

Sacred Voyager

Guru Maharaja at the United Nation Headquarters by Chandersekhara dasa

By the expert arrangement of his disciple *Saranagati dasi*, Guru Maharaja spoke for the second year in a row at the United Nations in New York this May.

The day before Guru Maharaja's first speech, Audrey Kitagawa invited Guru Maharaja and five of his disciples for lunch at her penthouse apartment in Manhattan. Mrs. Kitagawa, a friend of *Saranagati*, is the Chair of the United Nations NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concern, as well as the Co-Vice Chair of the Council of the Parliament of World Religions. During the prasada at her ornate dining table, holding her hands with great respect, she kindly asked each devotee to tell her his story of how he came to *Krsna* consciousness. She listened intently with heartfelt admiration. After the Italian meal, which *Srivasa dasa* had expertly cooked, Audrey asked Guru Maharaja to lead a kirtana in her living room. Guru Maharaja sang sweetly as she sat with eyes closed, mediating on his voice. When Guru Maharaja was preparing to take her leave, she reverentially offered each guest a meticulously gift- wrapped box of Hawaiian chocolates. Guru Maharaja appreciated her kindness and sincerity.

The following day, in honour of "The 2009 United Nations International Year of Reconciliation and Culture of Peace," Guru Maharaja spoke, along with co-guest Dr. Eileen Borris, in front of about two hundred guests. After politely listening to Dr. Borris's presentation on her book, *Finding Forgiveness*, Guru Maharaja, in his usual gentlemanly manor, made several brief and sanguine points.

He delineated the three modes of material nature and their influence on our behaviour: For example, one person gets hit by a bicycle. If he is in the mode of ignorance he will start crying due to pain. If he is in passion he will grab the cyclist by the throat and start beating him up. However, if he is in goodness, he will brush the dust off his body and will tell the cyclist that everything is all right and that there is nothing to worry about. The audience was fascinated by this original angle of analysis, which they had never heard before. Guru Maharaja then emphasised that a compassionate and forgiving attitude towards others, such as the exhibited by Jesus Christ while he was being crucified, can manifest when we ourselves are situated in spiritual knowledge.

In order to assume the role of the elder brothers and guide people in general on a proper path, we ourselves have to become situated in the mode of goodness first; we have to become saintly and develop the qualities that will truly benefit the misdirected civilisation of today. With no reservations, Guru Maharaja ended by stressing the crucial importance of becoming connected to *Krsna*: "In order to develop this universal brotherhood, we have to recognise our Supreme Father. It does not matter by which name we identify Him or call Him, but we have to recognise His presence and His affectionate influence in our lives. Then only can we develop our loving relationship with each other. Subsequently the divine qualities such as mercy, tolerance, compassion and forgiveness will become the natural ornaments of our noble characters. At that time we will be able to help this planet to become transformed into paradise."

Everyone applauded. Many individuals approached Guru Maharaja to speak to him personally, asking him various questions. Several among them, including Dr. Borris, met Guru Maharaja that same evening for a dinner reception at Priya *Krsna* Prabhu and *Ambika* mataji's residence in Manhattan. There, in a more comfortable setting they continuously listened to Guru Maharaja's wise words for several more hours.

The following day, Guru Maharaja spoke at the United Nations Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) Chamber. Sitting next to Guru Maharaja were His Excellency Archbishop Celestino Migliore GCD, DD Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN (Vatican), and Imam Shamsi Ali, Imam and the Islamic Cultural Center of New York. After Francis Lorenzo, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic, introduced the three speakers, Mrs Salwa Kader, a fond admirer of Guru Maharaja, who is also the president of the US Federation for Middle East Peace, introduced the topic to the audience: "Peace reconciliation." Guru Maharaja spoke first. From the very beginning of his discourse, he addressed the universal commonalities in all religions as the key for cooperation.

"The purpose of my speech is to appeal to the religious leaders of the world to get together and sincerely consider how we can find the ultimate solution to all the problems of the world. At a time when so many atrocities are going on in the name of religion, it is extremely important that we try to find the similarities between different religious faiths instead of creating dissensions." Guru Maharaja continued, "All religions accept two common concepts: they accept God and they show the way to develop our relationship with Him. When we stick to these two fundamental points, we can see that all the religions are actually striving to achieve the same goal. Due to the difference of name or identification, we tend to create differences regarding the same personality- God.

