

The 7 Purposes of ISKCON

ENVISIONING TOGETHER



A KRISHNA CONSCIOUS WORLD

A Vision Realized

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Introduction

Everything starts with a vision. Srila Prabhupada's mission was to make the entire world Krishna conscious, and it is up to us, his followers, to fulfill this great legacy. Yet, if we are to make this happen, we need to have a clear vision of what a Krishna conscious world will look like. Following the 2021 ISKCON 3.0 North American Leadership Summit, a team was formed with an initiative to meditate deeply on the Seven Purposes that Srila Prabhupada laid out for ISKCON and what the world would look like if each of those purposes were fulfilled. This document is a compilation of our collective vision. The descriptions are written in the present tense to help the reader envision the ideal world for themselves.

PURPOSE #1

To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.



SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN

There are schools for children of all ages from preschool to high school which offer both spiritual and academic education. Some of these schools are managed directly by the official legal entity ISKCON. But, most are started, managed, and expanded by those trained in ISKCON who then go out and influence the world.

These schools are funded partly by charitable contributions and partly by the government which, now that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's movement is spread all over the world, has adopted the model of the UK, Australia, and New Zealand in terms of supporting faith schools without mandating any particular religion. The US courts found a way to interpret their constitution so that the first amendment remains in place, while the government also ensures the highest national good in all aspects of life by propagating the chanting of the holy names of God and the spiritual principles that support it. The teachers of all classes are true brahmanas, who exemplify brahminical qualities and are broad-minded. Religious pluralism still exists in society and children are taught the principles of all faiths in a respectful way, highlighting the common ground between them all, especially the chanting of the holy names. In presenting any religion, what is emphasized in schools are the principles, not the details. The details are understood to be adjustable according to time, place, and circumstances. Great stress is placed on values education and character-building based on spiritual principles such as those listed in BG 13.8-12. This is an explicit part of the school curriculum.

Students aged 13 or 14 have coaching available to help them determine what their varna may be. They then have the option to go to Varnashrama college for basic occupational training rather than a general high school.

SPIRITUAL ASHRAMS INTERSHIPS FOR 18-YEAR-OLDS

Just as some countries require every citizen to serve in the military for one year, students, upon completion of high school or varnasrama college, can live in an ashram for spiritual training which includes daily sadhana, study, service, and strict adherence to following the 4 regulative principles. For many young people, this will be their first time living away from home. They may choose to join an ashram in their local area or travel to a new place, even overseas. This internship can be as a gap year between school and college/work, as it is an exciting time for them to grow and understand their own interests. They may choose an ashram experience according to their religious upbringing or they may explore a new religion. In some cases community service organizations, similar to the Peace Corps and Americorps in the USA, may include spiritual training in their residential experience during these internship years.

The ISKCON ashram experience would engage ashramites in learning devotional arts like playing musical instruments, doing devotional dramas, giving Bhagavad-gita classes, leading preaching initiatives or sankirtan parties, and so on.

They would also learn practical life skills like cooking, cleaning, taking care of cows, growing organic food, self-discipline, time-management, and how to be a team player. The service of the ashram residents is focused on performing sankirtan – chanting the holy names in public places or at events, distributing transcendental literature and prasadam, and sharing Krishna consciousness with others. They work with their ashram leaders and nearby ashrams to develop systematic strategies for doing this so that Lord Caitanya's name comes to be heard and chanted in every town and village all over the world.

LIFE SKILLS, VARNASHRAM EDUCATION AND SUPPORT FOR ADULTS

Career Varna

There are varna-specific courses for education in the qualities and duties of each varna. Upon completion of these courses, vocational guidance is available to help them take the next steps in their careers.

Ashram Training: Extended Student Life

For those who want to extend their spiritual internship after one year, there are five-year programs that offer Brahmachari training for men and women emphasizing the importance of simplicity, humble service to spiritual authorities, study of the scriptures and control of the mind and senses, especially offering respect to the other 3 ashrams. There are also asramas for those who want to be life-long celibate students, for a small portion of the population.

Family

For those transitioning from student life to marriage (brahmacari to grhastha), there is education about marriage and family (grihastha ashram), assistance with finding a suitable partner, premarital counseling, and mentorship from senior exemplary married couples. For those who are already married, there would be ongoing support for dealing with all the challenges of family life, parenting, etc.

Retirement

For men and women who are transitioning into retirement, or the vanaprastha ashram, there is education about optional ways to retire, encouragement to cultivate detachment, and mentoring from exemplary retired persons (vanaprasthas). Assisted living communities facilitate the spiritual and other needs of persons in this stage of life.

Renunciation

For men transitioning to full renunciation (sannyasa), there is education about the qualities and duties of a sannyasi. Sannyasa candidates are carefully screened and monitored by experienced sannyasis, who also offer association and support throughout the sannyasis' lives.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Every university has a Department for Spiritual Sciences where the principles of various scriptures are taught. In the field of Gaudiya Vaisnavism, there are courses such

as Bhakti Shastri, Bhakti Vaibhava, Bhakti Vedanta, and Bhakti Sarvabhauma which are based on Srila Prabhupada's books. There are other courses on the writings of the Goswamis and other Vaisnava Acharyas and the lives of saints in the Vaisnava traditions, including Srila Prabhupada. Analogous courses are taught in other faiths.

Comparative Religions, Hermeneutics, and an Introduction to Spiritual Science are required courses. Spiritual Science is also integrated across disciplines. For example, neurologists study the effects of chanting on brain activity, biologists conduct research into the connection between life and consciousness, psychologists develop mathematical models of the influences of the three modes of material nature, sociologists study effects of the sankirtan movement on crime, poverty, the family, etc. Agriculturalists develop sustainable models for cow protection, nutritionists scientifically demonstrate the benefits of a lacto-vegetarian diet, architects and urban planners develop designs for buildings and landscapes which promote higher thinking and a God-centered life, etc.

