

legally restricting our sankirtana! Just consider Prabhupada's instructions on this crucial matter.

"The highest development of Krsna conscious understanding will be when you are able to give anyone the truth, but in such a manner that they will respond in a positive way... If you understand this properly then you may be able to say the truth at all times in the most palatable way, according to the situation and the type of hearer. To perfect this art, that takes practice. So practice preaching from this understanding and gradually you will develop it more and more. But we should never steal anything like money, food, water, gasoline, etc., just to enhance our service to Krsna. That is too much dangerous, and if we are caught then all our work is finished. Just like in India recently, this balyogi Guru Maharaji was detected by the customs authorities attempting to smuggle some small items into India. By this one tiny incident his entire effort for preaching - even he is rascal Number One and his preaching is nonsense - even so the example is there, his work is now ruined and he is practically finished as the government will not grant him passport to leave India. So we shall always be careful to avoid any kind of jeopardizing our high standing in the society by some foolish and small act of illegal stealing."

"That is the real preaching, selling books. Who can speak better than the books? At least whoever buys, he will look over... You should know the tactic how to sell without irritating. What your lecture will do for three minutes, but if he reads one page his life may be turned. We don't want to irritate anyone, however. If he goes away by your aggressive tactics, then you are nonsense and it is your failure. Neither you could sell a book, neither he would remain. But if he buys a book, that is the real successful preaching..." (letter to Bali Mardan, Sept. 30, 1972)

"My general request is that you all distribute as many books as possible, and at the same time be very careful in dealings with others so that they may not become irritated with us. Your book sales statistics are astounding. I am so much pleased. Please continue distributing such nice quantities and try to enthruse others more and more. You are sincere, so Krsna will give you all intelligence, strength and everything else you may need to distribute millions and millions of books." (letter to Tripurari Swami, Jan. 16, 1975)

With careful attention to "PR" and continuing legal efforts, we can create, by Srila Prabhupada's guiding intelligence, an unprecedented and irresistible tidal wave of Love of God.

NOTE TO PRESIDENTS AND SKP PARTY LEADERS: If you know of any VIP's who have received copies of Srila Prabhupada's books, please write or send a postcard to the ISKCON Public Affairs Office in Los Angeles so we can mention their names in our next newsletter. This information is very enlivening to book distributors the world over.

The ISKCON Public Affairs Newsletter is sent to all initiating gurus and GBC's, all temple presidents, all sannyasis, all heads of Public Affairs Departments and to anyone else who specifically requests it. Please inform us if you want to be included on our mailing list.

BOMBAY THREAT TURNS INTO GLORIOUS VICTORY

Fraught with a series of obstacles since the initial purchase of the land back in 1971, the Bombay project at Hare Krishna Land, now ISKCON's most magnificent Temple complex, last summer suffered what appeared to be its worst setback. After a skirmish between ISKCON's hired guards and a shoe thief in which an illegal resident of Hare Krishna Land was accidentally killed by a hired guard, a Bombay City councillor incited large crowds to march on the Temple with protest signs and demand temple officials pay huge sums of money to the family of the deceased. The crowds, incensed by the councillor's lying words, smashed several windows and attempted to enter the Temple room in a destructive mood, but devotees barred the huge wooden doors just in time. The councillor also attempted, unsuccessfully to inspire all Juhu businessmen to close down for a half day in protest. Next, he and his cohorts arrived at the temple with a battery of police and several karmi residents of Hare Krishna Land -- ("witnesses") who pointed out Temple officials, saying they were directly involved in the "assault" on the dead man. Police took eight devotees in for "questioning," and after four or five hours of questioning told them they were being held for murder.

Meanwhile, the press, under the direct influence of this most sinister city councillor, who is influential with a major Bombay newspaper, launched a major assault. More than one hundred articles, exemplifying one of the most horrendous examples of yellow journalism ever seen on this planet, appeared throughout Maharashtra, depicting devotees as violent, dishonest, and even as espionage agents! One of the most infamous newspapers of Bombay printed a front-page close-up of the temple's marble towers, highlighting their magnificent *cakras* which are mounted at the very top. According to this amazing article, devotees, as CIA agents, were working beneath the temple altars, transmitting coded electronic information to the United States, and using ingeniously camouflaged radio antennae -- the *cakras*!

Vehement protests resounded throughout Bharat Varsa as leading industrialists, politicians, entertainers, and spiritual leaders voiced their grief and disgust over the false accusations and imprisonment of Lord Krsna's dearest servants. On hearing the news, Ms. Lata Mangeshkar, Life Member and India's most celebrated recording artist (she holds the Guinness Book of World Records title as having recorded more songs than anyone in history!), began to weep. Within a matter of days, the temple president, His Holiness Giriraj Swami, who had managed to escape arrest, rallied the support of hundreds of India's leading citizens.

