don't know if it is the same with Krishna, but when I see devotees or people in general happy then I feel inspired.

*Transcription of Interviews with Ahimsa Swami (Name Changed),
Page 189, Sannyasis in Modernity by Yadunandana Swami*

Q: The last question: If you would be asked to give the best piece of advice to a person who is about to take *Sannyasa*, based on your experience, what would you say?

A: Pray! (laughter) Keep praying!. Whatever form it takes, just, you can't defend, realize we are not material, pray to the Vaisnavas, pray to Prabhupada, pray to Krishna, pray to Lord Chaitanya, become humble... Pray and endeavor properly... Whatever service you do, whatever form it takes, it is the same for everyone. Maybe you are lecturing, maybe you are doing *kirtan*... whatever you do try to be humble. see how you can serve... do not become proud... continue depending on Krishna.

*Transcription of Interviews with Ahimsa Swami (Name Changed),
Page 197, Sannyasis in Modernity by Yadunandana Swami*





CAN A GRHASTA BE A SANNYASI?

Jagat Purusha Dasa: One time Srila Prabhupada was reciting some verses from Srimad-Bhagavatam. I believe it was from Bhagavatam, it could have been from another source. It described the different natures; not so much the different natures, but the different levels of spiritual advancement that are naturally accessible to different ashramas. So he is speaking of brahmacaris, about grihasthas, about Sannyasis, and there is something mentioned in some scripture where a brahmacari is said to have 50% chance of going back to Godhead, achieving perfection. A Sannyasi, 75% chance of achieving perfection. And a grihastha 25% chance.

Prabhupada was quoting it from some scriptures. So one devotee asked Srila Prabhupada that, “Prabhupada you say that a grihastha has only 25% chance to achieve liberation in his lifetime. But what about Saurabha?” Saurabha was the architect. He was living in the hut with the rest of us, and he had a little office that was created by

chattai sheets. From that little office - it was maybe four feet by six feet, he was sitting on an orange crate, he had a makeshift table made out of just found materials, and in that very austere environment - he was creating design for this magnificent temple. He was working probably 18 hours a day, if not more.

So this devotee asked Prabhupada, “What about Saurabha, he is a grihastha. He is a householder. Does he have only 25% chance to achieve liberation, perfection, Krishna consciousness?” Prabhupada stopped; in his typical fashion he would drive his cane into the sand, and he said, “He is not a grihastha, he is a Sannyasi.”

So we understood from that, these divisions have to do with one's nature, has to do with one's consciousness. It doesn't have to do with one's dress. A Sannyasi in dress is not necessarily a Sannyasi, and a grihastha in dress is not necessarily a grihastha. Grihastha can be a Sannyasi. Prabhupada very strongly illustrated that point.

SPF Interviews

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Because a Sannyasi has to be alone without any support or guarantee of support, he has simply to depend on the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If one thinks, ‘After I leave my connections, who will protect me?’ he should not accept the renounced order of life.

”

(Bhagavad-gita 16.1-3, Purport)



sannyasasec@gmail.com



DEPARTED SANNYASIS

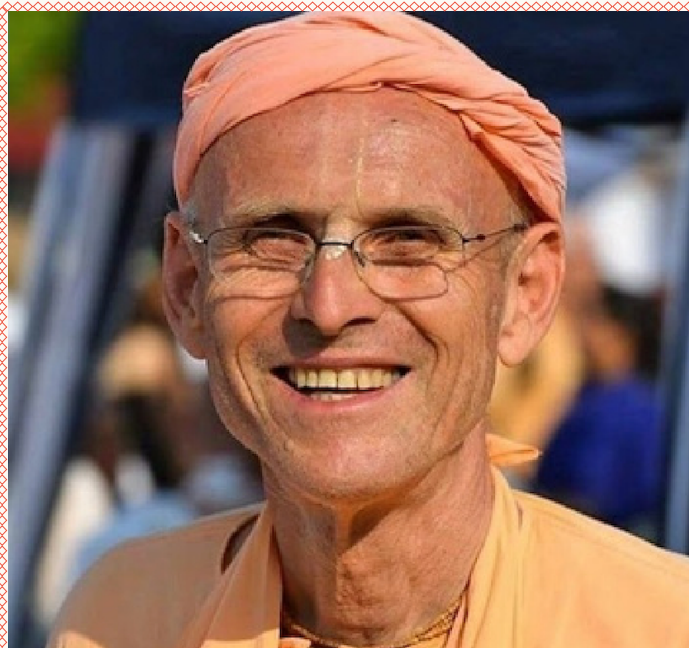
1. HH Kadamba Kanana Swami
2. HH Rupa Raghunatha Swami
3. HH Gopal Krishna Goswami
4. HH Bhakti Visrambha Madhava Swami