In some languages we call Him by a certain name we then think "this is our God" and we become totally intolerant about other's beliefs and other's approach towards Him. But the real fact is that he is one. He is our father, He is our dear-most friend, and at the same time He is the supreme proprietor and supreme controller." Guru Maharaja continued to stress a scientific, reasonable and non- sectarian approach to the problem: "Let us make a common sense approach. I say common sense approach because the intelligent class of people want a rational and tangible understanding of certain beliefs and faiths. Religion is not just a belief or faith; it is reality, it is the actual method of approaching spiritual reality. Religion is the means to understand God. All religions are actually a science of understanding that reality beyond our sense perception."

As the audience listened attentively, Guru Maharaja focused in on the fundamental teachings of *Krsna* consciousness:

"In this room around us we can see that there are so many different objects- they are all inert. But you and I are living, conscious beings. Our functioning is completely different from the way inert matter functions. So let's start from here: what makes us function in such a way? The presence of the spirit soul is what makes the body alive and conscious." Guru Maharaja stressed, "The soul is not a product of some chemical combination. The soul comes from another world, another reality, the spiritual reality. In that spiritual reality there is a Supreme Personality who is the predominating factor, who is the cause of creation, and who maintains everything. He is doing this in an inconceivable way; that is God." In conclusion, Guru Maharaja once again emphasised the crucial need for all religious leaders to concentrate on a shared aim in order to unite and make a better world.

“The need to establish our relationship with God is the essential factor of all religions. Therefore while we are thinking of establishing peace in this world, I personally think that it is extremely important that we- the ones who have taken the religious path, and those who are trying to educate others- get together and discuss amongst ourselves about our commonality and similarity, forget about our differences and try to educate the world about the similarity of all different religions. Then at least the atrocities that are going on today in the name of religion will be stopped. Thank you very much.”

As on the previous day, after the event, several guests and admirers, including Mr. and Mrs Kader, met Guru Maharaja at the residence of Priya *Krsna* prabhu. For several hours, again, Guru Maharaja charmed them and preached to them, winning over their hearts.

In retrospect, Guru Maharaja commented, “Establishing relationships with these people is the most important consideration.”

| At present there are hundreds and thousands of flags flapping in the United Nations, but during the time of Vidura there was, by the grace of Ajita, Lord Krsna, only one flag. The nations of the world are very eager to again have one state under one flag, but for this they must seek the favor of Lord Krsna, who alone can help us become one worldwide nation. Purport Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.1.20 |

Reflections in the Light of the Master (Sarangati devi dasi)

It is important for a disciple or any follower to reflect upon and offer thanks for all that the spiritual master has given one, most importantly for the opportunity to be liberated from the cycle of samsara (birth and death) and return to Krsna’s abode. Hopefully one day I will become sincere and offer service in a way that will be pleasing to my dear Guru Maharaja’s heart. Then *Sri Krsna* and *Srila Prabhupada* will certainly be happy and take me and His devotees back to Godhead.

I would like to share a few reflections, shared by several of those, who interacted with Guru Maharaja for the first time, during his visit to America in April and May 2009.

Jennifer Gerber, a school teacher, was so happy to have the opportunity to meet Maharaja at the Towaco Temple in New Jersey. She felt very much at home there, as she had once felt, while visiting *Gita-Nagari* Farm. She asked me to thank Guru Maharaja for so graciously inviting her into his aura. She felt it was a great blessing. Jennifer then shared with me that Guru Maharaja looks like an ordinary man from the outside but is very far from ordinary. Just being with him for a short time shifted her consciousness and she called me several times to discuss her experience. Besides this she wrote a thank you note saying, “I am changed.” She couldn’t thank me enough for inviting her and for the opportunity to be with Guru Maharaja. She had heard about our Manhattan Temple; though it was small, it was the first ISKCON Temple established by *Srila Prabhupada* in New York, and so had very spiritual vibrations.

She hoped to visit it and attend a *kirtana* there. Audrey Kitagawa, Chair of the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns- New York, hosted a luncheon for Guru Maharaja and some devotees. She said, “Those who chant the holy names of God are blessed. And those who completely devote themselves to the love of God should be supported and offered the utmost of respect.”

Krista Claudene Retto, a business strategist and designer, explained to me that she was an atheist. But something in her wanted to say, “Thank You,” because she was very touched by her meeting with Guru Maharaja.

