

DATA SANNYASA CANDIDATES – DEVOTIONAL HISTORIES 2017

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|----------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Adi Purusa Das (Bhubaneswar, India) | 1 year |
| Adhokshaja Das (Russia) | 5 years |
| Ananda Vardhana Das (Baltics/Finland/Europe) | 1 year |
| Asim Krishna Das (India) | 3 years |
| Bhaktipada Das (New Vraja Dhama, Hungary) | 1 year |
| Deva Deva Das (South America) | 1 year |
| Eklavya Das (India/Middle East/North America) | 1 year |
| Gargamuni Das (Fiji) | 5 years |
| Gaura Chandra Das (Mayapur) | 1 year |
| Gopendra Das(Vrindavan, India) | 5 years |
| Govindananada Das(West Bengal, India) | 5 years |
| Kamalalochan Das (Mumbai, India) | 4 years |
| Madhu Sevita Das (Italy/France/Benelux) | 1 year |
| Mahaprabhu Das (Hungary/Romania) | 1 year |
| Navadvip Dvija Gouranga Das (Bangladesh) | 2 years |
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| Puspashila Shyama Das (Bangladesh) | 1 year |
| Radhashyamsunder Das (Vrindavan, India) | 4 years |
| Raghava Pandit Das (Delhi, India) | 2 years |
| Santa Nrsimha Das (Jaipur, India) | 2 years |
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| Sutapa Das (United Kingdom) | 5 years |
| Vanamali Das (Mumbai, India) | 4 years |
| Venudhari Das (Mayapur, India) | 3 years |
| Vishvvasu Das (Germany/Baltics/Russia) | 3 years |
| Vrindavanchandra Das (Vrindavan India) | 2 years |



Adi Purusa Das (GGS) (Bhubaneswar) 1 year

I was born in the village Nilkanthapur of district 24 parganas, West Bengal on 26th October 1959. From my childhood, I had spontaneous attraction for the holy places like Tapavan, Vrindavan and Navadwip. Whenever I used to read about these holy places from some book or hear someone speaking about these places then my heart was longing for these places.

I used to sleep with my father, who while waking up from bed chants 3 times Hare Krishna Mahamantra and only then began his daily work. From then, I was attracted to Hare Krishna Mahamantra.

When people from my village were coming back from pilgrimage speaking about foreigners doing kirtan and playing Mridanga-Kartal, I was overwhelmed.

Two kilometers away from my village there is a Radharaman Math. I used to visit there every afternoon to take part in the Sandhya Arati Kirtan of Radha Krishna and Gour-Nitai. The Babaji of that Math loved me and was always giving me prasada. But my mind was not satisfied, as they were performing “Bhaja Nitai Gour Radheshyam, Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram” and I was unable to chant Hare Krishna Mahamantra.

Meanwhile in 1985, when “World Padayatra of ISKCON” arrived in Atisar Gram near our village, I came there. They were doing Hare Krishna Mahamantra kirtan and chanting, seeing which I was very attracted. After some days I got the book named “Vairagya-Vidya” in Bengali by Srila Prabhupada and started reading it, gradually it increased my attraction for ISKCON manifold.

In 1986, I had visit to ISKCON Mayapur. There I saw Yogapith and other big, big temples and was influenced for spiritual life.

In 1987 April, early in the morning, I arrived in ISKCON, Kolkata, 3C/Albert Road, Radha-Govinda Temple. It was the day of Ekadashi. There I met H.G. Shyamananda Prabhu and H.G. Sarbajyan Prabhu. I discussed with them about Bhagavat Gita. At last Shyamananda Prabhu told me, “Please you stay here for one or two days.” According to his instruction I stayed there for two days. Then Shyamananda Prabhu went for Travelling Sankirtan Party for book distribution. Before leaving he told me “Please you stay here for few more days.” Then I continued to stay. But that time 4

months had already passed when I came across one of my village friends while purchasing some medicine outside.

The next day he came to the temple searching after me. Then I thought when he will return, he will inform my father, mother and relatives and they will immediately come and take me away from temple. On that very day I informed this to H.G. Adridharan Prabhu, President of Kolkata temple. He consulted with H.G. Jagannath Puri Prabhu (Now H.H. Bhakti Gourav Narayan Swami Maharaj) and wrote a letter and sent me to ISKCON, Bhubaneswar in the night train.

Next day at 9 o'clock morning, I arrived in ISKCON, Bhubaneswar. Meanwhile Gurudev (H.H. Gour Govinda Swami Maharaj) was coming to his Bhajan Kutirafter giving morning class. Then I paid dandavat pranam to Gurudev and gave that letter. He read it and smiled at me.

From that time I am staying in Bhubaneswar temple. After 2 months, Adridharan Prabhu sent a letter "You may come back to Kolkata." But I replied "I want to stay here few months more."

At one time he came here and met with Gurudev and again asked me to come back, but I again told him that "I will stay for few more months. Afterwards once more he came and asked me "Do you like to stay here?" I replied "yes" and he granted me to stay in Bhubaneswar. From that time till today I am in Bhubaneswar temple.

I got my first initiation from my Gurudev (H.H. Gour Govinda Swami Maharaj) on Ram-Navami 1988. Same year on Janmastami I got my second initiation from Gurudev. I was engaged in cutting vegetables and prasada distribution and cleaning vessels 1987.

Gradually I did additional services like:

Book distribution in T.S.K.P. – 1988 to 1990

Pujari seva – 1990 to 2013

Head Pujari seva – 1995 to 1997

New devotee in-charge of Temple – 2005 to 2013

Preaching service – 2013 to till now

I have been translating Gurudev's books in Bengali and Odia languages. I have translated around 13 books of Gurudev (H.H. Gour Govinda Swami Maharaj) Now I am staying in ISKCON, Bhubaneswar and preaching in Odisha, West Bengal and Bangladesh.

I feel enthusiastic to preach. After taking sannyas, I will be more dedicated to preach, read sastras and translate Gurudev's books.



Adhokshaja Das (BVG) (Russia) 5 years

Devotional History of Adhoksaja Das

By Aananta Sesadas (Temple President Of ISKCON Nizhny Novgorod)

Adhoksaja das was born on the 16th of May 1975 in Serpukhov, Moscow Region, Russia. Attracted and inspired by sankirtana devotees Adhoksaja das joined the temple in February of 1993. In 1995 he was initiated by Harikesa Swami. In 2000 he was re-initiated and given a brahminical initiation by Niranjana Swami.

Book distribution was always the main source of inspiration and the main activity i He was very inspired to see how Srila Prabhupada's books change people's lives. In families that had bought books from him. They became devotees, started to chant t regulative principles. Adhoksaja held training programs for them, gave classes, tau etiquette and was overseeing them in KC. At present all of them are initiated devot

At that time having received support and blessings from the local authorities Adhoksaja for the first time participated in cable TV programs. It was his first preaching in mass media.

By 2000 there was a decline in book distribution in ISKCON worldwide. In summer 2002 Adhoksaja organized Russian Sankirtana Festival with the help of Yasomatinandana Prabhu and Ekanatha Prabhu (who was his first sponsor). At the festival Sankirtana Ministry of CIS (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus) was established to develop book distribution. On Bhakti Vijnana Goswami's and Bhakti Ananta Krishna Goswami's initiative Adhoksaja was included in the executive board of the Sankirtana Ministry.

Also in 2002 with the help of Yasomatinandana Prabhu, Adhoksaja started a new Russian sankirtana magazine entitled New Age Sankirtana. Unlike Param Vijayate Sri Krisna Sankirtanam magazine in the 1990's, this magazine had another task – to propagate new sankirtana programs, to depict new trends in book distribution. The magazine is published up to now.

Since 2002 with the blessings of the local authorities and Bhakti Vijnana Goswami Adhoksaja developed a few sankirtana projects to develop book distribution in Russia.

In 2002 Adhoksaja started an educational program for young devotees. The program took the form of a school where young Vaisnavas were taught Vaisnava philosophy and practice Krishna Consciousness as well as Vaisnava etiquette. Besides, devotees were trained in book distribution. For fourteen years every summer Adhoksaja has been organizing preaching tours to South Russia with 10-25 participants. The tour includes daily book distribution and philosophy studies. During the tour seminars are held daily as well as quizzes and competitions with sweet prizes for the winners. The participants follow regular program of Mangala-arati, Japa, Guru-puja, Bhagavatam class, Kirtanas etc. All this is done while travelling in Russia. The tour usually lasts for 15 days. Within this period devotees cover 4,500-5,000 km. On the way they distribute books in cities of South Russia. They spend nights in tents in the country. Some devotees sleep in a van which was donated to them by Vijaya Prabhu (ISKCON Sankirtana Minister) along with Srila Prabhupada's disciples from the US. For a few days they distribute books on the Black Sea Coast and a few days – in the Caucasus mountains. A few generations of devotees attended the school. Nine of the students received first initiation. Many of the students chant pranama-mantra and are getting ready for the initiation. A few devotees from that program have become leaders.

In 2003 Adhoksaja organised a health program for CIS sankirtana devotees. Every year sankirtana devotees who have health problems come to ISKCON Ershovo health center and get free medical aid.

In 2003 with GBC's approval and blessings Adhoksaja established Social Security Fund for Sankirtana Devotees. Bhakti Vijnana Goswami allowed sankirtana devotees to contribute to the Fund by taking a small percentage from every distributed book which they continue doing still. The Fund has three main activities: 1. Direct monetary aid to sankirtana devotees for medical purposes; 2. Financial support of elderly sankirtana devotees; 3. Maintenance of the Health center. The program has already existed for 13 years. Many sankirtana devotees get financial support for medical purposes.

In 2004 Adhoksaja organized special edition of the sankirtana bulletin called Sankirtana of the 21st Century. It was a colour brochure for free distribution in ISKCON centers. The bulletin was published for 4 years. At present it is out of print. Adhoksaja plans to resume the project.

In 2010 with the blessings of Gopal Krsna Goswami Adhoksaja organized Weekend Sankirtana Program in Nizhny Novgorod and started to launch this program in different cities of Russia. Over 30 Russian temples participate in the program. The scores of Weekend Sankirtana Program increase year after year. In

2014 the program participants distributed about 40,000 books. In 2014 and 2015 Adhoksaja organized Weekend Sankritana festivals.

In 2011 Adhoksaja supervised construction of a preaching and training center. At present there is a regional training center called Naimisaranya.

In 2014 Adhoksaja started a new project called Sundaracala. It is a small community in the country comprising a brahmacari and a vanaprastha asram.

At present Adhoksaja oversees 2 brahmacari asramas in different cities with 10 brahmacaris living in each of them.

Adhoksaja does all these projects along with his main service which is book distribution. He has been distributing books full time every day (except days when he travels from one place to another) for 24 years since 1993.

In 1998-2015 Adhoksaja was no 1 on sankirtana yearly's and Srila Prabhupada marathon's scores in Nizhny Novgorod Region. A few times he was among the top 10 book distributors in the world. In 2011 he was no 6 in the world. Since 1998 he has been in the top 10 book distributors in the CIS.

