

Viplavah

Revolution Through Education
A Journal of the ISKCON Ministry of Education

Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



December 2020 No. 4/4. Winter – Gita-Jayanti Issue



MISSION STATEMENT

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.

Minister of Education: H. G. Sesa Das

Executive Director: Tapana-misra Das

Core Committee: Hanumatpresaka Swami, Sesa Das, Atul-krsna Das, Tapan-misra Das, Indira-sakhi Devi Dasi.

Executive/Issue Editor: H. H. Hanumatpresaka Swami

Editorial Board:

- H. G. Indira-sakhi Devi Dasi
- H. G. Rama-giridhari Das
- Hanumatpresaka Swami

The first issue of the Journal was published Janmastami 2017, publishing 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.

Ministry Web Site: iskconeducation.org

For Correspondences: Secretary, viplavah.iskcon@gmail.com



CONTENTS

MISSION STATEMENT	2
MASTHEAD.....	2
SRILA PRABHUPADA UVACA	4
MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS.....	5
INTERVIEW WITH VAISESIKA DAS.....	7
EVENTS AND RESOURCES	17
REPORT FROM A REGIONAL REP	18



SRILA PRABHUPADA UVACA

By Indira Sakhi Devi Dasi



“So I am so much pleased upon all of the boys and girls in Los Angeles and all over the world who are understanding and appreciating this unique quality of our transcendental literature and voluntarily they are going out to distribute despite all circumstances of difficulty. By this effort alone they are assured to go back to home, back to Godhead.

In order to change this materialistic society and prevent them from gliding to hell, first thing is to educate them. All decent men want to give service to humanity, only thing is they do not have information really what is that service. Hospitals, feeding the poor, Red Cross, these are service to the bodies only, not to the man.

Service to humanity means jnana. By giving people knowledge, jnana, that is the highest service to humanity. So we are performing the actual welfare work of society by informing everyone through our literatures who is God, who they are, and what is the relationship. In this way everyone who hears our message gets the opportunity to fulfill his actual position as human entity and become delivered from the clutches of maya.

So you may understand it that by disseminating our Krsna consciousness propaganda anywhere and everywhere, by selling books, by making publicity, newspapers, television, so many ways there are to spread Krsna consciousness information, you may know it that by utilizing our energy in this way to give everyone access to the Absolute Truth, that is the real understanding of desire to serve humanity.”



(Letter to Ramesvara, India, 9 January, 1973)



MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

By Hanumatpresaka Swami and Sriman Aja-govinda Das



St. Francis of Assisi¹ is describe as saying that this body is an ass, that we ride through this world, do not spend all of your time taking care of an ass. Yet he also realized that the poor ass needs its respect for the work it has done and apologizes for the abuses we have given it.

We commented in the last *Viplavah* that this issue is will be our last

as General Editor. H. G. Aja-govinda Das, PhD Oxford, Assistant Professor at Texas A&M², has contributed with excellent help as Managing Editor for this issue.

We are very enthused in building bridges between Srila Bhakti-siddhanta Sarasvati's tradition and Prof. C. G. Jung's. In the course of that we met a very nice Jungian professor in Mexico City and we were talking about developing some projects together. He and I are the same age and studied in the USA at the university level at the same time.

He stopped me and smiled, and said, "Swami, at our age it is time to turn the new projects over the young people, and start to consolidate the work we have done in this life time".

It really struck as what I have also been thinking, so this is the last issue as General Editor.

Also, resigning as Member of the Executive Committee of the Ministry and as member of the Latin American Regional GBC.

We have had two teeth missing for several years. Our short term memory is clearly going and now in the last few weeks, months, our eyes cannot handle too much computer time and we are starting to get aches in our chest unless we 'live in the peaceful atmosphere of Vr̥ṇḍavana'.

Then raising the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison. And hitherto most of us had been able to control our sorrow; but now when we saw him drinking, and saw too that he had finished the draught, we could no longer forbear, and in spite of myself my

1 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Francis-of-Assisi>

2 <https://www.tamuk.edu/engineering/departments/eecs/faculty-and-staff/ayush-goyal.html>



own tears were flowing fast; so that I covered my face and wept, not for him, but at the thought of my own calamity in having to part from such a friend.

Nor was I the first; for Crito, when he found himself unable to restrain his tears, had got up, and I followed; and at that moment, Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out in a loud and passionate cry which made cowards of us all.

