

Viplavah

A Journal of the ISKCON Ministry of Education

Dedicated to ISKCON Founder Acharya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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Revolution Through Education





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Vision Statement

To provide Krishna conscious education of high quality to everyone through temples, educational institutions and various global initiatives.

Mission Statement

To develop comprehensive educational systems globally, that foster higher spiritual values, fulfil the needs of ISKCON members and the larger society bringing about excellence in all areas of human life. We aim to fulfil this mission by

1. Empowering and supporting educational initiatives and collaborations among educators, educational institutions and professionals.
2. Establishing and monitoring high standards of Vaisnava education.
3. Supervising the development and execution of educational plans and ensuring they are delivered to high standards and.
4. Understanding and fulfilling the educational needs of the Krsna conscious families.
5. Making every temple as an educational centre and a centre of excellence.





MASTHEAD



Viplavah is a Journal of the **Ministry of Education** of the **International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder Acharya** His Divine Grace Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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First issue of the Journal was Janmastami 2017 with plans to publish four issues each year. It is driven out of North American and the Western Hemisphere but is aimed at serving the educational needs of ISKCON globally.

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MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING EDITOR



This is the fourth and final issue of *Viplavah* for which we, Hanumāt-*preṣaka Swami*, will be acting as Editor. We feel we have done our duty and it has been delightful. Now we look forward to younger, more intelligent, devotees doing their share.

In the end, this issue has wonderful articles with practical instruction and global vistas: Russia, Latin America, Cyber-space. To summarize the other news: **The Core Committee**, with H. G. Tapana-misra Das as Chairman, has been effectively meeting every two weeks and this is giving definite structure to the Ministry's work. Though we have a regular, quality, Office Secretary in Mayapura, we still do not have a good Web-master and this has delayed the development of communication, access to resources, registration and evaluation of our educational world. Help!

The North American Zonal Representatives: H. G. Gopi-gita Devi Dasi, Ourselves, Rama-giri-dhari Das, Bali-mardana Das and Visvambara Das, has been able to fulfill their their roles of contacting regional educators and organizing symposia to varying standards albeit with great sincerity. The effort is alive and anyone with interest can help move it forward more and more. Help teachers teach by personally connecting them with the Ministry.

By Hanumatpresaka Swami



SRILA PRABHUPADA ON EDUCATION BY EXAMPLE



By Indira-sakhi Devi Dasi



Srila Prabhupada stressed that character development was an inseparable part of education. He explained that the teachers themselves should be exemplary role models to successfully impart Vedic knowledge to the students.

You are right when you say that setting a good example for the boys is the best precept. There is a saying that an example is better than a precept. Our exemplary character depends on strictly following the four principles, and this will conquer the whole world. Our boys and girls in London, by their exemplary character, have drawn the attention of many respectable persons and even some public papers. Our movement is not only for some theoretical teaching, but it is for developing practical character and definite understanding. (Letter to Aniruddha, Los Angeles, February 4, 1969)



One thing, if Aniruddha is shaky in his Krishna Consciousness, how he can teach the children? Unless one is firmly convinced about Krishna Consciousness, I don't think the children will learn properly from such a person. (Letter to Satsvarupa, Calcutta, February 16, 1972)

He wanted that the children in the movement along with learning academic subjects, should be trained in all aspects of Krsna consciousness. He stressed that this can only be accomplished if the

parents and teachers are sincere devotees, following all the rules and regulations and behaving in an impeccable manner, for “children's nature is to imitate”. (Lecture on SB 2.3.15, Los Angeles, June 1, 1972)

Simply follow the program of the elders, let the children associate as much as possible with the routine KC program, and when the others go out for working and business matters, the children can be given classes as you describe. They can learn our method of Krishna Consciousness by rising early, cleansing, plus knowledge of Sanskrit, English, a little Mathematics, history, geography, that's all. We haven't got to take any help from the government by getting so-called accreditation. If outsiders want to send their children to us, it will not be for their accreditation, but because they will get the best education for relieving them of all anxieties of material life and for this education the government has no idea.

Where is such thing as transmigration of the soul being taught in classroom? If they simply learn to rise early, cleanse, all hygienic principles, their study will be greater than any government program. Whatever the elder members are doing, the children should do if possible. But for teaching, the teachers themselves should be fixed up initiated devotees, otherwise how the children can get the right information and example? (Letter to Aniruddha, Calcutta, March 7, 1972)

Srila Prabhupada condemned the modern education system in which teachers are appointed on the basis of their academic qualification alone.

For learning Vedic knowledge, one must approach a person who is cent percent engaged in devotional service. He must not do things which are forbidden in the *śāstras*. A person cannot be a teacher if he drinks or smokes. In the modern system of education the teacher's academic qualification is taken into consideration without evaluation of his moral life. Therefore, the result of education is misuse of high intelligence in so many ways. (SB 1.9.26, Translation and Purport)

Not that "Professor such-and-such," and eating meat. This is the degradation of society. He is doing the work of a *brāhmaṇa*—teacher means *brāhmaṇa*—and eating meat - Oh, horrible! (Room Conversation with Devotees, New Orleans, August 1, 1975)

The principle of teaching by example is central to the philosophy of Krsna consciousness. Srila Prabhupada expected not just teachers at school to adhere to it to educate the children, but also all preachers to follow it to be effective in conveying Vedic truths to people in general. He asserted that this would benefit both the preacher and the congregation.

So you are one of the chief men of this Institution, kindly maintain your behavior to the standard so that others will follow and the whole thing may go on nicely. It was said about Lord Caitanya: *Āpani ācari prabhu jīvere śikhāya*, that is, He personally used to practice Himself the injunctions and then He used to teach others. That is our principle: Unless one is perfectly behaved person, he cannot teach others (Letter to Hayagriva, Madras, February 13, 1972)

If you are not ideal, then it will be useless to open center. You behave nicely, they will come, they will see, and they will learn. If you go to some school and the professors are rascals, then what you will learn? It is both, reciprocal. You shall act as professor, teachers. Your life should be ideal, and they will come and see, and they will learn. (Srimad-bhagavatam Lecture, Melbourne, May 19, 1975)





We are still developing articles on the philosophy of education in ISKCON. As Rasamandala Das commented it is interesting that we cannot find that many people in ISKCON to write on this topic. So, this issue we were thinking of just having this place-holder and request anyone who wants to submit learned articles on this topic to write us. Then we received the excellent article about Education in Russia and it includes a rough draft of a Philosophy of Education. Please look at it. The author also asks to join the development of this Ministry book on Ph. Ed. so we certainly hope H. G. Bala-govinda Das and *Viplavah* can make that co-ordination.

In the next *Viplavah*, Radhika-ramana Das has agreed to write an article on this topic. Of course, the idea is then to use these articles as the basis for a book that will be useful in developing a first class educational system worthy of the name Bhaktivedanta.

WELCOME TO MOTHER RUSSIA: Education in ISKCON Russia



By Tirtha-pavana Das

would like to state the principles that are the base of the education.

We've tried to list key principles and values of genuine education, though the list doesn't claim to be absolutely complete and structured, it appears to be a good tool for the development of various projects and systems. It is a fact that sometimes education doesn't give a desired result or that along with the desired result it brings an unwanted result. It means that one of the principles is missing. Deep and persistent meditation on these principles helps us to constantly improve the quality of the education we offer devotees in Russia, therefore we are hoping that this list will be of some help to the devotees engaged in the educational institutions.