Since 1998 Adhoksaja has been giving regular Bhagavatam classes in the Golden Ring Region of Russia. Since 2005 up to now he has been giving 270 hours of classes a year. Besides, he regularly travels and gives seminars in other places. A third of his time he spends in Nizhny Novgorod. Another third of his time Adhoksaja delivers subject seminars. Since 2005 he has been giving as many as 10-12 seminars a year. The seminars last 3-7 days. Some of his seminars can be found in his group in the Russian social network called VKONTAKTE (<http://vk.com/adhokshaja>). Since 2000 another third of his time he spends visiting ISKCON centers in different countries such as Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and Kazakhstan.

Adhoksaja was inspired to take this renunciation path by bhakti and renunciation in the hearts of pure devotees in our movement.

He believes that accepting sannyasa will help him to steadily follow this path without turning back and to attain the highest perfection – to please Lord Caitanya and Lord Krsna. He also believes that thus he will have more opportunities to engage new devotees in the preaching mission.



Ananda Vardhana Das (BVG) (Baltics/Finland/Europe) 1 year

Lord Krishna, knowing my passion for doing extreme things, reciprocated suitably.

It was an immense shocking experience when my parachute did not work properly.

Right after, I found myself in a clinic bed.

The doctor said: “You must now forget about sports. We hope that, after a few months lying on bed, you will be able to walk”.

The patient in the bed next to me spoke every day about Jesus and spirit. He told me that an American sportsman, who had a broken spine, meditated on his normal sports training and exercises while lying on the bed. Hearing this, I started to perform different exercises within my mind, and amazingly the gross physical body responded to the exercises performed with the subtle body. After two months, the doctor and his assistant helped me to stand up. A few days later I left the clinic on crutches.

Because of the pain in my back I started to practice yoga. At that time Lord Krishna brought me in contact with Acyutananda Prabhu, an astrologer and teacher in Ayurdeva. Acyutananda Prabhu, a senior Krishna devotee from Russia, gave me audiocassettes with recordings of the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra. At that time I started to sing every day the holy names of Krishna with a joyful heart.

In 1996, I had my next near death experience in Vrindavana. That experience brought me to decide to dedicate my life to the service of Their Lordships Radha and Krishna. After that my daily number of rounds exceeded more than sixteen. I came to Vrindavana a few times a year and had no interest to go anywhere else. During that same year, we started a Nama Hatta in Finland and began to engage in preaching.

My third near death experience occurred in 2004, also in Vrindavana. His Grace Aindra Prabhu was chanting the mahamanta in my ear. After I recovered, Aindra Prabhu told me a few important things. He instructed me to perform harinam sankirtan as much as possible. In 2005, my Srila Gurudeva His Holiness Bhakti Vijnana Goswami, gave me first and second initiation at the same time, and told me to work in the school.

Two years later, in 2007, I was the personal servant of one of the best sankirtan devotees in Finland, who was dying from cancer in Vrindavana. During the last month of his life we intensely supported each other in spiritual life. Before leaving his body he blessed me to become a renunciant. The morning after he had left his body during the singing of His Grace Aindra Prabhu, I called my Gurudeva and asked him about renunciation. My Gurudeva answered: “Now, you are ready”.

Since that time I started to travel, preach and perform harinam sankirtan. In January 2009, the GBC for the Baltics and my Gurudeva asked me to help in Tallin temple, and I became the Temple President and the leader of the brahmacari ashram. We started going out on harinama every day. Presently we have fourteen brahmacaris in the temple and during our five months harinam sankirtan more devotees joined us. In 2012 by the mercy of Gauranga and Nityananda, and with the help of His Holiness Janananda Goswami, we got a big bus, and twenty brahmacaris traveled together in various European countries performing harinam sankirtan in different towns.

Srila Gurudeva told me about my future sannyasa in 2011, and in 2012 he ordered me to take sannyasa. Simultaneously, different senior devotees explained me that sannyasa is not for personal achievements, but rather for rendering more service to Srila Prabhupada, and helping with the preaching. I accepted that instruction as the will of my spiritual master. My three near-death experiences gave me lots of strength and spiritual realizations. Therefore, in 2012 I applied for sannyasa, in the mood of feeling like a puppet conducted by the loving hands of Guru and Krishna.



Asim Krishna Das (India) 3 years

I, Asim Krishna Das, was born in Punaw village of Bhabua District, Bihar on 12th November 1965. During my school days I met devotees especially H.H. Radha Govinda Das Goswami Maharaja and then H.H. Gaur Krishna Dasa Goswami Maharaja in 1984. I started actively participating in preaching activities with above devotees along with my college studies. We used to perform Kirtan, distribute Srila Prabhupada's Books and travel in remote villages of Bihar preaching the science of Krishna Consciousness. Getting inspired by H.H. Radha Govinda Dasa Goswami Maharaja I took first initiation from him on 2nd January 1987 in Bihar.

Once in 1989, I went to Sri Vrindavan Dham with H.H. Gaur Krishna Goswami Maharaja and then we travelled to Delhi and Chandigarh for Ratha Yatra. In Chandigarh I met H.G. Devakinandan Prabhu. H.H. Gaur Krishna Das Goswami Maharaja and H.G. Devakinandan Prabhu encouraged me to join Brahmachari Ashram in ISKCON Juhu. So I joined the Sankirtan bus which came from Juhu during the Ratha Yatra time and came to ISKCON Juhu and became a Brahmachari. Then till 1991 I served in Sankirtan Department in ISKCON Juhu.

In Vrindavan, 15 November 1991, I took second initiation from H.H. Radha Govinda Dasa Goswami Maharaja. Then I served as new Bhakta Director for the year 1992. Then from 1992 to 1998 I served in Life Patron Membership Department.

Since 1997, I started giving seminars on Srimad Bhagavatam, Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita in places like Mumbai, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Chittrakut, Jharkhand, Pune, Surat, Vapi, Mauritius, Kenya etc. Since 1998 up to 2000 I was serving in Kitchen Department. From 2000 to 2005, I served in New Bhakta Department and then from 2005 to 2015 I was serving as Temple Commander.

Recently ISKCON management has asked me to travel and preach in various parts of India and abroad. Alongside I will also be serving as Brahmachari Council Head in ISKCON Juhu. My base will always be ISKCON Juhu. I feel enthusiastic participating

in Book Distribution and giving seminars on Srimad Bhagavatam and Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita.

Personal example of my Gurudev H.H. Radha Govinda Das Goswami Maharaja and my God Brother H.H. Gaura Krishna Das Goswami Maharaja and also other senior devotees in ISKCON Juhu like Braj Hari Prabhu inspired me on the path of renunciation.

Taking Sannyasa will keep me completely engaged in reading and speaking the glories of Lord Hari.



Bhaktipada Das (SRS) (Hungari/Romania/Turkey) 1 years

I was born 7th November 1969 in Uzsgorod, Ukraine, USSR.

When I was a small child I met the word “death”. I asked my grandfather what does death mean. His reply was: “when you don't exist anymore. I couldn't understand. What does it mean that I don't exist anymore?”

All my life I was searching for answers what is the meaning of death, and whether there's life beyond death. I saw my mother working hard constantly either at her job or at home. I was thinking: “Is this what life is about? Job and household?” I was searching for answers since my childhood: “What is the meaning of life?”

After becoming 15 years old, I became convinced about the existence of God. Whenever I asked Him some help, He always helped. But after He helped me, I forgot about Him and I didn't even say, “Thank You.”

After a while I realized that I have to become more conscientious, and I have to at least say “Thank You” for helping me. Once I had a huge problem. I asked God to help

me, but at the same time I felt I had to reciprocate with Him. I told Him, "Please help me, and in turn I will broadcast Your glories everywhere."

In the '90s, I started to learn more and more about who is God, and whether there's life beyond death. I read lots of books. I learned that He is a person and at the same time He is impersonal. The main thing is that I couldn't put the two together. So I asked God to please give me bonafide knowledge. At that time I was living in Hungary and I came in contact with Srila Prabhupada's books, but I hadn't met the devotees yet. When I read those books I immediately put the whole picture together and I saw that this is perfect and there's no mistake in the books.

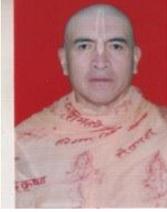
When I met the devotees in 1994 they told me that this is a preaching movement and I remembered that I promised God years ago that I will broadcast His glories everywhere. I immediately knew that this is my path. I could hardly wait for the temple president at Budapest to tell me I should move in.

I moved in to the Budapest temple in March 1996. I served as the temple commander. In June 1997 I moved to New Vraja Dhama (Hungary) following the order of Srila Sivarama Maharaja. I got first initiation in May 1998. I received second initiation in January 1999. I served as a temple commander for 4 years in New Vraja Dhama. Then I did pujari service until 2009. Besides that, I was studying a lot, sometimes for 10-12 hours. And I travelled a lot to preach with small Radhe-Syama utsava Deities. Generally I travelled in Hungary, but sometimes I went to Moscow and to a few towns in Ukraine. It was my favorite service.

I'm preaching in 6 towns in Hungary since 2009. We are building communities there. My base is New Vraja Dhama.

I'm most happy when I'm engaged in preaching activities. I wanted to accept sannyasa as soon as I moved in to the temple. I didn't want to do anything else apart from studying, practicing spiritual life and trying to help others. I was always very enthusiastic for that.

Even now I'm so happy that I don't own a house, I don't have my own car, I don't have anything, so I'm free from all anxieties. If I would receive sannyasa initiation I could be a better help for my spiritual master in spreading Krishna-consciousness. I could immerse myself deeper in my sadhana and I could dedicate myself more to the mission of Lord Caitanya.



Deva Deva Das (HDG) (South America) 1 year

I was born in the city of Oruro, Bolivia during the month of August, 1957, in a very conservative catholic family. I attended a catholic school, were at the age of 14, I was able to enter into the school religion seminar were I studied and served for one full year.

After I read a magazine entitled Back to Godhead that a friend of mine handed to me, I concluded that I had found the goal of my life. This happened in the year 1976. My interest and curiosity was great, I wanted to know more. So, I travel to the temple of Buenos Aires in Argentina, where I stayed several days. It was a great experience.

After Buenos Aires, I was routinely travelling to the city of La Paz, the capital of Bolivia, where three devotees, among them the friend that handed me that magazine, had a small place that they called the "Temple". It was the first Hare Krishna center in Bolivia.

The next year, 1977, I joined their mission in the city of Cusco, Peru, where I took my first initiation from H.H. Hridayananda dasa Goswami in 1978. Later, after concluding my university studies in Law, and with the desire to better serve my Spiritual Master, in 1990 I moved to the United States of America where I received my second initiation in the Potomac ISKCON Temple in Maryland.

Later on, I served in different ways, doing book distribution, Pujari, cooking for the Deities and for the devotees, helping in organizing festivals and contributing toward establishing other preaching centers, cooperating with different temples and projects and also opening new Govinda Restaurants.

Currently, I am dedicated to preaching activities in the Andean Region of South America, specifically in Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador.

In different occasions in the past, I had thought about the possibility of taking the renounced order of life, but this seemed something unreachable for me. It was during an informal conversation with H.H. Jayapataka Swami, my siksa guru, when he was in the airport leaving Bolivia back in 2012, that I seriously considered his suggestion that I take the sannyasa order. This was supported by two good devotee friends of mine who are the leaders of our Bolivian Yatra.

I feel very grateful to Srila Prabhupada and my Spiritual Master. I wish that by taking the sannyasa order I will be more fit to pay this debt to them by dedicating all my efforts to this sublime process of Krishna consciousness and to the development of ISKCON.



