

This chapter last revised April 25, 2008

Dear Reader,

This is a chapter from a book on the history of New Vrindaban, which I began six years ago. It is almost finished. Krishna willing, it will be published in August of this year in time for the 40th anniversary of the signing of the original New Vrindaban lease by Hayagriva.

If you have more information for this book, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at <henrydoktorski at gmail dot com> or by telephone at 724-693-8752. I'd love to hear your part of the New Vrindaban story, but please do not copy and post this chapter on the Internet without my permission, as the final version may have some revisions, and besides, I'd like you to purchase a copy of the book when it is published.

Sincerely,

Hrishikesh dasa (Henry Doktorski)

P.S. I have decided to title my book: *Gold, Guns and God: the Hare Krishnas in West Virginia*.

Disclaimer: I have been recently admonished by one devotee friend and former New Vrindaban resident: "By writing essays [about Krishna consciousness] and publishing them, you are putting yourself on a pedestal as someone learned in Krishna consciousness. If you are going to continue on this course of publishing the history of Krishna consciousness, I would first preface, and not with a footnote, what is going on in your own life. You might want to tell your readers that you have certain addictions that, while not a practitioner [of Krishna consciousness], makes you unqualified as a scholar of Krishna consciousness, and unable to reveal the mistakes of the past."

I have been exposed by my friend, and I thank him. If I had any semblance of righteousness in my heart, I would admit I am a contaminated reservoir of sinful activities. I would shout it from the roof tops and post it on the Internet. Yes, I am more sinful than Jagai and Madhai and even lower than the worms in the stool. No one is more sinful than me. Even if I wanted to mention my sinful activities, I would immediately become ashamed. And what to speak of giving them up! I do not know what is beneficial for me or what is detrimental. Nonetheless, some people consider me a learned scholar, and I am also thinking of myself as such.

Yet I am so puffed-up that I dare to research and write and publish a book about the history of New Vrindaban, where I served guru and Krishna for sixteen years of my life. Certainly my motivations must be suspect for the before-mentioned reasons. I crave fame, adoration and distinction, not to mention other more worldly pleasures. I have little taste for chanting Hare Krishna, for reading Prabhupada's books, or for associating with devotees. I am a fault finder and an offender. I cannot control my senses nor my mind, nor do I desire to.

Because of my impure heart, you cannot expect my writing to elevate your consciousness, it can only degrade. Anyone who hears my name loses the results of his pious activities. Anyone who utters my name becomes sinful. Anyone who reads my writing will be doomed to life in hell. If you choose to read further, you proceed at your own risk. I have duly given you ample warning.

Sincerely,

Hrishikesh dasa (Henry Doktorski)

Previous Chapter Summary: Chapter 4—“Kirtanananda Is A Crazy Man”—relates how, on September 22, 1967, Kirtanananda (who had received sannyas initiation only a few weeks earlier) flew from India—where Prabhupada was gradually recuperating from his stroke of May 31st—to New York City, and told his friends at the temple that Swamiji would probably never come back from India and would, in all likelihood, stay there for the rest of his life.

The devotees were heartbroken, but Kirtanananda tried to uplift their spirits by claiming that Swamiji had personally empowered him to carry on the Hare Krishna movement in America by awarding him sannyas. Then he boldly attempted to modify the dress and preaching strategies of his godbrothers in order to present Krishna Consciousness in a non-sectarian format to minimize the foreign Indian influence and perhaps increase American membership. When the bewildered NY devotees wrote to Prabhupada in India, Prabhupada chastised Kirtanananda in many letters and prohibited him from speaking at the temple (Prabhupada said he could be engaged in “washing dishes”).

However, the devotees felt so betrayed that they—without Prabhupada’s authorization—spat upon Kirtanananda and forcibly evicted him from the temple. Kirtanananda took shelter from and moved in with his friend Hayagriva—who, among all his godbrothers, was the most sympathetic toward Kirtanananda’s “non-dogmatic” philosophy—who was teaching English at a community college in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania.

Chapter Summary: This chapter—“New Vrindaban: The Earliest Days”—begins with an examination of Abhay Charan De’s article in a May, 1956, *Back to Godhead* which promoted the idea of a community of devotees following the principles of *Bhagavad-gita* and organizing themselves according to *varnashram-dharma*. Bhaktivedanta Swami’s efforts to establish such a community in America are discussed, including three separate 1968 proposals to Hansadutta, Hayagriva, and Dayananda to each establish a “New Vrindaban” in New York, West Virginia, and Florida.

Kirtanananda Swami and Hayagriva’s first visit to the property owned by Richard Rose, Jr. is related. The return of Kirtanananda and Hayagriva to ISKCON is discussed, as is the signing of the 99-year lease on August 7, 1968. Prabhupada’s instructions regarding New Vrindaban are detailed, including his cow protection program. Prabhupada’s first visit to New Vrindaban during May 1969 is described.

Other topics and events discussed are: the “sinister movement” in ISKCON and the resolution of same at the first annual Janmastami Festival at New Vrindaban during August 1970, the relationship between New Vrindaban and their Marshall County neighbors, the long-time conflict between Kirtanananda Swami and Hayagriva, the installation of Radha-Vrindaban Chandra, Kirtanananda’s Traveling Road Show, his return to New Vrindaban, and the moving of the deities from the Vrindaban farm to the Bahulaban farm. This chapter concludes when Kirtanananda Swami finally becomes the sole and uncontested authority at the community after Hayagriva resigns as temple president in May 1972. This is also when Kirtanananda Swami became widely-known as a pure devotee.

Chapter 5: New Vrindaban: The Earliest Days

by Hrishikesh dasa (Henry Doktorski)

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A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada had conceived of the idea of a community of devotees—who strictly followed the principles of Krishna consciousness and organized themselves in occupations according to the four social orders outlined by Lord Krishna in *Bhagavad-gita*—at least ten years prior to the establishment of ISKCON and the New Vrindaban Community.

As early as May, 1956, Abhay Charan De¹ had proposed a community, which he called *Geeta Nagari*, to serve as a model society which would teach humankind how to realize the purpose of human life. Abhay Charan De described his vision in one article in his fortnightly newspaper, *Back to Godhead*.

Bhaktivedanta Swami’s principle biographer summarized the article, titled “How to Broadcast the Teachings of *Bhagwat Geeta*”:²

In “How to Broadcast the Teachings of *Bhagwat Geeta*,” he [Abhay] talked about the need for spiritual organization in society. A model community, which he named *Geeta Nagari* (“the village where the *Bhagwat Geeta* is sung”), would live by the *Bhagavad-gita* and preach its message to the world. Praising Mahatma Gandhi for his Vaishnava qualities, Abhay suggested that Gandhi had also esteemed the *Geeta Nagari* concept. It was the only way of relief from the sufferings caused by “demoniac-principled leaders” who were misguiding the present demoralized civilization.

In the two-part article which appeared in the May 20 and June 5, 1956 issues of *Back to Godhead*, Abhay Charan De proposed a community of Vaishnavas who followed the principles of the *Bhagavad-gita*, where men would be divided into four social orders: brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya and sudra; not by birth, but by quality. He also suggested that the “huge fund collected to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi” after his death not be used to build some big building or monument, but to propagate the teachings which Gandhi had revered during his life.³

The *Geeta Nagari* will therefore be the main preaching centre of the Supreme Authority of Shree Krishna the Personality of Godhead. It shall be proclaimed from that place that Shree Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the Absolute Enjoyer of all benefits derived from all kinds of work, sacrifice, cultivation of knowledge; that he is the Absolute Proprietor of all the manifested universes and that he is the unalloyed friend and philosopher of all living entities namely the gods or rulers, the general people, the beasts, the birds, the reptiles, the plants and trees or the aquatic animals residing in every nook and corner of the great universe. When such knowledge will be fostered from the vantage of *Shree Geeta Nagari*, at that time only, real peace and prosperity will usher in the world so anxiously awaited by all kinds of people.

...