Socrates alone retained his calmness: What is this strange outcry? he said. I sent away the women mainly in order that they might not misbehave in this way, for I have been told that a man should die in peace.³ *Phaedo, Socrates*

So, funny, no? We really recommend reading the *Phaedo* referenced below. It's a whole essay we want to write: World Classical Literature. In fact we see that it is so true as Srila Prabhupada comments and many of our audience is also experiencing: Old age is a good friend for a devotee. It pushes us off of the sensuous and mental platform onto the intellectual platform. We can hope that our donkey although no longer a smart ass, is now becoming ass.

With those comments let us go ahead with this *Viplavah*. Basically it is the transcription of a dialog, interview with H. G. Vaisesika Das trying to work on developing more harmony between the Ministry of Book Distribution and the Ministry of Education. It seems O.K. It took about 10-hours to arrange it and then we got six devotees to transcribe it and we edited it with considerable eye strain.

In general let us thank the Members of the Ministry with whom we have worked: Sesa Das, Rama-giridhari Das, Campaka-lata Devi Dasi, Tapan-misra Das, Indira-sakhi Devi Dasi, Atul-krsna Das; Managing Editors for *Viplavah*; and we hope to continue with increased vigor our educational efforts with our own Sankirtan institution, the **Anjana Suta Academy** (www.JayaRama.US). Please engage us in your service.

Thank you.



3 https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1658/1658-h/1658-h.htm#link2H_4_0002



INTERVIEW WITH VAISESIKA DAS

Ministry of Education and Ministry of Book Distribution

Edited Transcription by Candra-Mukhi Devi Dasi, Sugopi-radha Devi Dasi, Nikunja-bihari Das, Aja-govinda Das, Pandava-prsni Das and Hanumatpresaka Swami

Hanumatpresaka Swami – Welcome Vaisesika Das, and we have here also Subhra devi dasi, Principal of the Gurukula, **The Bhaktivedanta Academy**, in Houston and Nandulal Das also from Houston.

HpS: Vaisesaka, can you see the PowerPoint show now?

Vaisesika Das: Yes, it says, “Sankirtan: Book Distribution and Education in ISKCON”.

HpS: Where’s that picture [of your selling books on the street] from?

VSD: Boston.



HpS: That's where Larry Bird is from, right?

VSD: Yes, he's from Indiana, but he played for the Celtics in Boston.

HpS: I think he is a Shaktyavesha Avatar

VSD: Yes, definitely.

HpS: Officially this humble effort at an interview is: *Sankirtan - Book Distribution and Education in ISKCON*. A dialog and interview with H.G. Vaisesaka das organized by the **ISKCON Ministry of Education**, 2020 November 29th.

HpS: In slide two we have the five questions that we mentioned in our text messages to you. Of course, here's a pictures of Srila Prabhupada dictating his purports and as he said, "Working so hard in his old age, so we could discuss his books after he was gone, and become happy".



The first question is, how does book distribution fit into Srila Prabhupada's model of education?

Of course, he repeatedly made the point that our focus is book distribution. Can we say that in some ways, as in the whole arrow, there's the arrowhead, when the actual books are distributed, and then behind them is the shaft to give it force and the feathers to direct it?

From that analogy, can we say that the whole goal of Education in ISKCON is that devotees should understand what is their position in the Sankirtana movement?

VSD: Prabhupada gave seven purposes for ISKCON. The seventh purpose was to print books, periodicals and other literatures, and by doing this, and by studying and distributing them, to achieve the aforementioned principles.

So, there's a way in which Prabhupada saw the inculcation of Krishna Consciousness through literature distribution to be foundational to developing all the programs holistically in ISKCON.



Looking at this arrow analogy, I would say it's the tip of the arrow. There's a way that Prabhupada defines Sadhana, the actual life of a devotee, as being engaged in saving others; For instance throughout the section of the Seventh Canto where Prahlada Maharaja is expressing his lamentation for the way people have taken a burden of material life on their head.

**śoce tato vimukha-cetasa indriyārtha-
māyā-sukhāya bharam udvahato vimūḍhān
Śrīmad-bhāgavatam 7.9.43**

Prabhupada, not only in that section, explains that the purpose of the Krsna Consciousness movement, really, is to go door-to-door and bring literature, bring the *Bhagavad-gita* and so forth. Throughout, his teachings are mixed with this kind of directive. In order to please Krishna we should really be out giving people spiritual knowledge and teaching them how to become Krsna conscious.