Devotional service is part of the work-study program for college students. Celibacy or marriage is a requirement for living in a college dormitory. Laws prohibiting alcohol and drug use in college dormitories are enforced effectively.

At all levels of education, the school day starts with

kirtan and an age-appropriate spiritual values class. School lunches are Krishna prasadam cooked by brahmanically initiated devotees, or at least there are options for that. And every campus has a multi-faith chapel and a meditation garden which students can optionally use for prayer, japa, or meditation during their free time.

SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND FITNESS CENTERS

Just as nowadays there are health and fitness centers in every city, there will be spiritual health and fitness centers everywhere. These places offer classes from beginning to advanced level in all the various techniques of spiritual life, such as chanting the holy names, studying Srimad Bhagavatam, associating with devotees, worshiping the deity, writing and publishing books, etc. They regularly offer seminars on a wide range of spiritual topics, hold retreats, and organize parikramas and pilgrimages to holy places. One can come and go as one likes for example, drop into a morning japa session, held daily, or one can get a personal trainer to guide them through a progressive program and monitor their advancement. Spiritual health and fitness centers are run by senior devotees with a mission to accept people from wherever they are and assist them in coming to a higher standard of spiritual practice.

ONLINE COURSES

There is a wide range of online courses available

covering the theology, philosophy, and practice of Krishna consciousness, as well as its personal and societal applications.

From schools for children to varnashram training for adults of all ages, spiritual education is provided in a systematic and non-sectarian way to people from all walks of life. As a result, all people develop strong faith in God and realize their position as eternal servants of the Lord. They become enriched with spiritual vision and divine qualities. Regardless of faith, they appreciate their common spiritual foundation and value systems, and thus they live and work together in peace and harmony, appreciating their unity in diversity.

PURPOSE #2

***To propagate a consciousness
of Krishna as He is revealed in
Bhagavad-gita &
Srimad Bhagavatam.***



PERSONALITY OF KRISHNA

A prominent conception of God in His Supreme Form in the world is Krishna as described in the Bhagavatam- the two-armed form with a complexion like a storm cloud, black curly hair, peacock feather, playing the flute - and the land of His appearance, Vrindavan, is a world-renowned place of pilgrimage. Krsna's pastimes as described in the Bhagavatam are well known and loved. Krsna's incarnations like Visnu, Nrsimhadeva, Ramacandra, Matsya, Kurma, etc, and their pastimes are also known, and it is understood that Krsna is the source of all incarnations. He is the origin of everything material and spiritual, the cause of all causes. Krsna is worshiped together with His eternal consort Srimati Radharani and devotees aspire to serve the divine couple in one of the five transcendental rasas or loving relationships. This loving devotional service to Krishna is known to be the goal of all knowledge, all work, and all yoga systems. It is well-known in the world as the supreme goal of life.

Descriptions of God are found in the scriptures of all religions of the world, and these are respected by all. However, there is a general consensus that knowledge of God offered in different scriptures is at different levels, and among these, the most in-depth knowledge is found in the Vedic scriptures. And within the canon of Vedic scriptures, the most direct, detailed, and unambiguous elucidation of God (which is the basis for Gaudiya Vaishnavism) is found in the Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam. In addition, developing a consciousness of Krishna is a central point of these scriptures (BG 8.14, 9.22, 9.34, 18.65, etc)

This purpose is being fulfilled in the following ways:

SYSTEMATIC TRAINING ON BHAGAVAD-GITA AND SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

There are several educational programs at all levels of society, aimed at distributing the knowledge of Bhagavad-Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam. For adults and working professionals who would also like to study these scriptures in-depth, there are corresponding short-term programs offered either in person or online.

ALTERNATIVE PRESENTATIONS

Media Entertainment

For the general mass of population, there are several television programs, movies, and dramas created around the pastimes of Srimad Bhagavatam or the teaching of Bhagavad-Gita, which disseminate the same knowledge through the medium of entertainment. There are video games through which players can immerse themselves in these literatures in an interactive way.

Bridge books

Many authors write books, both fiction and nonfiction, that are grounded in the principles of Bhagavad-Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam, working to present these principles in a new light. Many learned devotees also write commentaries on these books to clarify certain aspects of previous commentaries and to elucidate

contemporary application of the concepts mentioned in these books.

Clubs

Book clubs focus on the Bhagavatam, Bhagavad-gita, and the works of the acaryas. These clubs use incentives like prizes to encourage people to keep reading.

Children and Youth Resources

There are hundreds of books for children and young adults re-telling the stories of the Mahabharata and the Bhagavatam. Children's toys and games are based around stories from the Bhagavatam.

Popular Culture

The pastimes of the Lord come to life in popular culture through the celebration of festivals. The Vaisnava calendar is followed all over the world, and major festival days such as Janmashtami, Radhastami, Govardhana Puja, as well as Nrsimha caturdasi, Lord Ramachandra's Appearance day, Ratha Yatra and Srila Prabhupada's Appearance and Disappearance days are public holidays. These days are widely celebrated. Schoolchildren do festival-related learning activities and crafts leading up to the holiday, and towns hold special events to commemorate the occasions. For example, on Govardhana Puja day, a giant Govardhana hill made out of sweets is assembled in the town square. The Govardhan sila is worshiped, and the joyful citizens, headed by the mayor and other dignitaries,

circumambulate the hill amidst sankirtan. Mahaprasadam is distributed to everyone including the animals. This is a major event that everyone looks forward to all year.

