

# *Viplavah*

**A Journal of the ISKCON Ministry of Education**

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

Volume 3

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## **Revolution Through Education**





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## MISSION AND VISION OF ISKCON MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



### 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
4. Understanding and fulfilling the educational needs of the Krishna 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.

**Minister of Education:** H. G. Sesa Das

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







## MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING EDITOR



Once there was a man with a big cigar passing through Grand Central Station in New York. He said to a fellow by the side of the concourse, “Hey, Shoeshine Boy. What you charg'n for a shine?” The fellow answered, “I am not a Shoeshine Boy. I am a Footwear Maintenance Engineer”. So, we feel as Yadunandana Swami told us many years ago, that education in ISKCON is still in diapers. Our title is quite big but we are still quite small. Of course, trying to develop a global education network in a non-profit, religious, organization, where almost everyone is a volunteer and working without any substantial budget is an enormous task.

On the other hand, even though this third issue of *Viplavah* reveals the fledgling stage of many of our ISKCON educational initiatives, it also reveals that there are many things happening that can very, very quickly be turned into big successes. All it takes is an enthusiastic hand.

In this issue we continue with Direct Citations from Srila Prabhupada, being appropriate to the time, Gaura-purnima, the advent of the great apostle of love of God, Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Then, we see our preliminary survey of a Philosophy of Education going into its third perspective, a practical description of the administrative structure of the Ministry, and the accounts summary for the ministry's expenses in year 2017, and features on different geographic and portfolio education projects. We also have details of the fifth Annual Symposium on Education within ISKCON and a request to contribute to our December issue which we aim at being of a university quality standard.

This *Viplavah* being driven out of the Western world we are reminded of Abraham Lincoln who confronted a long, long string of failures but in the end one outstanding success.

- 1816: His family was forced out of their home. He had to work to support them.
- 1818: His mother died.
- 1831: Failed in business.
- 1832: Ran for state legislature – lost. Also lost his job – wanted to go to law school but

couldn't get in.

- 1833: Borrowed some money from a friend to begin a business and by the end of the year he was bankrupt. He spent the next 17 years of his life paying off this debt.
- 1834: Ran for state legislature again – won.
- 1835: Was engaged to be married, sweetheart died and his heart was broken.
- 1836: Had a total nervous breakdown and was in bed for six months.
- 1838: Sought to become speaker of the state legislature – defeated.
- 1840: Sought to become elector – defeated.
- 1843: Ran for Congress – lost.
- 1846: Ran for Congress again – this time he won – went to Washington and did a good job.
- 1848: Ran for re-election to Congress – lost.
- 1849 Sought the job of land officer in his home state – rejected.
- 1854: Ran for Senate of the United States – lost.
- 1856: Sought the Vice-Presidential nomination at his party's national convention – got less than 100 votes.
- 1858: Ran for U.S. Senate again – again he lost.

### 1860 Elected President of the United States of America.





## SRILA PRABHUPADA ON THE GOAL OF EDUCATION: KRSNA PREMA



By Indira-sakhi Devi Dasi



The goal of education is intimately connected to that which is perceived as the ultimate goal of life. Srila Prabhupada observed that the aim of modern civilization is simply to improve the standard of living by indulging in sophisticated sense gratification.

Everyone is interested how to earn money or how to gratify senses. That is the modern civilization. Here is a competition of sense gratification. I'm gratifying my senses in one way, and all others, they are trying to imitate me or compete with me though they hate me. This is going on. Everyone is trying to be the lord of all I survey. That is competition. Why I want to become the lord of all I survey? Because I want to gratify my senses to the greatest extent. (Lecture, Bombay, March 18, 1972)

Generally, a householder in the modern civilization, they are simply trying to accumulate money, increase the bank balance and make the society, friendship and love as the aim and object of life, and they have no other business. (Lecture on SB 5.5.2, London, September 17, 1969)

Consequently, the education system is also geared towards fulfilling these goals, which ultimately kills the spirit of inquiry (*athāto brahma jijñāsā*) innate to a human being.

The whole system of education is geared to sense gratification, and if a learned man thinks it over, he sees that the children of this age are

being intentionally sent to the slaughterhouses of so-called education. (SB 1.1.22, Purport)  
Unfortunately, human beings, although they have the bodies of men, are becoming less than animals in their behavior. This is the fault of modern education. Modern educators do not know the aim of human life; they are simply concerned with how to develop the economic condition of their countries or of human society. (CC Adi 9.42, Purport)

However, according to Vedic scriptures, attaining love of God or Kṛṣṇa prema, is the ultimate aim of life.

When one is absorbed in temporary, conditioned existence, he hankers after sense gratification and liberation. But love of Godhead is the eternal nature of the soul; it is unchangeable, without beginning or end. Therefore neither temporary sense gratification nor liberation can compare with the transcendental nature of love of God. Love of God is the fifth and ultimate goal of human life. (Teachings of Lord Caitanya, Chapter 19)

Thus, Prabhupada explains that real education is one whose goal is to awaken this love of God in the heart and thus lead one to spiritual perfection of going back home, back to Godhead.