Eklavya Das (LOK) (India/Middle East/North America) 1 year

I was born in a Jewish family in New York City in 1965. As a young child, I was interested in music and started music lessons at the age of 4. By the time I graduated from Berklee College of Music in Boston, at the age of 22, with a diploma in Recording Engineering and Production, I could play 16 different instruments.

At the age of twelve, I played the guitar in a children's production of the musical "Hair". The musical director asked me to lead the singing of:

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna

Krisna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama

Rama Rama Hare Hare

My favorite musicians were the Beatles, especially George Harrison. I was enchanted to hear eastern philosophy and the chanting of Hare Krishna on their records.

At the age of 15, I received Bhagavad Gita As It Is. My younger sister had purchased it on the street from some devotees and offered it to me as a birthday gift. I read it occasionally, but could not make much sense of it.

While a student in Boston, I hosted a new friend who had studied Indian music in Benares, India. He introduced me to a study of Indian music. During our time together, he invited me to visit the ISKCON temple with him. I became a regular visitor there, becoming very much attached to prasadam, especially halava.

After graduation from college, I traveled around the world. I visited more than twenty-five countries as a professional musician and seeker of adventures, both material and spiritual. During this time, I received Canto One of Srimad Bhagavatam in an airport from a compassionate vaishnava. Reading the fourth verse of the Siksastakam Prayers, I felt that the flame of renunciation in my heart was kindled.

In 1991, at the age of 26, I ventured into a forest in Ireland alone. I found a solitary river valley. For one month, I ate wild stinging nettles and clover growing in the forest. Oats that I brought with me were also on the menu.

I knew I was at a crossroads in my life. I prayed to be shown my path to God. I read the Srimad Bhagavatam and I chanted Om and Hare Krishna.

My oat supply dwindled. I visited Cork, a nearby city, where I immediately met devotees again. They offered me a japa mala. I started chanting 16 rounds immediately. I moved in with them as an experiment. Within three weeks, I felt committed.

I traveled to London to the Bhaktivedanta Manor for new devotee training for three months.

Joining ISKCON Padayatra Europe, a group of devotees walking from Belfast to Moscow, I traveled by foot through Holland, Belgium, France and Spain, distributing Krishna consciousness.

In 1992, during a meeting in Spain with my spiritual master, His Holiness Lokanath Swami, I received the instruction to go to Delhi, India to assist in the preparations for the Srila Prabhupada Centennial Celebrations.

“When should I go?”, I asked him submissively.

“Tomorrow!”, was his firm reply.

I received first initiation in 1993 in Mayapur, and second initiation in 1996 in Pandharpur.

My previous services include; being the secretary for ISKCON’s Srila Prabhupada Centennial Minister, H.H. Lokanath Swami. I was also the secretary for the ISKCON India Continental Committee (ICC), and the secretary for Western India Divisional Council (WIDC).. I managed a preaching center in Solapur, Maharashtra. I was a member of the Laxmi Narasimhadev Traveling Festival in Poland. I assisted His Grace Rama Raya Prabhu in starting a daily Harinam Sankirtan program in New York City, which continues today.

I currently serve as the secretary for the GBC Deputies as well as a member of the Sannyasa Ministry Secretariat. Additional responsibilities include; a member of the GBC World Holy Name Week Committee, Chant For Change Committee and ISKCON50’s Committee for the Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the First Kirtan in ISKCON. My primary duty is to present the Krishna conscious philosophy to a wide variety of audiences.

I have had the opportunity to visit India, North America, France, England, Spain, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Italy, Croatia, Slovenia, Guyana, Trinidad, Russia, Mauritius, South Africa, Botswana, and the Persian Gulf, as a traveling preacher.

My current base is ISKCON Kolkata, Srila Prabhupada’s Birthplace.

In 2012, H.H. Lokanath Swami, along with several very senior ISKCON devotees, encouraged me to try to increase my service to Srila Prabhupada's movement by entering the sannyasa ashram. In pursuance of their order, I am cooperating with the Sannyasa Ministry to the best of my ability.

I was never married. I see this as a great opportunity. I feel enlivened by living on the road, and having the chance to share Krishna consciousness with a wide variety of people from different cultures. Traveling is one of the best forms of education, wherein one gets to see the lessons of the scriptures exhibited graphically. The life of a sannyasi is certainly an opportunity to travel, preach, gain realizations, and receive mercy.

By entering into the sannyasa ashram, I have faith that, by the causeless mercy of Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga, I will continue to experience acceleration in the purification of my existence and my capacity to serve.



Gargamuni Das (Fiji) 5 years

My name is Gargamuni Dasa. I was born in 1974 in Maribor, Slovenia. I completed primary and secondary school there, then earned a Bachelor's and Master's degree (in Economics and Business Sciences) at the University of Maribor, on a scholarship sponsored by both the Slovenian Scientific Foundation and the Ministry of Science.

I was religious from a very young age, and this inclination became more prominent in my teens while I more and more actively practised Christianity. My quest to understand God led to my regularly reading scriptures from various spiritual traditions, which finally brought me to the books of ISKCON's founder-*acarya*, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

I came in touch with the Hare Krishna mantra through modern music, and I met devotees on several occasions, but it was reading Srila Prabhupada's books that convinced me to join the association of ISKCON devotees in 1995.

I soon became involved in congregational preaching, by organizing such activities in Maribor. While a student, I also organized vegetarian projects with distribution of *prasada*. Connecting my studies and Master's thesis with Krishna consciousness, I wrote about organizational image-building, with practical research on ISKCON's image among the youth of Maribor.

I was a member of ISKCON's temples in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and Osijek, Croatia, but lived mostly in Maribor, because I was married. My marriage dissolved when my wife and another man developed a relationship.

In 1996, I met His Holiness Sridhar Swami, who became my initiating spiritual master by giving me *harinama diksa* in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in August 1998 and then *mantra diksa* in Cakovec, Croatia, in March 2001. My sister also accepted initiation from Sridhar Swami.

Eventually, my services expanded.

In Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina I educated *brahmacaris* and the congregation by conducting seminars (Bhakti Sastri, the Disciples Course, overviews of Srila Prabhupada's books, Bhakti Class, etc.). I performed street *harinama* (up to hundred and fifty times per year). I did *nama-hatta* preaching. I translated a book by Srila Prabhupada into Slovene, and I wrote articles for Krishna conscious magazines and Web sites in the Slovenian, Croatian, and English languages. I did some book distribution in Slovenia and Croatia. And I represented ISKCON at state functions, interfaith conferences, and in the news media.

Over the years I systematically studied Srila Prabhupada's teachings by attending and successfully completing the three seminars then offered by the Vrindavana Institute for Higher Education: Bhakti Sastri (2001), Bhakti Vaibhava (2003-2008), and Bhaktivedanta (2009-2014). I also finished other courses: Teachers Training 1 & 2 (2004), Bhakti Sastri Teachers Training (2013), ISKCON Disciples Course and the certification to teach it (2014).

I am currently based in the Fiji Islands. In the temples, centers and communities of devotees there, I give seminars and lecture; help preach to the congregation; perform street *harinamas*; write articles, etc.

My inclination toward a renounced life gradually developed by following the process of devotional service and by travelling with and personally assisting my guru, Sridhar Swami. Serving Sridhar Swami on what turned out to be his last travels from Canada to Mayapur Dhama, where he left his body, made especially strong impressions on me.

Follow the instructions and example of my initiating spiritual master, and mentored by ISKCON's senior devotees, I am now engaged in preaching activities. Accepting the renounced order of life will enable me to travel widely and share Srila Prabhupada's teachings with more people. Thus I could more efficiently fulfil the order of my spiritual master to preach.



Gaura Chandra Das (JPS) (Mayapur) 1 year

Co-regional director at ISKCON Namahatta Sridham Mayapur

I, Gaura Chandra Das, legal name Gopal Chandra Mahanty, was born on 21st April, 1966 at Vill- Suradiha, P.O- Pratappur , P.S- Baliapal, Dist- Balasore, State- Odisha, in India. My father's name is Ram Chandra Mahanty and mother's name is Srimoti Subarna Mahanty. They belong to Gouria. They also got initiation from Gouria Vaishnav.

Since my childhood, I liked Krishna-prasad and worshipped Radha and Krishna. My parents also inspired me much in Krishna consciousness. The prasad I liked best was sweet rice. In my childhood wherever my uncle (senior) would go to perform any program about Gaur and Krishna, I would hear their lecture there and at last sweet rice was distributed which I liked so much. By the effect of their holy association, my Krishna consciousness increased day by day. It was 1981; Raghav Pandit Prabhu (now H.H. Bhakti Raghav Swami) and Gauranga Prem Das (now H.H. Gauranga Prem Swami) came to my house for Namahatta Preaching. Their sweet behavior and holy association inspired me to become devotee. I thought then it will be better for me if I become a brahmachari and acquire qualities like them in ISKCON, Mayapur.

So in 1982, in the month of August I came to Sridham Mayapur. But H.H. Bhakti Raghav Swami did not allow me to stay at Mayapur as a brahmachari as I was then sixteen years old and the required age limit to join in ISKCON Mayapur was eighteen. I stayed two days with H.H. Bhakti Raghav Swami. He inspired me to preach Namahatta. He gave me japa bag and bead, Radha-Madhab and Prabhupada pictures and some Prabhupada's books. I started chanting at my home, reading Shrila Prabhupada's book's regularly as I was sent back to my home. I preached on behalf of Namahatta Secretary. Thus according to the advice of H.H. Bhakti Raghav Swami Maharaj I preached two years at a stretch at different places in our area. I felt glad in it.

After two years a brahmachari named Rupa Das came to my house. I decided to come with him to Sridham Mayapur. And in the month of February, 1984 on the most auspicious appearance of Lord Nityananda which is called Nityananda Trayodashi, I joined as an ISKCON Mayapur Brahmachari. Here I joined in the department of new devotee training for seven days. After seven days H.H. Bhakti Raghav Swami Maharaj ordered me to preach on behalf of Namahatta Department in ISKCON Mayapur to help H.H. Gauranga Prem Swami Maharaj. In 1984 I got 1st

initiation on Gaurpurnima day from H.H. Jayapataka Swami Guru Maharaj and got 2nd initiation in 1985 on Janmastami day from H.H. Jayapataka Swami Guru Maharaj. Spiritual master gives a devotee a spiritual name at the time of initiation. My spiritual name which was given by my spiritual master, H.H. Jayapataka Swami Maharaj was Gaura Chandra Das.

During supervising Mayapur Namahatta Office for helping book distribution and preaching I had to go with H.H. Bhakti Raghav Swami Maharaj and H.H. Gauranga Prem Swami Maharaj. I was engaged as a supervisor for preaching in Nadia District in West Bengal for several years. I was made Namahatta Co-Regional Director in 2002. From 2002 to still now I have been preaching in different states like West Bengal, Odissa and some other places of Jharkhand.

I have also been taking care of Namahatta Brahmacharies Office management and construction by helping Namahatta Regional Director Sri Srimat Gauranga Prem Swami Maharaj as a Namahatta Co-Regional Director. Sometimes I go to help the District Supervisors in different states for preaching and visit different devotees for Namahatta Preaching, visiting different devotees houses, Hare Krishna UTSAV, Devotee care, to train up the devotee about Puja and Vaishnav etiquette, to train devotees, how to establish new Namahatta groups and shraddha kutirs, and many varieties of program like Annaprasan and Griha Pravesh. I have completed Bhakti Sastri and ISKCON Disciple Course from Mayapur Institute in 2012 and 2015 respectively.