It may require a bigger article to present a complete description of the implementation of these principles or even some research, so we will limit ourselves with the list of the principles and their brief explanation. Also, we'll present Srila Prabhupada's quote to each of these as an illustration.

- **Authority** – our curriculums are based on the most objective knowledge, foremost on Srila Prabhupada's quotes.

In the paramparā system, the instructions taken from the bona fide spiritual master must also be based on revealed Vedic scriptures. (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Adi-līla 7.48)

I Principles of education.

Our first business is to preach to the devotees and to maintain the highest standard of Vaisnava education. (Letter from 9th July 1972)

I've been approached by the Executive Committee of the Ministry of Education to present a brief observation of the education at ISKCON institutions in Russia. Before I start talking about different projects and programs, I

- **Live guidance** – the importance of communication with the conveyer of Bhakti in education is paramount.

One who is not taught by a bona fide spiritual master cannot understand the Vedic literature. To emphasize this point, Lord Kṛṣṇa, while instructing Arjuna, clearly said that it was because Arjuna was His devotee and confidential friend that he could understand the mystery of the Bhagavad-gītā. It is to be concluded, therefore, that one who wants to understand the mystery of revealed scriptures must approach a bona fide spiritual master, hear from him very submissively, and render service to him. (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Adi-lila 7.48)

- **Unselfishness** – desire to help others is the only motivation of our service.

Just like we are lecturing, educated, educating people. We don't say that "Give us salary." We simply ask them, "Please come." ... I'll give you food. I'll give you good seat. Please come and hear. We are not asking money, that "First of all pay the fees. Then you come and learn Bhagavad-gītā." We never say so. ... Brāhmaṇa is eager to see that people are educated. "Take free education and be educated. Be a human being." This is brāhmaṇa's business. (Room conversations, 11 June, 1974)

- **Mind set of service** – to help teachers to cultivate a servitor's mind set as well as a student's one; to promote cultivation of gratitude and desire to serve teachers among students.

Although officially I am your Spiritual Master, I consider you all students as my Spiritual Master because your love for Krishna and service for Krishna teach me how to become a sincere Krishna Conscious person. (Letter to Jadurani Dasi, 16 December, 1969)

Every disciple must consider himself completely unaware of the science of Kṛṣṇa and must always be ready to carry out the orders of the spiritual master to become competent in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A disciple should always remain a fool before his spiritual master. (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Adi-lila 7.72)

- **Quality** – we are constantly working on improving our curriculum, including materials and teachers' qualification.

Thus the guru takes on a very great responsibility. He must guide his disciple and enable him to become an eligible candidate for the perfect position—immortality. The guru must be competent to lead his disciple back home, back to Godhead. (Science of Self Realisation, chapter 2)

- **Proactivity** – our education must foresee people's needs and build a right society beforehand.

As long as a devotee is in his material body, his probational activities in devotional service prepare him for being transferred to the Lord's supreme abode. (Narada-bhakti-sutra, 4)

- **Awareness** – we do not confine ourselves to memorization, but teach devotees to think and act in full consciousness.

For example, we know from Bhagavad-gita that Krishna says He is the taste in water. Now try to understand just how Krishna is that taste in water, that is the high-class education. (Letter to Hridayananda, 9 July, 1972)

- **Independence** – we teach people to depend on the spiritual master, but to be independent in this reliance.

If there is no chance to serve the spiritual master directly, a devotee should serve him by remembering his instructions. There is no difference between the spiritual master's instructions and the spiritual master himself. In his absence, therefore, his words of direction should be the pride of the disciple. (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Adi-lila 1.35)

- **Voluntariness** – we do not force people to develop spiritually but cultivate inspiration for spiritual development.

...our leaders shall be careful not to kill the spirit of enthusiastic service, which is individual and spontaneous and voluntary. They should try always to generate some atmosphere of fresh challenge to the devotees, so that they will agree enthusiastically to rise and meet it. (Letter to Karandhara das, 22 December 1972).

- **Individuality** – we try to adapt education to every individual, we do not conduct it in a collective pattern.

It is the duty of the ācārya, the spiritual master, to find the ways and means for his disciple to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa. (Nectar of devotion, chapter 2)

- **System** – we give people knowledge according to their spiritual level and needs.
“In the beginning one must have a preliminary desire for self-realization. This will bring one to the stage of trying to associate with persons who are spiritually elevated. In the next stage one becomes initiated by an elevated spiritual master, and under his instruction the neophyte devotee begins the process of devotional service. By execution of devotional service under the guidance of the spiritual master, one becomes free from all material attachment, attains steadiness in self-realization, and acquires a taste for hearing about the Absolute Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. ... So, by the slow process of devotional service, under the guidance of the bona fide spiritual master, one can attain the highest stage, being freed from all material attachment. (Bhagavat-gita 4.10)
- **Step by step** – we build our education in the way people are able to receive knowledge: gradually, in accordance of their readiness.
A teacher instructs the student if the student is capable of taking more and more instructions. Otherwise, in spite of being instructed by the teacher, the student cannot make strides in his understanding. (Srimad Bhagavatam 7.1.9)
- **Broadness and accessibility** – we arrange our education so it is accessible to everyone, regardless of their abilities and opportunities.
A brāhmaṇa should give chance to everyone, even to the pāpa-yoni, how to become brāhmaṇa. That is real brāhmaṇa. And the rascal who thinks that "I shall remain simply brāhmaṇa; others shall remain mlecchas and yavanas," he is not brāhmaṇa; he is śūdra, because his mind is so crippled. He does not want to see others to become brāhmaṇa. (Srimad Bhagavatam Lecture, 15 June, 1973.)
- **Collectivity** – we prefer to educate devotees in association with other Vaishnavas.
(C) To bring together individuals in a Society, regardless of nationality and irrespective of creed or caste, in order to develop a nearness to

the Godhead and thereby the idea that within the members and humanity-at-large there is an infinitesimal soul-spirit that is part and parcel in quality with the Godhead, and that all life is meant for the satisfaction of said Godhead, the Supreme Soul. (Constitution of Association, legal document)

- **Comprehensiveness** – we develop our education in order to help people in all areas of their life.
To educate the greater human society in the techniques of spiritual life as the basis for a balanced psychic and biological development, and thereby achieve for the first time in human society a real peace and unity among the contending forces in the world today. (Constitution of Association, legal document)
- **Practicality** – we do not just teach theory, we help people change their lives.
Jñāna means theoretical knowledge, and vijñāna refers to practical knowledge. for instance, a science student has to study theoretical scientific conceptions as well as applied science. Theoretical knowledge alone will not help. One has to be able to also apply this knowledge. Similarly, in yoga one should have not only theoretical knowledge but practical knowledge. (The perfection of yoga, chapter 5)
- **Value-orientated** – we focus on developing the qualities and values of a real Vaishnava.
A learned man treats all women except his wife as his mother, looks on others' property as garbage in the street, and treats others as he would treat his own self. These are the symptoms of a learned person as described by Cāṇakya Paṇḍita. This should be the standard for education. Education does not mean having academic degrees only. One should execute what he has learned in his personal life. (Srimad-Bhagavatam 4.16.17)
- **Continuousness** – we try to help devotees to get an education on a daily basis, regardless of their material circumstances.
Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, offer obeisances and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me. (Bhagavat-gita 9.34)

II. General concept

We've said a few words about the principles and values of education, so now let's talk in details about some of their consequences in order to have a look at the picture of education at large.

We consider that the education of devotees must become a constant process in their spiritual advancement. Therefore, we see all ISKCON programs as educational because a devotee's participation in such activities helps in their spiritual development.