Our eternal relationship with God can be revived in the human form of life, and that should be the goal of education. Indeed, that is the perfection of life and the perfection of education. (SB 7.6.2, purport)

The human life is the opportunity for understanding what he is and what is the aim of his life. The aim of life is back to home, back to Godhead. We are part and parcel of God. Somehow or other we are in this material existence. So aim is again come to our spiritual life, spiritual existence, where there is no struggle for existence, blissful, happy life. Because actually we want happiness, blissful life. That is not possible in the material world. That is in the spiritual world. That is the aim. So every human being should be given chance. That is real education. (Answers to a





Questionnaire from Bhavan's Journal, June 28, 1976, Vrndavana)

Just like you come to the university. You want to get a better job, not that you go to the university so that you can work an elevator when you come out. You go to the university to increase your standard of living, to have higher standard of living. So real education, similarly, is that you can have higher standard of existence in your next life, not that I come to the university and simply live like animal and then have to be demoted to the body of an animal in my next lifetime. Rather, the real education is how we can be elevated from this human existence to higher existence, or to spiritual, eternal existence. So the purpose of the science of *Bhagavad-gītā* is just this, that *janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ* (BG 4.9). If you understand God in truth, and fact, then *tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti*: (BG 4.9) you will never take birth again in this material world, but you will go back to the spiritual world, called *Vaikuṇṭha* in Sanskrit language. *Vaikuṇṭha* means the spiritual world, the place where there is no repetition of birth and death. (Room Conversation with the Rector, Professor Olivier and Professors of the University of Durban, Westville, October 8, 1975, Durban)

Srila Prabhupada stressed that in this process of education, imbibing the teachings and practicing it in one's own life are more important than simply attaining theoretical knowledge.

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. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.16.17, purport)

Srila Prabhupada wanted all of us to act as preachers and teachers, in whatever capacity we can; as GBC member guiding the devotees in his zone, as congregation leader preaching to the members of his congregation or as a mother teaching her child. As such, it is important that we keep the goal of education in mind when we ourselves are studying, or are imparting knowledge to those who look up to us for guidance. That would make our service more effective and give results that would be pleasing to Guru and Gauranga.

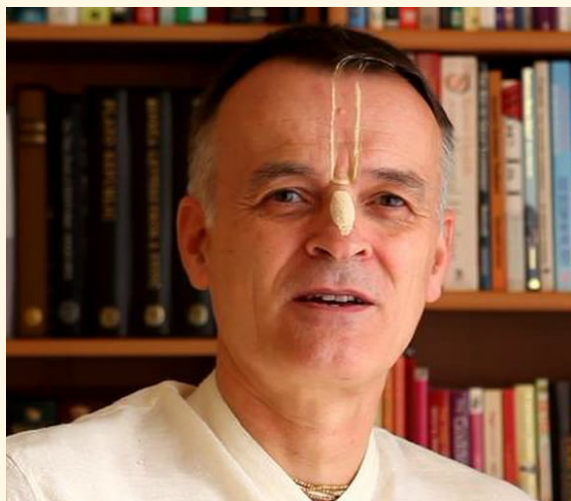




## Why ISKCON Needs a 'Philosophy of Education'



His Grace Rasa-mandala Das



### Introduction

In this essay, I examine a perceived need within ISKCON for giving more rigorous attention to educational theory, and to its systematic development. All educationalists are obliged to evaluate practice against corresponding, rational criteria. Although diversity of approach seems admirable, indeed inevitable, there is no escaping the responsibility of making well-informed decisions and promoting high standards through some measure of consistency and agreement. David Carr (2002, 3) writes that “In short, any sensible account of education needs to steer a course between reasonable pluralism and indiscriminate relativism.” (He clearly dismisses rigid absolutism). ISKCON likewise needs to maintain educational standards, and specifically to ensure alignment with Srila Prabhupada's teachings. However, repeated calls for such fidelity may obfuscate more complex - and indeed more *real* - issues, such as understanding precisely *how to* align education, applied in diverse global contexts, with the Society's theology. I argue that simplistic approaches, or mere appeal to religious mores, remain relatively ineffective.

### Multiple Theologies

My case rests on a broader proposition, and a view that Krishna Consciousness transcends both religion (as commonly understood) and specifically, in Srila Prabhupada's words, 'stereotype Churchianity'. By this phrase, I suggest he denotes a blinkered, sentimental focus on the overtly or exclusively 'religious', which marginalises ancillary areas of human

thought and endeavour.

My proposal is that ISKCON would benefit from developing a number of autonomous and 'fit-for-purpose' theologies', linked to ethics, ecology, economics, sociology, psychology, and so on. In this respect, such developments might mirror the evolution of the humanities during the European Renaissance, as Christendom emerged from the so-called 'Dark Ages' and the preponderance of Scholasticism, with its disposition toward pessimism, world-negation and incontestable ecclesiastical power. Whilst devotees have long collected and classified shastic quotes relevant to a range of practical subjects these may be little more than preliminary (albeit useful) steps toward cohesive 'Krishna conscious disciplines'. There is a case for suggesting that such disciplines must be capable of constructive dialogue within ISKCON and, crucially, beyond i.e. with its secular and 'other faith' counterparts. While the Vedic and Vaisnava teachings, represented through Shrila Prabhupada's books, may be complete in themselves, they need packaging to make them accessible to people of various world-views and attendant cultural and psychological disposition. They should also meet every day practical needs. In the case of ISKCON education, there are a number of emerging questions and tensions that urgently need addressing, with both analytical rigour and devotional fidelity. As a starter, it might be expedient to conduct small-scale empirical research to identify the 'problems on the ground' i.e. that might be usefully and practically addressed by an emerging 'theory of education'. What is indeed clear, I suggest, is that Shrila Prabhupada envisioned the emergence of Chaitanya Vaishnava 'theologies' (plural), and that education constitutes a core and much-needed discipline.