DEVELOPING A CONSCIOUSNESS OF KRISHNA IN THE WORLD

The Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam provide ample description of how to have a real awareness of Krishna while living in the material world. So drawing from these descriptions, there is widespread discussion and propagation of ways in which people can find Krishna in the world around them. The following are some ways in which this is being done.

Based on Bhagavad Gita:

- Krishna is the taste of water. Understanding this, people aim for maintaining purity of water so that everyone has access to it. Companies that sell water do it evoking Krishna conscious imagery and help people meditate on Krishna when they use water.
- Krishna is the light of the sun. People are taught to honor the sun and the energy we receive from it. Most people synchronize their work schedule with the movements of the sun and the stars, and use solar energy.
- Krishna is the light of the moon. Planting and harvesting is done in line with the moon cycles, so as to improve yield.

- Krishna is the splendor of fire. Care is taken towards the use of fuel in a way that respects Krishna as fire, with renewable sources of energy.
- Krishna is the fire of digestion. People eat food in a way that respects their bodies and the food that they eat, and are open to insights from traditional systems of medicine such as Ayurveda to gain understanding of diet, body type, and eating according to season.
- Krishna is the sound in ether. To respect sound as a manifestation of Krishna, there is a significant endeavor to stop noise pollution in the world. In particular, people waiting to obtain health care are in environments of healing sattvik sounds or kirtana. Many people are also engaged in creating beautiful sounds conducive to meditation on Krishna.
- Krishna is the ability in man. There is a desire to honor different abilities in people. Such consciousness forms the basis for eradicating discrimination in the workplace, sports, and the arts.
- Krishna is the fragrance of the earth. Understanding this, people respect the sources of fragrance and primarily use natural sources of fragrance and taste in food, perfumes, and body care. The natural integrity of these sources is maintained in a sustainable way.
- Krishna is the intelligence of the intelligent. There is prevailing humility and broad-mindedness among intellectuals who use their intelligence in the service of the Lord for the benefit of society. Society, in turn, maintains those who are engaged in research and discovery so intellectuals are not compromised

by dependence on funding from government or big business. They are inspired by the search for knowledge itself rather than financial gain. Teaching and research is done in the glorification of the Lord.

- Krishna is the healing herb. People prefer to use natural medicines, and corporations take immense care that medicines are safe. At every hospital there are chaplains who guide patients individually in prayer and kirtan, knowing that medical treatment can only be effective by Krishna's sanction.

- Krishna is the chanting of the holy names. People chant the holy names of the Lord regularly, according to their understanding.

- » Krishna is righteous sex life, that is, sex with the intent of conceiving children by qualified parents who take full responsibility to guide their children in gradual development of Krishna consciousness. Every home is like a temple, and the family members cooperate together to serve the Lord while supporting each other in their worldly duties. People are engaged in marriage to produce a good population and have good family lives. Divorce is very rare, occurring only in cases of domestic abuse, serious crime, or unrepentant spiritual fall downs.

Based on Srimad Bhagavatam:

To aid in propagating an awareness of Krishna, Srimad Bhagavatam describes how the various objects of this world are the different organs on the body of Krishna as the virata purusa. This consciousness fosters a

conscientious use of the earth's resources which promotes health, well-being, spiritual upliftment, and sustainable living. (References for these can be found in SB 2.1, 2.6, 8.20.25-29.)

- The material fragrance is his sense of smell: perfumes, etc. are made of natural ingredients in sustainable ways with stewardship of these valuable resources.
- His mouth is the blazing fire: energy would be through natural, sustainable, and renewable sources.
- Outer space is His eye pits, the sun His eyeball and day and night His eyelids: in every major city there would be early morning gatherings before sunrise for kirtan, japa, and sastra study. The times for chanting the gayatri would be announced in every major city as is now done in Islamic countries for the five prayer times. In the evenings, kirtan gatherings with prasadam would replace most clubs and bars.
- The juice or essence of everything is His tongue: healthy drinks would replace caffeinated and artificial drinks.
- The Vedic hymns are the cerebral passage of the Lord: musicians would focus on producing music based on sastra, whether in the original language or local vernacular.
- The illusory material energy is His smile: all people would be aware of the dangerous attractiveness of maya in this world and how to protect themselves by developing a higher taste for Krishna, the original, all-attractive Person, who is the master of maya.
- The rivers are His veins - rivers are respected

as life-giving and are not polluted..The use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers is minimized and the disposal of chemicals, motor oil, or other automotive fluids which end up in the river is minimized. Riverbanks are beautified with gardens, ghats, and temples of Krishna where people gather daily to hold kirtan in the morning and evening.

- The trees are the hair on His body - deforestation is not allowed, and cutting down the trees is treated as a severe crime. Trees are understood to be eternal spirit souls and are respected as having rights like other living beings. They are protected and well nurtured.
- The air is His breath - burning fuel releases gases and chemicals into the air and needs to be strictly monitored. Factories are required to purify the chemicals before releasing them into the atmosphere. Every business, manufacturer, and individual takes responsibility for maintaining air quality and checks on the usage of fuel and vehicle emissions.
- The water-carrying clouds are the hair on His head: water is not wasted and is limited in usage. Water is offered to the Supreme Lord before drinking.
- The moon is His mind: treatments for mental illness include much from traditional medicine and helping persons to get in touch with natural rhythms of life, as well as the mode of goodness. Mantra meditation is regarded as the best way to deliver the mind and is a crucial part of psychiatric treatment.
- Varieties of birds are indications of His masterful

artistic sense: birds are generally not killed for food or sport. Art glorifies the Lord and His masterful creation.