At the same time, we would like to make the process of spiritual advancement coherent. Therefore, our primary goal is to unite the programs in some structure that could help devotees to receive a systematic education rather than a chaotic one. Our Acaryas gave us this structure. Rupa Goswami described nine stages of the devotional service. We've decided to base our educational system for devotees precisely on these stages. Our education aims to help anyone who is on the stage of Sraddha to gradually reach at least the level of Nistha.

A detailed analysis would have to be presented in a different article, because the topic is rather broad. Nevertheless, we have compiled about 250 of Srila Prabhupada's quotes as well as previous Acaryas' on the topics related to the stages of Bhakti development from Sradha to Nistha. You might find some food for your reflection here:

These quotes are available here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/iyki2bbeglc59ig/Quotes.docx?dl=0>

Thus, we try to offer devotees a structured program of a comprehensive spiritual development in accordance with their level.

Any structure suggests a kind of pattern, but we aim to make education more personal. We have given local leaders the right to adapt curriculums and different resources, including books, training aids, etc., to the needs of their community. Also, we try to make education inextricably linked with mentoring in order to implement the principles of individuality, practicality, and live guidance in education. Therefore we are trying to organize a considerable amount of home programs, where in small groups, devotees can receive education that meets their needs. So, devotees are able to attend courses of their interest, which are conducted in an informal environment from year to year to develop relationships with the elder Vaisnavas and receive systematic mentoring in their life.

The above two sections are very inspiring.

I recommend some nominated devotee from Russia to participate in the Ministry of Education –

ISKCON Philosophy of Education Book. H. H. Hanumat Presaka Maharaja is leading this project and I shall be glad to arrange a meeting if you agree.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: H. G. Bala-govinda Das of ISKCON Pune is leading the project. H. P. Swami is trying to help. We have added our enthusiastic comments on this topic in this issues article on *Philosophy of Education*.]

III. Our Projects.

As there are about a hundred big and small communities in Russia and it is impossible to speak about all educational initiatives in all communities in this article, we'll talk about some important ones. Some of them are organized by the Department of Education, and some are the result of the effort of the Vaisnavas, who collaborate with the Department.

1. Education in small groups of spiritual association (home programs).

Devotees meet on weekly basis. They perform Kirtan, study our philosophy and its application to practical life, worship the Deities, take Prasadam, and associate with other devotees. There are about 150 such programs in Moscow. Basically it is either a Bhakti-sastri or Bhakti-lata program.

2. Mentoring.

The culture of mentoring, i.e. individual supervision, support and care in spiritual aspect of life, is well established in many communities. Many devotees obtain a first mentor who guides them through the path of their development well before their first initiation,. There are educational courses and retreats for mentors as well.

3. Educational courses for the first initiation.

Some of our courses are designed to help devotees who would like to receive first initiation to avoid making offences and become qualified and respectable members of our society. A majority of the devotees in Russia complete a one or two year educational courses. Basically, it is Bhakta-program, Bhakti-lata, or privately designed courses within the communities. Without a doubt, all of the devotees should complete an ISKCON Disciple's course. At this moment, 4000 devotees have completed this course.

4. Educational courses for the second initiation and after it.

Following Srila Prabhupada's will, it is compulsory in Russia to complete a Bhakti-sastri course before the second initiation. Therefore, each region has its own Bhakti-sastri centre where devotees receive in-depth education. A Bhakti-vaibhava course is under development. Currently, we are starting one course at the Mayapur institute and hoping to start two more Bhakti Vaibhava centers in Russia.

5. Educational courses for leaders, teachers, and preachers.

The GBC College is taking place in Russia this year, where many leaders are studying to become regional secretaries and team members. Apart from this, twice a year the leaders study *Srimad Bhagavatam* together within the framework of the National Council meetings. Usually, we have about 10 days of meetings at the National Council. Each morning we have a systematic study of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Plus, we dedicate at least 3-5 days to some educational courses by GBC members and other senior devotees.

We conduct courses for community leaders in the regions, such as Leadership and Management courses and a Teacher Training Course. In addition, we have designed 3 more special courses in Russia to complement the Teacher Training Courses 1 and 2. These are more in-depth courses on education that help devotees to bring in live values we wrote about in the beginning of this article and to obtain necessary skills to bring those values into practice.

6. Brahmachari Asrams.

There are a few Brahmachari Asrams in Russia where about 200 brahmacharis live and study. We are developing a program for those who decide to live there for a couple of years. This is done with the intention that they may become more advanced in Krishna Consciousness, and may go back later to their communities to help in Srila Prabhupada's mission.

7. Online education.

Despite our goal to establish a full-time program, sometimes it is not possible for devotees to receive a high quality education

because of their work commitments or because they reside in remote areas of the country. To meet their needs, we promote distance learning. Bhakti-sastri and the ISKCON Disciple course are available online. There are also a few webinars and streaming *Srimad-Bhagavatam* classes from the major temples.

8. Schools.

We are only talking about adult education because a different department governs children's education in Russia. When we say "school", we mean a carefully designed, full or part-time, education for devotees with specific goals. Periodically, we organise retreats, and in-between, devotees study on-line under the guidance of mentors. There are several schools of this kind in Russia. One of them is Japa Meditation School, which helps devotees to chant the Holy Names more carefully and thoughtfully. Another program is the Leadership and Collaboration School, where devotees learn the science of applied Bhakti philosophy in different areas of the Vedic culture alongside with philosophical science. There is also a Bhakti school where beginning devotees are taught basic philosophy.

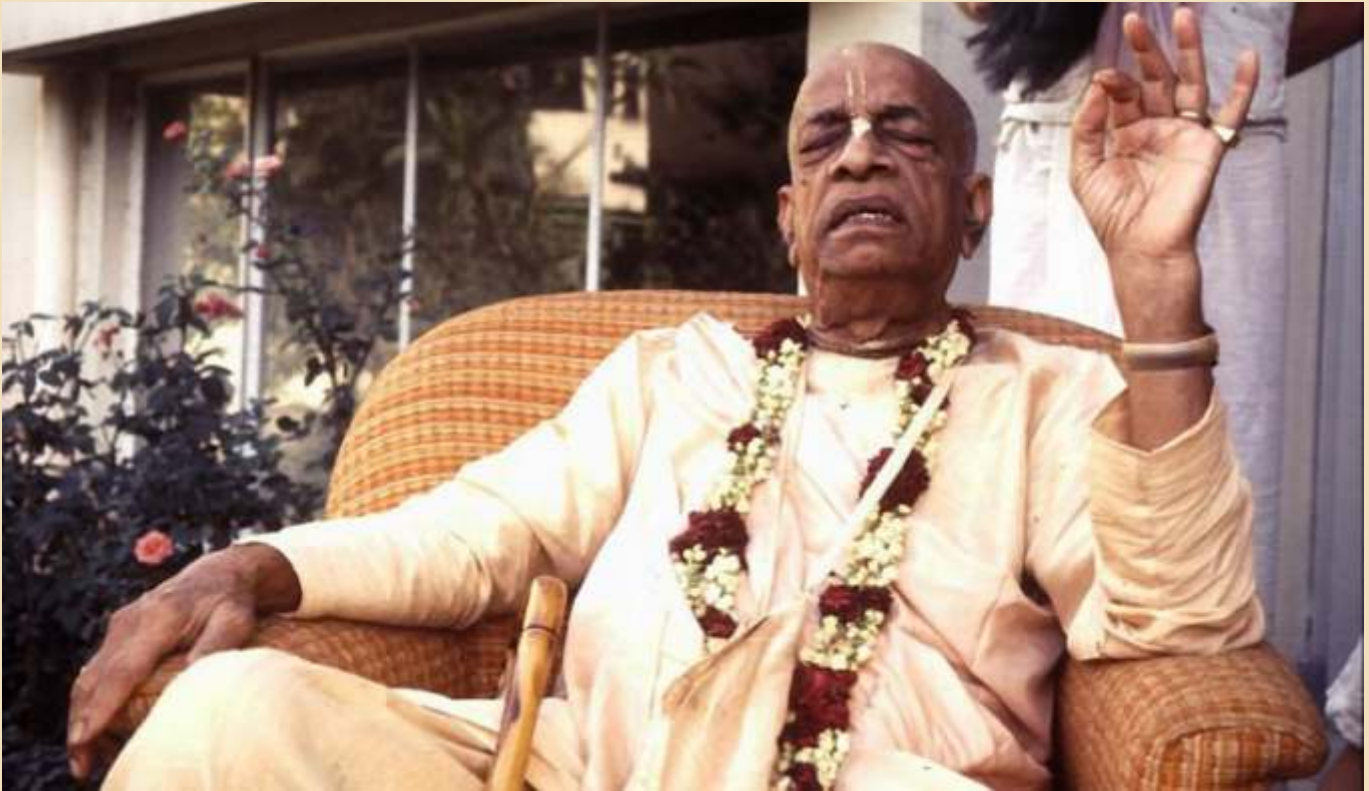
9. Out of Confession education.