### Theories of Education

Theories of education are normally accommodated within three main categories, or fields of study. The first, 'pedagogy', refers to the age-old science (or art) of *teaching*, with more recent stress on 'learning' and 'the learner'. The second field is broader and by the mid twentieth century was consolidated as a respected academic discipline called 'philosophy of education'. It drew not only upon a burgeoning pool of educational specialists, but on the great philosophers, who either wrote directly on education or guided the broad







trajectory of human thought. Although technically a branch of philosophy, it is mainly located in university departments of education. The third field, 'education studies', became prominent even later, largely in response to governmental attempts to purge teacher training of its theoretical foundations in favour of a more prescriptive 'competencies' approach. Today, education studies encompasses four main disciplines, as previously integrated into teacher training, namely the *history, philosophy, psychology* and *sociology* of education. More recently, education studies draws on further subjects, such as economics and political science.

Since ISKCON's (latent) educational theory draws substantially on ethics, metaphysics and epistemology, the 'philosophy of education' nomenclature appears most apt. However, there are variant views as to what legitimately falls within its scope. Bailey (2010, 2) suggests it can include sociology and psychology, but doesn't mention history. Purists lay claim to an elitist approach by rejecting the inclusion of empirical data within its domain, and even suggest it be returned to, and reinstated within, philosophy departments. I prefer the more inclusive approach, provided that all discourse is analytically rigorous and makes adequate reference to core philosophical questions, as impervious to empirical enquiry. To denote ISKCON's engagement with educational theory, I suggest it's fitting to refer to its 'philosophy of education'

### Theory, Practice and Stakeholders

A notable challenge within education, as a distinct discipline (by whatever name we call it) is the dearth of constructive, well-informed conversation between (a) theory and practice (b) disparate stakeholders. In a now well-known talk, Cambridge University lecturer Hargreaves (1996, 4) observed that most teachers, though inclined toward theory, 'rely heavily on what they learn from their own experience, private trial and error'; further, that 'education researchers write mainly for one another in their countless academic journals, which are not to be found in a school staffroom'. Grimmitt (2000) points out that politicians and policy-makers prefer political agenda to pedagogy, and resent accountability to theory. Resultant curricula frameworks are often content-oriented and, while claiming 'pedagogical neutrality', stealthily impose a covert (ostensibly 'liberal!') pedagogy. Examination boards may lack educational literacy, or ignore theory, with significant consequence. Through the 'backwash effect', assessment priorities and procedures influence the entire process, generating *de-facto* aims and outcomes quite different from the

formally stated 'desired learning'. Reversing a long-standing trend, parents are now inclined to side with their offspring *vis-a-vis* the teacher, and to favour earning over learning. To summarise, this rather dystopian landscape reveals a wide range of competing constituencies, each privileging different aims, holding specific attitudes toward theory and demonstrating, in many cases, inadequate educational literacy.

Despite these hurdles, research reveals that effective teachers and lecturers reflexively engage with theory to improve practice, and indeed their own personal and professional development. Urmila Devi Dasi (2012, 1), a leading ISKCON educationalist, concurs: "One feature of schools with high achievement is that teachers discuss pedagogy and make clear links between their practice and educational theory." Critical conversation with theory is also required of other stakeholders, including school governors and intuitional managers. Indeed, Vedic and Vaishnava texts insist that management defers to educational purposes, and that well-informed educational sensibility cannot be replaced with political expedient or platitude.

### ISKCON's Unusual Context

A religious ingredient only enhances the polemical flavour of education. According to Grimmitt's UK-based study, religious leaders often resemble politicians and policy-makers (rather than teachers or academics) by insufficiently embracing theory. On the contrary, they are apt to consider themselves educationally proficient by dint of (a) attending school (b) knowing scripture (c) desiring the salvation of souls. In ISKCON, there are parallel tendencies; for example, non-specialists may repeatedly stress elementary (though incontestably true) points e.g. that the aim of education is to develop Krishna Consciousness. The challenge here is that educators, excluding the most neophyte, already know this. A more pertinent issue might be the precise role of education in fulfilling *other* legitimate aims supportive of Krishna consciousness; for example, aims and outcomes related to personal 'goods' such as prosperity and moral virtue, and social imperatives focussed on leadership and 'succession'. The issues are complex.

What is clear is that the recent and welcome proliferation of adult education in ISKCON requires ample means and resources to support standards. As non-devotee education atrophies toward content-led approaches, devotional methods may similarly slip towards mere memorisation, which – though important in itself – is but a preliminary step toward the higher goal of 'realisation'. More positively, ISKCON's theology provides distinctive views and values pertinent to current secular debate; for example, to recent concern





about the erosion of academic integrity by 'market-led' strategies, especially at tertiary level. Despite this, ISKCON has itself been prone to financial expediency, as through a perceived dearth of educational investment. This in part may be due to the populist (even gleeful) condemnation of 'slaughterhouse education', which has fostered scepticism, or at least ambivalence, toward all systematic education. An alternative response, as proffered here, is to nurture a shared, unequivocal determination to provide a better example, both practically and theoretically. Otherwise, one may legitimately ask, 'what use is ISKCON's theology?'