The natives of India only have the prerogative to understand this position of Godhead from the pages of *Bhagwat Geeta* and they are alone able to preach this truth throughout the whole world. It is therefore desired that the authorities who shall guide the activities of the *Geeta Nagari*, may make such organised effort as will help this mission of the *Geeta Nagari*, on a permanent basis. . . .

Mahatma Gandhi did not approve of the present system of castes as is prevailing in India and there is ample support of this movement of caste less society in the *Bhagwat Geeta* in its own way. Caste less society does not mean that there will remain no section or subsection of social division because without that

no society can exist; but there may not be any caste simply for the sake of birthright accident. *Bhagwat Geeta* approves of the caste system in terms of mundane quality acquired but not in terms of accident of birth. . . .

In the human society there are undoubtedly men of such different qualities, namely men under the influence of the mode of goodness called the qualified Brahmins, those who are in the mode of passion called the Kshatriyas, those who are under the influence of the mode of passion cum ignorance are called the Vaishyas, and last of all, men under the influence of the mode of ignorance are called the Sudras. . . .

From *Geeta Nagari* this universal Truth must be propagated systematically so that real human society may be reestablished for the benefit of all, dividing men according to natural mode by such approved processes as, are called practical psychology or anything else. Such social order all over the world will be known as the *Institution of quality caste system* and every human being will have the right to qualify himself by education and culture to enter into the higher status of life in the same manner as the varsity of different states offers the facility to any one. . . .

The *Geeta Nagari* may properly utilise the huge fund collected to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi in the manner as above mentioned in four principal heads because Gandhi's memory can only be preserved by his exemplary activities and not by simply erecting some big buildings or statues as we see the general tendency. The *Bhagwat Geeta* asks every big man perfect his life with the teachings of *Bhagwat Geeta* and then set himself as an example for the benefit of the people in general. . . .

It is foolish to follow the proverbial principle of putting a cart before a horse or putting old wine into new bottle. It shall be the duty of *Geeta Nagari* to agitate against the Gandhi Memorial Fund being utilised otherwise than in the manner befitting the teachings of *Bhagwat Geeta* and as approved by Mahatma Gandhi.

Nine years later, when A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami began preaching in the United States, he naturally had concentrated his preaching in major cities where large numbers of people congregated, but he often thought about establishing a "country" ashram. In July 1966, when he had incorporated the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, a country ashram, where members might teach others the value of simple living and high thinking, was implied in the sixth purpose of the society according to the Articles of Incorporation: "To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler and more natural way of life."

Later during the summer of 1966, Swamiji took his disciples on a weekend retreat to *Ananda Ashram*, the upstate New York countryside yoga retreat center operated by Swamiji's Mayavadi acquaintance, Dr. Ramamurti Mishra. Swamiji very much liked *Ananda Ashram* and wanted to have such a place for his own disciples.⁴

Ananda Ashram was a beautiful place, with sloping hills and lots of trees and sky and green grass and a lake. . . . Swamiji walked across the scenic acreage, looking at the distant mountains and forests, and Keith walked beside him. Swamiji spoke of how Dr. Mishra had offered him the island in the middle of the ashram's lake to build a temple on. "What kind of temple were you thinking of?" Keith asked. "How big?" Swamiji smiled and gestured across the horizon. "As big as the whole horizon?" Keith laughed. "Yes," Swamiji replied.

Community camp.

Occasionally Swamiji encouraged his disciples to purchase land for a Krishna conscious "country" ashram. In a letter to Brahmananda from San Francisco dated January 25, 1967, he wrote, "Sriman Mukunda Das has in view a plot of land about sixty acres for the society and he wishes to organise our community camp there. It is very encouraging."⁵

Two months later, Swamiji wrote to Hayagriva Das about the possibility of acquiring some land and building a temple near Baltimore, “There is now a possibility of opening two more branches, one in Baltimore and one in Boston. Brahmananda, Rayaram and Mahapurusha have already gone to Boston and we shall act according to the situation. In Baltimore, one gentleman named John De Priest has become attracted to our movement and has told me that we may be able to acquire some land to build a temple there. Let us see what Krishna desires in this respect.”⁶

Swamiji proposes a Pennsylvania ashram.

In September 1967, with Swamiji’s encouragement, Hayagriva Das accepted a position as assistant Professor of English at a community college in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. In October, Swamiji requested Hayagriva to save money and investigate purchasing property for an ashram, and even pledged \$3,000 from the Society’s meager savings account toward the project. “Krishna has given you a very nice chance in the city of Wilkes-Barre, Penn. And the idea of purchasing land as you have suggested is very nice. I think you can negotiate for this land immediately and the Society will be able to pay \$3,000.00. After purchasing the land you can gradually develop it into an ashram by dint of your personal labour as teacher in college. From N.Y. the members may visit the place every weekend because it isn’t very far away. They take a 4 or 5 hour journey every week end so a 3 hour journey is not much. If you think you shall stick to your present occupation you can seriously think of this scheme.”⁷

Bhaktivedanta Swami returns to America from India.

On December 14, 1967, after four months in India recuperating from his stroke of May 31st, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami returned to America, arriving in San Francisco after a short visit to Tokyo. His strength had returned and he was eager to continue his preaching work in the United States.

In a letter to Jadurani dated December 16, 1967, Prabhupada humbly explained that he had returned to America to receive inspiration in Krishna consciousness from his disciples, “When I left your country on July 22, I had very little hope of coming back again. But Krishna informed me that I’m not going to die immediately; therefore I have come back again to get inspiration of Krishna Consciousness from you all good souls. Although officially I am your spiritual master, I consider you all students of my spiritual master because your love for Krishna and service for Krishna teach me how to become a sincere Krishna Conscious person.” Prabhupada remained in San Francisco for four months before he finally returned to New York City.

When Swamiji returned from India, some of his disciples began calling him “Prabhupada.” Hayagriva explained: “We cry out for Swamiji. And he appears in a wholly different and wonderful way. As the year wanes and Americans brace for another Christmas holiday, he arrives in San Francisco via Tokyo, December 16. He doesn’t arrive as the ailing Swamiji, but returns in full strength as “Prabhupada.”⁸

Prabhupada explained why his disciples should use the new form of address: “Prabhupada means one who is always found at Krishna’s lotus feet. Rupa Goswami was called Prabhupada because he was always worshipping the lotus feet of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. All the six major Goswamis were called Prabhupada. A spiritual master is usually addressed as Vishnupada, or Gurudev, or Prabhupada. These signify reverence and respect.”⁹

In *Srimad-Bhagavatam* Prabhupada explained: “The pure devotees whose only business is serving are honored by the names Prabhupada and Vishnupada, which indicate such devotees to be representatives of the lotus feet of the Lord.”¹⁰

“Sometimes the spiritual master is addressed as Prabhupada. Prabhu means ‘the Supreme Personality of Godhead,’ and pada means ‘post.’ According to Vaishnava philosophy, the spiritual master occupies the

post of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or in other words he is the bona fide representative of the Supreme Lord.”¹¹

Hayagriva described how Brahmananda once reminded him to use the new form of address: ““Oh, you mean *Srila Prabhupada!*” Brahmananda corrects me on the phone when I enquire about ‘Swamiji.’ ‘Yes, Srila Prabhupada is doing fine. I hear he looks very well and is already shouting at the impersonalists. He arrived in San Francisco [from India] this morning.’”¹²

Prabhupada proposes New Vrindaban to Hansadutta in New York.

Prabhupada first suggested to his disciple Hansadutta that he could purchase land for a country ashram and name it “New Vrindaban.” During March 1967, Hansadutta and his wife had joined ISKCON in New York City, and within a few weeks moved to the new Montreal temple where they were trained up in devotional service by Kirtanananda Das Brahmachari. After two months in Montreal, Hansadutta and his wife returned to New York City, where they received initiation from Prabhupada.

Hansadutta was an innovator, and had his own ideas about how to preach. He was ordered by the New York temple president to get a job and contribute his paycheck to the temple treasury, but he refused, and attempted to convince management to try out his new ideas for raising money by having devotees approach pedestrians and ask for donations during their regular street chanting parties.