Enraged over all these intolerable injustices, organized to harass and discredit the stalwart devotees of Lord Krsna, ISKCON's leading life members prepared their counterattack with a lust for battle comparable only to that of the great general Bhishma himself! Like a sea of thunderbolts, lawsuits and threats of lawsuits appeared in cities all over India, stunning reporters, editors and publishers alike into deathly silence. Many newspapers began to publish retractions, corrections, apologies and big articles which clarified and defined ISKCON's true position. Police released the devotees from prison. The heads of 40 of India's leading spiritual organizations prepared, signed, and paid for a full-length page ad with a beautiful picture of the temple, establishing the bona fide beneficent nature of ISKCON, and condemning the iniquities of "yellow journalism" fostered by corruption, greed, and a total dearth of ethics. The advertisement appeared in all major newspapers in their respective languages.

By the time the devotees were released from jail, ISKCON had already become the most popular subject in the nation. As the time for Jannasthami drew near, huge, colorful billboards at Bombay's busiest intersections, newspapers, radio, television, and cinema ads all heralded the coming observance of Lord Krsna's glorious Advent Day at Hare Krishna Land.

BOMBAY THREAT TURNS INTO GLORIOUS VICTORY

In an appropriate mood, devotees had erected just over the entrance gate to the temple, a twelve-foot-tall dazzling figure of the Lord, animated by hundreds of multi-colored light bulbs. Lord Visnu was hurling his invincible *cakra*, which quickly expanded as it moved away from his hand, appearing to come closer and closer to the hundreds of people crowded around the entrance arch. Along the upper colonnades on the temple's west facade, thousands of other colored lights formed the *maha mantra* and a multiplicity of moving special effects seldom seen even in America.

Because the controversy of Hare Krishna Land had raged so long in the news media, record crowds attended both Janmashtami and Srila Prabhupada's Vyas Puja celebrations. Ecstatic kirtans, remembrances of Srila Prabhupada, testimonials by government ministers, performances by India's leading artists, opulent prasadam, fabulous interior decorations, spectacular arotiks, movies, and dioramas all contributed to one of India's most memorable events. The all-auspicious appearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead had served to vanquish all the myths the demons had perpetrated against ISKCON.

After the festival, editors, reporters, spiritual leaders, scholars and government officials in highest echelons began to come almost daily to the Temple for day-long guided tours of Hare Krishna Land and private feast-luncheons of mouth-watering prasadam. In the mood of the Pandavas, Lord Krsna's devotees had met an immense challenge and defeated their adversaries. Once again, by Lord Krsna's inscrutable plan, adversity had turned into progress, apparent defeat to glorious victory.

I wish that all those calamities would happen again and again so that we could see You again and again, for seeing You means that we will no longer see repeated births and deaths.
(Prayer of Queen Kunti, SB: 1.8.25)

Thus, under the able direction of Sriman Jagat Purusa dasa, the newly-established office of ISKCON Public Affairs (IPA) in Bombay had seized the opportunity to preach like never before. Congratulations to ISKCON Bombay on a job-well-done!

RECORD INDIAN FLOODS YIELD GIGANTIC PREACHING OPPORTUNITIES

With the Mayapur Temple under fifteen feet of water, the devotees residing in ISKCON's holy dham utilized the calamity to embark upon one of ISKCON's potentially greatest "PR" programs to date. The Ganges flood, one of the worst in remembrance, affected 40 million people, displaced more than nine million people, destroyed almost two million homes and three million tons of grain, wiped out untold millions of acres of crops, and even caused some damage to our temple buildings' foundations.

Because the ground floor of the temple was under water, devotees moved to the roof and erected a kitchen from which they cooked for tens of thousands of people. First-class color and black and white photos of devotees feeding flood victims are being published in the current *Back to Godhead*. These photos and others are available through the BBT photo division in Los Angeles. Some of these show devotees on old-fashioned country boats distributing prasadam direct from the boat to villagers wading out chest-deep in the water with bowls to receive the *khicuri* made by the devotees. Government officials in Bengal supplied free of charge, as much food to the devotees as they could carry on their boats, and many supplied letters to ISKCON thanking them and recognizing ISKCON for its humanitarian work during the crisis. In a "Situation Report" published by the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service (dated October 13, 1978) ISKCON is listed along with CARE, the Salvation Army, the World Relief Commission, World Foreign Service, and other similar organizations for its help in flood relief. The report states: "International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) food relief...340 W. 55th St., New York...The Mayapur center, which can feed 20,000 - 30,000 persons a day, has been sent \$5,000 in cash for relief purposes. ISKCON Food Relief