Krishna gives shelter to everyone whoever surrenders to Him. Krishna's lotus feet are called fearless. So whoever enthusiastically takes His shelter and works according to His opinion is fearless. I have become fearless and can do every work as he inspires me as Super soul. Therefore I serve energetically and enthusiastically to please Lord Krishna and His representatives while preaching.

According to desire of the senior devotees like H.H. Bhakti Purusottam Swami Maharaj, H.H. Gauranga Prem Swami Maharaj, I shall accept sannyas. Especially Srila Prabhupada desired that one should accept sannyas to enhance the preaching mood. By accepting sannyas I shall get the opportunity to serve the Lord with body, mind and speech. Thus by engaging 24 hours in Krishna Consciousness by devotional service all of my senses will be used for Krishna Consciousness and hence my Krishna Consciousness will increase day by day. Preaching becomes more effective when people offer respect to the preacher. That's why Caitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyas. Srila Prabhupada and also my guru Maharaj H.H. Jayapataka Swami and many other disciples of Srila Prabhupada took sannyas for serious preaching. Following in their footsteps, I would also like to serve the same mission as their humble servant.



Gopendra Das (Vrindavan, India) 5 years

I was born in Vaikunthapur village, Chattisgarh, India on 17th October, 1965 and received the name Gopal Halder. My father passed away when I was merely 6 years old. In childhood I would do Harinam Sankirtan and construct small temples out of earth with my friends and other villagers. I started my education at the age of 11 years. Due to poor financial conditions I had to work in farms to support my family and schooling.

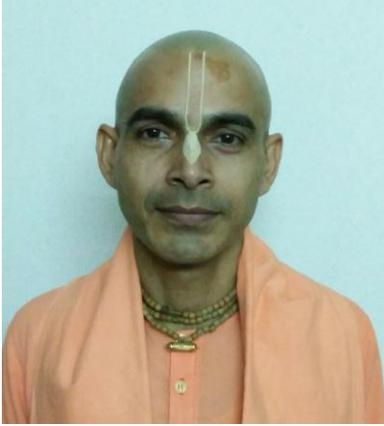
One day a Gaudiya Vaisnava came to our village for Bhagavat Katha. After hearing his discourse I decided to renounce the world. The one day I got a book "Beyond birth and death" by Srila Prabupada which attracted me to His teachings. Then I read "Back to Godhead" where an advertisement invited young men to join ISKCON. Henceforth I finalized to join ISKCON Mayapur. Meanwhile I visited ISKCON New Delhi and had the darshans of Sri Sri Radha Parthasarathi. And on my way to Vrindavan I took the darshans of Krishna Balaram that changed my mind and I joined ISKCON Vrindavan in the year 1993.

The first 8 months were spent in new devotee training and menial services like three times temple cleaning, bathroom cleaning and prasadam service. I took first initiation in 1996 during Gaur Purnima at Mayapur from His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaja. Then I received second initiation in April 1998 at Vrindavan. From 1994 to 1997, I did door to door book distribution with the travelling sankirtan bus. From May 1997 to March 2003 I was made the in-charge of the travelling sankirtan party.

Subsequently in April 2003, I was made assistant head pujari at Krsna Balaram Temple in Vrindavan. I participated in marathons till 2009 and distributed books while continuing my other services. I have been involved in training the brahmacharis and sankirtan devotees at ISKCON Vrindavan since 1997.

In the year 2012 I started giving discourses on Gaur Katha and visited Panipat, Sahibabad, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Panchkula, Panihati, Bhilai, Pakhanjur and Domjur

in India and Dhaka, Brahmabadia, Narayanganj and Khulna in Bangladesh. Currently I am based in Vrindavan and also teaching ISKCON Guru Disciples course at various places. Now I am 51 years old and at this juncture I would like to take to the renounced order. I am sure that taking sannyasa will help me in preaching effectively and efficiently.



Govindananda Das (West Bengal, India)

I was born in a religious Brahmin family of Midnapore District in West Bengal, India. I am the younger son of my parents. I was born in a spiritual atmosphere. My father was a priest and we had Nitya Seva of Sri Sri Gour Nitai and Shaligram in our home. From very childhood I was inclined in service of Shaligram. When I was 14 years old, in 1986 during the 500th anniversary of Mahaprabhu's appearance, ISKCON padayatra travelling party was passing through our village, my father brought a copy of Back to Godhead (Bengali) and kept it in book shelf. I was unaware of that incidence.

In graduation philosophy was one of my subjects. While reading the philosophy of Sankaracharya, I understood that this material world is unreal and I decided to search for the absolute truth and to leave home.

When this desire became very keen, one day I found that magazine "Back to Godhead" in my book shelf. I saw this magazine for the first time in my book shelf although it was lying there for years. Now I realized that it was a divine arrangement of Sri Sri Gaura Nitai. I was searching for the right path and it opened up in front of me by Their Divine mercy. I got the address of Mayapur Chandrodaya temple in that magazine and immediately I decided to join ISKCON Mayapur. I got the magazine on 2nd Feb 1991 and left home on 4th Feb and joined Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir.

One day New devotee in-charge took all of us to Gurumaharaj's (HH Bhakti Charu Swami) room. He taught us a sloka from Bhagavad Gita "Sarva Dharman Parityajya" and I memorized it instantly. I was very much influenced by his class and decided to accept him as my spiritual master. I received first initiation in 1992 on the holy

appearance day of Srivasa Thakur and got 2nd initiation in 1994 on the appearance day of Sripad Ramanujacharya in SriDham Mayapur.

I was engaged in Book table service. After that became Book godown in-charge. After few months during the Silver jubilee of ISKCON, H.H. Bhakti Purusottam Maharaja engaged me in preaching and drama in pandal programs. Under the guidance of Maharaja I was appointed in different services namely campus preaching, Gita study circle, Harinam preaching, cashier service etc. I served for 15 years as Harinam preaching and campus preaching departmental head. I served as school preaching departmental head for 4 years.

In September 2013 Gurumaraja engaged me in Panihati project as Manager. Currently I am preaching in West Bengal and Bangladesh and doing Bhakti Vriksha programs in different places of West Bengal. I am serving as a teacher of Bhakti Shastri and Bhakti Vaivhav in MIHE.

As I mentioned earlier, I like to preach and teach extensively. Sannyasa ashram is ideal to fulfil those missions. It will help me to be fully involved in preaching mission of Srila Prabhupada and spread Krishna Consciousness. My Gurumaraja is my role model and my main source of inspiration.



Kamalalochan Das (Mumbai, India) 4 years

Birth

I was born in Mysore (Karnataka, India) on 20th April, 1973.

Madhusudan Masa (Vaishaka Pouranimantah)

Krishna Paksha Tritiya, Vishaka Nakshatra (4th Pada).

My grandmother named me Krishna Kiran as she had vowed to Sri Udupi Krishna in her prayers to Him that a male child born will be named after Him.

Childhood.

Born into an orthodox Madhva family, I spent my childhood in and around Madhava Mutt (Uttaradi Mutt) learning all the rituals and mantras. Hanuman and Sripad

Madhvacharya were my natural heroes. My grandmother's Mahabharata and Ramayana stories became my passion. Later I did my schooling in Tenali (the place of famous Tenali Ram) regularly visiting the Hauman's deity (Mukyaprana) installed by Narahari Tirtha (No. 7 in our Guru Parampara list).

Youth

When I was just 14, the usually naughty and playful nature in me suddenly changed into a serious and philosophical one after the demise of my mother when . While studying in college (Marine Engineering) I tried to explore sense gratification under peer pressure, but found it against my nature. It was in the 3rd year of college that I heard a lecture by HG Dayaram Prabhu and made up my mind not to marry.

As I read the Gita many times and frequently heard from HH Bhakti Vidyapurna Swami at the Mayapur Gurukul, my conviction to dedicate my life for preaching the message of the Bhagavad-gita became strong.

Shastric study

While working in the Merchant Navy as an engineering officer, I utilised my abundant spare time studying Srimad Bhagavatam for hours a day. In the meantime, during my 3 months of break from my job in Shipping, I got the divine association of HG Atmatatva Das who further inspired me to study Srila Prabhupada's books and dedicate my life for preaching and told me that life is not meant for doing some shudra work. I gave up my highly lucrative job and joined ISKCON Mira Road on Aug 20th 1997.

Initial ISKCON days

There was a great resistance from my father, who even met the Prime Minister of India asking him to tell ISKCON to give his son back. But, the divine Lotus Hand of my spiritual master, HH Gopal Krishna Goswami Maharaja on my head saved me from all calamities both from within and outside of ISKCON. Somehow my father and other family members had to settle with the harsh reality i.e. their Krishna Kiran has become a monk and it is not a circumstance nor a chance, but a prediction by a Madhva Sanyasi of Mantralaya.

As my grandmother recalls "When kiran was 7 years old, we went to Mantralayam, the divine abode of Sripad Raghavendra Swami. As a ritual we all went to meet the current swamiji of the mutt for blessings and came out only to find out that Krishna Kiran was missing. We went to look for him in swamiji's room; there he was with the swamiji refusing to come out along with us. Swamiji told us that "he belongs to Krishna and you cannot force him into family life".

Services done in ISKCON

As soon as I joined ISKCON Mira Road in 1997, I took up the responsibility of "New Bhakta training" and youth preaching. I got my first initiation in Jan 1998.

Circumstances led me to become the Vice-president of ISKCON Mira Road in 1999. I took up congregation development and teaching in VIHE in the year 2002 after my second initiation. In 2007, I was made the President of ISKCON Mira Road, which came out to be a very strong community with a beautiful temple. I am known more for my philosophical discourses than my managerial abilities. I have also produced leaders and set up many temples and preaching centers in Vapi, Bhavnagar, Bhilwara, Udaipur, and many other places.

I have served as WIDC Vice-Chairman and have also completed the GBC College training from its first batch.

Current Services

Along with being the President of ISKCON Mira Road, I am also the member of the ILAC.

I travel extensively in South Gujarat, South Rajasthan and Panjab for preaching and guiding in setting up a standard gurukul as envisioned by Srila Prabhupada. Education is my passion; so I identify myself as teacher of Bhakti Shastri, Bhakti Vaibhav, Shad darshnas and other scriptures.

Why do I want to take sannyasa?

I feel that I am destined to be a sannyasi and I am already leading a life of a sannyasi. HH Gopal Krishna Goswami Maharaja has great expectation from me and somehow or the other I want to fulfil his desire. I just want to be a small instrument in the hands of HH Gopala Krishna Goswami Maharaja to expand Maharaja's services to Srila Prabhupada.