Hansadutta said, “Brahmananda and Satsvarupa had full time jobs and were supporting the temple by donating their paychecks. But I didn’t want to get a job. Why should I work for someone else? I knew we could make more money by going out in the streets, chanting Hare Krishna and asking for donations. Even when I was a kid, sometimes I would beg bus fare from passersby if I didn’t have enough money. I knew people would give. If each devotee made only five dollars per day, that would be more than enough to pay our bills. But Brahmananda, the temple president, didn’t like my idea. He told me to get a job. So I went out myself on sankirtan just to show that it could be done. And I made a lot of money (for those early days). I don’t remember how much it was; maybe it was twenty dollars. We got mostly quarters in those days; spare change. But I didn’t want to give the money to Brahmananda, so I wrote to Prabhupada, ‘What should I do?’ Prabhupada told me to open a bank account, save up money, buy land and start an ashram, which could be named *ISKCON-Nagari* or *New Vrindaban*.”¹³

In a letter to Hansadutta dated January 22, 1968, Prabhupada described how *ISKCON-Nagari* or *New Vrindaban* could be a place where devotee children could grow up to become brahmins, kshatriyas, etc., according to their natural propensities:¹⁴

The idea of opening an ashram in the near future is certainly a wish of Krishna’s. To develop our institution to its fullness, we require such an ashram without doubt. Child is the father of man, so the basic principle of any type of life is to instruct to the children from the very beginning, Krishna Consciousness. Children grow to be the topmost leaders of the human society. In the *Bhagavatam* it is said that the Brahmins are the head of the social body, the Kshatriyas are the arms of the social body, the Vaishyas are the waist of the social body, and the Sudras are the legs of the social body. The legs may be placed in a lower position than the head ephemerally, but actually the legs are as important as the head for maintaining the body as it is. It is not that the legs should not be taken care of and just the head should be cared for. But it is a fact that if there is not a head it is a dead body. The modern civilization is a sort of a social body without a head, or actually it is a dead body. The body is dead since the very beginning of its birth, and it is the spirit that keeps it moving. Therefore, spiritual enlightenment is the basic principle of civilization. The modern civilization is lacking in that respect and there are so many disadvantages on account of this deficiency. So we have to grow children to become the head of the human society and there is great need for

this. I pray Krishna that you may give a starting to such an ashram in full Krishna Consciousness. In the *ashram* there must be a grand temple as the deity of the ashram. . . .

I think you can save money for this ashram as much as possible. The ashram may be named as *ISKCON-Nagari* or *New Vrindaban* and a separate a/c may be opened in the bank.

In a letter to Brahmananda a month later, Prabhupada confirmed, “Hansadutta will help me in establishing a New Vrindaban in the West. Please inform Hansadutta that I have received his encouraging letter.”¹⁵

Richard Rose proposes a non-denominational ashram in West Virginia.

In the meantime, Kirtanananda visited his family in New York during the 1967 Christmas holidays, and happened to read the December 1967 issue (prophetically titled “The City of God”) of *The San Francisco Oracle*, a psychedelic, multicolored tabloid, which expressed the poetry, art and visions of love, world peace, hedonism, expanded consciousness, spirituality, ecology and tribal community as idealized by the “Flower Children” of the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. The 32-page newspaper cost 35 cents.

Hidden away amongst a feature interview with Buckminster Fuller (*Invisible Future*) and articles by Alan Watts (*Food Is God*), Gary Snyder (*Suwa-No-Se Island and the Banyan Ashram*), Robert Theobald (*Cybernetic Economics*), Harry Monroe (*The Instrument of the Womb*) and Neill Smith (*Environment for Expanded Awareness*), and poems by George Tsongas (*The Seven Cities of the Moon*), Stephen Levine (*Notes from the Genetic Journal*) and Mike Hannon (*The City*), and assorted advertisements for head shops, aphrodisiacs, missing persons, and records by Arlo Guthrie, Phil Ochs, Pink Floyd and the Broadway Musical “Hair,” and an ad for Andy Warhol’s movie “EPI” at the Cinematheque Coffeehouse Palace of Pleasure, was a short letter in tiny print tucked away on the “Letters Page” (page 27).¹⁶

Dear sirs or madams,

I hope this reaches you, since I do not have a more accurate address.

To be brief, I am (have been for nearly twenty years) trying to form an ashram of sorts here in West Virginia, in the rural section where I own about a half a section. The conception is one of a non-profit, non-interfering, non-denominational, retreat or refuge, where philosophers might come to work communally together, or independently,—where a library and other facilities might be developed.

Since it shall be non-profit, I need a bit of help in the form of cooperation. I do not think money is needed as much as determination. I would therefore like to use your news medium to contact any sincere people doing the same line of thinking. I want to meet one, two, or any number of people who would be willing to settle here and devote some time to getting the thing started. I know of many elderly people who are heartily in favor of the project, but I feel that a nucleus of young people is somehow necessary to supply the vitality to bear this project into three dimensional existence.

Thanking you for any contacts,

Richard Rose

R.D. 3 Moundsville, W. Va.

Richard Rose.

Richard Stephen Vincent Rose, Jr. (1917-2005) was born into an Irish Catholic family in Benwood, West Virginia, a tiny city on the eastern bank of the Ohio River midway between Wheeling and Moundsville. At the age of twelve, he entered the Capuchin seminary in Butler, Pennsylvania, to study for the priesthood and to “find God,” but he left after five years, disenchanted with the constant admonitions to be content to believe church doctrines on blind faith, and not to seek a personal experience of God. He

studied English at West Liberty State College, and also physics and chemistry, but eventually decided that logic and science were simply distractions on his path to God.

Rose turned to yoga and asceticism, and in his twenties he maintained an extremely disciplined lifestyle: “I decided to make my body a laboratory,” he said, “not a cesspool.” He became a vegetarian, did not smoke or drink, and observed strict celibacy. He also spent long months in solitude on his family’s remote farm in the hills of Marshall County. “Solitude is beautiful,” he said. “Those years of celibacy and solitude were the most joyful of my life.”¹⁷

Rose had a cataclysmic and life-changing mystical experience at the age of thirty; he felt his individual consciousness totally merge with the source of all consciousness (Brahman).¹⁸

He understood his enlightenment to be an experience “in which the individual mind dies, and the individual awareness merges totally with the source of all life and awareness—the Absolute, God, Truth. . . as that of a drop of water merging with the ocean.”¹⁹

Ten years later, he wrote about his experience in his first book: *The Albigen Papers*.²⁰

One student explained: “In Rose’s writings I found the voice of a modern and American and empirical man who’d not only walked the old road before me, but had studied and analyzed and carefully put his experiences and thought into words. Readable words that were lucid and practical, without mystifying or seeking to maintain some ancient tradition or ego.”²¹

In 1972, Rose lectured at the Pittsburgh Theosophical Society and the University of Pittsburgh, and formed study groups for young people who were interested in hearing his message. He lectured at other universities—including Carnegie Mellon, Kent State, Case Western, Harvard, Brown, North Carolina State, Duke, and the University of California, Los Angeles—and other venues (such as New Age and occult bookstores) until the mid-1990s, when he began showing symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease.²²

After Rose’s parents died, he purchased the shares of the family farm from his brothers, and opened the farm for seekers of the absolute where, he hoped, they could meet, spend time in solitude, and live.²³

One student, who lived at Rose’s farm for nearly eight years, claimed that his teacher was “the guy who saved my life.” He explained:

I first met Rose at Kent State. . . . I saw the end of bucolic college coming, with the prospect of a mundane life in front of me with no fulfilling meaning, and was becoming deeply depressed. Rose attended one of the Kent Pyramid Zen meetings and went to the ashram afterward, and after about an hour of listening to him, a light went off in my head, and I knew to myself “This guy is going to save my life!” I joined the group and shortly moved to the farm ashram for about seven-to-eight years. In retrospect now, I see the farm ashram was almost a magical place—a temporary oasis in a world dedicated to completely opposite principles. Rose did “save my life,” and gave me some meaning worth living for, and probably at least half of the things I value in life I learned from him.²⁴