### What are the Options?

One way of evaluating the perceived need for robust theory is to consider the alternatives, as adopted, often unwittingly, by some ISKCON-based projects. At the 2012 educational conference at Bhaktivedanta College, Belgium, delegates explored six main alternatives, as listed below.

- Ignore the problems (deferring to more 'transcendental' or 'spontaneous' methods)
- Randomly draw on shastric verses and stories (often to support personal opinion)
- Strictly embrace 'traditional' Vedic/Vaishnava practices (or, sometimes, Indian)
- Pragmatically concede to the local educational climate (often liberal and hedonistic)
- Adopt 'alternative' approaches (Steiner, Montessori), often with meagre critique
- Define our education by 'what it is not' (which can leave it strangely vacuous).

None of these seem totally adequate. Nor do we deny that a good deal of serious reflection is already underway. However, recognising the unique historical context of the Society, its multifarious aims and diverse contexts, begs for more collaborative attention to identifying universal, transferable principles, as usually derived from critical engagement with theory. Additionally, the tensions between conflicting views, values and epistemologies may require ongoing discourse and negotiation rather than a vain search for foreclosure and for tidy, conclusive solutions. In short, for ongoing conversation, we need 'a language'.

### Conclusions

In this concise article, we've had sparse room to explore detailed philosophical questions, as revolve around the nature of knowledge, the aims of education and the means to fulfil them, and various perceptions of 'self', 'world' and 'the Supreme'. To authentically enter the conversation, ISKCON thinkers might formulate

responses to such perennial questions. However, this strategy can be complemented by a further method, as a way of bridging theory and practice - so difficult in education as compared to, say, law or medicine. This is to start by identifying practical needs and tensions and to subsequently research shastra for corresponding insight. Such dilemmas appear, for example, when establishing schools. Devotee entrepreneurs must choose between private and state-funded options, and between the respective risks - on one hand, prolonged financial stringency; on the other, compromised principles. It is clear that without a well-structured theoretical framework, relying instead on what Peters (Bailey 2010, 23) termed 'undifferentiated mush', ISKCON's educational discourse will be impeded by vagary, discord and obscurantism. On the other hand, a rigorous, well-articulated educational theory may light the way toward the material and spiritual well-being of our future generations. Based on this consideration, and our previous discussion, we list eight tentative proposals.

1. Educational theory must be aligned to Srila Prabhupada's teachings.
2. It would best facilitate authentic dialogue with corresponding academic disciplines.
3. It should address all (a) areas of education (b) stakeholders.
4. It should identify 'core principles and values', applicable in diverse contexts.
5. Theory should inform praxis e.g. through policy, methodology and training.
6. We might start 'bottom up', first examining current 'issues', theoretical and practical.
7. The Society's educational theory and practice must be exemplary.
8. We need to start the conversation, especially through publishing.

This essay is an ardent though imperfect attempt to reinvigorate this vital conversation. For the interest of the reader, I list below a few key publications.

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## Notes:

<sup>i</sup> The full quote reads “So the Krishna consciousness movement comprehends all sides of life. It is not that a stereotype churchianity, 'weekly going to the church and come back and do all... No. It is embracing all sides of our life.’”

(Sriila Prabhupada Lecture on S.B. 2.3.19, given in Los Angeles on 15/06.1972)

Sriila Prabhupada also writes, “Human intellect is developed for advancement of learning in art, science, philosophy, physics, chemistry, psychology, economics, politics, etc. By culture of such knowledge the human society can attain perfection of life. This perfection of life culminates in the realization of the Supreme Being, Vishnu.

(S. B. 1.5.22 pur)

<sup>ii</sup> One key difference might be an insistence on retaining the religious integrity of the teachings while also acknowledging critical thought, and, more broadly, the ability of the 'Vedic tradition' to avoid 'a clear divide between philosophy and religion' as typifies Western thought 'at least since the time of Kant' (Hamilton 2001, 1-2),

<sup>iii</sup> For example, the Vanipedia project has done great service in this respect.

<sup>iv</sup> These most notably include, in the US, the pragmatist John Dewey (1859-1952) and Israel Scheffler (1923-2014) In the UK, Richard Peters (1919-2011) based his theories on analytic philosophy and the moral philosopher Lawrence Kohlberg. He is well known for his collaboration with Paul Hirst (1927-2003).

<sup>v</sup> Key figures include Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Locke and Rousseau (often credited as the first proponent of 'progressive education' standing counterpoised to 'traditional education.'. For a useful overviews on most of the prominent thinkers in education, refer to Palmer (2001a and 2001b).

<sup>vi</sup> This move has been much criticised for stripping the teaching profession of its autonomy and the exercise of its professional discretion.

<sup>vii</sup> Though the former aim i.e. earning a livelihood, is not invalid, including from the Vaisnava perspectives.

<sup>viii</sup> Or what Carr (2003, 5) describes as 'rhetorical flourishes that often find their way into party political speeches.’”

<sup>ix</sup> There are two main arenas; first, education seeking to understand the role of religion in the curriculum; second, religious organisations seeking to understand the benefits, if any, of systematic education.

<sup>x</sup> Please refer to the Shrimad Bhagavatam 1.4.13 purport, which Shrila Prabhupada concludes with the statement, “Realisation is more important than parrot-like chanting.”.

<sup>xi</sup> For the purpose of clarity, this list has been slightly edited i.e. since the conference.