A TRIBUTE TO HH KADAMBA KANANA SWAMI

HUMBLE SERVANT

Born on April 12, 1953, in the town of Heemstede, near Amsterdam, Kadamba Kanana Swami ventured to India on a quest to seek out a greater meaning to life. He joined ISKCON's Vrindavan temple, Krishna Balaram Mandir, in 1978, serving in various managerial roles, and went on to become temple president from 1990 to 1995.

In the 1980s, Kadamba Kanana Swami began visiting Australia and Belgium, developing a long-standing relationship with the local communities. He oversaw the construction of ISKCON founder-acharya A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's pushpa samadhi mandir (memorial shrine) in Mayapur, India, and was a member of the Mayapur Administrative Council, the committee that oversees the daily management of the project from 1985 to 1990. Later, he continued with more service in Mayapur from 2012 to 2016 by being part of the Executive Committee coordinating the development of the master plan.



"He became deeply involved in South Africa and spent substantial time there from 1995 to 2023"

Kadamba Kanana Swami took Sannyasa initiation from his guru, Jayadvaita Swami, in 1997 and he travelled extensively around the world spreading the message of Lord Caitanya's movement. As a Sannyasi, he was active in a great variety of projects. He became deeply involved in South Africa and spent substantial time there from 1995 to 2023. In a country with a long history of apartheid, he built bridges between the Indian and African devotee communities and through his preaching and offering of support to the local African devotees.





A TRIBUTE TO HH RUPA RAGHUNATHA SWAMI

His Holiness Rupa Raghunatha Swami Maharaja departed on the auspicious day of Jagannatha Sanana Yatra, June 22nd, 2024, in Bhopal, India.

Maharaja received Sanyasa Diksa from His Holiness Lokanatha Swami Maharaja and was bestowed with the new name His Holiness Rupa Raghunatha Swami Maharaja on Gaura Purnima 2017 in Noida.

HH Rupa Raghunatha Swami, born in Argentina to an Italian-speaking family was 82 years old.

HH Rupa Raghunatha preached extensively in Europe, South America and India. For more than 30 years Maharaja dedicated his preaching to Maharashtra, Gujarat, and the All-India Padayatra.

“Whenever Maharaja comes on Padayatra he inspires us to serve and fills us with energy by walking with us, distributing books with us, and serving prasada. Rupa Raghunatha Maharaja is always ready to serve.”



A TRIBUTE TO HH GOPAL KRISHNA GOSWAMI

The Governing Body Commission's Executive Committee released the following announcement regarding the departure of His Holiness Gopal Krishna Goswami:

“Dear Friends, Well-wishers, and Devotees of ISKCON,
Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

This morning, at 9:20 am IST, amidst loving devotees sincerely chanting the Hare Krishna mahamantra, His Holiness Gopal Krishna Goswami, one of the senior most disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, departed from this world.

Maharaja is a pillar of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and has served tirelessly in practically every leadership capacity to support and expand the mission of his spiritual master.

Even before his first meeting with Srila Prabhupada in Montreal, Canada in 1968, Maharaja, known as Gopal Krishna from his very birth, was given the service of cleaning and preparing Srila Prabhupada's rooms for his arrival. Since then, Maharaja has literally and figuratively dedicated

his life to keeping Srila Prabhupada's house in order.

Srila Prabhupada immediately took great interest in the thoughtful young Indian man who sat attentively through every lecture and they soon began regular correspondence. Soon thereafter, Srila Prabhupada initiated Maharaja as Gopal Krishna Das and thus began a lifetime of service beyond compare.