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advises that the centers may be used by other agencies for the distribution of food and other relief supplies. Their addresses are: P.O. Mayapur Dham...3 Albert Road...Hundreds of ISKCON volunteers are also available to work with other voluntary agencies." Also CARE of Bengal wrote a beautiful letter on their letterhead praising ISKCON's work -- a valuable document for your "PR" archives! (see page 8)

For an astounding day-by-day account of ISKCON's heroic food relief work at the height of the disaster, read the new BTG, Vol. 13, No. 12. The ISKCON Public Affairs suggests you put aside copies of this BTG issue specifically for PR purposes. It's dynamite!

BTG SUBSCRIPTION PROGRAM

As a follow-up to our November 9th interim newsletter regarding BTG subscriptions to parents, we also suggest that all your VIP's and non-devotee friends whom you want to cultivate should get a BTG gift subscription. Obviously, you won't have time, especially if you're a temple president, to individually cultivate each of these people as much as you'd probably like. People who get a BTG every month will constantly be reminded of the beauty of Lord Krsna through the wonderful paintings, the innovativeness and intelligence of His devotees through increasingly provocative, interesting articles, and the pleasure of associating with devotees by seeing them in beautifully effulgent color photographs. They will be reminded of ISKCON's importance to humanity through the over-all message of the magazine, of the various books available through the book-ad page, and of you -- the person who gave them a free subscription, the person through whom they can do some service to Lord Krsna, the person they can always turn to for spiritual guidance and direction on the path to perfection in life. You can use extra SKP donations to pay the \$5 subscription cost and at the same time add 12 points on the weekly SKP Newsletter. Just fill out the subscription cards sent to the temple presidents by His Holiness Jayadvaita Swami, mail them, and BBT will debit your account accordingly. Please contact the BBT if you require more subscription cards.

EXPLORE THE REAL CULT!

Under the conveniently applied rubric, "CULT," the media, as well as ISKCON's proclaimed enemies in the West, all-too-often group ISKCON with the "Moonies," members of the "Divine Light Mission," "Children of God," "Scientologists," "TM'ers," and other *persona non grata*. This problem has become particularly acute in Germany, so much so that this will be taken up as a separate item in a future IPA Newsletter.

In recent months we have been taking pains to distinguish ourselves from these pseudo-religions by proving we are not only a bona fide religion and one of the oldest (in fact THE oldest), but also that some five hundred million people follow our scripture, the *Bhagavad-gita*, as their Book of Truth. This means that ISKCON is the fundamentalist, orthodox core of what has come to be known as Hinduism, the world's third largest religion.

In many ways, we can demonstrate the authenticity of ISKCON. One of the most impressive ways to prove our point is to cite the hundreds of letters we have in our files from prominent Indians all over the world, endorsing and supporting our movement and protesting efforts to discredit us. When leading Indian citizens as well as large numbers of common Indian citizens in any country express these sentiments, the public is impressed. Thus, people tend to identify us with a whole country instead of seeing us as a "fringe religion." Further, we can present them with hundreds of favorable reviews of Srila Prabhupada's books by scholars the world over. On these two combined points, Indian and academic support, none of the pseudo-religions can gain any credibility. Other types of useable evidence are court decisions in our favor (particularly that of Judge Leahy in New York who dismissed charges of "brainwashing" against the New York Temple leaders two years ago in a landmark decision,

ALL GLORIES TO SRI GURU AND GAURANGA!

ISKCON
41 W. Allens Lane
Philadelphia, Pa. 19119
May 4, 1988

Dear Mukunda Maharaja,

Please accept my most fallen obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

This letter is to set before you carefully, in writing, why I take the position I do with regard to Rupamanohara Prabhu. I want to relate the history of my dealings with him so you can understand how I have come to perceive him the way I have. I seemed to have notably failed to communicate with you over the last year in oral discussions; perhaps this will help.

As you know, Rupamanohara has yet once again made an uproar and plunged into relentless campus politics, this time because I and the other temple managers lack sufficient trust and confidence in him to give him managerial control over Govinda's restaurant.

This lack of trust in Rupamanohara is well founded, being based on long experience.

First of all, he has--as you well know--a history of chronic drug abuse, a predilection not only contrary to our regulative principles but also against the law.