The Krishna Consciousness movement is for enlightenment of all human beings without any sectarian understanding of faith. Our principle is that the human being has to awaken his dormant love of God. Any religion or faith which teaches this development of dormant love of God is considered as first class religion. (Letter to all temples, 14 march 1969)

We are trying to establish courses for people who are not yet ready to accept the practice of Bhakti the way it is done in the Gaudia-Vaisnava tradition but are ready to accept the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness as it is explained by Srila Prabhupada in the "Bhagavat-gita as it is". It helps to spread knowledge to a wider group of people with a similar worldview.

10. Representatives in Mayapur and Vrindavan.

So that devotees can study the Holy Scriptures and experience life in the Holy Dhama (despite the language barrier), we created Bhakti-sastri and Bhakti-vaibhava centers for Russian speakers in both Vrindavan and Mayapur.



IV. Structure of the Department and its various sectors.

To render higher quality service, we need to develop the inner structure of our department. We would like to share our experience in this area with those who are engaged in the same service

Evaluating our department development for the last few years, we've ended up creating other sectors as parts of the existing department which deals with the programs design and development. Some of them are at the structural stage, but because we foresee some strategic importance in their active work, we hope that they will develop. These sectors are:

- **Strategic planning** – analysis of situations in the communities, prediction of situations, identification of the most important areas of practice, and project coordination.
- **Research centre** – to conduct research based on Holy Scriptures and combined experience within and outside of ISKCON over the years on different topics related to education in Russia.
- **Collaboration with the authorities and colleagues of International ISKCON** – to execute the order of our administrative secretaries

and to report to, as well as to exchange experience with, our colleagues from other countries.

- **Financial support and accounting** – to establish financial support of the employees and volunteers of each sector and to support different educational projects.
- **Secretariat** – certificates, public reception, etc.
- **HR** – clerical, staff management, peer support, and a safe and friendly working environment.
- **PR** – to inform others about various educational products, to communicate with community leaders, to manage website, circulation, and social net-work.
- **Collaboration with private projects** – synchronization, standardization, authorization, conflict resolution, initiative support, and project help.

V Conclusion.

This article is our attempt to briefly draw a picture of ISKCON education in Russia. If you have any questions, would like to share your experience with us, or if you'd like to support us, please do not hesitate to email us at tpdas@pamho.net.





By Mathuresa dasa**



Many initiatives to promote Sastric education in different countries of Latin America have been formed. The desire of responsible and capable members of our communities to help devotees to excel in the knowledge of the scriptures in a systematic and scientific way is very praiseworthy and worthy of being supported.

In an effort to integrate these different initiatives, H. H. Hanumatpresaka Swami promoted the creation of the Spanish language magazine, *Jayam*, in mid-2018, as part of the ISKCON Ministry of Education's academic dissemination program. It will be very useful for all the devotees of our continent. It is an integration instrument for these programs to have a common communication network within ISKCON.

We are very grateful to all the respectable Vaisnavas who have contributed their well-conceived articles for this first issue. Their contribution is vital to consolidate the various educational programs in our Temples and communities, and plays a fundamental role in developing the educational attitude of the students and followers of Srila Prabhupada.

Likewise, we thank our editor, H. G. Abhirama Thakur dasa for his excellent editorial work in producing this magazine.

This magazine is one of the fruits of the laborious service that has been carried out for many years by all the educators of ISKCON in Latin America, promoting programs at different teaching levels and inspiring all the devotees to give their best to study, understand and spread the teachings contained in the books of Srila Prabhupada.

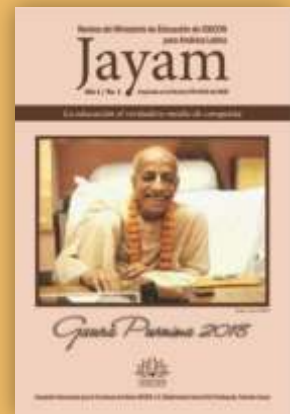
Please join this program either as readers, writers or distributors of this magazine and participate in this important mission of spreading education in ISKCON.

On this glorious day of Gaura Purnima 2018 we present this first issue at the lotus feet of Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu for the pleasure of Srila Prabhupada and the Vaisnavas gathered around their divine lotus feet.

* Inspired by *Viplavah*, devotees from Latin America have started another Regional Journal of the Ministry of Education. It is titled, *Jayam*, from *tato jayam udīrayet* (SB 1.2.4). Follow three excellent articles translated from *Jayam*. We encourage more local journals that can cross-reference each other in simultaneous oneness and difference.

The Director of *Jayam* is H. G. Mathuresa Das. The Editor is H. G. Abhirama Thakura Das, and their Spanish language contact address is: jayam.iskcon@gmail.com. If you write with simple language www.translate.google.com will put your English into functional Spanish].

** Chairman Latin American Regional GBC and Zonal Secretary - Bolivia and Peru.





by Parampadam dasa*



How in tune are we with educational changes in the last 20 years? Can Sastric education online provide comprehensive Vaishnava training? What are the most important challenges and weaknesses in education and online? How to achieve a common goal with both modalities?

In this article we explain the experience of 14 years that, together with my wife Ananta Sayana Devi Das, we had in the development of our Organization - Culture of Bhakti, www.culturadelbhakti.com, an online campus for training and formal education in several Vaishnavas topics.

The Evolution of our Educational Proposal

In the year 2004, after facilitating several live courses of Bhakti Sastri, we decided to dabble in online education, it was not more than a system of forums where we used our explanations with some questions and, the answers of students were there too. This was more or less like a mail course, but a little more elaborate.

By Krishna's mercy, advances on the Internet after that year became our great allies, and currently, in our online educational campus: We have a staff of eight professors and we offer more than fifteen different courses. We have more than two thousand (2000) registered students who have access to videos, audios, Power Point presentations, texts, interactive exercises, games and live meetings with their teachers, and in a completely online manner. A quantum leap in the way of transmitting knowledge or information.