Dr. Eileen Borris, author of *Finding Forgiveness*, changed dramatically from the role of a speaker during the Forgiveness Panel Discussion at the UN, to a receptive listener of Guru Maharaja during the evening reception following the event. It was heartwarming hearing her thoughts during the ECOSOC discussions. While we were sitting next to each other, Dr. Borris asked to receive as many lectures as possible on *Krsna* consciousness, and wanted to know everything about loving God and the soul, which were some of the topics Guru Maharaja spoke about during his speech. She also told me she is planning to visit Ujjain during her next trip to India.

Katen Larson, a UN staff member, shared, “It touches me that you have invited such a person, such as H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami, several times to the United Nations. I noticed on your website about the project he is working on in India. I hope to visit there some day. My four year old son saves pennies in his piggy bank. He is already learning about saving money for good will projects. I hope we can support this work in Ujjain in some way.” I felt so happy hearing her words; It is amazing to see someone light a spark that becomes a flame, to watch people become a flame, to watch people become inspired by someone who really cares.

Bernice Cousins, a retired employee in the Arts Education Department of the Museum of Modern Art, mentioned that meeting H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami was like a nourishing nectar, “I was able to attend both events where he gave presentations and both were especially important because of what he had to say.”

Guru Maharaja’s visit to the United Nations was an incredible experience: Attending the event in the ECOSOC Chamber, where long lasting decisions are made and actions are decided upon, I heard a woman leading the discussion on the essence of the divine feminine. On one side of her was a respected and well known Archbishop, a representative from the Holy Sea to the UN, and on the other side was a Representative from the Muslim faith. It was a modern day miracle listening to Guru Maharaja talking about loving God in such a way. The contents of his message were extremely important. These were precious moments of a spiritual happening. There we were, in the ECOSOC Chamber, talking about the peacekeeping force and about God. All this on 46th Street in New York, at the United Nations! It was like finding gems in a mine shaft. I really had to pinch myself to know that it was true.

South African Retreat, 2009 (Arati devi dasi)

Nestled in the majestic Drakensberg mountain range in Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa, lies the large up-market holiday resort, Mont Aux Sources- usually the setting for lazy family vacations or corporate team building weekends, this time transformed into a spiritual paradise. Stressed corporate executives come here to de-stress but leave more stressed than ever after their team building programmes fail to unify their employees. They devise all sorts of silly mental games to boost the morale and team spirit of their employees, but to no avail. All the devotees did was throw their arms in the air and sing and dance: Team built, morale in Goloka *Vrndavana*, instantly!

The first South African retreat with his Holiness Bhakti Charu Maharaja was attended by 220 devotees, the largest retreat attendance to date. Due to ill health Guru Maharaja decided to hold spiritual retreats in places that would be easily accessible for many devotees, as well as cutting down on his intense travelling schedule. Guru Maharaja expertly and mercifully used the retreats to recharge our Krsna conscious batteries that run on empty so often. After the success of the retreats held in Switzerland and the USA in 2008, South African devotees jumped at the opportunity to have Gurudeva's sweet and intimate association.

Arriving at the resort, we were met by smiling and eager devotees, the efficient and friendly retreat organisers and a divine lunch. One delicious meal followed the other. We were greatly fortunate that the resort management allowed our expert cooking team to take over their kitchens for the duration of our stay there. After lunch, room allocation and a quick shower, everyone was waiting in sweet anticipation for the first session with Guru Maharaja. On the first night Gurudeva introduced the *Srila Prabhupada katha* evenings. Every evening the devotees had the opportunity to offer their heartfelt appreciation to *Srila Prabhupada*: To relate how *Prabhupada* had personally affected them, if they derived any special spiritual benefits, if they had any unusual experiences with *Srila Prabhupada* in dreams or during difficult times, and finally tell how *Srila Prabhupada* had saved them from material Neo science. Sometimes the offerings were sad, sometimes humorous, but always very touching.

At times during the retreat it seemed as if Guru Maharaja had inexhaustible energy. He patiently sat and listened to everyone's realisations. Apart from that, he also presented *Srimad-Bhagavatam* classes, two seminars every day, attended to his usual duties, as well as give *darsana* to devotees, while kindly listening to their tales of woe, their spiritual and material difficulties and always ready to reach out to them and touch their hearts. Only towards the end of the retreat did he reveal that he was recovering from a jaundice, a disease that exhausts the body tremendously.