CONNECTING WITH KRISHNA THROUGH YOGA

Among yoga practitioners, there is a general acceptance that the aim of all yoga and all religions is to attain loving devotion for the Supreme Person, Krishna. Other yogas like karma-yoga, dhyana yoga and jnana yoga are understood to be stepping stones on the path leading to bhakti, and those stepping stones are also connected to Krishna. Dhyana is meant not only for mystic power or absolute knowledge by connecting with the all-knowing Paramatma, but to control the mind and senses so one can fix the mind on Krishna. Karma yoga is not only for living in harmony with the universe and becoming liberated - it is to offer everything to Krishna. Jnana, rather than being pursued to become liberated in Brahman, is primarily to purify the mind and the heart so one can think of Krishna.

Krishna reveals Himself in so many ways in Bhagavad-gita and Srimad Bhagavatam. According to each person's realization, they can perceive Krishna in the world and experience a connection with Him that is personal, sustaining, and uplifting.

PURPOSE #3

To bring the members of the society together with each other and nearer to Krishna, and thus to develop the idea within the members and humanity at large that each soul is part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.



HUMANITY AT LARGE

The primary consciousness and “vision” of the people of the world, and especially the members of ISKCON, is that all living beings are essentially spiritual beings rather than the body. Thus, prejudice, injustice, and exploitation based on external conditions of the body are rare anomalies within society. While people are engaged in work and service according to their natural propensity, racism and sexism have practically vanished.

In all levels of education, the central theme of education is unity in diversity. There is unity in that all beings are spiritual parts and parcels of God. Spiritually, we are all equal and connected. Differences between species, and among humans, due to race, gender, ethnicity, age, class, intellectual or physical ability, etc, are necessary because each individual has an important part to play in the purpose of creation. Education stresses appreciating each person’s contribution and valuing the opportunity to learn from each other.

Meat-eating is confined to hunters, who are allowed to hunt certain animals in a limited range, and they can sell the meat in a few places away from main cities, especially the areas where vegetation is very rare and animal meat is required for human survival in that particular area. Animals are treated with care and respect for their natural lives. Domesticated animals such as cows, horses, and sheep are cared for humanely and used in Krishna’s service. They are fed prasadam along with their natural foods and are regularly exposed to kirtan.

Fish and other sea creatures are not considered a means of food, but are valued for their contribution in the aquatic ecosystem. Fish-eating is restricted to certain islands and other coastal areas with limited alternatives. There are no fish industries that engage in large-scale fishing and distribution. People are also respectful of bodies of water and refrain from throwing garbage and industrial effluents into them, so as to respect the habitats of various sea creatures. Farming is organic, with permaculture used whenever possible, so as to respect the fact that all plants are also souls, part of Krishna. Pest control is, as far as possible, done with the use of natural predators, companion planting, and the use of a wide variety within the same type of plant (many types of apples, many types of bananas, etc.) so as to have biodiversity.

Forests will be allowed to maintain their natural growth patterns so the trees can communicate with each other, feed each other underground, and help each other against insect pests. Kirtans are held in forests to benedict the trees. Trees are not unnecessarily cut just for the benefit of humans.

There are many wild animal reserves. People who visit have kirtan and distribute prasadam in ways that are conducive to animal health. Human habitation and agriculture are limited such that wild places can continue to thrive.

People of the world see each other primarily as spiritual

beings, each with an intrinsic and individual relationship with Krishna. There is an understanding that the main necessity of life is spiritual development. Communities are built around a deep appreciation of each other's eternal spiritual nature, and individuals' psycho-physical natures are considered only for the sake of discerning how to best assist each individual in their gradual spiritual progress. But everyone appreciates that there is no material impediment to bhakti. Bhakti is transcendental to any material quality or situation. Therefore, everyone is encouraged to serve Krishna according to their highest level of competence no matter what background they come from or which type of body they have.

Because the bodily concept of life is minimal, people do not objectify each other as sense objects. Thus there are practically zero incidences of sexual harassment, rape, or even illicit sex, in society. Women can move about without fear in any country.

There is little or no crime and few wars in the world because the normal standard is that everyone treats each other equally and respectfully. The world is a peaceful place with everyone living in harmony.

Cities are covered with street art, murals, banners with Krishna-related themes. Street musicians perform spiritually uplifting music, and children's rhymes are about their spiritual nature.

Because our common relationship with Krishna is at the heart of our unity, people take great pleasure in

reminding each other of Krishna. People are all given names related to Krishna, and a standard greeting that is exchanged when people meet each other on the street is, “I offer my respects to you, eternal soul, fellow servant of Krishna.” From childhood, people would learn to greet animals, insects, and plants with a similar greeting. (such as, “Respects, spirit soul.”)

MEMBERS CLOSER TO EACH OTHER

ISKCON has adopted a mood of “radical personalism.” Devotees value the opportunity to get to know other devotees. Devotee guests are treated like VIPs at ISKCON centers. Building community is done with intentional effort with each and every devotee in the community being accounted for, engaged according to their propensities and talents, openly acknowledged and appreciated, and actively cared for so that they feel like a valued member of the family. The way devotees treat each other convinces each individual that Krishna loves them.

Every ISKCON devotee is an active member of a devotee sanga group in their local community which meets regularly in person and where members read Srila Prabhupada’s books and help each other overcome personal challenges in their spiritual lives. For devotees who have been members of ISKCON for less than two years, the sanga groups are formed with sensitivity to cultural differences.