So, education is not just dry academics for Prabhupada, he wanted it to be practical, and he also didn't want us to just go out and work hard to distribute the books. The first time I met him in San Francisco, he looked at our Sankirtan party and He said, "These books are not just for selling, they are also for you to read, to become pure devotees, and to go back to godhead".

So, the two go together. I like to say that studying the books and distributing them is like rice and dhal. They're both good foods, but we can put rice and dhal together and you get superfood. Super Sadhana is distributing and reading the books.

Hps : Then what about this perspective? For example, some people are very, very, good at producing pictures. Vijay Das and others present the books through the pictures in the books. They say it is one of the best ways to get the message across to people and get them to take them.

Some people paint pictures, some people give us leads for contacts so the distributors and sellers can go, and other people give financial support which is useful in all ways.

Am I right to look at education that people understand: Okay, wherever I go I try to sell books but somebody can do a hundred books a day. I can't do that, but I can tell this guy a hundred good places to go to sell those books. So how about that perspective?



VSD: Yes. I like that perspective very much. We're one team, one family and all the parts work together. They all complement one another. We don't work in isolation. In a business model when the various departments of a company work in isolation from one another, and compete against one another, it is called Bounded Rationality, and they start thinking they're the all-in-all.

However, in a healthy company, there's a way in which everyone understands the overarching purpose, and they all work together understanding how their bit contributes to the whole.

That's the art of management.

Really, it's the same with book distribution. The way to encourage everyone is to really have the oxygen of preaching going on so that everyone feels it and everyone feels part of the Sankirtana movement, and they're all contributing to it.

Again, I would say book distribution would be the tip of that arrow and it's all part of the whole arrows going in one direction together.

HPS: I was thinking that if you go out with a bag full of arrow tips, and start to throw arrow tips at people, it hasn't too much effect, but if that arrow tip has a 5-pound shaft behind it, it is going to have a lot more effect. They buy the book and the distributor gives them the Temple's Sunday Feast invitation, and then they get an excellent reception for themselves and their friend.

VSD: Well said Maharaja, well said.

HPS: Okay, we got the first question. Second question:

Question Number two: What education do book distributors need? Do you need, and have used yourself?

VSD: What education to book distributors need? Well, everybody needs to read *Bhagavatam* and *Caitanya Caritamrta*, and all of Prabhupada's books because without having that what's the use of distributing them? And we've seen before if people don't actually get a taste from reading the books from hearing and chanting, then they'll start thinking about selling something else. Why not sell soap-on-a-rope instead of books, because it takes a certain love for these books to go out and market them to people. Our education should be in *Bhagavatam*. We should experience the world through the *Bhagavatam*.

Bhagatam covers every aspect of human psychology and experience, and when we go through it, and appreciate how it's speaking to us directly and edifying us, then we feel empowered and enthusiastic to distribute it.

HPS: One Temple President wrote a letter to SP saying that his book distributors wanted to spend more time during the day in hearing and chanting, and Prabhupada said, 'No, if they get one hour of good class in the morning and one hour in the evening that would be sufficient. I know they want to read my books more but they should think of themselves as "*bhūri-dā janāḥ*" (SB 10.31.9), very generous people who are sacrificing their desires to go out for the welfare of other people.'

So, would you say that for book distributors participating in full morning and evening programs is enough education?

What do you do? What is your live program of reading and studying, and how does it integrate with book distribution?

VSD: Well, of course Prabhupada said different things at different times and there are, you know, recordings of Prabhupada's enthusiastically saying to read two or three hours a day. It also depends on what the morning and evening classes are like.

Some classes are a little funny because by the time you end up finishing singing *Jaya Radha Madhava* and read the verse, you get like five minutes of discussion.

Personally, I need a lot more than that, and when I had that experience in San Francisco, when Prabhupada personally said you must read my books, I felt he was so emphatic, that I took the liberty to do that throughout my entire book distribution career, and continue to do so.

I read at least 41-pages of *Bhagavatam* every day, because that means I finish the whole *Bhagavatam* in one year, every year, following in the footsteps of his Holiness Hanumatpresaka Maharaja, who is my mentor for reading Prabhupada's books (HpS blushes and dies a thousand deaths), and I also take a month at least or five weeks, and go for a retreat with devotees for concentrated reading, every year.