We are very grateful to have contributed to the Spanish-speaking Vaishnava community, giving hundreds of titles of **Bhakti sastri**, and courses for disciples and **Bhakti Vaibhava**.

We also extend our educational proposals to training areas beyond the Sastric education. We have a completely free training course in Vaishnavas practices for all those who begin Krishna Consciousness, and we have developed and created the most famous ISKCON courses on vocational training (**Communication, Leadership, Mediation, Effective Teams and Facilitation**) in an e-learning format.

Ananta Sayana devi dasi is providing for the first time in history [**online**], a very developed and practical course on the Classical Dance of India, in Odissi style, where devotees and worshippers from all over the world learn steps, postures and *mudras* to glorify the Lord and represent its puzzles (pastimes).

This course of dance is also being used by many other people outside of Vaishnavism who appreciate this millenary art. It is very crowded by dancers from other music traditions, teachers and professionals in different areas of education.

Soon we will also be offering courses of Ayurveda, Jyotish (Vedic Astrology), Indian Vocal Music,

* Trained in social psychology and then initiated in ISKCON in 1988, in 2002 he received the Bhakti Sastri diploma. Since 2004 he coordinates and directs, with his wife, Ananta Sayana Devi Dasi, the first virtual educational platform for the Spanish-speaking world about the philosophical foundations of the *Bhagavad Gita* and other spiritual texts of India: www.culturadelbhakti.com. [Their physical bodies reside in their beautiful country Ashrama in near Cordoba, Argentina.](#)



vegetarian cuisine and Sanskrit which opens up the range of educational proposals beyond Vaishnava community.

The Evolution of Online Education in the World

Online education (e-learning) has ceased to be a type of teaching that seeks to emulate the traditional school classroom, and has become an educational proposal with its own pedagogical rules.

Almost all the **best universities in the world** have their own virtual campus, which become essential in capturing the potential, modern, students of the twenty-first century. It now sounds retrograde that in a school knowledge is only transmitted in a classroom with only help of printed books.

This is all due to the **revolution of communication** that has been taken over in the last twenty years. Today people conceive communication in a very different way than before. If someone has a doubt, he does not go to the library or to a teacher, but looks for his answers in Internet. Surely a similar revolution happened with the creation of the printing press, where the students began to resort to the books as a great source of knowledge, declining in some extent to be in direct contact with a professor or expert in the topic.

But, the big question is: Which way does this jump in communications affect the assimilation of Sastric knowledge and our processes of learning?

Online Versus FACE-TO-FACE

The possibility of studying a career over a distance allows **more students to continue their studies**. But the e-learning system also generates challenges, contrasting with the ability to have contact with the teacher.

Although the practice of using virtual classes grows steadily between the latest generations, there is still a long way to go. In fact, it is common to hear many teachers saying that it is not be viable to replace traditional classes by online modality. But, fortunately, not all human beings are the same and this diversity of characteristics can offer home for reconciling these methods.

Let us ask ourselves about the advantages and disadvantages of the virtual classes, in respect to personal understanding, in two formats: The synchronous modality, in which are connected at the same time the teacher and students (or multiple students

to perform a job); and the asynchronous modality, in which each one accesses the material in a digital platform whenever he wants.

In a live class what happens inside the classroom will not be repeatable, unless you have recorded the entire class. But in the recorded class, besides that we must have the consent of the teacher and their peers, the students will have to strive to achieve a good film recording, because you must capture what explained by professor, questions of the audience, as expressed in the whiteboard, the experiment conducted of projection of slides.

On the contrary, the audiovisual material of an on-line class is conceived from its beginning with the intention of facilitating learning, with levels of animations and text. As a complement, in the synchronous on-line courses, it remains implicit that the meetings are recorded, not only to favor the absent pupils, but also to allow access for a as many times that it is necessary, braking it, stepping back and advancing to students' will.

With regard to this last aspect, among the major advantages of the online courses is that we can count on the ease of seeing the material at the moment that we want, even from non-traditional environments such as a trip on the subway or a sunbed close to the sea. But here overlooks the first possible difficulty that could jeopardize this apparent paradise: connectivity. We all have knowledge of the vertiginous growth of communications, but we cannot discard the flaws and failures in the connections or the insufficient bands of any leases, especially in countries that do not belong to the labeled: First World.

In "Culture of Bhakti" we try to manage these challenges and strengthen e-learning as much as possible. To accomplished that we offer to our students a great variety of audio visual resources, including the recorded classes of the professors, which they can see, read and download during the week all the times that they want, and then, during the weekend, we meet them in a live online meeting where we share the learning experiences they have had.

In this way we try to ensure, as far as possible, a personal contact of the teacher with the student.

My teaching experience in both modalities (face-to-face and online) has allowed me to make a comparison between these two ways of education, and I can say, without a doubt, that I have not found large differences in training outcomes in the Sastric education students.





We were able (me and my wife) to realize that the success in the educational processes depends not so much on the modality of the course (online or classroom) but not to fall into the most common trap that happens in each of these two proposals.

The Most Common Fault in Online in Classroom Education

[EDITOR'S NOTE: We got this translation is about 77% correct and we are trying to bring it to 87% correct. We expect that our readers are educated people who can do the last bit of work. We used two dictionaries and then had to call Abhirama Das by Whatsapp in Peru to finally work out that the “slack paw” in English is the “the weak link”]

The “slack paw” in face-to-face education: ISKCON Educators' Training Courses (TTC1 and TTC2), which we offer in on-line format, give a very clear guide of the weak links that might exist in any learning process; and although the list is long, in a personal matter, I think that there is one which especially stands out like **the great weakness in the face-to-face teaching of Krishna consciousness**. This refers to the deception of believing that **only instructive speech of the teacher** creates training and learning in the student.

Despite the fact that we can see victims of this deception in educational establishments outside of ISKCON, in our movement this deception legitimates **confusion of the processes of *sravanam kirtanam***, which are very successful in the field of the development of Bhakti, with pedagogical proposals in themselves.

If a process of face-to-face learning is based on this **misleading premise**, then, the instructive **videos of youtube** could be more effective for students than a live classroom, since the videos offer more facilities for review and observation and repetition.

In this case, live education **would be positioned below the online way of teaching.**

We must always remember that: There is no impression without expression! This is one of the "Sutras" of the Teacher Training courses in ISKCON. It is therefore

imperative that a teacher in a face-to-face modality creates ambiances to promote interaction and expression for the students.

The “slack paw” [weak link] in on-line education:

The e-learning system tries to ensure and demand that the students make contributions. This is done from audios or written media or creation of audio-visual resources. Therefore, it is very difficult in this modality that the professor falls victim of the previous deception and tricks.

Nevertheless, in this system there is a tendency to think that **automation of the educational processes and evaluation** by means of **very sophisticated and creative web platforms** creates in itself a great success in the training of the student.

Without a guardian **"alive and aware" tutor** in contact with the student, the learning is very limited.

Therefore, a professor in the online modality must be very aware of this, and include in his educational proposal areas where you can **exchange the most possible personal relationships** with their students.

Conclusion: Invitation to Professors

To conclude, we want to communicate that we are having a lot of success with classroom teachers who are **working along with our on-line proposal, using its resources and offering them to its students.**

This, undoubtedly, would be promoting the **“best of each world”** and benefiting the actual Vaishnava community which is eager to obtain an integral experience in its learning processes.