## THE MINISTRY'S NEW OPERATING STRUCTURE

### Introduction

In order to increase its effectiveness and engagement with the educators in ISKCON, MOE lead by its Minister, HG Sesa Prabhu, undertook a restructuring of its operating structure. Under the new structure MOE will have the following primary elements:



### Roles and responsibilities

1) **MOE Minister:** The ministry will operate under the direction of the MOE Minister, HG Sesa Prabhu. MOE Minister is appointed by the GBC body and is also the de-facto chairperson of the Executive Committee.

2) **Executive Committee:** In the new structure each of the executive committee members must have an executive role to perform. The executive committee shall operate as a team, but each members will also have to undertake individual projects, directly related to the growth of MOE. The members are expected to maintain at least 80% participation in the executive committee calls. The members are also required to submit a monthly report on the progress they are making on their individual projects to the MOE Executive Director. The currently determined membership and their respective projects are as follows:

#### I) HG Sesa Das, ISKCON MOE Minister

#### ii) HH Hanumat Presaka Swami:

- a) Editor, Viplovah, the MOE quarterly journal;
- b) Project Director for the MOE Book Of Philosophy of Education;
- c) Development of South America Regional Representatives.

#### iii) HG Champakalata Dasi:

- a) Formulating the ISKCON MOE endorsement and accreditation policies and processes;
- b) Redirecting child protection issues to the CPO or for general information purposes, as a clearing house or a liaison.

#### iv) HG Indira-sakhi Devi Dasi:

- a) Assistant Editor, Viplovah, the MOE quarterly journal;
- b) Development of the online ISKCON educational resource base;
- c) Development of MOE Website;
- d) Development of the MOE database;
- e) Co-development of the MOE strategic plan and office;
- f) Coordination of the Sunday School Curriculum development.

#### v) HG Atul Krishna Das:

- a) Chairperson of ISKCON Board of Examiners (BoEx);
- b) Reviewing the BoEx adult education standards to make programs such as Bhakti-vaibhav, Bhakti-vedanta, Bhakti-sarvabhauma accessible to the current demographics of ISKCON.

#### vi) HG Ramagiridhari Das:

- a) Annual North American Symposium and Co-development of India conference;
- b) Development of the North America regional representatives, Co-development of India regional representatives;
- c) Operation of MOE India account.



## vii) HG Tapana Mishra Das:

- a) Executive Director, ISKCON MOE, responsible for the effectiveness of the executive committee. He would also convene and chair the MOE Executive Committee conference;
  - b) Development and implementation of the MOE operational structure;
  - c) Establishment of the MOE Executive Office;
  - d) Development of the Regional Representative network in Asia, Africa and Europe. Co-development of India Regional Representatives;
  - e) Coordination of the Sunday School Curriculum development;
  - f) Development of MOE strategic plan for 2020.
- 3) Regional Representatives: The Regional Representatives are an administrative link between the Executive Committee and the local educational initiative. They must follow the standard of sadhana required by Srila Prabhupada for second initiated devotees. Such candidates could be nominated by the regional authorities and temple presidents or identified by MOE executive team directly. But in either case they will work along with local leadership. MOE is looking for inspired devotees to perform this voluntary service. The primary roles expected for the first year are as follows:

i) *Identify the temple, projects, schools, programs in your zone.*

ii) *Connect with the temple president / in-charge per temple and establish a contact with him / her. This is needed to establish education as a focus in the yatra and also to roll out the standards time to time.*

iii) *Get connected with the devotees (in-charge) in every temple who heads the education agenda in the temple and have them or the temple president register each of their education projects.*

(NOTE: If there is no devotee identified for education, please encourage the temple president to identify one & encourage them).

iv) *Form a network of amongst these educators*

*and encourage them to share best practices / resources etc.*

v) *Encourage them to submit report about their projects periodically (this can be half-yearly or annually to begin with).*

vi) *Encourage them to write to you all in case of any issues / concerns / feedbacks / suggestions. This is very important as many a times devotees don't know whom to reach out for any problems in their projects.*

vii) *Circulate the ISKCON Education Journal and get subscription on an ongoing basis.*

4) *Project Managers: As the executive committee conceptualizes and prioritizes projects for the MOE it will start looking for qualified devotees to take charge of these projects as managers. The project managers would build the team and plan for each project and coordinate with one of the executive members for support and reporting. Examples:*

i) *Sunday School Curriculum – that will allow the children to attend weekly programs at their respective temple or yatra that would assist in their understanding of Krishna consciousness as instructed by Srila Prabhupada. Such programs shall be standardized that if students were to move from one location to another they would find similarities and able to continue their onsite Sunday school education.*

ii) *The ministry is seeking to develop a resource base for children which will allow the children in ISKCON communities around the world to supplement their secular education with Krishna Conscious resources – online video tutorials, weekly assignments, etc.*

iii) *Standardization of adult education shastric programs – Similar objectives as the Sunday school program but in this case gives the ability for candidates to pursue their Bhakti Shastri, Bhakti Vaibhava, Bhakti Vedanta and Bhakti Sarvabhauma across locations in the world. The standardization would also ensure a certain minimal quality standard to adhere to the expectation of the ISKCON Board of Examiners (BoEx)*

*We seek the blessings of the ISKCON vaishnava community that we may be able to serve you all and fulfil the instruction of Srila Prabhupada that ISKCON is an educational movement.*