This problem came spectacularly to the community's attention on Halloween, 1986, when Rupamanohara did not show up for his wife Candrika's birthday celebration, for which all her relatives had gathered. For three days he was gone; his wife's suffering at this time was painful for everyone to see. It came to light then that Rupamanohara had for some time been regularly--monthly--vanishing on overnight cocaine "binges;" he would simply drop out of sight without a word, leaving his wife imagining horrible things. Inevitably, this birthday disappearance also proved to be a "binge," one so intense that when Rupamanohara returned, his nose, scoured by cocaine, would not stop bleeding.

Rupamanohara then received spiritual counseling; he admitted his weakness; he vowed to reform; he began to attend the morning program. But after a while he resumed his usual spiritually lax life.

Then in March, 1987, another spectacular binge. After Rupamanohara had flown for vacation to California, Candrika discovered to her dismay that he had covertly removed \$1500 from one of their personal bank accounts; this money purchased cocaine in California. Distressed and alarmed, Candrika went to

Kapila dasa, another Food For Life manager, and with great apprehension together they began to go over the FFL books, looking for funds unaccounted for. They removed him as a signer on the FFL accounts, and Candrika also altered their personal finances so that he could not get money without her knowledge.

Rupamanohara's duplicity, as much as his drug use, hurt Candrika deeply, and she wondered how much trust she could place in her own husband. She thought of leaving him, and finally decided to move into the temple and try at least to restore her own spiritual life.

Rupamanohara returned and saw the position he was in. He then brought off a remarkable reversal. You would see him talking intensely to Candrika for hours and hours; then going to me, to you, to Kapila, back to Candrika, and so on. In short order, he had turned her completely around--regained her confidence and deftly diverted all of her feeling of anger and betrayal from himself to Kapila.

I felt, as we all seemed to then, that Rupamanohara's behavior made him unfit to be the head of FFL in Philadelphia. FFL had acquired a big building; it was becoming a large and very visible project; increasing amounts of money ^{were} passing from the government into its accounts. It had become a major project--a major project whose director abused drugs, seemed to be untrustworthy with money, and periodically broke loose of all restraints. Who knew what could happen?

But Rupamanohara seemed unable to understand what we were so upset about. He represented himself to me as an innocent, easygoing, fun-loving person who somehow or another found himself in charge of this project and subject ^{to} a lot of pressure he wasn't used to; so once in a while he needed to blow off a little steam, and he couldn't understand why everybody was making such a big deal about it. Especially Candrika, way overreacted, freaking out like that, and coming over to the temple and making a big scene in front of everybody, getting me involved, Mukunda Maharaja involved. He said that she, like her mother, was mentally unstable, prone to wild exaggerations, and he pointed out that she had spent a good deal of time in mental hospitals before she became a devotee. Feeling himself to be like an innocent, if somewhat exuberant child, he looks to see what is wrong with us when we get so unnecessarily upset with him.

Now Rupamanohara is a very lovable person, and he skillfully uses his considerable charm to sell this representation of himself. Yet his use of this very charm to manipulate and control people, and his unyielding determination to avoid real accountability to anyone, belie this innocent picture. It is a false presentation, although Rupamanohara himself is sold on it.

Rupamanohara labored indefatigably to get back as one of the signers on the account. He also moved into the temple and began

to attend the morning program. You told me you obtain^{ed} a written promise that should he again succumb to cocaine, he would resign from FFL.

At the same time, I watch^{ed} Rupamanohara and Candrika, a team once more, mount a concerted assault on Kapila. Candrika possesses a formidable reservoir of rage, and Rupamanohara has learned how to control and direct it. An orchestrated campaign of faultfinding and defamation was gradually built up against him, until finally, in the fall, he was cast out. But Kapila's doom had been sealed when Rupamanohara returned from California.

Rupamanohara stayed no more than two months in the temple, and his sadhana gradually deteriorated. In May he moved back with his wife and began^{to} work intensely on the woman's shelter.

As the shelter approached completion, problems arose within FFL. Rupamanohara had again restored himself to financial autonomy, and the bookkeeper wrote to me with great concern that between January and October \$43,000 worth of cash checks had been issued to Rupamanohara, and that there were not many receipts to show for it. Others approached me to tell me that nondevotees workers in FFL were inquiring whether Rupamanohara had a drug problem. There was a steady stream of these sorts of concerns, and people came to me because they thought I ought to be able to do something about it.

In November, there was a FFL meeting in which Rupamanohara was pressured to conform to certain financial and spiritual standards. He agreed wholeheartedly, and then went out on another acknowledged all-night cocaine binge.