Taking up sannyasa helps me to practice the following verse in the Srimad Bhagavatam in a more realistic way.

etam sa asthaya paratma-nistham

adhyasitam purvatamair maharsibhih

aham tarisyami duranta-param

tamo mukundanghri-nisevayaiva

I shall cross over the insurmountable ocean of nescience by being firmly fixed in the service of the lotus feet of Krsna. This was approved by the previous acaryas, who were fixed in the firm devotion to the Lord, Paramatma, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Devotional career in ISKCON

- Joined ISKCON Mira Road in 1997

- Immediately took up the responsibility of “New Bhakta training” and youth preaching
- I got my first initiation in Jan 1998
- Vice-president of ISKCON Mira Road in 1999
- I took up congregational development and teaching in VIHE in the year 2002 after my second initiation
- In 2007, I was made the president of ISKCON Mira Road
- A strong community with a beautiful temple built in 2015.
- I have also produced leaders and set up many temples and preaching centers in Vapi, Bhavnagar, Bhilwara, Udaipur, and many other places
- Served as WIDC Vice – Chairman
- Completed the GBC College training from its first batch

Current Services

- Along with being the President of ISKCON Mira Road
- I am also the member of the IIAC
- I travel extensively in South Gujarat, South Rajasthan and Punjab for preaching and guiding in setting up preaching centers
- Teacher in VIHE
- Teacher in LEEDS



Madhu Sevita Das (ACBSP) (Italy, France, Benelux) 1 year

I was born in Rome in 1952 and lived a useless life till 1973. In May 1973 I traveled to India by land via Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and after entering India and paying a tasteless visit to the Dalai Lama I reached Nepal where, after a trekking journey to a place near Muktinath, I met two Sannyasis and joined ISKCON.

In 1974 at the inauguration of the Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir during the Gaura Pournima festival I took 1st initiation from Srila Prabhupada, and in 1975 at the inauguration of the Krsna-Balarama Mandir I received 2nd initiation from His Divine Grace.

In the early seventies I served nearly four years in Mayapur as Temple Commander and then in the late seventies till January 1981 I served nearly four years in Calcutta as Vice TP; then I went back to Italy where I became TP in a Temple near Milan.

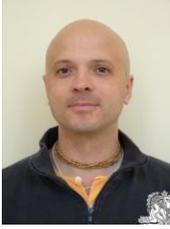
In 1988 I took up the service of initiating Guru, in 1991 I became a BBT Trustee and since 1992 I am a member of the GBC Body; I am still engaged in all these services.

My base is Villaggio Hare Krishna near Milano.

I like to print Srila Prabhupada's books and see that they get read, understood, and distributed.

I also like to do the needful to see that what Srila Prabhupada left us is kept without alterations in a progressive spirit of preaching.

The Sannyasa ashrama will give me more time, concentration and inspiration to perform my present services with an increased preaching enthusiasm.



Mahaprabhu Das (SRS) (Hungary/Romania) 1 year

I was born in Hungary in 1965, and I came in contact with Krishna-consciousness in 1990. After 1989 the communist era changed and thus various philosophical ideas and religious organizations developed in the country. By the effort of the devotees and Lord Caitanya's mercy ISKCON was registered as an official religion. It was a period in a real revolutionist mood. Before getting acquainted with Krishna-consciousness I was a dreamer and was seeking after the truth, but obviously I did not find it. I was a member of some yoga group and another community, but when I met the devotees on the street while they were distributing books, I felt their clear, sincere faith and dedication. I came to the realization that I also must do the same and a little bit later I gave up my job and moved into the temple.

At that time there were only two preaching centers in Hungary. Practically, all devotees were distributing books, so I also did that service. This was in 1991 and this was the year when I got my first initiation from His Holiness Srila Sivarama Swami Maharaja. From then on, for almost twenty years, my service was mainly book distribution. I received second initiation in 1993.

From 2003 to 2008 I organized a university-preaching project. From 2012 I was taking care of seva puja sponsors for Sri-Sri Radhe Syama. Recently, I am helping in the 1% campaign, through which a lot of citizens in Hungary have the opportunity to offer 1% of their tax to some church or religious organization. By my spiritual master's mercy I like distributing books, which I usually do during the Srila Prabhupada Marathon each year. I also visit Nama Hatta centers to preach.

In 2012 my spiritual master requested me to accept the sannyasa order, so that preaching and the varnasrama system can advance in Hungary. I believe this is the asrama in which I could best contribute to building a thriving community in Hungary and elsewhere based on good, harmonious cooperation, which would attract more and more people to Krishna-consciousness to start practicing the process of devotional service.



Nabadvip Dvija Gouranga Das (JPS) (Bangladesh) 2 years

I was born at Manikgonj in Bangladesh, on 18th April 1966.

I read Srila Prabhupada books when I was a school student. I found the books, Science of Self Realization and Bhagavat Gita As It Is, especially powerful. Gradually, I became attracted to Srila Prabhupada's mission by associating with the devotees. After completing my graduation, I joined in ISKCON Wari Dhaka, Bangladesh in 1987.

I did pujari service there, then I was sent to preach and open a centre at ISKCON Sylhet. From the opening until now, I am trying to serve there.

I took 1st Initiation on 13.08.1990 on Janmastami at ISKCON Wari Dhaka and 2nd initiation on 10.04.1992 in Ramnavami at ISKCON Rup-Sanatam Temple in Jessore, Bangladesh.

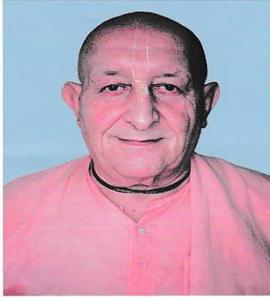
We constructed ISKCON Panthirtha Smriti Thirtha Temple at the birth place of Advithya Acharya. We bought land, then made a nice temple, where H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami, H.H. Jayapataka Swami, H.H. Subhug Swami other Maharajas and H.G. Pravavishnu Prabhu visited.

We constructed two facilities for students called BACE. One is Avaycharan BACE temple where about 65 students are cultivating in Krishna conciousness. Another one is beside Agricultural University, Sylhet. We got some land from another famous University (SUST). Now so many Namhattas and more than 10 big centres of ISKCON Sylhet Division.

I am serving as Vice President ISKCON National Council, Bangladesh Temple and President of Sri Sri Radha Madhav Jew Mandir ISKCON Sylhet. I am also taking care as a president of ISKCON Sunamgonj. ISKCON Panthitha, ISKCON Pathariya, ISKCON Duyarabazar. Divisional Secretary ISKCON Sylhet Division, Mymenshing ,Brahmanbariya, Comilla and all over Bangladesh. I am also President of Pilgrimage Development National Committee, Bangladesh.

The devotional activities I feel most enthusiastic about are Student Preaching, Kirtan also Bhajan (Baul Sanggit), Deity Worship, Congregational Preaching, Book Distribution, and Farming (Cropsfields).

I hope I will be blessed and serve them better as a sannyasa because preaching will be more.



Premadata Das (Italy/India) 2 years

I was born in Italy on 20 April, 1944. Since childhood, I received Christian education. At the age of 12, I was ready to join the Christian Seminary for becoming a Priest, but my elder brother strongly prohibited me from doing so. After military service, I completed my studies, receiving an Electro-Technician Diploma. Then I got married and became a father. After that, I joined a political-communist-extremist theatre (led by a famous Nobel-prize winning actor), as a light and sound technician and actor for four years. Then, two comrades inspired me to go to visit India. At the age of 30, in October, 1974, I entered India by road in a hippie mood, with the desire to meet a Guru with mystic powers, having read the book "Autobiography of a Yogi" (P. Yogananda). After visiting Varanasi and taking several baths in the holy river Ganga, I heard these two mantras for the first time, "HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE, HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE" and "OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VASUDEVAYA."

We lived under a banyan tree and I used to do spontaneous hatha yoga exercises. One day, an Italian girl met us and told us that she was living for the last two years with the same Babaji who was described in the book. We were very interested in meeting him. She gave us the address of an ashram in Gopinath bazaar in Vrindavan. After a few days, we met him and I became his follower for the next 8 months. But in Vrindavan I missed the opportunity to see Srila Prabhupad face to face, even though during the days of my stay there was also the inauguration of Krishna-Balarama Mandir. (Years later, I realized that I was not ready to meet Srila Prabhupad. I needed some training in Shaivism for destroying some quantity of ignorance, since that Babaji was in the Shaivite line.)

After one more year in India, I came back to Italy completely transformed. I was a pure vegetarian, my body weight had reduced to 64 kg from 84 kg, I was practicing hatha yoga, mantra japa (om namah shivaya), meditation, prana yoga, and after understanding the law of karma my perspective on life had changed. My wife was astonished and her love for me increased. The result was that we produced twin sons. I also started teaching Hatha Yoga and vegetarianism in many centers, and

when I opened a multipurpose center (hatha yoga, natural food, ayurvedic products, alternative books etc.), I had about 200 followers.

An ISKCON center had opened in Gallarate, just 10 km from my center, and different ISKCON devotees were visiting me and inviting me to their Sunday feast. One of them was my close friend, H.G. Goura Krishna das, and when I would visit ISKCON he used to glorify me in front of the devotees introducing me as a great yogi. I appreciated the lessons from Srimad Bhagavatam and the Prasada very much, and during my lesson of hatha yoga I used to put in the tape recorder a cassette with different Vaishnava songs like “Bhajahu re mana Sri Nanda-nandana.” In my center, I was preaching about God based on the books of famous gurus like Yogananda, Aurobindo, Sai Baba, Krishnamurti, Ramakrishna, Dalai Lama, and my Guruji Hariakandi Babaji. But one day, I had one important realization: ‘I had a very big confusion in my mind about God, about spiritual soul, about reincarnation. The philosophical explanations that the ‘big gurus’ were preaching were contradictory to each other, and it was impossible to understand who was right.’ So, one night, I was alone in my yoga center after a lesson, and I started a deep meditation. I was asking God with all my sincerity, from my heart –

“If You exist, and I think that You exist, please, please, please enlighten me about You. Who are You? Where are You? I am ready to surrender to You, but I need to know the perfect truth. Please help me!”

About a month later, H.G. Goura Krishna das invited me to attend the inauguration of the new ISKCON temple, Villa Vrindavana, near Florence in the center of Italy. It was August of 1982. I went with my family. Someone gifted me a Bhagavad Gita As It Is. As I read it, I was shocked many times and realized that God was giving me the perfect answers to my hot questions. The result was that I felt a strong desire to join ISKCON. But I had two problems to solve: 1) How could I abandon my Guruji Heriakandi Babaji? 2) What would happen to my wife (who was not favorable) and my three sons? By the mercy of Sri Krishna, two qualified devotees gave the perfect solution to my 2 problems.

1) I was in France in ISKCON Nouvelle Mayapur, and H.G. Goura Krishna das introduced me to H.G. Matsyavatara das (Srila Prabhupad disciple), telling him, “Take care of this dear friend of mine.” He took me to a nice garden, under a big tree, and asked me to narrate my history. I told him that I was attracted to join ISKCON but I could not betray by Shaivite Guruji, who was very kind to me like a father, taking care of me with love for 8 years and teaching me so many things. Very intelligently, H.G. Matsyavatara Prabhu started with great glorification of Lord Shiva,

explaining that he is the most qualified Vaishnava of the universe and therefore he can be considered the spiritual master of all Vaishnavas. Then, he asked me: "If you want to drink very pure water, where will you go to look for it?" I replied, "To the source." "Exactly. Suppose that here there is a source of water, this is Krishna. How pure will the water be 5 meters away?" I replied, "Also very pure but not 100% pure like at the source." "Exactly! Therefore, if you desire to go to the source (Krishna) to drink water, do you think that Lord Shiva will be unhappy with you? No! He will be very satisfied, because it means that he has destroyed your ignorance and was successful in your case!" This analogy was so clear, and it had the power to remove all doubts from my mind and in that moment, inside my heart, I took the decision to join ISKCON.