In 1973 Rose founded the TAT Foundation (Truth and Transmission). He called his system the “retreat from untruth,” the examination of personal belief systems and lifestyles, discarding what one finds to be false on a case-by-case basis. He combined this skeptical approach with his belief that truth does exist and can be found for oneself with sufficient application of effort.²⁵

“Rose was basically what in an earlier age would have been called a *free thinker*. He . . . had cobbled together a belief system from various sources and later went about to numerous college campuses attempting to recruit adherents. . . . We had only one brief discussion about his particular catechism. . . . I asked Rose what exactly it was that he ‘taught’ (*teachings* was the way he described his activities). ‘I

take the best from everything,’ he said. ‘Christianity, Buddhism, the Sufis, philosophy, and bring it all together.’”²⁶

One student described Rose’s realization of the absolute, “He said in a public talk . . . that he didn’t find God, as he expected, but found that he was God—no, that’s not right either; he said he found that he *is* God.”²⁷

Kirtanananda was excited by Rose’s concept of a nondenominational community of philosophers; perhaps this was the golden opportunity he had been waiting for. He and Hayagriva had little success in New York City, or in Wilkes-Barre, in attracting converts to Kirtanananda’s nonsectarian movement of God consciousness. However, if they teamed up with Richard Rose, who seemed to share their ideals of a nonsectarian approach to God realization, perhaps they could attract the fame and followers which they so ardently desired.

Kirtanananda wrote to Richard Rose, and, in late February 1968, when he received a reply, Kirtanananda (who must have been traveling at the time) telephoned Hayagriva in Wilkes-Barre and invited him to join him on a journey to West Virginia to meet a man who was looking for people to help establish a rural community devoted to the search for the Absolute Truth. Hayagriva, busy with his college teaching duties, responded that he would accompany his friend to West Virginia during a weekend free from classes. Hayagriva also shared this exciting news with Prabhupada in a letter, telling him about the land in West Virginia, its owner, and outlining possibilities for an ashram.

Prabhupada proposes New Vrindaban in West Virginia.

Prabhupada replied to Hayagriva from San Francisco on March 17, 1968, “I hoped that Kirtanananda Swami would open some branches in many parts of the country after his return from Vrindaban, but I am sorry that he has left our company. So I am missing him also. But since he is continuing to keep his name, Kirtanananda, which was given by me, I think I have got still some right to say that he may resume his Krishna Consciousness movement instead of trying to open some ashram of non-denominational type. I think non-denominational type of spiritual activities will never be successful.”²⁸

Prabhupada enthusiastically continued, “I am so glad to learn that one gentleman [Richard Rose] is going to open an ashram in West Virginia. I wish that this big tract of land—320 acres—be turned into New Vrindaban. You have New York, New England, and so many ‘new’ duplicates of European countries in the U.S.A.—why not import New Vrindaban to your country? . . . if Kirtanananda endeavors to utilize the 320 acres and turn them into New Vrindaban, I may permanently stay there and try to serve you in constructing a New Vrindaban city in West Virginia.”²⁹

Neither Hayagriva, nor Kirtanananda had even seen the land, yet already Prabhupada had invited them to construct a New Vrindaban city in West Virginia!

While waiting for Hayagriva to join him, Kirtanananda Swami passed the time by visiting his brother F. Gerald Ham in Madison, Wisconsin. Gerald’s wife, Elsie, remembered her brother-in-law’s visit, and said, “Keith was on his way to visit an ashram in West Virginia and he looked something like a hippie. His hair was getting longer and he wore beads around his neck; not Krishna neck beads, but some other beads. During his visit, our bathroom smelled like marijuana smoke. He must have been smoking pot in the bathroom.” Her husband interjected, “Not only in the bathroom; he once lit up a joint right in our living room!”³⁰

According to Elsie’s diary, Kirtanananda Swami stayed at his brother’s home for twelve days, from March 13 until March 25, 1968.³¹

Kirtanananda and Hayagriva visit Richard Rose's West Virginia farm.

During the weekend of March 30-31,³² Kirtanananda journeyed with Hayagriva to Marshall County, near Limestone, in West Virginia's Northern panhandle, to meet Richard Rose, the owner of 300 acres of land, and a self-styled guru himself. They wore Western-style clothes and introduced themselves honestly as former Hare Krishna devotees who had left the movement because the Krishnas were too "closed-minded." Kirtanananda and Hayagriva told Rose they were looking for a "non-dogmatic" spiritual community where people of different beliefs could come together and study and mediate and exchange ideas.

Richard Rose talked about his first meeting with Kirtanananda Swami and Hayagriva:³³

"It was about 1967, I guess, when I placed an ad in the *San Francisco Oracle*. It had been probably twenty years or so since I'd had my Experience, and I'd almost given up hope of ever finding anyone to pass it on to. Outside of a few old ladies in the Steubenville group, and an occasional nut . . . I might meet, there was nobody to even talk to about spiritual matters.

"Then in the Sixties, the *zeitgeist* changed. I had always brought young kids from town out to the farm so that they could get the city out of their hair—the country is a beautiful place to a kid. But what started happening in the late Sixties is that young people—college-age kids, some maybe a little younger—started gravitating out to the farm on their own. I didn't put the word out or anything, but of course I didn't discourage them either. Before you know it we were having regular gatherings on the weekends. Nothing formal, just sitting around, shooting the bull about philosophy. If circumstances were right, maybe I'd read a mind or two.

"I became really curious about why these kids were suddenly so open and aware about esoteric matters. Eventually, I realized that it was dope—LSD in particular—that was opening up their heads. They saw other dimensions that seemed just as real as this one. And what's more, acid seemed to give them an artificial intuition—they understood me.

"Well, I figured, maybe the time has come. With the Experience comes an obligation. So I ended up putting an ad in a couple of underground newspapers in New York and San Francisco, letting people know I was looking for sincere seekers who wanted to take part in a philosophic ashram." Rose smiled. "I didn't know what I was getting into."

"I heard you had a lot of bums and drifters show up," Lou said.

"Yeah, when I was lucky," Rose chuckled. "Most of the people who came around turned out to be dope addicts just looking for a place to crash. Once a couple of gypsies came and stayed in a trailer on my place. Told me they'd been students in a Gurdjieff group,³⁴ and I thought maybe I'd finally found some people with potential. I discovered later they were running a prostitution business outside of town. I kicked them out, but before they left they burned down my trailer."

He laughed at the memory and spoke without animosity or, apparently, regrets.

"Is this when Ham and Wheeler came," I asked.

"Yes, it was about this time. They told me they'd previously been in the Krishna movement, but had given it up. They said the Krishnites were too closed-minded, and that they were looking for some kind of non-dogmatic ashram, a place where people of different beliefs could come and meditate and exchange ideas. And of course, this appealed to me because this is what I was trying to do, too.

"So anyway, I had the back farm, and since I had the family in town and was raising cattle on the other farm, I couldn't keep an eye on the place. The hillbillies were breaking the windows out of the house, and it was growing up like a jungle, so when Howard Wheeler suggested I rent the farm to them, I thought, sure, why not. Maybe something good would come out of it."

Hayagriva described his first meeting with Richard Rose: ³⁵

On a weekend, free of classes, I accompany Kirtanananda out to Wheeling, in West Virginia's Northern panhandle. There, we meet Mr. Rose, ³⁶ a balding, burly, hayseed philosopher who wants to open up a community "for everybody wanting to learn the Truth." Talking rapidly, the gregarious Mr. Rose informs us that he's not only attained the Truth but can impart it as well. "You just gotta open up," he says.

Talking nonstop, he drives us out to see some of the property. "I got over three hundred acres in all," he tells us. "That includes this roadside farm here, and another way up a logging road that's hard to get to. A couple of people from California are supposed to come out this weekend to help."

From the road, we get a general view of the land. It is a little too hilly for serious farming, but it must have looked like good homestead country to the pioneers. The atmosphere is tranquil, and forests of maple, poplar, and locust run along the ridges and creeks.