Opulently dressed in beautiful garments and jewellery, the presiding Deities of the retreat, *Sri Sri Jagannatha*, *Baladeva* and *Subhadra Mahrani*, Their radiant smiles beaming, received *mangala-arati* and *darsana-arati* every day. The altar was made from lengths of brilliantly coloured cloth, changed daily and pleated and draped in the most amazing way; truly a work of art.

The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* classes were taken from the 3rd Canto, where Lord *Kapiladeva* instructs His mother, *Devahuti* in the science of self realisation and service to the *sadhus*. Gurudeva explained that *Devahuti* was a wonderful mother and asked such profound questions to Lord *Kapiladeva*: "Devotional service is so powerful that we don't have to strive separately for austerity. Devotional service means surrendering to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. All other processes should eventually lead to bhakti. Knowledge and renunciation are essential for spiritual realisation, but a person in love with *Krsna* does not need them.

These qualities will automatically follow. We should not give up the objects of our love whimsically but we should engage them in the service of *Krsna*. "We should not give up the objects of our love whimsically but we should engage them in the service of *Krsna*." Gurudeva further explained, "If we are to serve the *sadhus*, we should know who is actually a saintly person. People often fail to recognise a saintly person because Kali-yuga is the age of cheaters and the cheated. We should recognise a *sadhu* by his behaviour and not by his dress. Yet, it is difficult for us to recognise a real *sadhu* because of our envy.

Our *anarthas* and material attachments prevent us from seeing a pure devotee. We have to purify our own hearts. We must develop attachment to *sadhus* and engage in the service of *Krsna*. The result is that the heart will become peaceful and from the state of tranquility we will develop ecstasy, bliss and joy.”

The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* classes tied perfectly to the *Bhagavad-gita* seminars. Through both classes we came to the conclusion that devotional service is the ultimate goal of life. Guru Maharaja started each *Bhagavad-gita* class by singing a few stanzas of *Saragrahi Vaisnava*. Afterwards he explained the finer points of *Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura*’s powerful poetry. The theme of the morning seminar was: *Scientific understanding of spiritual reality in the light of the Bhagavad-gita*. Guru Maharaja’s instructions to us were: “Make it a point to read *Srila Prabhupada*’s books. Remain in good association. The devotees will inspire you.

Chant regularly and take proper care in the pronunciation of the Holy Name.” Another highlight of the retreat was the re-enactment of Lord *Krsna*’s boat pastimes at a picturesque, little lake near the resort. Devotees walked the short distance in pouring rain and ecstatic *kirtana*. The rain stopped just long enough for devotees to enjoy the Lord’s boating fun. An informal afternoon spent in the company of Guru Maharaja, who shared with us his pastimes with *Srila Prabhupada*, as well as anecdotes from his early years in ISKCON, was the perfect end to the highly successful and spiritually recharged retreat. We all felt so privileged to be able to spend this sweet and spiritually rejuvenating time with Gurudeva.

Guru Upadesa Prabhupada’s International Asrama (HH Bhakti Charu Swami)

In the past, before Caitanya *Mahaprabhu*’s appearance, mantras were kept secret. Mantras were given by the spiritual master to the qualified disciple in a secret way. The guru would whisper the mantra into the disciple’s ears three times and the disciple would memorise it. Just by hearing the mantra he would receive the mantra. Since mantras were kept a secret one had to get initiation in order to revive the mantra. There was no other way of receiving the mantra. But Caitanya *Mahaprabhu* made the *maha*-mantra public. He gave the *maha*-manta to anyone and everyone irrespective of qualification. So now there is no need to receive this mantra through the process of initiation because it is not secret anymore.

In *Caitanya-caritamṛta* it is described that the Hare *Krsna maha*-mantra doesn’t depend on the formality of initiation and the process of purification. Just by coming in contact with the tip of the tongue, this mantra can deliver even a *candala*, the lowest of mankind. Although *Caitanya-caritamṛta* is saying there is no need for *diksa* and *purascarya*, still we find *Srila Prabhupada* instituted this process of initiation in ISKCON. Not only *Srila Prabhupada* but *Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura* also instituted the process of initiation. *Jiva Goswami* also mentioned that although the holy name doesn’t require the formality of *diksa*, still *diksa* is necessary. At the time of initiation the disciple surrenders himself unto *Krsna* and at that time *Krsna* accepts him. So for the sake of surrender, formal official surrender, *diksa* is necessary. *Diksa* is the process through which one actually surrenders to *Krsna* through the agency and via medium of the representative of *Krsna*, the spiritual master.