This is the first year I've missed in 20-years because of the pandemic, where we sit down for five hours a day and hear *Bhagavatam* every single day of Kartik.

I try to have longer classes here in our community (in San Jose, California; Silicon Valley) because I feel that devotees need to hear Prabhupada's voice. They need to be really familiar with the *Bhagavatam* in order to have a lifelong commitment to devotional service.

So, I personally need more than the morning and evening program myself, and I'm a little autocratic (smile), so I just impose that upon others who come around me in the community.

Hp Swami: I remember another letter that Prabhupada wrote. He said "Are all your Pujaris chanting their Gayatris? Do they all have 1-hour a day to read my books?"



The Temple President replied, "Prabhupada, they have very busy schedules and don't always have extra time for reading."

Srila Prabhupada responded, "No, an intelligent man will not be satisfied, unless he has at least one hour a day to read."

Like you are saying, different diets. Some people are very Ksatriya oriented, they are happy just that people are buying. They like to engage people in Brahminical life. Other people they really have to have very intellectual work in their preaching.

Question Number Three: What are the different modes of distribution, eg., Bhaktivedanta Institute, rock concerts...

Vaisesika Prabhu: Oh . . . well. . . Rockefeller distinguished himself as an entrepreneur because he took the production of oil to a new level - to say the least.



He got thousands and thousands of uses out of one substance – oil – and that is how he made his money. So, as many devotees as there are, there are techniques and avenues for book distribution.

As an example, during the pandemic we are finding ways that we had never seen before, online, using the telephone to contact people and talk to them.

Bhaktivedanta Institute? Absolutely. Rock concerts? Absolutely. There are as many ways as there are people to distribute books. We recommend that people start book distribution in their immediate communities taking advantage of whatever processes there are to engage them, and when devotees have an opportunity to go out and do book distribution at least once a month, on a weekend, even if it is for a short amount of time, then they get this kind of oxygen from going out into the great unknown and doing the right thing and going out of their comfort zone. Like right now, we just discovered, there are little free libraries that people put outside of their homes. It is actually a network, there are 42,000 of them in North America, and we are now working on a network to put Prabhupada's books in each one of those 42,000 little libraries. We are also putting them in hospitals and hotels, we are meeting people on the streets, we are selling books online, and the list goes on and on.

HpSwami: We go walking every evening with Nitai Gaurasundara Dasa and our group here in Tennessee, and we walk right by one of those. One of our neighbors has one of those little places there. What I was thinking when I was passing it was, "Wow, we need so many kinds of books", because all the books in his little library box were for children or teenager.

As you say, I heard Prabhupada said that every salesman has his own technique. You can steal ideas from other salesmen, but in the end, you have to develop *your* technique.

Question Number four: Are there webpages, books, other devotees whom our readers can contact in terms of how to learn about book distribution?

VSD: Yes. There is www.distributebooks.com which I recommend, and there is also a book call *Our Family Business*⁴ that not only gives the history of book distribution, but also ways to organize it. The principles are there to guarantee your success in book distribution, and they also have some ideas about enhancing your Sadhana. So, I recommend these two resources definitely.