Rose tells us that he's willing to grant small individual leases on the property to those helping him start a religious community. "You can set yourselves up immediately," he says, "and stay year round."

Then he goes on to tell how Gurdjieff and Ouspensky ³⁷ are but pikers compared to him, due to his recently acquired knowledge. We don't mention ISKCON or Prabhupada. We quickly gather that Mr. Rose would resent any guru other than himself.

Richard Rose had already achieved some notoriety due to local newspaper articles about his "Hippie Farm." Hippies, or "people who let their beards grow," were a novelty in mostly rural and redneck Marshall county (hippies preferred the more tolerant and "evolved" milieu of college and university towns), and sometimes local residents drove past the Rose farm to try and catch a glimpse of the hippies. Rose had at first tolerated the "rubbernecks," but after a while grew he increasingly testy about their snooping.

The *Moundsville Echo* had reported, "Rose has been in the news lately as large headlines have announced his farm as 'hippie haven,' and apparently a number of people have gone by to take a look, and have been rebuffed. . . . People who let their beards grow have been reported as camping on both Rose farms." ³⁸

After their initial visit with Rose, Hayagriva returned back to Wilkes Barre to teach, but Kirtanananda Swami decided to stay. At first he lived with Rose and his disciples at the "goat farm" on the county dirt road, but quickly discovered that Rose did not appreciate others who might have different opinions than his own. Rose had experienced enlightenment; he was convinced that he *is* God and knew all the answers and solutions to mankind's questions and problems. Kirtanananda, or anyone else for that matter, could not teach him anything new. In this regard at least, Richard Rose and Kirtanananda Swami were very similar; one believed himself to be God and the other believed himself to be God's empowered representative. Two strong-willed men like Kirtanananda Swami and Richard Rose could never cooperate as both were unable to consider for a moment that they might be mistaken.

Rose actually owned two farms: one, called simply "the goat farm," which lay on the winding county road which traversed McCreary's Ridge and descended to Pine Hill Road near Wheeling Creek past Burches Run Lake. The other farm was landlocked, inaccessible to ordinary vehicles. Kirtanananda moved to the isolated and abandoned landlocked backwoods farm, a good half-hour walk on a steep trail from Rose's "goat farm." Another "road" connected the farm to McCreary's Ridge Road on the other side, but it was impassable to ordinary vehicles due to the mud and ruts. The house where Kirtanananda stayed was over one hundred years old, with beams hewn out of the great trees which once grew throughout the Ohio River Valley. The chimney and basement were built from rocks hauled out of the creek. Kirtanananda said, "It was almost falling down. I remember you could see through the walls." ³⁹

“There were ghosts here when I first came. But the chanting drove them away.”⁴⁰

Richard Rose’s land, situated in the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia, is part of the Allegheny Plateau, a rough-and-tumble conglomeration of small valleys and broken, ragged ridge lines, extending more than five hundred miles southwestward from the Mohawk River valley in central New York through western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, and West Virginia, to the Cumberland Plateau in southern West Virginia. Much of the Allegheny Plateau is strongly dissected by stream erosion and the topography is rugged. Small, narrow valleys (hollows) twist through the resulting hills. The older plateau surface is evident in the pattern of hilltops all tending to reach the same elevation (about 1,300 to 1,400 feet above sea level).

Coal mining and agriculture—including grain and fruit growing, timber cutting, and raising of livestock such as sheep, hogs, poultry, and cattle—have always been the chief occupations of the people who lived in the immediate area surrounding New Vrindaban.

Kirtanananda contemplates returning to Prabhupada.

When Kirtanananda arrived at Rose’s farm in March 1968, Marshall County had been in a recession since the 1940s when the industrial activities along the Ohio River began to decline. The steel mill in Benwood had closed and many coal miners lost their jobs due to mine mechanization and newly-implemented governmental restrictions on the burning of high sulfur coal. The area lost several thousand jobs when Marx Toy Company (the largest toy plant in the world under one roof, established in the 1930s), U.S. Stamping Company, Vulcan Rail and Construction Company, and Wheeling Bronze Casting closed their doors. Unfavorable economic conditions forced cutbacks in the operations of other manufacturing firms. One of the oldest and best known businesses in the area, Fostoria Glass Company (established in Moundsville in 1891), laid off seventy-five percent of their employees it had hired in former years. Young people left the area in droves, unable to find work.⁴¹

Kirtanananda, however, like Prabhupada, was not interested in economic activities. He liked the quiet and solitude of the abandoned farm. It was primitive, but it was peaceful. If people in the cities were unemployed, that was their problem; they chose to live in the cities. The cities were hellish. Kirtanananda remembered the verse by the English poet, William Cowper (1731-1800), which Prabhupada liked to quote: “God made the country, but man made the town.” Kirtanananda might also have heard Hayagriva quote the American poet and philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882): “Cities force growth, and make men talkative and entertaining, but they make them artificial.”

Kirtanananda was quite happy to chant Hare Krishna for hours on end at the rundown farmhouse. The vibration of the holy names sounded very sweet in the quiet atmosphere where the only other sounds were chirping crickets, warbling songbirds and the whistling of the breeze blowing through the trees. He lived very simply, and bathed every morning at the waterfall and pond (*Keshi ghat*) on the creek (Big Run, which empties into Wheeling Creek via Burches Run Lake). Kirtanananda said, “Some of you may discover that *Keshi ghat* is there, it is so nice. When I was living here [at Old Vrindaban], I was walking down there every day. There’s a pond down below the ashram to bathe in.”⁴²

Although the foot path from the farmhouse to *Keshi ghat* measures less than two tenths of a mile, the trail descends nearly 300 feet down into the valley along a steep and sometimes slippery slope. The daily hike up from the creek was strenuous, especially for Kirtanananda, who sometimes had to walk with a cane as a result of his childhood polio.

Kirtanananda usually ate only once a day. Oatmeal was his staple, but he supplemented his diet with wild blackberries, pokeweed shoots, bitter crabapples, the sweet yellow fruits of the may apple, and other

edible plants (which he called “forest vegetables”) which grew in the meadows and forests. He lived simply and in harmony with God and with nature.

But after some weeks of living practically in solitary confinement at the rundown backwoods farm, Kirtanananda grew restless. He needed some other activity to engage his senses. He eventually realized that he needed to preach. He wanted to attract other spiritual seekers to help build New Vrindaban into a God conscious country ashram.

But there was one big problem: he couldn’t do it alone. He needed Prabhupada. Kirtanananda and Hayagriva had tried, on their own, to attract followers, without much success. Although Hayagriva had managed to interest a few spiritually-inclined students by chanting Hare Krishna at the Wilkes-Barre community college, Kirtanananda had nothing to show for the last six months. The New York City book publishers wouldn’t even consider looking at “his” *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* when he and Hayagriva tried to sell a doctored version of Prabhupada’s manuscript which credited Kirtanananda as author and Hayagriva as editor.⁴³

Kirtanananda didn’t have the spiritual potency, the magnetism, the charisma, or the exoticism which came so naturally and easily to A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. And now he was practically all alone in the wilderness of West Virginia. What to do? He decided that somehow he had to get back into ISKCON, however painful it might be to humble himself and admit defeat.

ISKCON devotees intuitively understood why the two apostate disciples finally returned to Prabhupada’s flock: because they discovered that they could not attract followers without him. Brahmananda explained, “It was only after Kirtanananda and Hayagriva became frustrated, because they found it difficult to attract followers to come and live there at New Vrindaban, that they decided to offer the land to Srila Prabhupada to develop as a Krishna consciousness project. . . . I cannot at this point document it, but I know it and so does Gargamuni. You can also get it confirmed from Satsvarupa.”⁴⁴

Kirtanananda, on the other hand, described decades later a different motivation for returning to ISKCON; he insisted that he “wanted to do something for Prabhupada.” “I was living with Hayagriva [in Wilkes-Barre]. We took a trip out to West Virginia . . . and met Mr. Rose and saw the place. . . . I was there all by myself all alone in the house for a couple months and I did a lot of thinking. I wanted to do something for Prabhupada.”⁴⁵

“When I came to New Vrindaban, I only had seven dollars and one *dhoti*. We had no running water even, only an old broken down log farmhouse and [that winter] the snow came in through the cracks. But I was inspired to try and do something for Prabhupada.”⁴⁶

“We have to pray to Krishna that we don’t lose the original essence of New Vrindaban: the spirit of submission to the spiritual master. We came here because Prabhupada asked us to come here, not because we wanted to live in West Virginia.”⁴⁷

Kirtanananda attempts to reconcile with Prabhupada.