Spiritual life means surrender. In *Bhagavad-gita* *Krsna* says, *sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja*: we must surrender unto Him. Caitanya *Mahaprabhu* teaches

the process of *saranagati*. This surrender is the life and soul of devotional practice. Without surrender there cannot be spiritual life. Material life means independence. And to sacrifice that independence is surrender. If we want to transcend the material platform and embark onto the spiritual platform then the process is surrender. If you do not surrender you will remain in the material platform. That is why surrender is so important. It is difficult to surrender. In order to surrender there is a need for formalising the process of surrender and declaring, “Yes I am going to completely surrender myself now”. That is the purpose and initiation. That is why Srila Prabhupada instituted and formalised this process of initiation.

In earlier times spiritual masters would have individual *asramas* to train their disciples, but *acaryas* like *Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura* and *Srila Prabhupada* considered that in order to spread *Krsna* consciousness all over the world there needs to be an institution and governing body. Therefore *Srila Prabhupada* established ISKCON. ISKCON is *Srila Prabhupada's asrama*. *Srila Prabhupada* created this international *asrama*. Generally the guru has an *asrama* and he hands over the authority of the *asrama* to one disciple. He appoints a successor. But *Srila Prabhupada* didn't do that in ISKCON. Actually no one was qualified to be the successor of *Srila Prabhupada* in an *asrama* as large and extensive as ISKCON. Had it been a smaller *asrama* then probably it would have been alright. But this is an *asrama* that has spread all over the world.

Only *Prabhupada* could create and maintain such an *asrama*. But for any other single individual to be able to maintain such an *asrama* would be absolutely impossible. That is why *Prabhupada* was so empathic that no one individual should be appointed as his successor. Rather *Prabhupada* wanted us to manage the society collectively through the Governing Body. *Prabhupada* has created the authority structure for ISKCON. This is *Srila Prabhupada's* creation. The line of authority is that *Srila Prabhupada* is the founder-*acarya* of ISKCON. *Srila Prabhupada* is unifying all of us in ISKCON. *Srila Prabhupada*, though very humble about his preaching activities, was emphatic that his position as the founder-*acarya* of ISKCON was clearly established.

Where does our ultimate loyalty lie? It lies with *Srila Prabhupada*. In the line of authority, next to *Srila Prabhupada* is the GBC body. Then there is the Zonal GBC member. Every zone has a GBC member who is the zonal secretary. So we should be loyal to the GBC body and to the GBC members. And then there is the temple unit and in the temple the person in charge is the temple president and the temple council or temple management committee. In this way we have the line of authority established by *Srila Prabhupada*. We must show our surrender to ISKCON by giving our obedience and loyalty to this authority structure created by *Srila Prabhupada*.

Cooking with Maharaja (*Syama mohini devi dasi*)

In June 2007, I learned from *Sandipan Krsna Prabhu* that H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami would be in Toronto for five days. From reading *Prabhupada Lilamrita* and hearing Maharaja's lectures on “*Srila Prabhupada* in my life,” I knew that Maharaja used to cook for *Srila Prabhupada*. Since then it had been my dream to see Maharaja cook. I had also heard about how Maharaja cooked sumptuous meals in a matter of a few minutes! Therefore, hearing about his upcoming visit to Toronto, I at once requested if I could be present when he was cooking; very mercifully, I was allowed to visit.

A few days later, when I entered the kitchen where Maharaja was about to start cooking, Nilambari *Radhika* mataji was washing and cutting the vegetables to prepare the bhoga. The organisation in the kitchen was distinct, and the meticulous and precise method for washing and cutting the vegetables was evident. I was told that five preparations were being planned for the meal: 1) a spinach preparation, 2) asparagus, 3) cauliflower-zucchini-broccoli stir fry, 4) a tomato-cheese preparation and 5) rice. The rice, a combination of brown-black/wild and flat rice, took the longest to prepare, and therefore mataji had begun cooking this in advance. When the rice was almost cooked and all the other ingredients were ready, Maharaja entered the kitchen. He began his cooking with the spinach preparation. In a pot, on medium heat, Maharaja poured some butter, followed by hing, semolina and some nutmeg. Then the finely-chopped spinach was added. Maharaja then added some hot water, covered the pot, and allowed the spinach to cook for a few minutes. In the meantime, he started cooking the broccoli- zucchini stir fry and asparagus.