Maharaj served for years as Srila Prabhupada's personal secretary and was appointed by Srila Prabhupada as a Governing Body Commissioner in 1975 with responsibility to oversee all of ISKCON India. Srila Prabhupada thereafter entrusted Maharaj with the task so dear to his heart — the printing of his transcendental books.

From that time, Maharaja has been an emblem of book distribution, sharing of Krishna consciousness, building beautiful temples, and managing the international affairs of Srila Prabhupada's mission, all the while remaining a gentle, humble Vaisnava who always has a moment to encourage others with his genuine care and affection. In addition, Maharaja's sadhana is impeccable, often on the temple altar offering mangala-arati to the deities before completing the morning program, taking a japa walk, and then worshipping his own deities prior to commencing a full day of dynamic service.

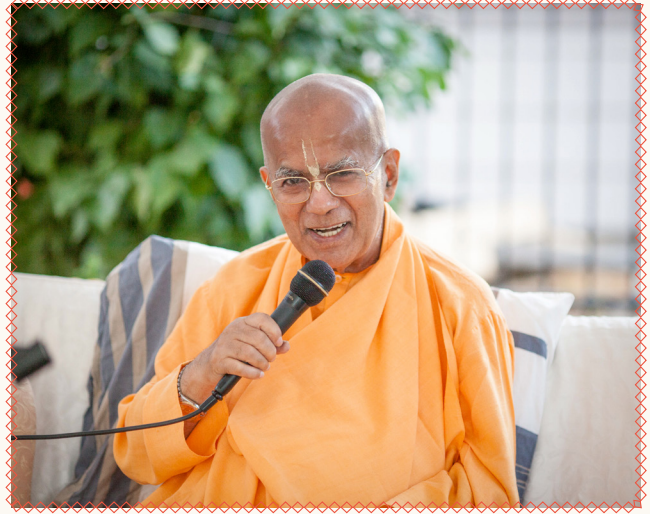
His Holiness Gopal Krishna Maharaja personifies all that is at the heart of ISKCON and will remain eternally revered and loved for his matchless service, dedication, and expertise in knowing and serving Srila Prabhupada's will. We can only pray that we may each be blessed with but a drop of such courage, focus, and sincerity to serve, though never will the void of his physical presence be filled in our hearts or in our society.

Our hearts and heads remain at the feet of His Holiness Gopal Krishna Goswami Maharaja, a most exemplary disciple, devotee, godbrother, spiritual master, and friend.

Maharaja has always encouraged us to work together cooperatively to support and assist each other in Srila Prabhupada's service. In that mood of service, we offer our affectionate prayers and support to Maharaja's disciples and all those bereft in Maharaja's absence. We encourage you to take shelter of Maharaja's instructions and example of focused sadhana and service in the association of our ISKCON family.

His Holiness Gopal Krishna Goswami Maharaja ki jaya!
Srila Prabhupada ki jaya!
Hare Krishna,

Your servants,
Guru Prasada Swami
Tapana Misra Dasa
Govardhana Dasa,
GBC Executive Committee.”





A TRIBUTE TO HH BHAKTI VISRAMBHA MADHAVA SWAMI

Bhakti Visrambha Madhava Swami Maharaja was born on 1st June 1956 in Colorado, USA. Joined the Krishna Consciousness Movement in 1972 at the age of 15.

Some stages of the biography:

He received his first initiation from Srila Prabhupada in July 1974 in San Francisco on the recommendation of Tamala Krishna Goswami and Visnujana Swami.

He was named Mahamantra dasa, He received his second initiation a year later, in July 1975, in Chicago during the Ratha Yatra celebration.

From 1978 to 1982, he was a pujari at the St. Louis Temple after the Radha Damodara group ceased to exist.

He took care of 20-30 tulasi trees, and made almost all 6 arati offerings for the Gaura Nitai Deities.

On October 30, 1982, he left for India, where he served for 9 months in ISKCON Bangalore. From March 1985 to 1990, he served at BBT as a production manager under the leadership of Bhima Dasa and Srila Gopal Krishna Goswami. From 1994 to 1996, he lived in Vrndavana at the Brahmachari Krishna Balaram Mandir Ashram. Since 1996, he began to preach and travel around Russia.

In Moscow in August 2001, he received Sannyasa from E.S. Niranjana Swami and the name Bhakti Visrambha Madhava Swami.