Kirtanananda couldn’t bring himself to write directly to Prabhupada to apologize and beg for forgiveness. Although he desired to reconcile with his spiritual master, he was still too proud. He had seen or heard about the condemning letters his guru had written to his godbrothers: “Kirtanananda is a crazy man,” “he should once more be sent to Bellevue,” “he has lost his link on account of disobedience,” “his future is very dark.” Kirtanananda was afraid to contact his spiritual master, like a disobedient child who fears punishment from his parents after committing some mischief. It seemed easier to stay away in hiding than to face Prabhupada. He had experienced Prabhupada’s thunderous wrath almost two years earlier during a class at 26 Second Avenue when his concocted ideas about surrendering to the “unborn within Krishna”

had been smashed by Swamiji. Kirtanananda had been “absent without leave” from Prabhupada and ISKCON for nearly half a year. Would Prabhupada forgive him for his offenses?

Kirtanananda thought that perhaps Hayagriva might intercede on his behalf. Hayagriva had never entirely neglected his relationship with his spiritual master; he had frequently written to Prabhupada during the previous six months, and had even considered quitting his teaching job and flying west to San Francisco to see his beloved guru. “Through February, I fight the urge to fly west. . . . Whenever I think of Prabhupada in San Francisco, I consider chucking the job and jumping a jet for the coast.”⁴⁸

Prabhupada had requested in an October 1967 letter to Hayagriva that he could purchase some property for an ashram near Wilkes-Barre. Prabhupada had specifically indicated in his March 17, 1968 letter that he would let the two of them try to start a Krishna conscious ashram on Richard Rose’s property in West Virginia.

Kirtanananda was undoubtedly encouraged by his spiritual master’s recent March 17th letter to Hayagriva; although Prabhupada was “sorry that he [Kirtanananda] has left our company,” his letter was nonetheless promising, “if Kirtanananda endeavors to utilize the 320 acres and turn them into New Vrindaban, I may permanently stay there and try to serve you in constructing a New Vrindaban city in West Virginia.” Kirtanananda wanted to connect again with Prabhupada; but he may have been afraid of what his master might say directly to him. Perhaps more chastisement would come. He had already suffered so much on account of his immaturity; he still hesitated to write to Prabhupada directly.

Janardan intercedes on Kirtanananda’s behalf.

Kirtanananda decided to write to his godbrother Janardan, who had assisted him in establishing the Montreal temple, and ask him to intercede on his behalf. Kirtanananda wrote to Janardan on April 7, and Janardan, in turn, wrote to Prabhupada on April 12. Prabhupada replied from New York on April 26:⁴⁹

My Dear Janardan,

Please accept my blessings. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated April 12, and postdated on April 24, 1968, with enclosure of letter from Kirtanananda Swami dated April 7, 1968. . . .

Regarding Kirtanananda’s letter, I may inform you that I always think of him and pray to Krishna for his good sense. That is my duty. Anyone who comes to me for my help or wants advance in Krishna Consciousness, and whom I initiate and accept as my disciple, I must pray for him and his welfare always. So Kirtanananda personally served me, especially during my illness, which I always remember. But because somehow or other he has misunderstood our activities that does not mean that I am no longer his well wisher. I write at the end of my letters to my disciples, “Your ever well-wisher,” and as such, I cannot become otherwise than being ever well-wisher of my disciples, even though he may leave me.

So I was praying to Krishna that He may save Kirtanananda from his misunderstanding and if ever he chanted Hare Krishna at least once in sincere heart, I am sure Krishna would not allow him to go out of his influence. Therefore, I believe that he can never forget the form of Krishna, neither he can deny His Personality. It is good news that he is trying to establish a new Vrindaban, which I suggested through Hayagriva Brahmachari, and if he is successful, in his attempt, certainly it will be considered a great benediction upon him by Lord Krishna. When I offered him Sannyas, I expected such great achievements through him and if Krishna desires, he will come out successful in his great attempt. Yes, I expressed my desire to go there through Hayagriva Brahmachari, and if I am invited to go there, by Kirtanananda Swami, it will be my great pleasure to see the place and enjoy his company.

Kirtanananda Swami must have been thrilled when he read Prabhupada’s reply, sent via Janardan. Prabhupada had not rejected him; he was still his well-wisher.

Hayagriva visits Prabhupada in New York.

In the meantime, on April 17, Prabhupada flew from San Francisco to New York, and Hayagriva was there to greet him at Kennedy Airport. After returning to the temple at 26 Second Avenue, Prabhupada spoke with his disciple: ⁵⁰

“So, you have seen this property and its owner in the Virginia?”

“Yes,” Hayagriva replied. “It’s very beautiful land. I’ve some reservations about the owner, though.”

“You must convince this gentleman to become Krishna conscious. Then we can make it into a Krishna conscious ashram.”

“I doubt I can convince him,” Hayagriva said. “Maybe Kirtanananda can. He says he’s opposed to all sectarian religions.”

“Then you must convince and inform him that we are not a religion but a science that is nonsectarian.”

“I’ll try.”

“Yes, you must try,” Prabhupada said. “That is all Krishna asks. You should try, and Kirtanananda should try. Just try to turn this land into a New Vrindaban. Then the rest is up to Krishna.”

Prabhupada shared with another disciple the good news about Hayagriva’s visit, “Hayagriva came to see me in New York and we talked very frankly, and he is still my good disciple, and I have asked him to stay with me wherever I may be, and he has agreed. I understand also from him that Kirtanananda Swami is also eager to see me, and we shall be very glad if they come back and work with us conjointly. I am praying for this to Krishna.” ⁵¹

After meeting with Prabhupada, Hayagriva spoke with Kirtanananda by telephone and shared Prabhupada’s desire to have Mr. Rose converted to Vaishnavism. Kirtanananda replied, “Impossible. We don’t agree on anything. I’ve just moved out to the back farm for some peace and quiet.” Hayagriva was discouraged, and thought, “It’s hopeless. We’ll NEVER convert Mr. Rose to Vaishnavism.” Hayagriva began looking at real estate for another ashram in the Poconos, ⁵² near Wilkes-Barre, but the prices were prohibitively expensive. Kirtanananda, however, apparently saw some potential in the rural West Virginia farm and he stayed on.

The prodigal son begs forgiveness.

On May 13, 1968, after an eight month unauthorized leave of absence, Kirtanananda finally mustered enough courage to write directly to Prabhupada; he had learned his lesson, he apologized for his offenses and begged forgiveness: “Long towards summer, Prabhupada went to Montreal, and I wrote to him and begged forgiveness for my offenses, and I wanted to surrender to him. . . . and he invited us to come and visit him in Montreal.” ⁵³

Prabhupada replied with great joy from Allston, Massachusetts, on May 23, 1968, and revealed his great love for his wayward disciple, “Sometimes I silently cried and prayed to Krishna that how I have lost this child, Kirtanananda”: ⁵⁴

My Dear Kirtanananda Swami,

Please accept my blessings. I was so glad to receive your letter dated May 13, 1968, and my gladness knew no bounds, exactly like that when one gets back his lost child.

