

# Homages



ISKCON Ministries



# ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace on this auspicious occasion of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā.

Last year when Tamohara Prabhu informed me that my appointment as the new director of the Central office of Child Protection had been approved by the GBC Executive Committee, I was elated and also apprehensive. Having been raised from childhood in ISKCON and being your granddisciple, I felt that this was the culmination and perfection of all my material qualifications—that they could now finally be utilized in the service of protecting the heirs to your legacy, the devotee children. This was a service I knew would please you very much, a service that would make this lifetime of mine a purposeful one.

Nonetheless, Kṛṣṇa had His own plan—to test the degree of my surrender. And so, almost simultaneously with the prospect of heading up the Child Protection Office came an alluring opportunity to head up an entire department in a huge law firm, with a huge salary attached to it. But I was resolute in my determination and felt that my life would be better spent in protecting ISKCON's children and gaining your blessings rather than accumulating material wealth, which is of no use at the end of this lifetime.

I embarked on this service cautiously, knowing that there would be many difficult decisions to make. The determining factor, however, was always the best interest of the children.

During my training under Tamohara Prabhu, I observed his exemplary leadership qualities: empathetic listening skills, sound reasoning, compassion, and kindness. I pray to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that I may imbibe the qualities of this wonderful son of yours and serve as he did in this office.

I must also commend your daughter Mahā-viṣṇu-priyā Dāsī, who despite her ill-health works tirelessly as the assistant director in this office. She is very vigilant in protecting children and adopts a zero tolerance approach toward abusers, something that you would be proud of, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

As Kali-yuga progresses, those who should be protected—namely cows, women, children, elders, and *brāhmaṇas*—are instead being abused, disrespected, and exploited. In the past few weeks there have been several articles in the world's major newspapers and magazines exposing child abuse that occurred in the Catholic Church and even the Boy Scouts. We are not immune to it. In fact, our risk factor is greater, as we mercifully embrace into our fold anyone who takes shelter of the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

These current media revelations are serving as an impetus to us to become pro-active, to screen all those who enter ISKCON, to be robust in educating our children on how to identify abuse and on how to prevent it, and to adopt a no-nonsense approach in dealing with child abuse cases.

The words of the *New York Times* journalist who reported on the case that alludes to the fact that Pope Benedict XVI had knowledge of the abuse clearly sends a strong message: "Abuse should not be dealt with as sin and repentance but as crime and punishment." Accordingly, we must not sacrifice the innocence or the emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being of our children.

Your words remain our guiding principle:

These children are given to us by Krishna, they are Vaisnavas and we must be very careful to protect them. These are not ordinary children, they are Vaikuntha children, and we are very fortunate we can give them chance to advance further in Krishna Consciousness. That is very great responsibility, do not neglect it or be confused. Your duty is very clear. [Letter to Arundhati, 30 July 1972]

Please grant all of us serving in the Central Office of Child Protection and on the child protection teams the intelligence and fortitude of mind to think clearly and objectively, and the ability to blend our dealings with love, compassion, and caring.



*Your servants at ISKCON's Central Office of Child Protection.*

(written by Champakalatā Devī Dāsī)

# ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale  
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn iti nāmine*

*namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāñī-pracāriṇe  
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Lord Gaurāṅga declared that the holy name would be spread to every town and village. Śrīla Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura had a vision of Māyāpur as the place where people from all over the world would come to sing Hare Kṛṣṇa and dance together. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spread Lord Caitanya's teachings throughout India. He also offered his disciples the great opportunity to preach in the West. Where others failed, you succeeded most wonderfully; indeed, your tenacity and purity made this seemingly impossible task appear like an easy conquest. It is difficult for the mind to fathom the extent of the hardships you endured to fulfill the dreams of the previous *ācāryas*.

The wretched inhabitants of Kali-yuga were devoid of good fortune. As a representative of Lord Nityānanda, you went from town to town, turning those places into places of pilgrimage. Your purity made everything auspicious.

During your manifest presence, you made thousands of disciples all over the world. Your lectures and books awoke them from the depths of illusion. Your benign smile and compassionate nature softened the hearts of the many who later surrendered unto you.

Due to your unparalleled example, your sincere followers work tirelessly to deliver Śrī Caitanya's message to suffering humanity. Our words are inadequate to express your greatness.

You desired that Kṛṣṇa be established in every home, and that every home be transformed into a preaching center. Among many other instructions, you singled out the following words of Lord Caitanya as encapsulating the essence of your mission:

*yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa  
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa*

"Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they are given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land."  
(*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 7.128)

To which you wrote this purport:

This is the sublime mission of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. Many people come and inquire whether they have to give up family life to join the Society, but that is not our mission. One can remain comfortably in his residence. We simply request everyone to chant



the maha-mantra: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. If one is a little literate and can read *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, that is so much the better. . . . The real purpose of human life is to attain the spiritual platform and return to Godhead. That is the summum bonum of spiritual realization. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying to elevate human society to the perfection of life by pursuing the method described by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in His advice to the *brāhmaṇa* Kūrma. That is, one should stay at home, chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, and preach the instructions of Kṛṣṇa as they are given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Your humble servants at the ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry are taking this bold and empowering vision as central to our mandate to promote programs for helping individuals and communities transform all homes into temples and all devotees into transcendental messengers.