## MOE Expense Statement 2017

Description	Amount in USD
Budget : Funds Allocated by GBC for the Year 2017 - USD 6300	
Receipt: Payment Received from GBC Treasury for the year 2017 - Not Yet	
Notes: Funds disbursement from GBC treasury is delayed as the banking system and process have got changed.	
Total Receipts from the Treasury (as on 28th Feb, 2018)-	
Expenses for the year 2017	
Newsletter Artwork	31.25
Website Hosting	109.4
Website Revamp - Developer	234.4
Printing of Viplavah for distributing in IIAC and Mid-Term meetings	78.125
Contribution to ISKCON Seattle from MoE (after 4th Education Conf.)	51
Contribution to Nrtya Kishori for her tickets to Seattle Conference	400
Print / Stationary / Travelling Expenses	50
Total Expenditure	954.18





## MINISTRY DATA BASE



One of the initiatives undertaken by the ministry is to have an updated database of all the educators and educational initiatives in ISKCON. We see this an important first step towards having a dialog between educators, exchanging best practices, collaborating on projects, etc. To this end we were trying to have Web-forms on our website which would enable devotees to register their efforts. Unfortunately, the devotees engaged with the development have been unable to do this. So currently the ministry is looking for a website designer to help us with the project of renovating the website and setting up our database. The related job posting can be viewed at <http://jobs.iskcon.org/job/web-designer-for-iskcon-ministry-of-education/>



## ILS MEETING 2018



*By Indira-sakhi Devi Dasi*

At the *ISKCON Leadership Sanga (ILS)* 2018, the MOE seminar entitled “Passing the Torch of Knowledge”, stressed the need for ISKCON as a global community to focus on education. Srila Prabhupada's vision was discussed beginning with his instruction to the leaders to ensure that his books are “very thoroughly being read and discussed and understood and applied in practical life,” his assertion that everything is in his books and his emphasis that ISKCON is an educational movement. Next, the goal of the education in the secular world was contrasted with the goal of education according to Srila Prabhupada's instructions (“Our eternal relationship with God can be revived in the human form of life, and that should be the goal of education”) with the intention of establishing that ISKCON has an important role to play in disseminating spiritual education, particularly for its own members and the next generation. Some statistics regarding other world religions and their educational programs were shared for reflection on ISKCON's comparative progress. A brief history of education in ISKCON was discussed to derive lessons from the challenges and successes in the past 50 years. An interactive exercise was conducted to receive feedback from the participants about the educational programs in their temple/congregation. The seminar concluded with additional dialog on what we can do to further the cause of education within ISKCON, and an appeal was made that every member of ISKCON makes education a priority within their Yatra.

The seminar was offered 5 times. It was presented by Indira-sakhi devi dasi and Tapan misra das. About 70 devotees participated. All participants were given a copy of *Viplavah*. The audience was very receptive and enthusiastic. Several of them volunteered to work with the Ministry for Educational initiatives and almost fifty devotees expressed a desire to subscribe to the Ministry's Journal. A copy of the seminar should be available on the ISKCON Leadership Sanga website.



## NEW VRAJA-MANDALA, SPAIN: Education and Community Development



**ISKCON New Vrajamandala** community is a rural project situated about one hour northeast of Madrid, Spain. The current President, H. H. Yadunandana Swami, and community are focusing on education as the basis of their community development. Yadunandana Swami was initiated in 1979 and took Sannyasa in 2009. He was Principal of the **Bhaktivedanta College** in Radhadesa and Member of the Executive Committee of the **Ministry of Education**.

One history explains that the NVM complex was donated by the personal doctor of King Alfonso XIII of Spain to the owner of Laboratorios Llorente, a well known pharmaceutical company at the time. The complex was used as a summer retreat. There is a legend that Francisco Franco, the Spanish Dictator, also had visited the complex for hunting purposes. It had three swimming pools and hundreds of acres of land for horse-back riding. Weekend educational retreats in Sastric studies and specific occupational skills, Puja etc are now organized there. Children from Spanish schools come for a program called, “A Day in India”, and get to milk a cow and offer incense to Their Lordship’s, Sri Sri Radha-Govinda Chandra. Breakfast and lunch are a rural feast and the peacock is waiting to take your remnants.

In 2017, Yadunandana Swami and the devotees chased the spiders out of three of the lower patio rooms, and cleaned, painted and outfitted three sunny rooms as class rooms for a pre-school program. The progressive model is that they will add one level of education each year. This worked in Manipur for H. H. Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Swami and after 12-years his students were winning State competitions.

The core teacher is a devotional jewel, Mani-manjari Devi Dasi, who joined as soon as she finished a teaching commitment with the Sandipani Muni School in Vraja. She has been teaching professionally in the secular world for ten-years and is certified by, and well associated with, the professional educational system in Spain known as NABSS. NABSS is a British system fully authorized and appreciated by the government of Spain. She is continuing to enhance her accreditation to primary school level by taking distance education courses from the NABSS facility in Valencia.

NVM and Yadunandana Swami are also integrating with the Avanti School Trust, headed by Navin-krsna Das in England, through their pre-school system, Little Avanti Nursery School.