2) After France, we came back to Italy, Villa Vrindavana, and I was talking to H.G. Vipralamba das, head pujari. My question was, "My three young sons have the right to be taken care of by their father too, not only by their mother. And, they don't want to follow me in ISKCON. Will I not be too egoistic if for following my desire of spiritual realization I abandon them? Because, I love them. And even if now they are reluctant to follow Sri Krishna, who can help them to develop Krishna consciousness if I am not near them day after day?" He replied, "If you have the courage to abandon everything – family, property and job – for serving Sri Krishna full time with love and devotion, Lord Krishna Himself will take care of your family, property etc. And if you want all relatives to go back to Krishna, you must become a pure devotee and first you must go back to Krishna, because that was the boon given by Lord Nrsimhadeva to Prahalad Maharaj when he expressed to the Lord the desire to rescue his asura father Hiranyakasipu who had died in the lap of the Lord. The Lord said, 'From this moment, for whoever will become a pure devotee like you and come back to Goloka Vrindavana, I will automatically rescue 21 generations of relatives before and after him.'" This explanation entered my mind and my heart like a transcendental medicine and gave me the strength to give up everything and become fully dedicated to devotional service.

My first service was to oversee the bhakta program and take care of the new bhaktas. Then I associated with the sankirtan leaders and learned how to distribute lots of books and paraphernalia. I took Harinama diksha in 1983 from H.H. Bhagavan Das Maharaj, with the name Purnabrahma das. Then I became manager of the Guest House. After the exit of H.H. Bhagavan das Maharaj from ISKCON, I went for a tour to India and I married Srimati Paramakaruna Devi Dasi, very famous for her translation of Srila Prabhupad's books into Italian. At that time, I got divorced from my first wife. In Milan, my wife and I opened the ACV (Cultural Vegetarian Association) in an open space of 800 sqm where we started teaching many courses – Vegetarian kitchen, Sanskrit, Bhakti yoga, Hatha yoga, Karate, Indian dance, etc. and we had about 3000 associates and 2 other branches. We worked very hard for four years, and then we decided to permanently move to India. We started in the new

ISKCON center in Puri managed by H.G. Mayapur Chandra das. After one year, we moved to Bhubhaneshwar, Krishna Balaram Mandir, led by HH Gour Govinda Maharaj. And after his disappearance, when HH Bhaktiswarupa Damodara Swami became GBC of BBNR, we took re-initiation, both first and second, in 1997 with the new name Premadata das and Jahnava d.d.

We were engaged in the Second World Congress of Science & Spirituality in Kolkata as manager of western kitchen to look after the needs of the western delegates, full of Nobel laureates and spiritual leaders. After few months, our Guru Maharaj sent us to Tripura where I was nominated Temple President of the ISKCON temple of Agartala. The situation there was very difficult and the temple was very small and very poor. My wife, Jahnava dd was disgusted after one year and decided to go back to Puri and rejected the instruction of our Guru. I decided to remain in the position to fulfill the order of the Guru. After some time, I got divorced from Jahnava dd at the Court of Agartala. The divorce was also accepted by the Municipality of Milano where we got married fifteen years back. Without knowing well either English language or the local Bangla language, I continued my devotional service establishing all rules and regulations per the instructions of His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada. In course of time, my English became better. I gave several hundred lessons in many parts of Tripura due to invitations from many different Mathas and Associations.

One day, an 18-year-old boy entered the temple, very agitated, and asked me to protect him from his father who was chasing him with the intention to kill him because he wanted to become a devotee of Krishna. I closed him in one room under a bed. After a few minutes, three relatives knocked on the door. When I opened the door, they enquired about the young boy. I replied that I had not seen any young boy and I showed them that all rooms were empty. They left, but the rumor attracted many local people from the side Flower Club. Their leader asked me if I needed any help. I did not understand their intention and told them that there is no need of anything. After one hour, I called the police station and they sent four policemen. I told the captain to help me protect the young man and to be very careful with him. The captain took the young man like a prisoner and they went outside very openly. The local club boys saw everything and after some time the leader of the group of boys came to me in a very angry mood, threatening me and saying, "You must go back to Italy because you are a liar and Krishna is not for you, but only for us." I replied, "Only my guru can tell me to go from here. You go to my guru and speak with him, otherwise I will not move from here. If you do not agree, you can kill me." They were surprised and ran away. But in the evening, after 9 pm, when the temple was empty of visitors, the club boys started to attack the temple, throwing many stones from outside for about one hour. And they repeated this for three nights. This happened 17 years ago. By preaching, and by distribution of Prasadam, I gradually

changed the situation and now all people there respect me and appreciate my service.

Every year, we perform Jagannath Ratha yatra in three temples simultaneously, as well as Janmastami, Gaura Purnima, and many other Vaishnava festivals, with distribution of large quantities of Prasadam. We have performed Nagar Sankirtan uncountable times, with the banner of Maha mantra and the name of ISKCON, with a speaker. Every year, I maintain transparent accounts, and we have no debts. All bills – telephone, electricity, water supply – are paid by due dates. Also, GBC fee, Bureau fee etc. are paid on time. Five years ago, at the age of 65, I received a social pension from the Italian Government and I used the entire amount of about 32,000 INR for temple purposes. And when I go to Italy for collection, making tables in different type of Fears, all profit is used for the temples and the extension centers.

Some years ago, I visited Kurukshetra and in front of the tree where Sri Krishna spoke the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna, I took a vow to distribute one million copies of Bhagavad Gita before the end of my material body. But I am afraid of not having the capacity to maintain the vow because till now, I have distributed about 5000 B.G. only. I am 72 years old and if Sri Krishna graces me with the initiation of Sannyasa, maybe I will get the chance to distribute more and more. Finally, I beg forgiveness for all my mistakes, for all my offenses, for my laziness, for my imperfection, for my ignorance and for my stupidity and my proudness. And I thank all Vaishnavas, all ISKCON gurus and Lord Sri Krishna for permitting me to continue to be engaged in unalloyed devotional service.

Hare Krishna!



Pritivardhana Das (BVPS) (Mayapur/India) 2 years

I began associating with ISKCON devotees in Prague in the winter of 1991. The next year, when I was 23 years old, I completed my MSC in Chemistry and Electronics from Institute of Chemical Technology in Prague, Czech Republic. Right after that, I traveled to Vrindavan to study Bhakti Sastri with the VIHE along with one other devotee. We travelled over land using trains and buses as a mode of transportation.

First we took a train to Istanbul, Turkey. From there we crossed over the Suez-canal to Asia and got a bus to the Iranian border. After crossing by foot we took another bus and train to reach Tehran, the Iranian capital. The train was quite comfortable, unlike the ones to come. Spending 2 days in Tehran was quite an adventure, especially the bed bugs in the hotel! Many of the Muslim people were quite intimidating, but there were a few pleasant ones who helped us to get around the city. From there we took a train to Kerman and Zahedan, where the real pearl awaited us. After waiting for 30 hours in Zahedan we set off on a Pakistani train (just for a comparison – imagine 4th class train in India) and went on a journey through the Balochistan desert in south Pakistan. Even though the ‘windows’ were firmly closed there was sand everywhere, under our clothes, inside our bags and even inside our mouths. It was very austere, but remembering that we were going to Vrindavan, we were able to tolerate it. Finally we came to Lahore. From there we crossed the Indian border to Amritsar, took a train to Delhi and at last a bus to Vrindavan.

After the VIHE courses, in October 1992, I proceeded to go on Braja Mandala Parikrama. The other devotee I came with was by this time already sitting in a plane going back to Prague. I realized however, that I did not want to go back to Europe to live a consumer life, but that I wanted to stay in Vrindavan. Afterwards, in November 1992, I took up service in Vrindavan working with Dina Bandhu Prabhu and Daivi Shakti Mataji in the mailout department for a few months.

In April 1993 I went to Mayapur to visit the Gurukula about which I had heard a lot. I had previously met H.H. Bhaktividya Purna Maharaja in 1992 in Hungary, preaching in the ISKCON temples and farms, outside universities, and homes of devotees.

I have also been conducting comprehensive seminars on Srimad Bhagavatam, Upadesamrita, and Mahaprabhu Siksastaka in Mayapur and Baroda (Gujarat) since 2012.

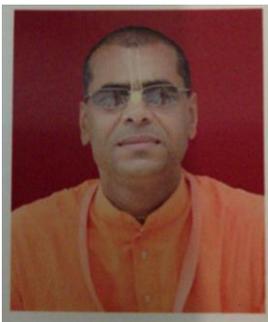
My reasons for taking Sannyasa

Considering my involvement in the field for now over 20 years, my desire is to further revive education in ISKCON according to the teachings of His Divine Grace AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada. Taking sannyasa will permit me to approach a broader spectrum of the public and will open up further avenues for spreading Krsna consciousness and the Holy Name. In this way I aim to teach and preach Srila Prabhupada's purports by living example. As a sannyasi, I will also be able to better motivate boys in the Gurukula to take up and maintain brahmacarya more seriously.



Puspashila Shyama Das (JPS) (Bangladesh) 1 year

I was born on 2nd June, 1969 at Dinajpur district, Bangladesh. Initially I have been spiritually inspired specially by late Sevanidhi Das Brahmachari, one of the prominent preacher in his time in ISKCON Bangladesh and other senior devotees also inspired me for renunciation. I have joined in ISKCON In the year of 1988 at Rupa-Sanatan smriti-tirtha, Ramsara, Abhaynagar, Jessore, Bangladesh. In the year of 1986 I first met the ISKCON devotees. They gave me three books of Srila Prabhupada, namely * The nectar of Krishna Consciousness, * Perfect question perfect answer and * Bhagavat Gita. After reading Srila Prabhupada`s books I have started with the devotees through letters. In 1987 I have gradually started chanting 16 rounds (inspired by the devotees) at home. In one stage of communicating, the devotee asked me to join with them. And then I Joined the ISKCON devotees in their book stall at Kheturi Dham, Rajshahi (the birthplace of Srila Narottam Das Thakur) at the disappearance day of Srila Narottam Das Thakur. In this way I have joined the ISKCON Movement. The year of my first initiation is 1989 at Rup-Sanatan smriti-tirtha, Ramsara, Abhaynagar, Jessore, Bangladesh & the year of my 2nd initiation is 1993 at Katakali, Keshavapur, Jessore, Bangladesh. Some of my performed services are: a. Namhatta preaching (Rajshahi Division) b. Director of Padayatra c. Temple President: Sri Sri Radha-Gopinath temple, Gareya, Thakurgaon. d. Vice-President of ISKCON National Council, Bangladesh. Now I am generally staying at Sri Sri Radha-Gopinath ISKCON temple, Gareya Gopalpur, Gareya, Thakurgaon, Bangladesh. Now I am serving as vice-president, ISKCON, Bangladesh & temple president, Sri Sri Radha-Gopinath temple, Gareya Gopalpur, Gareya, Thakurgaon, Bangladesh. I feel enthusiastic about congregational preaching, pandal program, temple management, student program etc. To fulfill the desire of Lord Caitanya, to spread the movement of Srila Prabhupada and keep myself engage in preaching Krishna Consciousness I intended to accept sannyasa. At the same time this will help me socially to preach Krishna Consciousness strongly. Hare Krishna!