For his last preparation, a tomato-cheese dish, Maharaja cooked long and thin slices of tomato with salt and some oregano. After a few minutes, a layer of mozzarella cheese, topped with an equal amount of cheddar cheese, was added to the pot, which was then covered and cooked for about five minutes. Before I could realise it, all four preparations were ready in less than fifteen minutes. The food was mostly cooked in butter or sunflower oil, and no huge amounts of oil, ghee or large variety of spices were used. It was important that each preparation be cooked only for about five to seven minutes. According to Maharaja, the idea was to enhance the taste and still keep the food healthy. The cleanliness in the kitchen while cooking appeared to be of utmost importance.

After the meal was ready, Maharaja asked for the offering to be made, while we laid the table and prepared to serve. While honouring *prasada*, Maharaja talked to everyone present in the room, describing how each dish was cooked, and wherever possible, provided suggestions to improve. Maharaja then asked everyone else to honour *prasada*. I distinctly remember my first bite, it was the most amazing taste ever, simple and delicious. And it was made more sumptuous by realising that the Maharaja had cooked the feast himself. He very kindly ensured that everyone ate and insisted that we eat more.

In the days that followed, while the five-preparation meal remained the standard menu, Maharaja would occasionally cook a different meal, such as pizza or wheat noodles. During one such cooking session, Maharaja commented how each vegetable has its own unique taste and that the best cooking revives the original taste of each vegetable. These words, I later reflected, truly symbolise *Krsna* consciousness, where our expert chef, the bonafide spiritual master, revives our original identities in the service of *Sri Sri Radha* and *Krsna*.

Yours in the Service of *Srila Prabhupada*

By *Srila Prabhupada*'s divine arrangements Ujjain has become my main place of involvement. Although I am not spending so much time here nowadays, undoubtedly this is where my main focus is. Here my ideas are taking shape and I am getting a chance to demonstrate what I actually want to do. As *Srila Prabhupada*'s representative, as a leader of ISKCON, I have to guide and train my followers, and Ujjain is the place where that is happening.

One of our main objectives is to produce ideal leaders for human society. Although various individuals are assuming the roles of leaders all over the world, everyone can see that

practically all of them are terrible disappointments. An ideal leader will not only bring true happiness and prosperity in the society but must also be able to guide his followers to the ultimate goal of life. That goal is to situate them in their spiritual identity by establishing their relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Until and unless that goal is achieved, mankind will not be happy and true prosperity will not prevail in human society.

The spiritual reality is beyond our sense perception. Therefore, knowledge about that reality must be received from an authentic source. Originally that knowledge was given by *Kṛṣṇa*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Himself to the first created being in this universe, *Brahma*. He in turn gave it to his disciple *Narada*, and in this way this knowledge has been flowing since time immemorial through a chain of disciplic succession. In the recent past His Divine Grace A.C. *Bhaktivedānta* Swami *Prabhupada*, in that line of disciplic succession, distributed that transcendental knowledge all over the world, and in order to continue that distribution network he established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. All the temples of ISKCON, all over the world, have only one objective: to distribute this pristine spiritual knowledge.

With that objective ISKCON has been established in Ujjain and it gives me great pleasure to see that the mission is being accomplished. About four years ago when we started our activities here we had a handful of participants but today thousands of local people have become actively involved. Many of them embraced Krishna Consciousness whole heartedly and are practicing the process with all sincerity.

Many youth are becoming involved. Some of them have become so enthusiastic about their involvement, that they want to give up their studies and want to join as full time devotees. However, I discourage them from doing that. It is better that they complete their studies and become responsible members of society. Then they will set a very nice example for others to follow. And I tell the little ones that unless they do well in their studies and if their parents are not satisfied with their performances in school then I will forbid them from coming to the temple. Not that I mean it, but this warning bears a good result and they become serious about their studies also. And needless to say that their parents become pleased, not only with them but with us as well.

Bhakti Charu Swami.