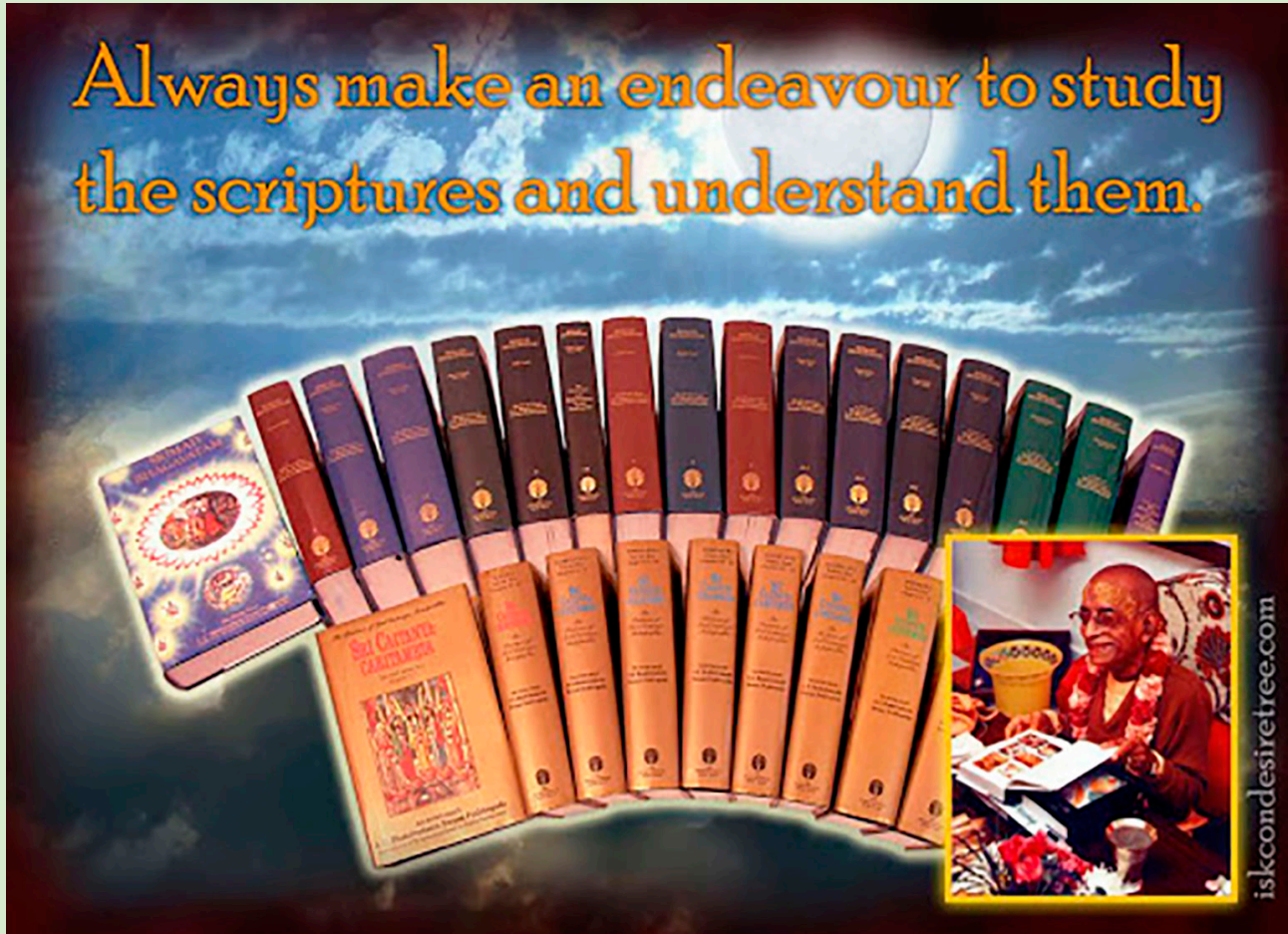
HPS: What about kids, for example? In your area, Iskcon Silicon Valley, are there people whom we can contact to understand nice programs with kids, going out for trips on Sankirtan etc?

VSD: Yes, in fact, we put on regular seminars, call SOS: *Sankirtana Orientation Seminar*, and during our seminars we cover all different modes of Sankirtana, including Kid Sankirtana, which has been wildly successful⁵. It is not just for us but also for all our other contacts. London has implemented an ecstatic program.

HPS: I heard about marvelous experiences of devotees Boise, Idaho. The kids can really relate to it, but I don't want to steal too much your time.

4 <https://www.amazon.com/Our-Family-Business-Vaisesika-Dasa/dp/9171499008>

5 <https://iskconsiliconvalley.com/>



So next question: Srila Prabhupada promoted four diplomas: Bhakti sastri, Bhakti vaibhava, Bhakti vedanta and Bhakti sarvabhauma. How can they be integrated with book distribution?

By design with Srivas Pandita Das who was our Bhakti vaibhava study program organizer for the West coast, we included that everybody who was engaged over the four years of study had some kind of Sankirtana, book distribution. One system was that we considered that it was enough if the student taught Bhakti-sastri two times during their Bhakti vaibhava curriculum. Of course, obviously, it means first that the Bhakti sastri students have to buy *BG*, *Sri Isopanisad*, *Nectar of Instruction*, and *Nectar of Devotion*.

So, that is one idea little idea how to integrate book distribution with these academic studies.