Several very qualified families have already moved to the community to enroll their toddlers and engage their skills in other community services. NVM is minutes away from the picturesque small town of Brihuega where one ISKCON favorable gentleman runs an excellent health spa. He sends clients to NVM as a weekend retreat and some community devotees are taking work with him. Carpooling to Guadalajara (pop. 84, 803) is less than an hour and quite practical for devotees living at NVM for developing their own businesses, or working for municipal or business entities.

Let us finishing by contrasting Maharaja’s and the NVM communities strategy with that of Aghasura.

“Aghāsura was instigated by Kāṁsa, so he had come with determination. Aghāsura also thought that when he would offer grains and water in memory of his brother and sister and kill Kṛṣṇa and all the cowherd boys, then automatically all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana would die. Generally, for the householders, the children are the life and breath force. When all the children die, then naturally the parents also die on account of strong affection for them.”, <https://www.vedabase.com/en/kb/12> [italics ours]

So let us suggest that when the children live and thrive the householders also live, prosper and preach with great success and introspection.

<http://centres.iskcon.org/centre/new-vrajamandala-spain/>







Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami from Africa, a student of the GBC College, Sannyasi and initiating spiritual master, receives his Zonal Supervisor certificate and gifts at the ILS 2018 from Tamohara Prabhu, Romapada Swami and Radhanath Swami - all trustees of the GBC College.

**The GBC College for Leadership Development** (<http://www.gbc-college.com/>) was established by the GBC body per its resolution passed at the February 2015 Annual General Meeting. The first Board of Trustees of the GBC College for Leadership Development includes Romapada Swami, Radhanath Swami, Bhakti Charu Swami, Tamohara Das, Laxmimoni Dasi, Bhakti Vijnana Goswami, Rupanuga Das (BCS), Kaunteya Das (JPS) and Gauranga Das (RNS).

Several months of deliberations by the Organizational Development committee of the GBC, co-chaired by Gopal Bhatta Das and Kaunteya Das, first led to a GBC resolution to establish the Zonal Supervisor (ZS) position in February 2014. The necessity of training the top ISKCON leaders to deal with our rapidly expanding society was thus established. On the College's Home Page, a little down to the left are the *Mission and Vision Statements*.

Gauranga Das, one of the nine trustees of the College along with his team of brilliant devotees from ISKCON Chowpati, led the curriculum development initiative for the then newly created ZS position. The team has since expanded, and so has its scope, to now develop courses for all levels in ISKCON, including a new Bhakta/Bhaktin, Mentor, Group Leader and all the way up to Guru or Sannyasi. The current curriculum development team, led by Bal Govind Das of ISKCON Pune, includes devotees from Russia, India, USA and South America.

The College trustees appointed Rupanuga Das, a disciple of His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami, as the first president of the College. He also serves as co-President of ISKCON Laguna Beach, USA, and is employed as an endowed professor in the field of management at a university in California. Before starting his PhD studies in USA, he worked as a management consultant in India.

Lalita Manjari Devi Dasi, Secretary of the GBC College, is an indispensable member of the core team that manages the College matters. She is deeply involved right from the admissions through the graduation of students, especially those who undergo training in India. The admission to the College is initiated by a GBC



who recommends the student. The Succession Organizational Development Appointment Steering Committee then evaluates the candidate and makes the admission decision. If selected, students are asked to fill out an online application and answer about 30 essay type questions about various aspects of ISKCON in light of their experience.

Gopinath Prasad Das, another integral part of the team, handles the information technology aspects and the EdX platform that is used for delivering the 12 online courses year round. The two residential training sessions of two weeks each offer multiple opportunities for experiential learning, team work and comradery among leaders. These sessions are taught by Srila Prabhupada's disciples and other devotees, who are area experts. Additionally, students are required to work on a semester-long Action Learning Project with their local teams, which include developing a strategic plan for their Zone.

The College presently offers this rigorous one-year training for potential Zonal Supervisors, who are expected to fill the extremely important position of coordinating the Sankirtana mission of ISKCON between the Zonal Secretaries and many local leaders in their constituency. Currently, we have the fourth batch of 25 potential Zonal Supervisors undergoing training at a two-week residential session in Pune, India. The residential location for the first three batches in India was the picturesque Govardhana Eco Village. Radhanath Swami and his team graciously funded the training for the first two batches in India. The donations from students now cover the College expenses.

The GBC College is also expanding its offerings in other languages, besides adding other levels of leadership training. Russia opened its doors for the ZS training to about 40 local leaders in June 2017. Next, a group of 30 Spanish speaking leaders is being selected for training in Latin America. Dhanvantari Swami has graciously offered the facilities of his Jaladuta Institute in Brazil to host the residential training.



Third batch (2017-2018) of the GBC College students and some teachers at the first residential in Govardhan Eco Village, India

To facilitate the sessions in Brazil and also provide opportunity for developing the strategy and practice of the College, there will be the presence of Hanumatpresaka Swami, Dhanvantari Swami, Kaunteya Das, Bal Govinda Das, Rupanuga Das, and some graduates of the first two batches of the GBC College, namely Ekanatha Gaura Das, Mathuresa Das, Divya Priya Devi, Devakinandana Das, Mitravinda Devi Dasi, Premarupa Das, and Premarupini Devi Dasi, who are also spearheading this significant Latin American initiative of leadership training. These graduates of the GBC College represent the traditional Parampara system now imparting the knowledge that they received as a part of their Zonal Supervisor.