Since that time, Rupamanohara has not regularly attended the temple programs. He continues to closely associate with people who are known drug abusers. He maintains that while it is true he spent one whole night out in March partying with drug users, he himself did not touch any. Not everyone believes this.

I have never made any secret of my conviction that we ought to live up to Srila Prabhupada's standard and the long-established law of ISKCON that all managers and leaders of ISKCON projects must follow the regulative principles. Rupamanohara has felt this conviction a real threat, and in response he has done two things: 1) moved the Food For Life program entirely outside the jurisdiction of ISKCON, and 2) engaged in nonstop politics in the community, and now outside, against your humble servant here.

The FFL program started out as an ISKCON project, but by the time I became a manager, it was already well on the way to being removed as such. The program is separately incorporated as Food For All, Inc. It is, in actuality, now a private householder business, with Rupamanohara and Candrika together making \$50,000 a year, and Devideva, the other director, \$36,000 a year. Because it is a private business, and not a formal ISKCON project, one may argue that Rupamanohara does not have to come up

to the same standards. However, since the project goes under the name "Hare Krishna Food For Life" and is closely identified with ISKCON in the public eye, the same standards ought to apply. A scandal for them is a scandal for us. But Rupamanohara feels secure. He has boasted to two different community members that now no one can get him out, not even Mukunda Maharaja.

So he is not accountable.

During my course of association with Rupamanohara's project, I have seen him show little or no interest in establishing any Krishna conscious standards--of financial or moral accountability for Rupamanohara himself, of basic prasadam standards for the FFL cooks^{and} employees in the Deity kitchen, of standards of FFL people living in the temple--and whenever I have tried to establish these standards with anything greater than mild exhortation, Rupamanohara has immediately seen me as a political threat. Claiming that I don't appreciate him and FFL, that I am interested in controlling everything, that I am inimical to anyone who is not a "pure devotee," etc., he has taken his case to all the devotees in the community, thus furthering dissension and division.

This constant political activity by Rupamanohara and his wife makes it very difficult to deal with him in a personal way. At this point he is doing a great deal of harm to the community as a whole, and is, in effect, making a case against Krishna consciousness among the devotees. All this because he feels personally threatened.

Rupamanohara is able to gain great sympathy for himself because of the power with which he is able to convey to others his own sense of himself as an innocent, basically childlike person, whom people like me unjustifiably accuse of reprehensible things. Rupamanohara is successful because he deeply feels it is so.

And I have concluded that there is a sense in which it is true. Rupamanohara is actually still a very small child in the realm of moral development. Somehow or another, in this one area of life he is severely retarded, and he still feels the world like a child who has not at all internalized the adult standards of right and wrong. It is not that he feels the difference between right and wrong and chooses wrong; adults do that. It is rather that he doesn't feel the difference. His plea, in effect, is for us to recognize his pre-moral innocence, and not condemn him or restrain him.

Small children are amoral beings, but they have small bodies and their desires, though unchecked^{ed}, are also undeveloped. Their amorality is little threat to others. But Rupamanohara couples an infantile amorality with (some) adult desires and an adult's intelligence. Like a child without internal checks, he cannot at all abide any external restraints, and when he^{he} feels his sphere of action is in any way checked^{ed} or restrained externally, he indulges in the equivalent of a sustained temper-tantrum until

everyone backs off. He cannot abide, and does not understand, adult restrictions.

Thus, Rupamanohara is handicapped. He is the victim of severely retarded moral development. In one sense he is not mentally ill--his cognitive functions work all right, and on a day-to-day basis his actions are rational--but he is far from a properly functioning, healthy adult human being. He does not feel the difference between right and wrong; he does not feel moral obligation and responsibility and commitment. He is morally handicapped. If this is not recognized and managed properly by the adults around him, he will always be a source of mayhem.

For this reason, he doesn't belong in the position he is in, and he will do great damage. He is using all his adult skills ruthlessly to make a safe sphere of action for the child to play without restraint.

If you can recognize him as the handicapped person he is, then it might be possible to work on a program to make his problem manageable and for him to lead something of normal life. It does no good for you play the indulgent parent to the spoiled child, or for me to play the strict parent to the spoiled child. The child needs to grow up as far as possible. But at the present, Rupamanohara is busy creating mayhem, doing great damage to himself, to other people, and to the movement. You should recognize this, and understand that Rupamanohara's own conviction of his innocence should be recognized as the source of great troubles. We recognize "childlike innocence," but as devotees we should be able to see the truth of a famous observation by the philosopher Thomas Hobbes. "Evil," he said, "is a robust child."

Hoping this finds you well,

Your fallen servant,

Ravindra Svarupa dasa
Ravindra Svarupa dasa