There is a mentorship system wherein each devotee

who desires can have a formal mentor and each mentor has a reasonable number of mentees (a maximum of ten) so they can get to know them personally. Mentors talk to their mentees weekly, whether there is a pressing issue to address or not. The focus of this relationship is to assist the junior devotee's spiritual advancement and will most likely include coaching them in how to connect their conditional activities with Krishna so they can learn how to practically spiritualize or Krsna-ize every aspect of their lives. These mentors may change over the course of one's life according to need.

Care for devotees is established in every major city encompassing the following: career counseling, premarital counseling, matchmaking, mentors for couples in the first five years of marriage, marital counseling as needed, mentors to help members transition into the retired asrama (whether from marriage or directly from student life), sannyasa mentoring, devotional based prenatal care, devotional based training in birth preparation, doula training, postpartum care, mentoring in newborn care, parenting classes, nursery schools (pre-schools), primary and secondary schools, vocational training, apprenticeship placement, vocational guidance according to sastra, devotional in-home health care, end of life care, and devotional mental health counseling.

In every major city and most medium-sized towns there

are weekly gatherings in homes, parks, temples, etc. for kirtana, prasadam, and philosophical discussion. At most of these gatherings, there is provision for child care. In these gatherings, members share their doubts, questions, and realizations about the books and philosophy.

On every continent there is an association of devotees according to vocation (medicine, fine arts, education, trades, etc.) that meet regularly online and has an in-person conference annually.

Monthly in each major city and most mid-sized towns, there is a gathering for devotees who are buying and selling as well as offering of services, job referrals, and so forth.

Each temple and preaching center keeps an updated directory of members and what skills they have to offer, along with contact information. This directory facilitates members employing other members when they need work done. Similarly, there is a regularly updated international database of members and their skills and training, to be used for those looking for work or service, and by those looking to engage or hire someone in work or service.

MEMBERS NEARER TO KRISHNA, THE PRIME ENTITY

There is an awareness that every living entity has a unique relationship with Krishna. These relationships play out in a twofold way: one is in relationship with

one's conditioned nature, or psycho-physical nature in this world; the other is one's eternal constitutional relationship with Krishna, which may exist in one of five rasas mixed with seven secondary rasas. In the former, one is guided to find their niche and at the appropriate time, devotees are encouraged to explore this. In the latter, one becomes closer with the prime entity Krishna, experiencing Him as the prime object of service and love, in both one's external and internal activities. Guidance for this cultivation is given according to individual devotees' levels of realization. Members are also encouraged to regularly write and share their realizations in Krishna consciousness as it helps solidify their bond with Krishna and inspires others to seek a higher level of personal relationship.

Because vast numbers of people in the world understand Krishna as "the prime entity," the varieties of populations in various villages, towns, cities, countries, and continents understand themselves to be part and parcel of Krishna and are encouraged to become members of ISKCON to further that relationship, or to increase it within their own faith group.

PURPOSE #4

To teach and encourage the Sankirtan movement, congregational chanting of the holy name of God, as revealed in the teachings of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.



In this age, the congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord is the prescribed method for realizing one's spiritual identity and re-establishing one's loving relationship with Krishna. The ways and means are most scientifically presented by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and intelligent persons may take advantage of His teachings in order to bring about real peace and prosperity. (SB 1:1:4–purport).

Sankirtan is a core subject that is taught in all schools, like reading, writing, and arithmetic. In an age-appropriate way, children are taught both the philosophy and the techniques of sankirtan. In the early ages, it may be as simple as singing in response to the teacher's lead. Later, children are taught to lead kirtan themselves with various musical instruments. School music classes are centered around the main purpose of learning musical instruments for accompaniment to sankirtan in a diversity of musical styles according to local culture and individual taste. Gradually, the philosophy of sankirtan is introduced, based on authorized scriptures like Sri Caitanya Caritamṛta, Harinam Cintamani, and others. Students are taught to chant from the heart, calling out to the Lord with affection and devotion. They are taught to spread the chanting to every town and village with a mood of humility and compassion, following in the footsteps of Lord Nityananda, Lord Caitanya and their associates, and recent acaryas like Srila Prabhupada, who are the heroes of the present age.

Congregational chanting is the standard way to open

any event, like public ceremonies, school day, business meetings, sports events, weddings, etc.

All villages and towns have nightly congregational chanting of God's names, according to various faiths, where people gather together for singing, dancing, and refreshment. Nightclubs, pubs, restaurants, and other places for gathering and entertainment are focused on chanting the names of God and serving non-intoxicating drinks and snacks. On Friday evenings, friends and neighbors gather together to chant, read Bhagavad-Gita and eat prasadam.

There are varieties of online and in-person classes in the principles of pure congregational chanting of God's names, as well as instruction in various accompanying instruments.

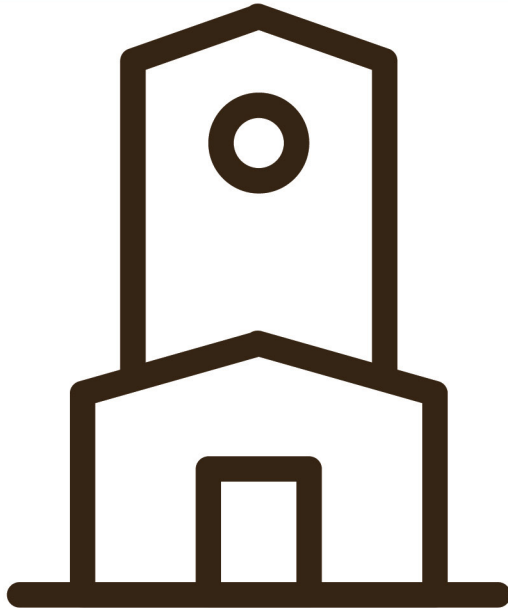
City streets are constantly reverberating with the singing of the holy names. Busy streets like Oxford Street in London or 5th Avenue in New York are a constant stream of harinam sankirtan. As soon as people exit one shop, they enter the harinam and go chanting and dancing their way down the street until they enter the next shop. Department stores play soft kirtan music in the background. The music department sells mainly recorded kirtan or other devotional music for the glorification of the Lord. Just as everyone carries a mobile phone with them, everyone carries a set of karatalas or other instruments so they are ready at any opportune moment to break into kirtan and everyone welcomes this with gusto.