## BHAKTI'S BOOKSHELF - The Library is the Heart of the Institution



**Nitai-gaura-sundara Das, Dr. Ravi Prakash Singh**, was born in Lucknow, India, 1948. He is the son the highly distinguished Hindi scholar and patriot, Dr. Kunvar Chandra Prakash Singh. He himself was very active in his youth in the Indian **Rastriya Svayam Sevaka Sangha** along with his brother who continued the political path and is now Vice-President of the **National Lawyer's Association** of India. His father, however, put him into the medical path and coming to the USA in 1974 for his post-graduate work at Johns Hopkin's University. He then met ISKCON devotees in 1975.

When Srila Prabhupada came to the Potomac Temple in 1976 he was completely engaged in his reception by Rupanuga Das, and Srila Prabhupada delighted him with several very personal exchanges. Later he was initiated by Satsvarupa Das Goswami, is currently Director of Geriatric Psychiatry at the prominent **Trustpoint Psychiatric Hospital** in Tennessee and President of the ISKCON affiliated **North American Institute for Oriental Classical Studies**.

We are wondering if a Grhastha so engaged can have a good reading program and if Prabhuji can help us develop a whole literary promotion and review column in *Viplavah*.

**Viplavah:** Nitai-gaura-sundara Das (NGD), about how many BBT, ISKCON, books do you have in your library?

**NGD:** It looks like about 500 but they are overflowing the book-shelves so it's a little hard to count.

**Viplavah:** Can you describe them? Why do you acquire them? Where do you find them?

**NGD:** Well, we are just trying to take advantage of Srila Prabhupada's and our Guru Maharaja's mercy and make real progress in spiritual life. We look for new publications on websites such as **Dandavats.com** and at different ISKCON festivals whenever we attend. We usually buy at least 50-new books a year and read maybe 25-per year. The rest we are stocking so that we can read them after we retire. Many of them are wonderful but out of

print.

Of course, there are all the BBT books that Srila Prabhupada personally established and then later BBT publications such as Vaisesika Das' Our Family Business, Gopi-parana-dhana Das' Brhad-bhagavatamrta annotated translation. Other publications sometimes deal with specific preaching areas such as evolution or scientific explanation of the Bhagavatam. Many are devotee biographies or their personal preaching and devotional experiences in their lives.

Of course, we have all of our Guru-maharaja's books and they are also all available online at [www.sdglegacy.com](http://www.sdglegacy.com).

It is easy and motivating to read the biographies and of course inspires us to make progress in our Ashrama and personal cultural situation. Daily we read Srimad Bhagavatam, in the morning, and Gita in the evening. Then we usually hear about five-hours a week of current lectures on Mayapura TV. We are trying to take up this formal Bhakti-sastri curriculum with H. H. Hanumatpresaka Swami and usually we have visits in our home and community of about 10-15 Sannyasis and senior devotees a year.

Thus we have very penetrating and stimulatingresources for developing our preaching based up Srila Prabhupada's books and we feel that we can expand this by developing a permanent Temple and educational center here in Nashville.





## ISKCON EDUCATORS CONFERENCE – 2018



The fifth Annual Symposium on Education within ISKCON will be held in Alachua, Florida from June 21 - 24, 2018. We invite educators throughout the Americas to join us for 3 full days dedicated to:

- Building connections with fellow educators.
- Developing professional skills.
- Guiding the future direction of ISKCON's global educational initiatives.
- Setting team and collective goals for the year ahead.

Each day will begin with inspiring keynote speeches followed by breakout sessions where participants will have the opportunity to delve into topics relevant to the area of education they are part of. A partial list of Confirmed Participants includes:

- Sesa Das
- Hanumatpresaka Swami
- Bali-mardana Das
- Gopi-gita Devi Dasi
- Subhra Devi Dasi
- Radhika-raman Das
- Vaisesika Das
- Visvambara Das
- Rama-giri-dhari Das.

With the support of this year's host, Bhaktivedanta Academy and the ISKCON Ministry of Education, the cost to participate is only \$51. The participant fee includes conference sessions, prasadam meals, and an excursion on the final day of the conference. For more information and to register, go to [www.iskconed.com](http://www.iskconed.com)



## CALENDAR



- *GBC College* in Brazil March 2018
- *Fifth Annual Symposium on Education within ISKCON*, Alachua, Florida – 21-24 June 2018





## NEXT ISSUES



**Call for Contributions** *Viplavah*, the journal of ISKCON's Ministry of Educational, seeks contributions for our December 2018 issue, which will focus on higher education. We invite the following types of contributions: 1) scholarly articles on themes relevant to Gaudiya Vaishnavism, 2) reports of academic conferences on Vaishnavism or other subjects of interest to readers of *Viplavah*, 3) descriptions of higher educational projects and institutions within or related to ISKCON, 4) summaries of university outreach programs and opportunities for university-level study for devotees, and 5) scholarly books for review, 6) discussions of any other matters relevant to ISKCON in relation to higher education. Contributions should be no longer than three single-spaced pages, but may be significantly shorter.

Questions and submissions should be sent to the editor-in-chief, H.H. Hanumatpresaka Swami (Huber H. Robinson) at [jayarama108-nios@yahoo.com](mailto:jayarama108-nios@yahoo.com), or Radhika Ramana dasa (Ravi M. Gupta) at [ravigupta108@yahoo.com](mailto:ravigupta108@yahoo.com). All contributions should be submitted no later than October 30, 2018.





Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare  
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