We invite all **teachers of the Krishna Consciousness in Spanish-language to take advantage of the resources e-learning that we offer in our educative campus** and in this way improve our services which are vital to the improvement and evolution of our institution and our communities.

¡Hare Krishna!





Complementarity relationship between the *Brahmacari Ashram* and the *Grihastha Ashram*

By Karuna Krishna dasa*



When Srila Prabhupada began his preaching labor in the West, in New York City, towards the second half of the 1960s, he synthesized in a sentence the essence of ISKCON's philosophy: "The process of Krishna consciousness is simultaneously easy and sublime." Although the phrase became very popular in those days, and was widely used as a slogan for the young preachers of our movement, it has been only with the passing of the years that we have been able to understand what Srila Prabhupada tried to communicate with that wording. The word "easy" does not mean "cheap". ISKCON as a hereditary, spiritual institution of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, has its goal as a creation of a community of pure devotees, people who serve God, without personal motives, uninterrupted and free of material desires. The progress in Krishna Consciousness should be shown by a gradual disappearance of the manifestations of lust, anger and greed in the heart of its practitioners. For that reason, we now understand that the word "easy" used in this slogan means "possible" or "available". In this way, if we follow this process it will be "easy" to reach positions like "sublime" within Pure Bhakti.

The Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was liberal in extreme, accepting within the movement of Sankirtana people considered to be degraded by the followers of the Vedic culture, however, its liberality did not preclude simultaneously that he was very strict in requiring all his followers' faithful compliance with the complete standard in spiritual practices.

The problem that ISKCON faced in this conjuncture is that history has demonstrated that there are more persons who approach the temples, attracted by the spiritual potency of Bhakti, than those who are capable of following all the principles and rules and regulations that the ISKCON demand from its practitioners. The real problem for ISKCON has been in seeing new followers and practitioners, in the course of time abandoning these principles, rules and regulations (either partially or totally) in the absence of skill to guide and to attend to these frustrated practitioners with a spirit of ripeness and comprehension. In the process of "Cultural transplantation" that Srila Prabhupada conducted in the West, one of the main concerns was to establish respect for the Ashrams, the stages of life by which a devotee should pass all the parameters of civilized people according to the Vedic perspective. Truly, our Founder Acharya showed a big worry in teaching to its young students the concepts of regulated "Brahmacaria", celibate student and "Grihastha", married life. The above mentioned work was not by any means simple, the first ISKCON followers were individuals coming from the counter-culture.

According to the Vedic principles, the spiritual life of a person begins by the practice of Brahmacharya, which is the basis of the four Ashrams. There is no possibility of controlling the mind and the senses without following the principles of Brahmacharya, and there does not exist possibility of reaching success in the spiritual life and

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obtaining pure Bhakti if he/she does not learn to control the mind and senses.

The Vedic culture has always been very careful not to allow unrestricted relations between men and women. Particularly speaking, a Brahmachari, a celibate student, has his/her sexual relations restrained in consideration of an entire emphasis on the study of scripture and service to his/her spiritual master. In his brilliant essay, "Cleaning the House and Cleaning the Heart", Prabhu Ravindra Svarupa summarized as follows the difficulties that Srila Prabhupada experienced while trying to establish, for the first time, the Brahmachari Ashram in ISKCON:

"His first followers were young, immature, lacking in training and experience. Many suffered from mental, moral and spiritual disorders that came from their experiences in the counter-culture and the Vietnam War. The ISKCON of those early times absorbed the contempt that the counterculture felt from society and its institutions. As a result of these attitudes, often the devotees were unnecessarily hostile and confrontational with all authority figures (including their own parents). Some sought to support this hostility with verses of Scripture, taken out of context. The temples were filled with candidates for the Brahmachari Ashram that lived under the great pressure to be able to fulfill vows and commitments, many of which exceeded their reality. In those times, there were not many mature and experienced devotees that could guide them with healthy advices. The problems, flaws and failures, in following in the beginning could not be recognized and not much less controversial. As result of this intolerant ambience, many candidates simply were disappearing overnight, but equally, many new candidates were coming to the temple to occupy its place"

In general, this atmosphere described here by Prabhu Ravindra Svarupa, ISKCON of the first times, continued to exist several years after the departure of Srila Prabhupada, until the mid-90s in which ISKCON, recognizing the difficulty that many experienced in living as Brahmacharis of temple full-time, began to give emphasis to the programs of congregational preaching, develop a change of attitude and vision toward the devotees called "externals". Going on from the time, and particularly after the change of century, the populations of the communities of Brahmacharis of the temples of ISKCON in the Occident diminished

drastically, while we fix now our attention in other big Ashram that Srila Prabhupada established in the Occident: Grihastha Ashram.

In 1969, three couples of young people, Grihasthas disciples of Srila Prabhupada, were very successful in inaugurating an ISKCON temple in London and that impressed greatly Srila Prabhupada who said the following thing in a class in 1971, in Bombay, India:

"My spiritual master formed many more Brahmacharis and Sannyasis for his work of preaching, however, I am going to train more Grihasthas, because in Europe and North America boys and girls, are interrelated so closely that there is difficult to maintain a Brahmachari. We do not need false Brahmacharis. The life of a married person is known as a Grihastha Ashram, which is as good as Sannyasa Ashram. Ashram means the place where there is Bhagavad Bhajana, God's glorification. It makes no difference if one is a Sannyasi, Grihastha or a Brahmachari. The main target is to realize Bhagavad Bhajana. I would like to inform you that these married disciples are helping me very much and give a practical example, I tell them that many years ago, one of my God-brothers, a Sannyasi with so much reputation, was sent to London by my spiritual master to inaugurate a temple, but after three or four years of being there, he was unable to perform this task, so he was called back to home. However, I have commanded to three couples of Grihasthas and in a year, they have opened a beautiful temple"

As a result of these successes, Srila Prabhupada encouraged for those years the Grihastha Ashram among his disciples, but sadly, because of the lack of maturity of many of them, those relationships could not be maintained.

It has been more than fifty years since ISKCON was founded in 1966 and with regard to the topic of education within the Ashrams, we wish to make the following analysis and reflections:

The Ashrams of Brahmachari and Grihastha in ISKCON have been established by Srila Prabhupada, strictly in accordance with the codes and Vedic principles which are ancient and millenarian (as e.g. the rules of Yajñavalkya that describe the behavior of a Brahmachari). These codes and principles are eternal and may not be altered or changed. However, taking as a





basis the experience gained after five decades, it is necessary to rethink new strategies on the most efficient way in which these same principles, rules and standards can be applied and used in the daily practice of the young Brahmacharis and Grihasthas of ISKCON today.

We must not forget that, for example, there is a great difference between the life of a Brahmachari of the ancient Vedic times and a Brahmachari that lives in a temple of ISKCON today. Brahmacharis of the ancient Vedic times lived in forests in the school of the Guru and in that situation of social isolation and contemplative silence they devoted themselves exclusively to the service of their spiritual master, avoiding all contact with the opposite sex until the moment in which they entered to family life. On the contrary, the Brahmacharis of the temples of ISKCON are young people who come to the institution after having had (in most cases) a lot of frustrating and traumatic experiences in the materialistic life, both in its adolescence and in their early youth. They will not be able to avoid having contact with young girls inside the temple and out of it and also they will have to treat with money, digital technology, easy access to mass media, etc. This young people Brahmacharis need to be supervised and directed by mature devotees, already experienced in the difficulties originating from this Ashram. A beginning of confidence must exist between the young man Brahmachari and his leader. This principle of confidentiality must allow the young practitioners to be able to reveal to his spiritual counselor all its internal crises, having the security that this information will be kept in reserve. We must note with sadness that this culture of secrecy is still not much in ISKCON. Also it is important understand the time of duration of the life needed in this Ashram. Although it was never forced anyone to remain for always in the Ashram of Brahmacharis, in practice, ancient Ashram of Brahmacharis was structured and the things were managing as if they all were going to remain forever there, which demonstrated to be a big error. Some successful Ashram of Brahmacharis of India can serve like example in these topics.