In every city, there are broadcast kirtana breaks during the day (like the Muslim call to prayer) where people stop their studies and work and have a kirtana for ten minutes before resuming their activities.

Lord Caitanya's prediction that the holy names of the Lord will resound in every town and village of the world is fulfilled. The sankirtan movement is universally accepted, not only as the prime religious practice for all people, but as a way of life. The chanting of the holy names pervades all spheres of existence from dance music in nightclubs to opening recitations at official functions such as presidential inaugurations. From birth to death, the holy names are one's constant companion through life. No activity is complete without the chanting of the holy names. Lord Caitanya is universally recognized as the most magnanimous Supreme Personality of Godhead and His teachings regarding the congregational chanting of the holy names are revered and implemented. As a result, people in every corner of the world sing and dance in ecstasy, and love for the Lord and all living beings overflows.

PURPOSE #5

To erect for the members, and for society at large, a holy place of transcendental pastimes, dedicated to the personality of Krishna.



THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

ISKCON centers like New Vrindavan, New Vraja Dhama, Nova Gokula, and Inis Rath, which have been developed gorgeously as places of Krishna's transcendental pastimes, are very well known with hundreds of thousands of tourists a year who get guided tours filled with many activities related to Krishna's pastimes. These places are major tourist attractions of the world and people go for pilgrimage, spiritual entertainment, and to learn techniques of spiritual life, as explained in Purpose 1.

People can also live in such places for a longer duration as members of staff, performing essential services, or as students of Vedic culture and philosophy. All residents attend the standard ISKCON morning program and practice simple living and high thinking.

Plans are in various levels of development for a full-scale place of pastimes in every major geographical region of the world.

At these places, visitors are guided through different areas where the scenery is designed to simulate being there in a particular pastime. Devotee staff members narrate or act out the stories, or it could be a recorded narration that people can plug into on their cellular devices. Ideally, there are devotees who are live, trained actors dressed up as residents of Vrindavan and act totally in role all day long as they greet guests and take them around. Whether your guide is a cowherd boy, a gopi, a servant, or an elder cowherd woman, your experience will be totally different. Thus you can choose

to see Vrindavan from different angles of vision in different moods. When the different characters see each other, they also act in roles. Two cowherd boys will joke with each other. But a cowherd boy will be very respectful to a parental figure, etc. This way, people don't just feel like tourists seeing a display but they feel like they have entered a living history and they can interact with it. If they want, they can also choose to dress up a certain way, in which case, they will be treated accordingly by the different characters they meet, including Krishna.

There is a beautiful clean river, the Yamuna, with lotuses growing in it and the banks are graced by gazebos and other sitting places. There is a serene meditation garden on the bank of the Yamuna. As one walks along the river, there are cows grazing and drinking water. People can feed and pet the cows at this place. Then one comes to a stretch where Kaliya is emerging from the Yamuna. A devotee playing Krishna jumps into the river and everyone else pretends to faint, then Krishna dances on Kaliya's hoods until Kaliya surrenders. Further down, there is a section of the river where children can play in the water.

There is also a lake where the Manasi Ganga pastime takes place. People get in a boat in peaceful water. Then there is a wave simulator which makes the boat shake and almost tip over. Finally, an actor playing Radha embraces another actor playing the boatman (Krishna) and the water becomes calm again.

On the other side of this lake, there is a market where one can buy all kinds of refreshments made of ahimsa dairy products like yogurt lassis, milk sweets, puris with paneer subji, ice cream, and other snacks. Groups can sit down and have a forest picnic with Krishna in the center at this place.

There are facilities to simulate the experience of Trnavarta causing a storm in Vrindavan.

The wrestling match between Krishna and Kamsa is on display. People can sit in the bleachers with others. Devotees dressed like the women of Mathura are approaching the guests and saying, “Don’t you think this is unfair? How can you sit and watch such an irreligious competition?” When the wrestling starts, everyone cheers for Krishna and Balaram.

In this way people wander through the 12 forests of Vrindavan, like Vraja Mandala parikrama, meditating on one pastime after another. For the elderly and disabled, there are bullock carts that take people from one area to another. The main section is devoted to Krishna’s Vrindavan pastimes. Similarly there are other sections dedicated to Krishna’s Dvaraka lila, the pastimes of Lord Caitanya and his associates, Lord Rama’s pastimes, etc. Large crowds flock to these pastimes places especially on festival days to immerse themselves in the relevant pastimes and increase their meditation of the Lord. Festivals like Govardhana puja, Holi, Gopasthami, etc. are observed in grand style in the appropriate areas.

There is a boutique that sells all kinds of paraphernalia related to Krishna's pastimes that people can take home as souvenirs to remember the experience.

VRINDAVANA, INDIA

In the whole area of Vrindavana, India, everything is pristine, clean, and in good repair. There are efficient systems of recycling and waste reduction to eliminate trash and landfills. Plastics are banned in this area. There are excellent systems for managing sewage, farming is all organic, and the air is clean. The Yamuna is flowing freely and is so clean and pure that one can drink the water.