Radhashyamsunder Das (Vrindavan, India) 4 years

Hare Krishna.

My humble self was born in 1965 at Dholpur, Rajasthan. The Supreme Lord was very gracious to first give me birth in a pious Brahmin family in a simple village named Jarga. Being from a simple background not so much contaminated by the modern city life I was naturally inclined toward devotional activities from the very beginning, like sloka competition, recitations, kirtan in local temples, etc. I also had a strong inclination toward renounced order of life as I used to feel something special whenever I heard or read about the great Indian sages of yore. From as early as 1979 my life turned and somehow a strong impetus came from within to wake-up before brahma-muhurta in order to study vedic literatures. Seeing this change in me my parents felt great happiness and encouraged me to pursue that way of life.

After finishing my 12th study in science (biology) in 1985 from local colleges, then in 1986 I came for my first Govardhan parikrama. After this I decided to leave home and stay in Vrindavan for life. However my parents threatened to commit suicide if I did. This desire kept burning in my heart until finally I left for good in 1990. Where I went first was the Gaudiya Matha of HH Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja at Mathura. But he advised me to go to ISKCON as I'd feel uncomfortable there on account of his preaching in Bengali to Bengali speaking devotees. So I came and met the then temple president HG Kadamba Kanana das – now, HH Kadamba Kanana Rasa parayan Swami – and joined the bhakta program. Since then I've rendered services in various capacities that are given in the list below. I was awarded first initiation by HH Loknatha swami in 1996 and 2nd in 1998 in Sri Vrindavan dhama.

By the encouragement of many senior devotees such as HG Mahaman and pr and HH B.A.Vaishnava Maharaja and many other senior brahmacaris I've applied for the sannyasa order of life.

LIST OF SERVICES RENDERED:

- 1 8 months New Bhakta training
- 2 1992-97: Sankirtan in-charge
- 3 Through 1998 served as cashier
- 4 1999-2000: Temple president Indore
- 5 2000-2005: Lucknow, Temple president
- 6 2006-2012: As in-charge for various departments – Life member, Namahatta, Brahmachari, Sick, Supply
- 7 2013-2014: served as temple President, Noida
- 8 2014-til date: serving as “Director of Namahatta Preaching” in Vrindavan, which includes various services like – Preaching program for (1. Village, 2. School, 3. College, 4. Organizing festival, 5. Organizing Ratha Yatra, 6. Sobha Yatra, 7. Book distribution, 8. village to village Hari Nama Sankirtan), Bramachari Councilar, VMC member & Incharge of Agra ISKCON Center etc.

9 During Preaching days, visited various places of India.

I am based in ISKCON Vrindavan and have great interest and love for preaching and book distribution & Hari nama.

For last 25+ years, I have been serving Srila Prabhupada in his mission and now, I am 50+ years.



Raghava Pandit Das (Delhi, India) 2 years

Raghava Pandit Das is a disciple of HH Gopal Krishna Goswami. He has been preaching in India and Mauritius.



Santa Nrsimha Das (JPS) (Jaipur, India) 2 years

I was born in Lalgargh, District Midnapur in West Bengal on the 19th of February 1967. My father, Khagendranath Sahoo, was a professor in Teacher Training College in Government of West Bengal. Due to his job our family moved every three years. In that case my father enrolled me in the Ram Krishna Missionary school at Rahrha, near Kolkata. There I studied till tenth class after which I joined Howrah Shivpur College and completed BSC graduation.

After my education I took employment in the Revenue Department of the Government of West Bengal. I worked there for three years before I joined ISKCON in Mayapur in 1992. Devotees of Mayapur Sankirtan book bus were distributing books in my office and playing Srila Prabhupada's kirtan. I was very attracted to this sound and saw so many books like Caitanya Caritamrita, I was most impressed. In the Bhagavad Gita I saw Srila Prabhupada's signature and I thought, this was many different persons names. The devotee then told me all about Srila Prabhupada and I was even more attracted. The devotee came again in the lunch hour and I helped him sell three sets of Caitanya Caritamrita.

I later took a set of CC myself and read the whole CC set before reading Bhagavad Gita. After that I came to Mayapur with my parents for a visit. At that time one devotee from that same book bus took me to Murari Gupta, head of new bhakta program. He preached to me for 2 hours and asked me to join. He told me that, as your family is stable why do job, you should come and join and serve Srila Prabhupada's mission. That same year without telling my family, late one night, I came to Mayapur and next day joined fulltime in 1992.

After completion of new devotee training program I was given the service of maintaining accounts in Sankirtan Department. After serving there for one year Jayapataka Swami agreed to give me first initiation during the Gaurpurnima Festival 1994 and gave me the name Santanrsimha Das. I was then given the service of book distribution on travelling sankirtan party. After my first preaching tour which lasted around 45 days I was made group leader of one of the Sankirtan groups for the next preaching tour. I served in this position from 1994 to 2000 and during this period HH Jayapataka Swami gave me second initiation in 1999 Gaurpurnima. In 2000 I was put in charge of three Sankirtan groups and from 2003 I was put in charge of all ten Sankirtan book distribution parties, until 2007. In this service I was

feeling very good and I realised that, to maintain brahmacari life this service was best for me. In this period of travelling Sankirtan I was able to read Srila Prabhupada's Srimad Bhagavatam fully, sometimes reading until late night. Slowly I was attracted to studying Srila Prabhupada's books more and more and whenever I was in Mayapur I would attend all seminars and classes.

In 1999 I had completed Bhakti Sastri course and in 2004 I completed TTC1, TTC2 and BSTTC. From 2004 to 2007 I taught Bhakti Sastri in Mayapur and Bangladesh in Bengali language. While at the same time I continued in my service as Travelling Sankirtan leader.

In 2007 I came to Vrndavan then Jaipur on pilgrimage, at that time Pancaratna Prabhu, Temple President in Jaipur, requested me to stay here and preach in Hindi language, as there a great shortage of good Hindi preachers. I then started serving as congregational preacher and part time pujari. In 2009 I went to Pune for Youth Preaching Training course after which I started to organise Youth Preaching programs in Jaipur.

Presently under my direction many Bhakti Vriskha groups are going on, Bhakti Sastri classes in Temple and soon we will develop a Youth Bace group in the Temple. In Jaipur I am developing Congregational Preaching and we have reached out with three extension centers in Chomu, Udaipur and Ajmer. The Chomu center is very strong with 60 congregational devotees doing Harinam Sankirtan every day. In 2011, with the permission of the ISKCON Board of Examination, we started Bhakti Sastri Courses in Hindi. I have been teaching Bhakti Sastri since then. Along with this service I am also serving as Co-Vice President in ISKCON Jaipur and also the Temple Head Pujai. Presently Sri Sri Giridari Dauji are installed in Jaipur and in this year, 2016, we will be installing Sri Sri Gaur Nitai and Sri Sri Radha Madhan Gopal.

Your servant
Santanrisimha Das



Sundarlala Das (Mauritius) 3 years

I was born on 17th September 1965, the exact date when Srila Prabhupada landed in USA. I was raised in a very strict family. As a young man I was very much attracted to sports, music and arts. The sports were most importantly to promote a sense of good health. Volley ball was my favourite game. I have learned the basics practice of good sportsmanship from my second brother Vinod. He was very keen and wanted

me to make progress in my sports and educational careers. As a figurehead of sport organisation, I was always surrounded by a circle of friends who would visit me daily to prepare for tournaments. In 1982 I became a member of a newly born Literary Club. It was called VARD which meant Voluntary Agency for Rural Development. The aim of this club was to educate and help individuals, families, communities to enhance their individual and collective well being, and help to bring social change, cohesion and to make infrastructural development in rural areas. During my youth I had many questions that were haunting me which are as follows. Who is the creator? Who created the creator? Who decides who should be the God? Why someone specific? Why not somebody else? Is this world real or is it fake? Are those people I see around me real or are they just puppet show or are they made only for my pleasure? How are the moon and the stars created? VARD did not really give me satisfactory answers to all my questions. During my school years I was attracted by a school girl who happened to be a Hare Krishna devotee. In my search for this girl I end up to become a lover of Krishna Consciousness. In fact our first meeting never took place because most probably I was not confident enough. Lord Krishna explains four types of people approach Him. So this was just bait on a hook. In the same year I was invited by my best friend to attend a huge Hare Krishna Hall program which was attended by a thousand guests. At the end of the lecture the speaker would ask is there any questions or comments? The questions and answers sessions were my favourite part of the program. I did not want to become a blind follower. So after two or three programs which I had attended I started to stab the devotees with a volley of questions.

In a very short time my questions and doubts were cleared by the expert explanation of the devotees which took me to the next level of reading Srila Prabhupada's books and Back to Godhead magazines. Srila Prabhupada's books contain the highest understanding of not only how to become a worshipper of God or to know who the creator of the creator is but to become a lover of God. This is the unique contribution of Srila Prabhupada's books. It is beyond the jurisdiction of ritualistic ceremonies as practiced by almost every Hindu. Slowly I became attracted by the simple process of chanting, dancing and feasting. One of the first slogans of ISKCON was "Chant and be Happy". The loving nature and the simplicity of the devotees transformed my life.

Since then I have been serving as a congregation member for four years. Seeing my ardent determination and faithful attraction to the Hare Krishna Movement, my dear mother was worried that one day I would leave home. She was very attached to me. By Lord Krishna's blessings she left this world in 1985. Three months later, in 1986 I joined the Brahmachari ashram. In the very beginning I went out on book distribution. I took Nama diksa in 1990 by His Holiness Srila Lokanath Maharaja. I was moved by his simplicity, kirtans and humility. His causeless mercy took me to another level of Krishna Consciousness. In a very short period I became the Sankirtan leader. I had been serving as Youth Director for 18 years, Temple Commander, Temple President in Mauritius and as well as in India, Maharashtra. I have also been involved in organising festivals, interfaith programs, Music Band,

College, University preaching and opening preaching Centres. At present I am a travelling preacher. I am preaching in Maharashtra, Noida, Delhi, Europe, Middle East, South Africa and Mauritius under the guidance of His Holiness Srila Lokanath Maharaja and His Holiness Bhakti Caitanya Maharaja.



Sutapa Das (United Kingdom) 5 years

I was born in London in 1981, and had the fortune of coming to Bhaktivedanta Manor since that time. My interest in Krishna Consciousness became more serious in 1996, when I read the Bhagavad-gita and joined our youth group, Pandava Sena. At 18 I began studying for my degree at University College London, and in the years 1999-2002 I became one of the organisers of University preaching in campuses across London.

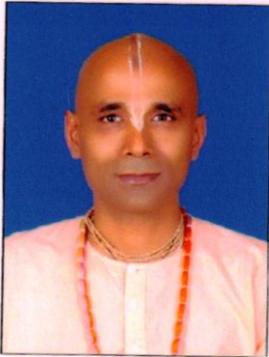
At the age of 21, Immediately after completing my degree, I decided to join as a full-time ashram Brahmachari. I spent my first 6 months in ISKCON Chowpatty, where I received invaluable association and training. Thereafter, I returned to Bhaktivedanta Manor, and have been based here ever since.