Besides, on the other hand, there is also a large difference between the life of a Grihastha of the ancient Vedic times, who lived in an agricultural society and a Grihastha of present society that has to be able to reconcile their professional lives, and family and social relations with the model of devotional behavior of a married person within Krishna Consciousness. The working environment and social relations in which they live the life of a modern ISKCON Grihastha, is highly polluted and he must be able to counteract the pernicious



influence, getting involved in devotional activities and preaching. For a Grihasthas couple, both participants must maintain common goals and their main objective will have to be to restore their eternal relation as God's servants offering him all their love and devotion. A favorable change that has happened in the formation of Grihasthas Ashram of the contemporary ISKCON is that in contrast to earlier times, now one thinks of the topic of the psychology of the Krsna conscious couple. They offer to themselves workshops of resolution of conflicts and speak everyone more openly in these topics in ISKCON worldwide.

As a curious fact, we wish to point out that, in places where have disappeared the Ashrams of Brahmacharis, persons are devoted to the community of Grihasthas, and they seek to learn about the principles of the Brahmachari Ashram and seek as far as possible to assimilate in their lives these same principles of behavior. Truly, the Ashrams of Brahmacharis and Grihasthas are not opposites but complementary and it is in this same spirit that we can try to restore respect for the Vedic Culture.





By Hanumātpreṣaka Swami



We have been asked by several agencies to write a report on the recent GBC-College in Brazil. This would include its broader implications for ISKCON's global Sankirtan (playing the big mṛdanga).

First, it is a very big and powerful topic, so we will write this article as a preface to later dialogs. We write it with the audience of the ISKCON's education journals in mind.

Like the six blind men approaching the elephant I can only see things from my perspective, either in my *siddha-svarupa* or currently embodied intelligence. With sincere attachment to my perspective on the elephant (maybe from the tail) I should be able to have a practical appreciation of the viewpoint of others, but a really practical view of the beast can only result from a dialog with other blind men attached to its other aspects: legs, sides, ears, tusks, trunk.



Many points come to mind, from many discussions and experiences, but most prominent seems to be the idea

that many of these efforts at educating ISKCON administrators seem to be predominated by effective models from the current corporate environment. There is nothing wrong with this. We've read and use *From Good to Great*, *The Purpose Driven Church*, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Management means action, dealing with current realities. We need some practical solutions now. On the other hand this has to be done with the perspective that these are provisional means and gradual development of more fundamental resources will modify and improve these.

First thought: The current corporation environment is aimed toward Vaisya or business ends. At best they are Karmis as contrasted with Vikarmis (NOI 10). This means that the motivation in administration is different from ISKCON and this will result in practical differences in application. Administering volunteers in a non-profit corporation like **PETA**, **Greenpeace** or the **Sierra Club** involves motivating people from the level of intensely held ethical views, what to speak of a religious organization like **ISKCON** where people are motivated by that which is *sa-cit-ananda*. One very successful manager in the medical insurance industry told us that managing in ISKCON was like herding cats.

Currently this is our most prominent consideration, improving the Śāstric basis of the College's effort.



From very interesting discussions with teachers, trustees, and organizers of the GBC-College we can see that they are quite aware of these things, but from back here at the tail, acting as a traveling Sannyasis, and having to counsel unwed girls, their families, about abortion etc. we have to emphasize and implement this a lot more.

Second, what resources do we have to do this? We would say that our basic management tool is *Varna-ashrama-dharma*. We would say that administrators are hesitant to access this because they rightly fear an artificial caste system where a bunch of Śṛṅgis (SB 1.18) are disrupting their service and creating a chaos for the society at large. As we investigate the *Bhagavatam* we feel that this problem can be properly identified and the solution also identified.

The resource materials in the *Bhagavatam* alone are cosmic (eg. SB 4.21) but beyond that Srila Prabhupada recommends that 'qualified brāhmaṇas are meant to give direction to the kings for proper administration in terms of the scriptures like the *Manu-saṁhitā* and *Dharma-śāstras* of Parāśara' (SB 1.9.27). Then there are letters, personal conversations of Srila Prabhupada, Santiparva of *Mahabharata*, *Hitopadesa* etc. etc. By sharpening our intelligence on *Srimad Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gīta* we can take these many management principles for the modern corporate world and apply them in ways that will amaze and attract even these successful businessmen and government administrators.

Let us conclude this preface to *The GBC College and Iskcon's Sankirtan* with some of the extreme proposals we have heard to hopefully establish a reasonable outer-limit to these discussions:

- All GBC Secretaries and Zonal Supervisors must be married.
- GBC College should have appropriate courses to train ISKCON ladies in the very sophisticated role of being the wife of an ISKCON administrator.
- All ISKCON leaders should take Sannyasa after fifty years, renounce all administrative positions and lead the society by spiritual potency.
- The GBC is a Ksatriya minded Brahmanical function, Raja-gurus, to the Temple Presidents, like Dhaumya-rsi for the Pandavas or Vasistha for Maharaja Dasatha.
- All Zonal Secretaries, GBC Secretaries, must be Madhayama-adhikaris.



Your turn!

VEDABASE.COM: The BBT On-line



By Prahlada-nrsimha Das*

What is the goal?

To present Srila Prabhupada's books nicely and to provide powerful research tool for their study.

Brief history

Before the Online Vedabase project came there already had been attempts to present Srila

Prabhupada's books online (e.g. vedabase.net, vanipedia, ...) but my desire was to give Srila Prabhupada's books in more presentable way and in multiple languages.

First contact with BBT for permission to allow me to make this project was in middle of year 2010, but at that time we were refused permission for there was no need to have such project. Half a year later after meeting with BBT in Sweden we got

* Prahlada-nrsimha Das became initiated in Mar 14, 2010. He joined ISKCON in Czech Republic in 2001. His main service is to develop the Online Vedabase hoping to please Srila Prabhupada by distributing his teachings.]

This is a brief report on <https://vedabase.io> and <https://www.vedabase.com> [legacy version which will be redirected to new version soon]





suggestion to contact Ekanatha Prabhu from Bhaktivedanta Archives. After speaking with Ekanatha Prabhu he invited me for BBT Trustee meeting in Italy where I presented idea of the project and got permissions to have BBT books in all languages.

First version of <https://www.vedabase.com> was launched on Vyasa Purnima 2011 (15th July). That it included books only in English and Spanish. Over years I was doing small improvements and was gradually adding more books and languages. On Balarama appearance day 2017 we launched new version at <https://vedabase.io>, which uses a new and more powerful system. Its biggest improvement is that each paragraph is considered as whole unit and all languages are interlinked on paragraph level. That opens us for various possibilities like topical categorization which is applied through all languages at once, dual language view, we can give references to specific paragraph, etc... New version also added ability for users to have own account where reading history and bookmarks are kept.