There are knowledgeable guides at each holy place. Entrance to various attractions and facilities at these pastime places is on a donation basis that maintains both the places and the guides.

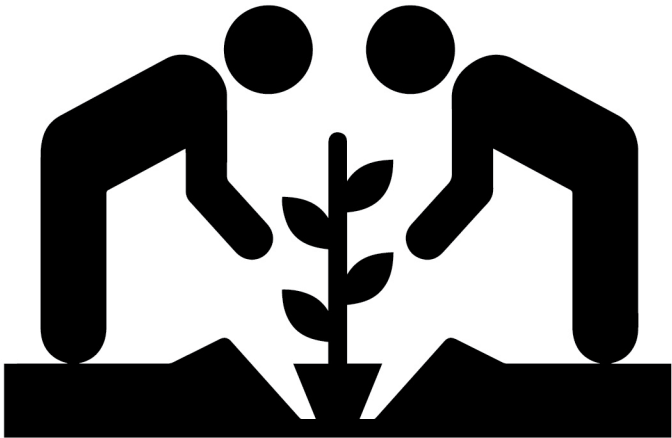
A VISION REALIZED



PURPOSE #5

PURPOSE #6

To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler and more natural way of life.



There are large rural communities all over the world where devotees live together on the land. The temple deities are the center of community life, and devotees come together for temple programs, community meetings, festivals, and special events. Devotees also work together in different capacities for the good of the whole community and the maintenance of their families in cow protection, agriculture, education, outreach, marketing, etc.

Devotees live simply with the majority of life's necessities being produced by the devotees themselves on the farm or in workshops. Most of the community residents work full-time within the community and are provided with whatever they need for themselves and their families either directly, through barter, through a sustainable system of economic exchange, or through a monthly stipend.

Families maintain themselves either through barter or through a sustainable system of economic exchange. Devotees use the natural products of the farm to make necessities like soaps and natural medicines. There are groups of devotees who are engaged in creating clothes for the community, as per their taste. Most of these rural communities are built near a natural water body so as to enhance self-sufficiency. Devotees have designed local water lines to provide running water at homes and other establishments.

Each rural project is connected to nearby urban centers in a reciprocal relationship where the rural project

supplies fresh organic produce and ahimsa dairy products to the urban centers for use in restaurants, deity and devotee kitchens. The urban centers make devotees and send them to the farm to do essential services.

The environment is clean and fresh. Devotees use natural sources of energy like solar power, wind, and biogas. All-natural resources are reused and wastage is kept to a minimum.

Minimal electricity is required because devotees rise just before sunrise and go to sleep not long after sunset. The majority of activity takes place during daylight hours. People who perform domestic services such as washing clothes and dishes are well-treated and fairly compensated, so many of them do these tasks. Most people are able to generate enough electricity at their own homes through wind and solar to meet their own needs. By living a regulated life which is in tune with natural cycles, and by doing physical work as a part of routine daily life, the residents are fit and healthy.

Children of the devotees play outdoors and make their own simple toys from natural materials like clay, wood, straw, and cotton. They are not addicted to video games or television and have a higher taste for listening to the pastimes of Krishna and role playing these pastimes. Children also assist the adults in working in the gardens, goshala, or kitchen according to their capacity, so there is mutual appreciation between all ages. They

spend their leisure time swimming in natural rivers or lakes, playing in the fields and forest, and this way they grow up physically and mentally strong and healthy. At every major ISKCON temple or center, there are regular ongoing classes in various simple living techniques at various levels, such as beginners, intermediate, and advanced. There are also groups and “clubs” for those who are already proficient in various areas to share and help each other. These techniques include:

- Growing food (including in greenhouses, in containers, and on balconies)
- Drying and canning food
- Vegetarian cooking
- Growing medicinal herbs, preparing and using herbal medicines
- Mental health preventative and curative techniques
- Midwifery and childcare
- Caring for cows and other livestock
- Training oxen, bulls, horses for agricultural work and transportation
- Making fabric from naturally grown fibers (spinning, dyeing, and weaving)
- Making clothes for people and Deities (sewing, knitting, crocheting, embroidery)
- Making jewelry and other ornaments for people and Deities from natural materials
- Carpentry, metal working, pottery
- Making musical instruments
- Waste reduction and management
- Forest management
- Alternative energy (solar, wind, etc.)

These courses are very attractive to devotees and non devotees alike. College students can get credit towards their academic degrees for taking these courses or doing internships. There are plenty of accommodations to host groups for retreats for yoga, japa (mantra meditation), shastric study, kirtan.

PURPOSE #7

With a view towards achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, magazines, books, and other writings.



Srila Prabhupada's books are available in every store near the checkout. Bookstores have a large section dedicated to Bhagavad-Gita, Srimad Bhagavatam and other holy scriptures.

Every major city has reading rooms where there is also a reading corner where book lovers can sit and read Vaisnava sastra. In these reading rooms, there is an information desk for all the books, classes, retreats and the nearest temple details for seekers who would like to take a step forward.

Srila Prabhupada's books are available in all the libraries. There is a major section in every public library for Vaishnava literature, and that is ever-expanding since devotees are constantly producing new books. Librarians are educated and trained to assist and encourage people who borrow the books.

