

News Release

New Vrindaban Community • Office of Public Affairs • RD1, Box 318A • Moundsville, W.Va. 26041 • (304) 843-1600

News Item

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For Immediate Release

Controversial Swami of Hare Krishna Community in West Virginia begins 1st Amendment Freedom Tour.

His Divine Grace Kirtanananda Swami Bhaktipada, founder and spiritual leader of New Vrindaban, the much publicized 4000 acre Hare Krishna community in Moundsville, West Virginia, has begun a publicity and goodwill tour of major cities in the United States. *Swami Bhaktipada's 1st Amendment Freedom Tour* is timed to correspond with the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution whose 1st Amendment guarantees freedom of religion.

New Vrindaban is the home of over 700 devotees of the Krishna Consciousness movement and the world renowned *Prabhupada's Palace of Gold*, West Virginia's 2nd major tourist attraction, with 250,000 visitors annually. The community has been the focus of much harassment and religious persecution recently due to a federal grand jury investigation brought about by charges of murder conspiracy and drug dealing. The investigation, which began in September of 1985, by the F.B.I., Internal Revenue Service, state and local police agents and recently involved an early morning "gestapo" type raid on the administration and finance offices, has yet to show any evidence against the community.

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Swami Bhaktipada's national tour will emphasize religious persecution all over America. He will be appearing on national, regional and local television and radio talk shows, making guest appearances and doing press interviews in each of the selected cities. The 1st Amendment Freedom Tour began in December in Washington D.C. with Bhaktipada's appearance on the top-rated talk show, "Larry King Live". He has also appeared on "C.B.S. News Nightwatch", "Sally Jesse Raphael Show", "Owen Spann Show" and many other area shows.

The Swami's tour will take him on goodwill visits to New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Miami, New Orleans, Atlanta and at least 20 other cities. For further information, phone 304-843-1600, Ext. 251, or write to the New Vrindaban Community, Office of Public Affairs, R.D. #1, Box 318A, Moundsville, West Virginia 26041.

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