We always design our Sastric studies courses with the basis that the students constantly consider that they are learning to teach. It seems that that is the basis in Kali-yuga, become a Sankirtan man, not a Jnani.

VSD: Well, you know I could not agree with you more. We have always had full discourses, you and I, that it is the most important thing to have devotees studying for these diplomas with an attitude of becoming preachers, teachers. That makes the books come alive.





I see in Mexico, Guanajato, they have a training center there that Aravinda Prabhu set up. They have the Bhaktisastris and at the same time, on the weekends, all the students go out to distribute books. I like the combination.

I think that should be a part of it. Everybody who takes Bhaktisastris should also become a book distributor in their own way. Again, they go together like rice and dahl. If you have one without the other, then I think it is not a complete meal. You don't get the full protein.

HPS: Then our last point. How can the Ashrama education path, Kinder to College, be integrated with book distribution? We have Subhra Devi dasi with us here, who of course has so much experience with the pre-school, kindergarten and primary school. Maybe she can also kick in some questions here as she likes.

In terms of different ages, from the academic side with people going to school as children, in the college and the university. What are your ideas on how book distribution can be integrated with that aspect of education?

VPD: Well, I can just tell you fifteen years ago I took five, five year olds out on book distribution and they loved it and from then the kids book distribution program just blew up here, and continues ever since. Those five year olds are now leaders. Not only in Sastra, knowing Sastra, but also in book distribution, and many other skills. You get street smart from doing book distribution, you get to see the world the way Narada did when he was a child and left home after his mother died. Prabhupada recommends that everyone go see the energies of the Lord working in his creation and I feel that the best way for a person to become fully oriented and situated in the knowledge of Krishna Consciousness that's given in Prabhupada's book is to also go out and present them to others and so it should be integrated, it can be integrated into each one of the Ashramas. Give people the opportunity to go out and sell books. If it becomes the actual foundational part, a real value in our organization, that everyone go out and preach, I think we would be far better off.

HPS: As an example, I think when Subhra was first promoting the Goswami Academy, it was at the new Houston Temple building Grand Opening, maybe she can correct me, and one lady came up to here and introduced herself as the Principal of a local Montessori School. She said, "Hello, Subhra Lind, I'm from the Montessori School. Our kids are going to be friends right? We can have lots of cultural exchanges, no?"

So, kids can go to other schools. They can go to public schools. They can go to Montessori Schools and they can think when they are learning that they are going to show their friends what we know. Then right away it goes to distribution of literature: Here is our presentation, drama, here is our literature.

As you were saying even the smallest kids can start learning with a Sankirtan consciousness, learn to share. Learn based on Srila Prabhupada's books. Experience them.

What do you think, Subhra Lind, any comments or questions? You have known Sriman Vaisesika Das from San Jose Temple for years.

Subhra: Yes, Hare Krishna, Vaisesika Prabhu, Maharaja. It's kind of interesting that with **Goswami Academy**⁶ I've observed that many of the younger children engage and like book distribution and Prasadam distribution. We have three and four year olds that actually take the lead. With the older

6 <https://goswamiacademy.org/>





kids we set up book-tables or we make up book bags for going out. Yet, honestly speaking we do it more during December than other months. We should be doing a little.

Maharaja has been always encouraging us but we haven't gone to schools as yet. He has been saying that since five years ago, encouraging us to do that but we haven't taken the kids to any of the neighbouring schools.

VP: Well, you're doing a wonderful service. I love Maharaja's vision. I think it would be potent that you bring the kids to other schools and having them interact. It would be absolutely lovely.

HPS: Yes, they'll start harassing their teachers, "We want to be like Hare Krishna kids. They have good food!"

Then it seems to follow naturally that we need so many books for different audiences and ages. Which leads me to a question. Didn't Srila Prabhupada want to establish books for children as a separate publishing entity? I forget the name of what it was called. Do you know? Was it **Bala Books**?

VPD: Yes, yes, yes.

HPS: So what about that in terms of book distribution, for kids? Of course it would be with bigger letters, more pictures and even that different for different ages, like Purnaprajña's teenage books.

When he wrote the *Ramayana* I read it again and again, and definitely it is a teenager's book, but it also has moral, cultural and spiritual education. What about publishing more books, appropriate for specific age and ethnic groups?

VP: I think is an excellent idea and I agree with you that we need a spectrum of books that address people in such a way that they can get started.