There are Vaishnava newspapers and news channels where Krishna conscious perspectives are given on current events around the world. There is also news on devotional activities and information on what is happening in every temple so it inspires other temples to adopt the best practices. The newspaper publishes articles about Krishna's glories and teachings of Lord Chaitanya. There is a devotee corner where devotees share their realizations and understanding from the scriptures. There is coverage on the importance of the various festivals and articles on how the festivals were celebrated at the temples. There are regular sections on Vaishnavism in major newspapers of the world where

devotees share words of wisdom gathered from the sastra for application to the wider audience in response to the ever-changing events of the world.

Most homes in the world have a full set of Srila Prabhupada's books in their local language. There are a variety of devotional periodic magazines with various points of view in each major language of the world, in print and digital versions, and literate households have subscriptions to one or more of them. There are devotionally based books for all ages of children and all levels of reading ability, in all the major languages of the world. In every major language, every year, there are at least 100 new novels and 200 new non-fiction books related to Krishna consciousness.

There are at least ten regular television shows and at least twenty movies a year in every major language to portray stories from sastra, or fictional accounts that help to guide people in spiritual life. Every year, there are at least twenty documentaries on spiritual topics in each major language. Books, films, and television on various subjects such as science, geography, and history, have a devotional perspective.

ISKCON has a powerful online presence with a variety of newsletters, audio books, video series, scholarly articles, and Vaishnava literature ebooks and reading groups. There are thousands of blogs where people are writing about their experiences and realizations in devotional activities. Every temple has a social media presence where they attract new devotees and engage their

existing members. They publish temple schedules, important festival details and share deity darshan pictures. There is a section where people can interact and get clarification. Srila Prabhupada's quotes and lessons from the Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam are published. Information on the new classes is frequently posted for new devotees to join.

God conscious literature is everywhere, in all languages, in all genres, and for all ages. People thoroughly enjoy reading and writing transcendental literature. These literatures solidly maintain and enhance the Krsna consciousness of all human society by:

Educating all people in the techniques of spiritual life

Propagating a consciousness of Krishna as revealed in the Bhagavad-gita and Srimad Bhagavatam

Bringing people closer together and nearer to Krishna

Teaching and encouraging the sankirtan movement of Lord Caitanya

Guiding the establishment of holy places of Krishna's transcendental pastimes

Teaching a simpler and more natural way of life

In this way, transcendental literatures achieve all the aforementioned purposes and form the solid basis for a spiritualized world.

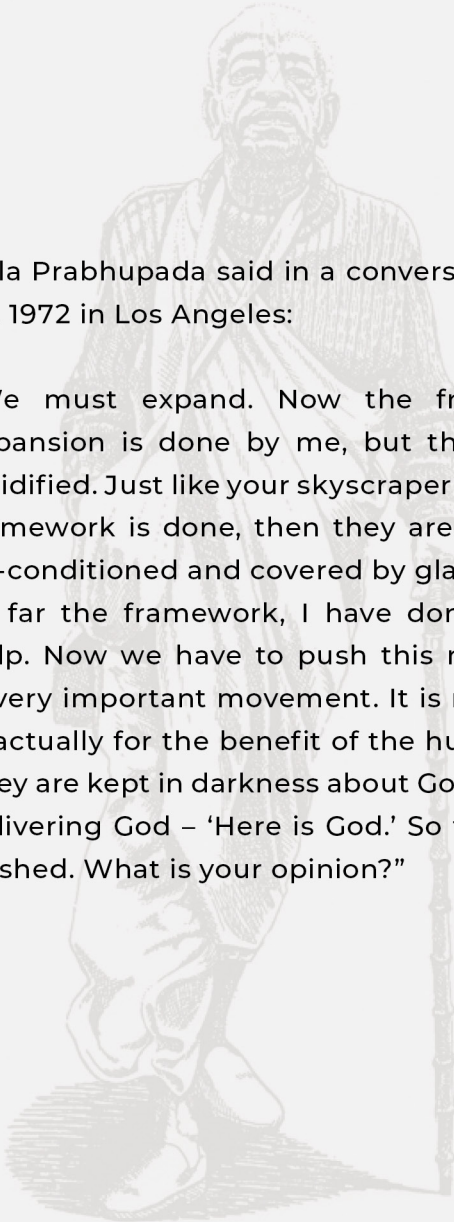
Concluding Words

This vision is a start and may be expanded unlimitedly. We encourage all readers of this document, and especially community leaders, to not only enjoy imagining a Krishna conscious world, but to use this vision to formulate objectives for strategic planning. When the vision is clear, strategy is easy.

So, we conclude with a call to action. Please challenge yourself to find one or more aspects of this vision that inspire you, gather a team, and identify achievable goals and actions to make this vision a reality. As servants in Srila Prabhupada's mission, we may feel ourselves insignificant, but the fact is that we have the blessings and empowerment of the Supreme Personality of Godhead behind us. Krishna promises to fulfill the desires of his pure devotees, and Srila Prabhupada, a pure devotee, and our Founder-acharya, has made his desires clear in the above Seven Purposes. He has given us the structure. Now it is up to us to fill it in.

Srila Prabhupada said in a conversation on May 25, 1972 in Los Angeles:

“We must expand. Now the framework of expansion is done by me, but this should be solidified. Just like your skyscraper building. The framework is done, then they are made nicely air-conditioned and covered by glass... Similarly, so far the framework, I have done, with your help. Now we have to push this movement. It is very important movement. It is not a farce. It is actually for the benefit of the human society. They are kept in darkness about God, and we are delivering God – ‘Here is God.’ So that must be pushed. What is your opinion?”



The 7 Purposes of ISKCON

The seven purposes of ISKCON, as laid down by Srila Prabhupada, encompass the vision and essence of the Hare Krishna movement. In this booklet, we explore what the fruition of these purposes could look like in order to help direct our efforts moving forward.