You have written to say that you think of me often and now it is confirmed that you cannot do without thinking of me, because I was always thinking of you. Sometimes I silently cried and prayed to Krishna that how I have lost this child, Kirtanananda. But I am sure that you cannot be lost because you chanted very

nicely in Vrindaban. Anyone who once sincerely chanted the Holy Name of Krishna cannot be separated from the Krishna Consciousness atmosphere. So I was sure that you were never lost and you would come back. Anybody who asked me how Kirtanananda left me I answered that either Kirtanananda or Hayagriva cannot be lost because at least they have chanted sincerely the Holy Name of Krishna. Anyway, Hayagriva came to me and was very glad to see him in New York, and I expected also to see you. You wrote one letter to Janardan, and I have replied that letter, and from the letter you can understand my feelings for you. Krishna has provided you with a nice plot of land, and it is due to His causeless unlimited mercy upon you.

You were in Vrindaban but you did not like the atmosphere and you became disturbed, so immediately after your arrival in Vrindaban you felt uncomfortable—that I could understand, and therefore you came back to U.S.A. although it was settled before starting that you continue to live in Vrindaban. Krishna is so kind that you went to Indian Vrindaban, but you did not like that particular place, somehow or other, and therefore He has so kindly awarded so nice piece of land, exactly resembling Vrindaban. We should always know that Vrindaban is not localized in a particular area, but that wherever Krishna is there, Vrindaban is automatically there. And wherever the Holy Name of Krishna is chanted, Krishna is present there because there is no difference between Krishna and His Holy Name. So I am so pleased to learn that you are chanting and meditating on Krishna, and once only you are eating something to keep your body and soul together.

But my request is that as you have accepted Sannyas in this order of our disciplic succession, you must do some more service to Krishna than chanting and meditating, and the opportunity you have got. I understand that the land is very big area; I heard that it is 320 acres of land, and in the letter addressed to Janardan, you expressed your desire to convert this beautiful piece of land into New Vrindaban in U.S.A. I wish that you may try for this New Vrindaban to your best capacity, and Krishna will give you all help. And if this piece of land is turned into New Vrindaban then I shall forget to return to Indian Vrindaban. I am getting older and older, so actually if I get a peaceful place as described by you, the rest of my life will be continued in translating *Srimad-bhagavatam* and other Goswami literature, assisted by some of my disciples like you. So anytime you take me to your new hermitage, I shall be very glad to go there. . . .

I shall be much pleased if you kindly write me at your convenience, and more, I shall be glad to hear that you are chanting Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. . . .

As Prabhupada had forgiven and forgotten Kirtanananda Swami and Hayagriva's offenses, he admonished his other disciples to do the same. His two wayward disciples had returned to the flock; everyone should treat them as respected godbrothers in good standing and offer them obeisances.⁵⁵

Let us forget about our past incidences with Hayagriva and Kirtanananda. Treat Kirtanananda as bona fide and address him as Kirtanananda Maharaj. He should be first offered obeisances and he will return the respect to his Godbrothers. . . . Please be brotherly with Hayagriva and Kirtanananda. They have come back with sincerity.

After the spring semester was completed at Wilkes-Barre Community College, Hayagriva (who had just been fired by the college president and dean for chanting Hare Krishna in his English class) and one of his students, Harold Olstead (later initiated as Hrishikesh Das), came to live at New Vrindaban with Kirtanananda.

The devotees began cleaning the house, clearing paths with scythes and bush-axes, and repairing the dilapidated farmhouse. They hauled water from the creek for drinking, cooking and bathing, and picked wild blackberries for jam and chutney. Hayagriva purchased supplies with money he had earned as a Professor of English: screens for windows, insect repellent, mantles for kerosene lanterns, detergent, a broom, foam mats, rubbing alcohol for mosquito bites, sugar and oatmeal, canned fruit juice, fruits and vegetables, buckets, a bush-ax, etc.

Through his letters and conversations, Prabhupada established the direction of Krishna conscious country living: the community should be based on Vedic ideals, everyone living simply, keeping cows and working the land. “Simple living and high thinking” would be their motto. The community would be aloof from the city and might sometimes appear inconvenient and austere, but life would be peaceful, free from the anxieties of the artificial urban society based on hard work for sense gratification.

Prabhupada indicated that: “The men should be engaged in (1) producing vegetables, (2) tilling the field, (3) taking care of the animals, (4) house construction, etc., and the women shall do the indoor activities,”⁵⁶ such as: “(1) taking care of the children, (2) cleaning the temple, kitchen, etc., (3) cooking, and (4) churning butter,”⁵⁷ and all the members of the community would serve Krishna and chant his name.

The main business of New Vrindaban: raising cows.

From the very beginning, Prabhupada declared that the single-most important activity at the New Vrindaban Community was to care for cows and bulls. He insisted that the economic problem would be solved by tilling the land and protecting cows. He explained this succinctly in a letter to Hayagriva from Montreal dated June 14, 1968, “give all protection to the cows, and that should be the main business of New Vrindaban.”⁵⁸

I have advised Kirtanananda and yourself to convert West Virginia into New Vrindaban. I understand the spot is very beautiful, and the hills may be renamed as New Govardhan. And if there are lakes, they can be renamed as Shyamakunda and Radhakunda. Vrindaban does not require to be modernized because Krishna’s Vrindaban is transcendental village. They completely depend on nature’s beauty and nature’s protection. The community in which Krishna preferred to belong was Vaishya community, because Nanda Maharaj [Krishna’s father] happened to be a Vaishya king, or landholder, and his main business was cow protection. It is understood that he had 900,000 cows and Krishna and [his brother] Balaram used to take charge of them, along with His many cowherd boy friends, and everyday, in the morning He used to go out with His friends and cows into the pasturing grounds.

So, if you seriously want to convert this new spot as New Vrindaban, I shall advise you not to make it very much modernized. But as you are American boys, you must make it just suitable to your minimum needs. Not to make it too much luxurious as generally Europeans and Americans are accustomed. Better to live there without modern amenities. But to live a natural healthy life for executing Krishna Consciousness. It may be an ideal village where the residents will have plain living and high thinking. For plain living we must have sufficient land for raising crops and pasturing grounds for the cows. If there is sufficient grains and production of milk then the whole economic problem is solved. You do not require any machines, cinema, hotels, slaughter houses, brothels, nightclubs—all these modern amenities.

People in the spell of *maya* are trying to squeeze out gross pleasure from the senses, which is not possible to derive to our heart’s content. Therefore we are confused and baffled in our attempt to eschew eternal pleasure from gross matter. Actually, joyful life is on the spiritual platform, therefore we should try to save our valuable time from material activities and engage them for Krishna Consciousness.

But at the same time, because we have to keep our body and soul together to execute our mission, we must have sufficient (not extravagant) food to eat, and that will be supplied by grains, fruits, and milk. So if you can develop this place to that ideal life and the residents become ideal Krishna Conscious men, in that part of your country, I think not only many philosophically minded people will be attracted, but they will be benefited also. . . .

The difficulty is that the people in this country, they want to continue their practice of sense gratification, and at the same time they want to become transcendently advanced. This is quite contradictory. One can advance in transcendental life by process of negating the general practice of materialist life. The exact adjustment is in Vaishnava philosophy, which is called *Yukta Vairagya*, means that we should simply

accept the bare necessities of our material part of life, and try to save time for spiritual advancement. This should be the motto of New Vrindaban, if you at all develop it to the perfectional stage. And I am always at your service to help you by practical suggestion and assistance also. . . .

For the time being, if you actually want to develop such ideal ashram, we must have sufficient land, and all other things will gradually grow. For raising crops from the land, how many men will be required—that we must estimate and for herding the cows and feeding them. We must have sufficient pasturing ground to feed the animals all round. We have to maintain the animals throughout their life. We must not make any program for selling them to the slaughterhouses. That is the way of cow protection.

Krishna by His practical example taught us to give all protection to the cows and that should be the main business of New Vrindaban. Vrindaban is also known as *Gokula*. *Go* means cows, and *kula* means congregation. Therefore the special feature of New Vrindaban will be cow protection, and by doing so, we shall not be loser. In India of course, a cow is protected and the cow herdsman they derive sufficient profit by such protection. Cow dung is used as fuel. Cow dung dried in the sunshine kept in stock for utilizing them as fuel in the villages. They get wheat and other cereals produced from the field. There is milk and vegetables and the fuel is cow dung, and thus, they are self-independent in every village. There are hand weavers for the cloth. And the country oil-mill (consisting of a bull walking in circle round two big grinding stones, attached with yoke) grinds the oil seeds into oil.