We humbly invoke your blessings, begging for the *śakti* to fulfill your expectations.

*Your servants at ISKCON's Congregational Development Ministry.*

## ISKCON Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śālākayā  
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*



I was born in the darkness of ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torchlight of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him.

*mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim  
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī-guruṁ dina-tāraṇam*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, the deliverer of all fallen souls, whose mercy turns the dumb into eloquent speakers and enables the lame to cross mountains.

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

I am happy to inform you that we now have a national ministry promoting the *varṇāśrama* mission in India. The Indian leadership formally established this ministry in November, 2009.

For your transcendental pleasure I am sending you the outline of the mandate given to the ministry by the national leadership in India, followed by its statement of projected mission, strategy, and goals.

Devotees involved in promoting the *varṇāśrama* ministry in India request your kind mercy so that we can help you realize one of the important dreams you have given for fulfilling the *saṅkīrtana* mission of Lord Caitanya. Without your kind mercy, it will not be possible to succeed. Thank you very much for engaging us in your devotional service.

*Yours servants at ISKCON's Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry.*

(written by Bhakti Rāghava Swami)

## ISKCON Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry Promoting Rural Development (India)

Proposal Adopted by the Regional Governing Body for India (11 November 2009)

Whereas the India RGB established the India Varṇāśrama Development Committee in September, 2007, for the purpose of helping promote varṇāśrama development in India.

Whereas the Varṇāśrama Development Committee has drafted a Position Paper on varṇāśrama which was officially endorsed by the India RGB leadership in September, 2008, entitled *Promoting Vrindavan Village Development in India*.

Whereas in their meeting with Bhakti Rāghava Swami in Mayapur, Śivarāma Swami, Devāmṛta Swami, and Romapāda Swami suggested that it would be advisable to establish Varṇāśrama Ministries at national levels before officially forming a Global Varṇāśrama Ministry.

Whereas the India Varṇāśrama Development Committee has recommended establishing a national ministry in India for the purpose of promoting *varṇāśrama*-based rural development.

Whereas there is an urgent need to train and educate our devotees about the *varṇāśrama* mission, to establish model rural projects based on *varṇāśrama* principles, and to develop a resource base to support the concept that “I want the world to see by our example that life can be lived naturally, peacefully if one is self sufficient with land, some cows and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.” (SP Letter to Jagadīśa, 74-06-18)

Whereas the 2009 GBC resolutions (1) “310. GBC Participation in Farm Projects” and (2) “311. Purchasing from ISKCON Farms and Farmers” both lend support to the need for promoting the Varṇāśrama mission.

Whereas Bhakti Rāghava Swami has been active in promoting the *varṇāśrama* mission both here in India as well as in other countries and is agreeable to help set up such a ministry.

Therefore, the India RGB hereby establishes the *varṇāśrama*-based Rural Development Ministry with the following mandate:

1. To encourage the establishment in India of models of Kṛṣṇa conscious rural communities (villages):
    - a. to demonstrate in a practical way how the principles of *varṇas* (aptitude-based occupations) and *āśramas* (phased lifelong spiritual emancipation) are universal and standard principles meant to be implemented
    - b. To demonstrate the principles of self-sufficiency, sustainability, and localized economy based on proper utilization of land and cow protection.
  2. To encourage, wherever possible in India, *varṇāśrama*-based rural development centered on the land, cows, and Kṛṣṇa.
  3. In order to accomplish the above, to establish training programs, publish resource materials, organize conferences and seminars, establish libraries and resource centers, etc.
- Bhakti Rāghava Swami is hereby appointed as minister.

The existing RGB Varṇāśrama Development Committee will continue with the following mandate:

To regularly review the activities of the ministry and advise on its functioning.

To organize periodic assessments of the work of the ministry when requested to do so by the IRGB.

To be available to advise the IRGB on any *varṇāśrama* development issue that may be brought to its attention, whether related directly to the ministry or not.

## Statement of Projected Mission, Strategy and Goals

### A. Mission Statement

The ISKCON Daiva Varṇāśrama Ministry Promoting Rural Development seeks to promote, establish and demonstrate the ideals of simple living and high thinking, based on the concepts and principles of *daivī-varṇāśrama-dharma*, as desired by Śrīla Prabhupāda. The ministry will work with the ISKCON India







leadership to establish self-sufficient rural (village) communities, giving special emphasis to training and education.