This name means “one who serves Madhava intimately” or “a close friend of Madhava.” The meaning of the word Visrambha is intimate, close, innermost. Bhakti indicates a relationship with the Lord, in this case with Madhava.

In 2008, he began accepting students. In 2010, he spent a period of Caturmasya at Krishna Balaram Mandir in Vraja, living in Gosala. In 2018, Maharaja’s book “Tulasi Amrita” was published in Russia with a translation of Sanskrit texts about Tulasi, author’s notes and the main points about the care of the Tulasi tree.

A few years earlier, this book was published in English and Hindi.

Since 2017, Maharaja’s health began to deteriorate significantly, and he stopped accepting new students.

Bhakti Visrambha Madhava Swami passed away on December 22, 2024 after a long illness.

Bhakti Visrambha Madhava Swami was a recognized expert in Vedic philosophy, knew the Bhagavad-Gita and many other Vedic scriptures by heart.



NEW SANNYASIS IN LAST 2 YEARS



Bhakti Saara Govindananda Swami Maharaja



Visvavasv Swami Maharaja



Bhakti Sarvajna Gauranga Swami Maharaja



Bhakti Nilacala Swami Maharaja



Bhakti Kevala Gopendra Krsna Swami Maharaja



Bhakti Vilaksana
Atmaramananda
Krsna Caitanya Swami
Maharaja



Bhakti Padma Saurabha Pracaraka
Swami Maharaja



Radhe Shyamananda
Swami Maharaja

PRESENT SANNYASA CANDIDATES

1. Rukmini Krsna Dasa
2. Santa Narsimha Dasa
3. Nanda Kumara Dasa

4. Caru Candra Dasa
5. Madana Mohana Dasa



TASC

(TEAM FOR ASSESSING SANNYASA CANDIDATES)

- ✦ HH Prahladananda Swami
- ✦ HH Bhakti Prabhava Swami
- ✦ HH Vedavyasa Priya Swami
- ✦ HG Braja Sundara Dasa
- ✦ HH Bhakti Pracara Parivrajaka Swami
- ✦ HG Srivasa Dasa
- ✦ HG Mahendra Dasa

TSCS

(TEAM FOR SANNYASA CANDIDATE SERVICES)

- ✦ HH Prahladananda Swami
- ✦ HH Bhakti Prabhava Swami
- ✦ HH Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami
- ✦ HH Bhakti Carudesna Swami
- ✦ HG Mahendra Dasa
- ✦ HG Raghunatha Dasa
- ✦ HG Vrajendra Krsna Dasa (Secretary)

STANDING COMMITTEE

- ✦ HH Prahladananda Swami
(Chairman)
- ✦ HH Bhakti Vaibhava Swami
- ✦ HH Bhakti Caitanya Swami
- ✦ HH Bhakti Gauravani Goswami
- ✦ HG Hrdaya Caitanya Dasa
- ✦ HG Devaki Nandana Dasa

SECRETARIES

- ✦ HG Vamsidhari Dasa
- ✦ HG Anantasesa Dasa
- ✦ HG Vrajendra Krsna Dasa
- ✦ HG Radha Rasikaraja Dasa
- ✦ HG Syama Gopal Dasa
- ✦ HG Dhruva Dasa
- ✦ HG Pitambaradhara Dasa
- ✦ HG Madana Mohana Krsna Dasa
- ✦ HG Krsna Kisora Dasa

SMC

(THE SANNYASA MISSION COMMITTEE MEMBERS)

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| ✦ HH SB Kesava Swami (Chairman) | ✦ HG Sadhu Priya Prabhu (Russia) |
| ✦ HH Bhakti Asraya Vaisnava Swami (India) | ✦ HG Mathuresa Prabhu (Bolivia) |
| ✦ HG Vaidyanatha Prabhu (Europe) | ✦ Ananta Sesa Dasa (Secretary) |
| ✦ HG Ganga Prasada Prabhu (West Africa) | ✦ HG Braja Sundara Dasa (EC) |
| ✦ HG Sri Gauranga Prabhu (East Africa) | ✦ HG Ramiya Prabhu (USA) |
| ✦ Bhakti Sarvajna Gauranga Swami
(South Africa) | ✦ HG Baladeva Prabhu (India) |