In the years 2002-2005 I functioned mainly as a University and youth preacher. In 2005, I became the sankirtan leader, and have been doing that service to date. In 2009 I began systematically traveling around the UK and visiting outlying towns where we would conduct book distribution, attend local preaching programmes, and in some cases begin new groups where people could meet together and inspire one another in spiritual life. Over the last 15 years we have managed to do sankirtan and outreach in nearly 350 different UK cities.

One of my main focuses has been to develop the Brahmachari ashram. After returning from ISKCON Chowpatty in 2003, a team of us began focusing on the Bhaktivedanta Manor ashram, introducing standards, policies, training, education and mentoring

programmes to support and inspire more devotees to join. Since that time over 100 individuals have attended a residential course (3-6 months), and many of them joined as brahmacaris. The Manor now has an ashram of 30 individuals. We have also begun a new Brahmachari ashram in Leicester, and hope we can replicate this model in cities across the UK.

On the order of HH Kadamba Kanana Swami, I am applying for sannyasa in order to further our preaching across the UK, and inspire more devotees in the life of renunciation. I pray that this commitment may increase the quality and quantity of our preaching activities, and inspire me to dedicate the totality of my mind, body and words to the service of Srila Prabhupada's mission



Vanamali Das (Mumbai, India) 4 years

Born on 31st May 1969 at 6 PM and came to know that my birth day is parenthetically on Jyestha Purnima – Snan Yatra day which is Divine Birth Day of Lord Jagannath). Born and brought up in Chembur, a suburb of Mumbai, INDIA. My father Shriman A. Kumaresan Pillai and My mother Srimathi K. Theivanai Pillai were very caring parents and very kind to me.

From the childhood I use to feel emptiness. My both sisters seems to be happy and easily mingle with contented neighbours. I was curious to know what makes them so happy in sports, outings etc.

Years passed, I was 18 and doing my last year of my college (Third Year Bsc Physics). Study leave was a bit boring for the upcoming final examination. The point in my mind, then attraction towards the reformation.

I heard from my fellow student Dinesh Patkar in my school days that he is being in the Juhu ISKCON temple which is very beautiful and he saw foreigners sing and dance during prayers. In 1988 I made up my mind to see the temple. In the year 1988 during winter I visited the temple and small Sankirtan was going on near the front entrance gate. By seeing the temple outlook I was imagining the white space ship from outer world.

It was amazing and then at 4.15 pm I saw and heard 3 conch shell blew simultaneously which I never saws and heard anything like in the past. The whole atmosphere was fascinating.

I have been informed by one young man that the evening program is at 5th Floor (Srila Prabhupadji quarter). I totally engrossed by having dinner in Govinda Restaurant at mezzanine floor.

Mukund Madhav Prabhu, Kapila Prabhu, Rishabdev Prabhu, Rasraj Prabhu, Jiva Prabhu, (no more now) were pioneer in youth preaching and I am fortunate to work with them.

I felt the day was the happiest ever enjoyed. After my graduation, I joined in prestigious Indian Armed Forces as a Military Officer in Motorized Infantry Battalion. From the year 1990 to 1996 I served in the Army. In spite of all exciting and sparkling Army life, my mind goes back to my days in Sri Sri Radha Rasbhahari (Juhu ISKCON Temple). Sometime I use to feel that I am cheating myself by not hearing my inner voice by joining in ISKCON. Somehow I served 5 more years. Finally to put a full stop to a material career joined full time in ISKCON (Mumbai).

I was deputed to Mira Road ISKCON Temple. In the year 1996 I enjoyed the cleaning job in Mira Road ISKCON Temple. In the year 1997 on Nithyanand Tryodashi H.H Gopal Krishna Maharaj was very kind to me and by his causeless mercy he accepted me as his disciple (I was amazed by realizing his mercy on me) I promised myself that I would be always grateful to Guru Maharaj. I would never forget this moment of his kindness for me.

In 1997 – Started fund raising through Life Membership at day time by conducting Small youth program and the congregation at evening time.

In 1988 Guru Maharaj was kind enough to give me Brahman initiation. I got the motivation from Guru Maharaj to become a Sanyasi one day.

In 1999 – BHISMA (mailer fund raising) was started by me and I become HOD. Since then I was fortunate their Lordship that Sri Sri Radha Giridhariji always engaged me and gave shelter.

As a small temple I had multiple services Nagar Sankirtan, Books Marathon, fund raising (congregational preaching, youth preaching, BHISMA, New Bhakta leader, Brahmachari leader, deity worship etc.,)

In 2010, I become part of Temple Management Council.

Harinam Sankirtan and Spiritual discourse enthusiast me a lot being with youths inspiring them with enthusiasm. As a young man I was inspired by the ISKCON youth forum and wish to nurture more.

Sanyasis are detached from everything and attached only to Krishna & Srila Prabhupada and this inspired me. When I reached home 1st time with Japa beads,

my mother told me you are good as a devotee one day you will become a sanyasi. I was dreaming of the day to me become a sanyasi and she is no more now.



Venudhari Das (JPS) (India) 3 years

The Sannyasa Ministry is waiting for the candidate to provide additional information.

Venudhari das received first initiation in 1991, and brahminical initiation in 1992 from His Holiness Jayapataka Swami. He is leading the Mayapura book distribution programme, coordinating courses for the Mayapur Institute and is the head of the school-preaching department.



Vishvasu Das (NIR) (Germany/Baltcis/Russia) 3 years

In 25.04.1967, I was born in Kurgan Russia.

In September 1989, I joined ISKCON in Novosibirsk Academic Centre as a grihasta.

In October 1989, I started to chant 16 rounds and follow 4 principles.

In September 1990, I became leader of nama-hatta in Novosibirsk Academic Centre.

In Spring 1991 I became a member of Regional Meeting of ISKCON Sibiria as secretary of Novosibirsk Temple and regional preacher (Novosibirsk region, Barnaul, Tomsk, Kemerovo)

In September 1992 I received first initiation from Niranjana Swami.

In October 1992 – May 1993, I became the temple president of Novokuzneck Temple.

In September 1994, I was moved by Niranjana Swami to Ukraine and started to serve as the leader of the nama-hatta in Zhitomir and begun to function as a traveling preacher in Zhitomir region (4 nama-hattas).

In October 1996, my wife left me and Niranjana Swami transferred me to Kiev as leader of Nama-hattas in Kiev and teacher of Bhakti-shastri in Kiev Spiritual Academy.

In the Spring of 1997, I became the leader of Nama-hattas in Kiev preaching Region (Kiev, Zhitomir, Chernigov, Cherkassy and Kirovograd regions)

In July 1997, I received second initiation from Niranjana Swami, and started to be a travelling preacher in the Ukraine.

In October 1997, I became the rector of the Kiev Spiritual Academy, and Chairman of Kiev Temple manager meeting.

In Spring 1998 I became a member of National Meeting of Ukraine.

In 2000, I started to follow an instruction of my diksha-guru: "If you will have no managerial service, you have to preach and stay no more 3-4 days in one place" I began to follow this instruction and still follow it today.

In the Winter of 2001-02, I started my service as travelling preacher in Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) which I continue today.

From 2004 till now, I serve as the Leader of Bhakti-shastri Office and Bhakti-shastri teacher in Baltics.

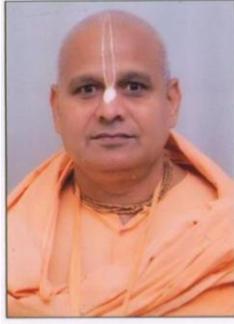
From 2007-2008, I was the Chairman of Temple meeting in Tallinn (Estonia).

In 2007, I started to preach in Germany (Berlin, Koln, Heidelberg, and in namahattas). I continue this service today.

In 2011, I started to serve as a bhakti-shastri teacher and travelling preacher in Germany. I continue this service today.

In 2012, I became the rector of the RISHI Spiritual German Academy. I continue this service today.

On 6.10.2013, I accepted vanaprastha at Harinamadesh in Germany.



Vrindavanchandra Das (Vrindavan, India) 2 years

I was born on January 2nd, 1963 in a village Gurura in the Bihar Province of India. In 1977, when I was studying in high school, one of my classmate (now Raghunath Das) invited me to visit Vrindavan along with him. I was unwilling but he persisted and finally I agreed and another senior schoolmate also joined us. I had no money for travel and other required expenses. I managed Rs 50 from my scholarship account but that was insufficient. Next task was to get parent's permission, which I didn't have the courage to ask my father so I approached my mother. At first, she refused completely but after my persistent requests she complied with the condition that I should return soon and she provided me some money as well and we started our journey to Vrindavan.

After reaching Mathura, we enquired from the local sadhus about how to go to Vrindavan but they directed us to go to Barasana as it was a festival day of Holi and everyone was headed towards Barasana. From there, we came to Goverdhan and stayed at Kaladhari Ashram for one night. Next day after darshan and parikrama, we came to Radhakunda and walked all the way to Vrindavan as there was no conveyance available.

Once we reached ISKCON Vrindavan, we met HH Radha Govinda Maharaj and felt much relieved. We were allowed to stay in Brahmachari Ashram and were engaged in temple cleaning services. Srila Prabhupad was expected to arrive in Vrindavan but due to his ill health, the visit was cancelled. After a few weeks, we returned back to our village. After a few months, I received a message that Srila Prabhupada was in Vrindavan. I travelled again to Vrindavan and got the opportunity to meet Srila Prabhupad in the month of June. After spending a week, I returned back to my village.

After a few months, HH Radha Govinda Maharaja visited our village for Bhagavat Katha and stayed there for a few days. During this period, we received the news of Srila Prabhupad's disappearance from this world in Vrindavan through a local newspaper. It was a big shock.

Next month, I received the first initiation from HH Radha Govinda Maharaja on December 21st, 1977 on the auspicious occasion of Gita Jayanti.

Next year, I accompanied Guru Maharaja along with Vrindavan Temple President on a Book Distribution Tour. After that I was sent to Delhi temple for book distribution services under the guidance of HH Lokanath Maharaja. There I got the opportunity to visit Sridham Mayapur in 1979.

I had to join Banaras Hindu University (BHU) due to parent's pressure. There we organized several preaching programs. Our guru maharaja also visited BHU to conduct lectures on Bhagavad Gita. After that I went to my village and received 2nd initiation on 28th January, 1981. After a couple of years, I started to assist Guru Maharaja in preaching activities in Bihar. During this period, my primary service was to organize and develop Namhatta Centers in Bihar.

Gradually, a strong desire developed in my heart to spend more time in Vrindavan, so after Silver Jubilee Celebration of Krishna Balaram Temple, I started to live in Vrindavan with Guru Maharaja. Several temples started to invite me for Satsanga Programs in Hindi. In this way, I remained engaged in conducting seminars and Kathas in Hindi. Once Namhatta department opened in Vrindavan, I got engaged for the same services here as well.

In 2012, I completed my Bhakti Sastri Course. Since 2013, I am being given assignment for teaching Bhakti Shastri Course at VIHE. Currently, I stay in Vrindavan, and continue to preach in Namhatta Programs and teach at VIHE. On certain occasions, I am invited to conduct classes in the other parts of the state such as Jhansi, Agra, Shahibabad and also Bihar and Mauritius.