I saw once a devotee who was married to a Prabhupada disciple, but she couldn't read Prabhupada's books and wasn't inspired to until she read Siddha Svarupa Ananda's books. His were divided into smaller categories and spoke a little bit more in such a way that she could understand. Then she got interested in Prabhupada's books. So, there's ways in which I think we should tax our brain to bridge, but the ultimate goal should be to bring people back to Prabhupada's books, and get them in that way.

HpS: Exactly. To finish off here, with our own center, institution (**Anjana Suta Academy** and NIOS), we have been trying in our own humble way to do something. We have developed this after so many years.

One strong focus is on Carl Jung because Prabhupada said that of all the Western philosophers, he had the most sense. The more we have investigated them we see they are a very active community. We do one lecture presentation and cultural presentation again and again: Science, Psyche, and Spirituality – The encounter of Carl Gustav Jung with the mysticism (Bhagavat culture) of ancient India. We see that this specific kind of literature can build bridges between our two worlds.

We did one program in Buenos Aires with about 200 people. These were mental health care professionals who were counseling families, men, women, who were drug addicts and everything else – who are lying to themselves, lying to their families, lying to the police, and lying to their psychologists.

It was the most terrifying lecture I had to give in my whole life because these professionals were all looking at me with their glance saying, "Yeah, yeah, you have your dogma, you have your theory, but





do you really know what you are talking about? We deal with people with mild and intense delusional systems every day. Do you really know you're talking about?"

It was really challenging. We had to accept, show, that there are things that we normally say, that we don't really know. I was bringing up Prabhupada's books all through the presentation and at the end they engulfed the book table and were buying even two, three, five books each!

Again, it seems that everybody has a different way. Even a dog can take part and dance in ecstasy.

We don't want to monopolize your time now, and hope to have other people get involved and ask for some of your inspiration within this educational format, within the **Ministry of Education**. We are dealing with this more academic approach, but it should be an academic approach, like you are saying, for book distribution.

Vaisesika Prabhu: Yes, I see what you mean, Maharaja. I think that last example was brilliant, innovating in new ways. I would say, we need to insert ourselves into various conversations that are going on around the world, giving context, becoming relevant, and bringing people to the *Bhagavatam*. I love the way you are doing it.

HpS: Wow.

Vaisesika Prabhu: Only if I had the brain power! (Smile) Well, I will pray to Krishna for some brain power so that I can emulate the kinds of things that you do, and I thank you for always being a champion for reading Prabhupada's books and distributing them all over the world. I am really touched that you keep me on your list. It means a lot to me, Thank you.

HpS: (Tears coming from his eyes in torrents of rain and voice choked up with embarrassment) O. K. and also we want to thank again Mother Shubra, and Nandulal Das from Houston Temple for their association in this dialog. Do you know Nandulal in Houston?

Vaisesika Prabhu: Yes!

HpS: Any day you go to Nandulal I am sure he agrees that Larry Bird is a powerful incarnation of Krsna (joking, laughing)⁷.

Nandulal: (laughing). Maharaj you have to forgive me, I am on the second defense team.

HpS: Thank you all very much. Everybody please have hot milk and Krishna book.

Hare Krishna! Thank you all so much.

Shubra Mataji: Hare Krishna! Thank you. Haribol.

Vaisesika Prabhu: All glories to book distributors.

Nandulal Prabhu: Haribol.



7 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-KDVcMBmz0>





EVENTS AND RESOURCES

- **GITA-ANU-SHILANAM** - We seek your support to widely share with members of your communities about the annual flagship event called:

Gitanushilanam - The Biggest Online Bhagavad Gita Competition
(<https://learngitalivegita.com/gitanushilanam>)

To be held on 3rd January as part of the Gita Jayanti events. As a run up to the finale there would be quizzes, verse recitation, and Krishna art competition.

More than 20,000 students are expected to participate in this event. The state government of Jharkhand in India has already declared this as an official event and has directed all Government schools to take part in this event.

- **MINISTRY NEWSLETTER** - If you would like to receive the latest updates on what the ISKCON Ministry of Education is doing to further realize Srila Prabhupadas vision for education, along with any major undertaking of ISKCON educational institutes, please subscribe to our Newsletter. We not only strive to keep you informed, but are also dedicated to providing content that stimulates the spiritual consciousness of the reader. <https://iskconeducation.org/newsletter/>



REPORT FROM A REGIONAL REP

By Gandharva Das

(Editor's Note: This is a letter of introduction from H. H. Gandharva Das to the Latin American Regional GBC with aim of developing the Ministries Regional Representative system in Latin America. We hope it is inspiring to other Regions.)

Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Dear RGBC authorities,

Please accept my humble and respectful obeisances.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

My name is Gandharva das (HpS), in charge of the Regional Representation service on behalf of the **ISKCON Ministry of Education** in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru. By the initiative of H. H. Hanumatpresaka Swami Maharaja, I am writing this letter with the intention of greeting you, humbly requesting your blessings and presenting the activities report that I have carried out during the last two years.

I was born in Lima, Peru, in 1967 (53 years old) and studied Arts at the **National School of Painting, Sculpture and Engraving** of Mexico City, between 1989 and 1996. For 25 years I have been teaching and researching in different universities and colleges in my country, having taught theoretical and practical courses in faculties of Architecture (12 years), Plastic Arts (16 years), Design and Visual Communication (10 years) and Photography (13 years). I am married to Indira Sakti dd and we both received initiation from Maharaja Hanumatpresaka Swami. Currently, we are both serving as pujaris for Sri Sri Radha Madana-bihari in the ISKCON Chosica temple in Peru.

In March 2019 I was suggested by H. H. Hanumatpresaka Swami and appointed by the **Peruvian National Board** as Regional Representative of the **ISKCON Ministry of Education** for Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, with the permission of H. G. Mathuresh Das (GBC Zonal Secretary for Peru and Bolivia) and Divya Priya dd. (representative of the GBC for Ecuador). My position is in consultation with H. H. Hanumatpresaka Swami (member of the Executive Committee of the Ministry) and H. G. Tapan Misra Prabhu (Executive Secretary).

During the first year of service, I made the necessary contacts with authorities and educators from temples and preaching centers to find out their needs, interests and concerns regarding the educational development of their respective communities. For this two face-to-face meetings were organized with different educators from Peru and several teleconferences with teachers from Ecuador and Bolivia. During 2019 I traveled to Bolivia in order to establish contact with local educators. A trip to Ecuador was also planned at the beginning of this year which was frustrated by the health situation.

The year 2020 has been very fruitful for educational development. The confinement situation has given the opportunity to many teachers to provide their services on online and thanks to this, six Bhakti Sastri courses are currently being taught since March 2020 with 170 students, approximately, in the three countries of the region. In addition a Bhakti Vaibhava course is taking place in Lima with five enthusiastic students.



We are applying, Yugala Kisora dd and myself, as examiners and administrators for the Bhakti Sastri course with the **Board of Examiners** of the **Ministry of Education** (BoEx). The accredited temple will be ISKCON Chosica and the procedures are advancing, so we await the official appointment during the first months of 2021.

In order to increase the skills of the teachers, the TTC2 and TTC3 courses are being taken, having achieved an alliance with **Bhakti Culture School**, which offers us facilities so that teachers can improve themselves through the different courses that this platform offers online.

We have been actively collaborating with the Executive Secretary of the Ministry in the search and recruitment of devotees who can perform a similar service of Regional Representation in different areas of Latin America:

- Zone 1 (Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador),
- Zone 2 (Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay),
- Zone 3 (Brazil),
- Zone 4 (Colombia, Venezuela and Panama),
- Zone 5 (Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana),
- Zone 6 (Mexico and Guatemala)
- Zone 7 (Central America and the Caribbean Islands).

At the moment, the applications of Adikarta das (Colombia) and Param Padam das - Nara Narayana Rsi (Argentina), from zones 2 and 4, respectively, have been accepted by the Ministry.

I have heard from H. H. Hanumatpresaka Swami that Tapan Misra Das has suggested to you that someone act as a Latin American Regional coordinator for the reporting and communicating with the Ministries Zonal Representatives in these seven areas, the Ministry and your good selves. I think I could do this service for a year while things are developing, but after that it may require more energy than I am capable of.

Finally, we have had conversations with devotees from Arequipa (Peru), who are very interested in the development of a pedagogical program for children and pre-adolescents. At the beginning of 2021, we will put them in contact with devotees with experience in this field and we will provide them with the translated teaching material, available on the Ministry website.

I say goodbye to you,

Your servant, Gandharva das





Chant



and be happy