B. Mission goals

1. To help set up models or micro-units of *varṇāśrama* communities (villages) where the principles of *varṇāśrama* dharma will be promoted.
2. To demonstrate in such communities how the principles of *varṇas* (aptitude based occupations) and *āśramas* (phased lifelong spiritual emancipation) are universal and standard principles.
3. To demonstrate in a practical way the concepts of self-sufficiency, sustainability, and localized economy based on proper utilization of land and on cow protection.
4. To encourage the establishment of educational and training facilities such as *varṇāśrama śikṣālayas* (pre-gurukula), *gurukulas* (younger students) and *varṇāśrama* colleges (older students) for the purpose of realizing the above where both formal and non-formal education will be given.
5. To compile, publish, and distribute literatures (pamphlets, booklets, books, magazines, newsletters, etc.) for the sake of informing and educating people about the *varṇāśrama* mission.
6. To help revive interest in India's traditional practices of village technologies.
7. To systematically and methodically conduct seminars and workshops to provide training and education on the concepts and principles of the *varṇāśrama* mission.
8. To work with other secular educational, scientific, social, religious and cultural institutions that may have similar goals and objectives.
9. To promote organic and natural farming avoiding the use of the following four dangerous practices: (1) chemical pesticides, (2) chemical fertilizers, (3) hybrid seeds and (4) modern machines, all of which create ecological imbalances in nature and destroy the environment.
10. To promote general research in and help increase awareness about the *varṇāśrama* mission.

C. Strategic plan

1. To build working relationships with existing ISKCON ministries, temples, rural projects, educational institutions, etc.
2. In consultation with ISKCON authorities, to appoint local, state and regional coordinators.
3. To invite the active involvement of ISKCON youth groups in India.
4. To encourage the participation of devotees, especially Nāma-haṭṭa devotees living in the villages, in helping realize the above mentioned mission statement and mission goals.
5. To establish libraries, āśramas, cultural centers, residential quarters, small-scale cottage industries, etc., which will all help manifest and develop the *varṇāśrama* mission.
6. In consultation with the appropriate ISKCON authorities, to raise funds for the Varṇāśrama-based Rural Development Ministry.
7. To establish Varṇāśrama Research Teams for the purpose of involving more individuals in the *varṇāśrama* mission and whose members will work closely with various ISKCON entities.

D. Short-term goals defined (within one year)

1. To compile a list and maintain a database of all existing *varṇāśrama* projects in India.
2. To distribute basic information about the *varṇāśrama* mission to all ISKCON temples in India.
3. To conduct a *varṇāśrama* seminar in each of the four divisional council zones of India.
4. To begin appointing state and regional coordinators for India.
5. To produce a Varṇāśrama Manual giving general guidelines about the *varṇāśrama* mission. This will be an official ministry publication.
6. To publish the *Varṇāśrama Guide and Resource Directory* for India. This will be an official ministry publication.
7. To hold a national *varṇāśrama* conference for state and regional coordinators.
8. To help organize the yearly on-going Global Varṇāśrama Seminar in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur at Gaura Pūrṇimā.
9. To conduct a yearly 3-month *varṇāśrama* college course.
10. To establish one model of a *varṇāśrama* research team.
11. To produce a video documentary called *Make Vṛndāvana Villages* before Gaura Pūrṇimā 2010.





This will not be an official video documentary of the ministry.

12. To print the book *Traditional Education* before Gaura Pūrṇimā 2010. This will not be an official ministry publication.

E. Intermediate goals defined (within 3 years)

1. To work towards establishing a *varṇāśrama* college in each state of India.
2. To work towards establishing one *varṇāśrama* research team in each state of India.
3. To work towards establishing *varṇāśrama śikṣālayas* in each state of India.
4. To visit all the existing ISKCON rural/farm communities in India.

F. Long-term goals defined (within 5 years)

1. To have one working model of a developing *varṇāśrama* community in each state of India.
2. To have dozens of *varṇāśrama śikṣālayas* established in each state of India.
3. To have *varṇāśrama* research teams set up in all the major cities of India.
4. To request the India RGB to make a formal proposal to the GBC for the formation of a global *varṇāśrama* ministry.
5. To work towards establishing the headquarters of the global *varṇāśrama* ministry at Śrīdhāma Māyāpur.

G. Duties of national *varṇāśrama* minister

1. To serve under the India RGB leadership as per their guidelines and directives and in consultation with the established India-RGB-appointed *varṇāśrama* development committee.
2. To network with ISKCON India zonal secretaries, regional secretaries, temple officials as well as various other entities connected with the ISKCON India mission such as Bhaktivedanta Institute, BBT and other ministries, etc., for the purpose of advancing the *varṇāśrama* mission in India.
3. To oversee the overall implementation and development of the *varṇāśrama*-based rural development ministry.
4. To oversee the activities of *varṇāśrama* state and regional coordinators.
5. To oversee the activities of *varṇāśrama* research teams.
6. To help establish *varṇāśrama śikṣālayas* at the village levels.
7. To organize annual seminars promoting the *varṇāśrama* mission.
8. To submit an annual report to the India RGB EC and to the India RGB-appointed *varṇāśrama* development committee.