From that time we spend most of our time in importing books into the new version. Idea is that once we have all books transferred we can remove fully old version and redirect all traffic to new one only. Recently a few devotees are also helping to import (Spanish and Ukrainian). And my wife, Madana Priya devi dasi, disciple of HH Bhaktivaibhava Swami, who is kindly tolerating and supporting my service, is also helping with entering different languages.

Vedabase Spanish: There are devotees helping to import Spanish books into new Vedabase version. It is a great help. In next days SB 4 and 5 will be added to vedabase.io. We are already in half of SB!

- Pablo Parikrama Das
SB 1.5-15, SB 1.17-19,
SB 2.3-19
SB 4
SB 5.1-16
- Isvari Devi Dasi
SB 1.16
SB 3.24-30
SB 5.16-26
- Gandharva Das
SB 3
- Carlos Prabhu
SB 2.1-2

Statistics: Recently we lost free ads from Google, so getting 20k+ visits less per month. I would like to apply for ads again, but we will need to file data with **TechSoup** first.

For last 30 days we have had:

- 60,000 users (unique users)
- 200,000 visits
- 1,000,000 page views
- 7m 13s average visit (as far as I know it doesn't count last visited page, so number should be much higher, especially when people use Advanced Chapter-view)
- 42.2% are returning visitors

For the whole existence of the project we have served 46 million page views and people have spent over 100 years of reading there.

Plans

As Krishna is unlimited and always expanding we see Vedabase project to have practically unlimited ways how to expand and spread this spiritual knowledge to all.

Here are some of plans we want to achieve (not necessary in chronological order):

1. Improve search [*Note: during May 2018 search is going to be added to vedabase.io, but will not have all features we would like it to have, so those will be added later*]
2. Launch topical categorization (we want to categorize all teachings in our library)
3. Digitalization and importing of languages which are not in electronic format yet
4. Encyclopedia (more info bellow)
5. Online education (more info bellow)
6. Video gallery (have all videos from Bhaktivedanta Archives)
7. Photo albums (Bhaktivedanta Archives have collections of tens of thousands photos), we want to add meta-tagging (devotees, places, events, date) so it will be nicely searchable
8. Time-coding audio with transcripts (3k+ audio and transcripts)
9. Proofreading of all letter transcripts (6.5k+ letters)
10. Offline readers (desktop, mobile apps for reading all the scriptures without need of internet access) – should work as replacement of current outdated Folio software



11. Good support for devices for blind people
12. Importing any available books are which supposed to be in Vedabase and all ISKCON historical documents
13. Import *Back to Godhead* magazine (1944-1960)

WHAT HELP DO WE NEED?

Most needed help at this moment would be to help us import the books to the new site.

Then there is very intimate and ecstatic service. We have new timecoding feature ready. And we would like to timecode all Srila Prabhupada's lectures. By listening lectures and marking beginning of each paragraph we will be able to highlight paragraphs as they are spoken for anybody who listens audio and it will be also possible to start audio from specific paragraph.

Another huge help will be to work on category tree, which will be used for topical categorization of all content. Of course, devotees who have degrees or training in indexing and library science would be extremely useful.

Online Education

As far as I know there are various ISKCON education projects which are using Online Vedabase for references or as primary source of the texts.

Once Online Vedabase is developed enough to be considered as perfect research tool I would like to launch other projects whose purpose will be Online Education. We would like to offer multiple online spiritual courses for all levels of spiritual progress. From introductory course up to Bhakti-vaibhava level. Courses will be available for free for everybody and each student will be able to follow it in his own pace. Each topics will be covered in separate video(s) and between them will be short quizzes to keep students alert and help them to absorb teaching better. Online Education will be connected with core Vedabase (library), so referenced scriptures will be easily accessible.

Encyclopedia

Encyclopedia pages will cover persons, places, concepts, For example if you open page about Arjuna you read info about him and info about all his brothers, parents, ... All pages will be interlinked both with other pages and with scriptures from core library. Sometimes we see that university students who don't have any experience with spiritual and Vedic subjects come to read. For example they will be able to use link from text in the *Bhagavad-gita* and come to encyclopedia page about 'karma' where they will read clear explanation. As other parts of the Vedabase it will be translated into other languages.

Please contact us at: prahlad@vedabase.com

ANNUAL NORTH-AMERICAN MOE CONFERENCE



The **ISKCON Ministry of Education's** annual education conference will be held in **New Raman Reti dhama** – Alachua, Florida, June 21 through June 24, 2018. Alachua is home to two devotee run schools serving a combined 250 children from Pre-K through High School.

The purpose of this year's conference is to facilitate connections between fellow educators; learn best practices from peers and subject area experts; guide the future of ISKCON's global educational initiatives; and to come away with goals and strategies to advance the area of education participants are involved in.

Each day will begin with a keynote speech followed by interactive breakout sessions based on the area of education participants are interested in. Keynote speakers this year are ISKCON's minister of education, Sesa Dasa, and Vaishnava scholars, Hanumatpresaka Swami and Radhika Ramana Dasa.

Leaders from ISKCON's various educational initiatives – Ram Giridhari Dasa, Hanumatpresaka Swami, Gopi Gita Dasi, Nrtya Kishori Dasi, Subhra Dasi, Balimardana Dasa, and Visvambhara Dasa have confirmed their attendance.

This event is being hosted by the **Bhaktivedanta Academy** – the tuition-based, Pre-K through High School, academy that has become a model for a sustainable and professional devotional education.



Anyone engaged in the field of education – school teachers/administrators, Shastric and adult educators, and university level preachers are all encouraged to attend.

Attendance is limited to facilitate engagement and connection amongst all participants. Register online at www.iskconed.com. Registration includes full conference attendance, breakfast and lunch, and outing on the last day of the event.

Fly to the Alachua area via four airports (listed closest to furthest):

- Gainesville Regional Airport (GNV)
- Jacksonville International Airport (JAX)
- Orlando International Airport (MCO)
- Tampa International Airport (TPA)

Transportation to and from Gainesville Regional Airport can be arranged for registered participants.

Limited accommodations are available on the ISKCON Alachua property on a first-come-first served basis along with several nearby hotels:

Holiday Inn Express & Suites

(386) 518-6777 <https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/alachua/gnvac/hoteldetail>

Travelodge

(386) 462-2414 <https://www.wyndhamhotels.com/travelodge/alachua-florida/travelodge-alachua/overview>

Quality Inn

(386) 462-2244 <http://www.qualityinn.com/hotel-alachua-florida-FL682>

Questions regarding the conference, travel, and accommodations can be sent to the event organizer – Visvambhara Dasa at d.aguilera@bhaktischool.org.

CALENDAR

1. *The ISKCON Ministry of Education's, Annual North-American Education Conference*, New Raman Reti dhama – Alachua, Florida, June 21-24, 2018. Contact: www.iskconed.com and Visvambhara Dasa at d.aguilera@bhaktischool.org.
2. *Art and the Sacred*, NIOS (HpSwami et al) with the National Library of Peru and Jesuit University, Lima, Peru, end of October 2018, watch for news at www.niosnimbus.org
3. *All India MOE Symposium*, February 26-27 2019, Sridhama Mayapura, for information correspond with *Viplavah* Secretary mentioned above.

NEXT ISSUE

Will be a rigorous academic issue with Prof. Ravi Gupta (Radhika-ramana Das) as the Acting Editor and Jacob Essau (Jiva-goswami Das) as the Assistant Acting Editor. We already have articles promised from ISKCON cosmologists, U. N. authors et al. Please contact us if you want to submit articles, descriptions of ongoing ISKCON education related academic projects or proposals.