The whole idea is that people residing in New Vrindaban may not have to search out work outside. Arrangements should be such that the residents should be self-satisfied. That will make an ideal ashram. I do not know these ideals can be given practical shape, but I think like that; that people may be happy in any place with land and cow without endeavoring for so-called amenities of modern life—which simply increases anxieties for maintenance and proper equipment. The less we are anxious for maintaining our body and soul together, the more we become favorable for advancing in Krishna Consciousness.

Inspired by Prabhupada's letter, Hayagriva approached Mr. Rose and asked him to sell or lease him the entire back farm. Rose, however, would not sell the land or give a long-term lease; he insisted only on short-term leases of five years. "I don't want one sect to take over the whole ashram. I want to leave it open for as many different kinds of people as possible. That's the idea, you see. To leave the path to Truth open. People of all backgrounds and philosophies can come from all over the world here to seek Truth."⁵⁹

"It will be failure."

On June 22, Kirtanananda wrote to Prabhupada about the difficulties with Mr. Rose, his insistence on having a "nonsectarian" institution, and the "backwards and suspicious" neighbors. He also requested some assistance to help build the community. Specifically Kirtanananda requested ISKCON to send *one hundred* brahmacharis to help at New Vrindaban.

Prabhupada was disappointed to hear of Mr. Rose's refusal to accept ISKCON as a "nonsectarian" institution, and replied to Kirtanananda from Montreal on June 30. In reply to his disciple's specific request for one hundred brahmacharis, Prabhupada answered, "I think no brahmachari will agree to go there."⁶⁰

Mr. Rose may be very good man, but he does not know what is sectarian and what is non-sectarian. . . . I therefore think that you should try to convince Mr. Rose about our philosophy of Krishna Consciousness, and let him become actually non-sectarian. Without understanding Krishna, everyone is sectarian, and combination of such non-Krishna Consciousness persons will never create any institution of non-sectarian nature. That is not possible. . . .

For the present, live as simply as possible, without any endeavor to develop that part into New Vrindaban, or do it peacefully as you have mentioned, but you must continue to chant Hare Krishna, at least you and

Hayagriva, and ask everybody to join you. At least Mr. Rose cannot object to this performance of kirtan because he wants to give facility to all sects. So even if he takes it that our Krishna Consciousness movement is also a particular type of sect, certainly he will not have any objection. Therefore, the conclusion is that you must regularly hold Krishna kirtan, now, and even as in our other centers they are doing. And live peacefully without any exaggeration, and try to convince people about the nonsectarian nature of Krishna Consciousness. I think that will make you successful in this great adventure. . . .

But, if the people are backwards and suspicious, then how your scheme will be successful, in that part of the country? This movement is meant for intelligent class of men, those who have reason and logic to understand things in a civilized way, and who are open-hearted to receive things as they are. . . . But if the place is infested with such suspicious men and backward class, then how you can develop a New Vrindaban there? The circumstances as you have described them is not very favorable. Therefore I think the attempt will not be very successful.

Krishna Consciousness movement can be pushed forward in a favorable atmosphere. If the atmosphere is not favorable, then don't attempt it, it will be failure. Precaution you may take, but as you grow larger, if they are suspicious then they may cause trouble. Because you can dress yourself and live peacefully at your home, but if you neighbors are always suspicious, then there may be always danger. Therefore, why should we make our residence in such a place. And I think no brahmachari will agree to go there and live in such uncomfortable situation, with suspicious neighbors. Simply for land, we don't care. We simply want favorable place for worshipping Krishna. That is our idea.

100 Bramacharis?

Prabhupada must have thought Kirtanananda's request for one hundred brahmacharis extremely odd; there were hardly a hundred devotees in all of ISKCON, let alone one hundred brahmacharis who could pack up their bags and move to New Vrindaban at a moment's notice. Kirtanananda had been out of touch with ISKCON for too long. Prabhupada confided to Brahmananda, "Kirtanananda is in W. Virginia and he invites 100 brahmacharis there. I don't how would you like this idea of when we have got 100 brahmacharis." ⁶¹

Prabhupada explained his reservations regarding Mr. Rose in a letter to Hayagriva dated July 10; he suggested that the West Virginia property should be abandoned and that Hayagriva should come and live with him: ⁶²

So far I could understand, . . . that we had no freedom of action because the land belongs to Mr. Rose, who wants to develop an institution appealing to all sections of seekers in spiritual enlightenment. Such ideal of impersonal views can never be successful. . . . If Mr. Rose wants something for the satisfaction of all sections of spiritualists, I think your endeavor will not be very successful. Under the circumstances, I would advise you to live with me.

Prabhupada did not want to invest men and money into a scheme which he thought would amount to nothing. He wrote to Upendra in San Francisco, "I understand from Gargamuni that Hayagriva has sent you a letter inviting some of you to live with him in W. Virginia where they are attempting to open a new center, but I am not very much hopeful about this center because there are so many impediments. I have already written to Kirtanananda that in such suspicious and unfavorable conditions, no brahmachari will be interested to go there. If there is actually any invitation for going there, I send herewith instructions to all of you that for the present, there is no necessity of going there. And in future, also, nobody shall go there without getting my permission." ⁶³

Prabhupada proposes New Vrindaban in Florida.

When his disciple Dayananda reported that a man in Florida wanted to utilize ten acres of land for a spiritual ashram, Prabhupada suggested in July that they could develop a “New Vrindaban” in Florida. “Regarding Mr. John Fugate: This news is very encouraging. As we are spreading our Krishna Consciousness in your country, we need a center in Florida, and if Mr. Fugate cooperates with this movement, certainly he will be very much benefited. So you can keep him alive by correspondence and send him our books and literature to read. So the ten acres of land which Mr. John Fugate wants to utilize for some spiritual cultivation center can well be utilized in developing a New Vrindaban. In San Francisco, they are developing a New Jagannath Puri and in Florida we shall develop a New Vrindaban.”⁶⁴

Back in West Virginia, Hayagriva and Kirtanananda wondered, “Should we pack up and leave? Or stay on and struggle?” Late in July, they decided to visit Prabhupada in Montreal and let him decide. However, while hiking the trail to their car, they discovered that there had been a shooting at Richard Rose’s ashram at the goat farm.

The “shoot out” at Rose’s “goat farm.”

One unexpected event late at night on Tuesday, July 16 helped remove the obstacle of Richard Rose’s stubbornness to grant a long term lease on his back farm: a shooting at his “goat farm.” Rose described the shoot-out at his ashram; he claimed that his house was attacked by trigger-happy hillbillies, that his sleeping son could have been killed by a bullet which went through the wall only twelve inches from his head, and that he had acted only in self defense to protect his home, son, and students.⁶⁵

“We had a little trouble out here a few years back when I was first trying to get a group started. I had some real weirdoes staying out here. Dope heads, hippies.” He looked around at our faces.

“You was here that time, wasn’t you, Pete?”

Pete, a tall boy with close-cropped hair, nodded. “Yeah, I’m the only one left from those days. The locals had never seen anything like us, I guess. It made them nervous.”

“The locals didn’t know what was going on out here,” Rose went on, “but whatever it was they aimed to put a stop to it. One night a couple carloads of hillbillies pulled up in front of the house at about two in the morning and started shooting up the place. Bullets were coming through the windows and the walls.”

Rose shook his head at the memory and wiped his brow again.

“Inside was a real circus,” he went on. “We grabbed my hunting rifles and returned fire. These hippies on my place were always preaching peace and love, but when the shooting started they could really handle the rifles. This one speed freak, what was his name?”

“Rick,” Pete said.

“Right, right. He was loading and firing a single-shot rifle so fast it sounded like a machine gun.”

“Anybody hurt?” I asked.

“Nobody inside the house. One of the boys in the cars got shot. I got arrested for it even though the hillbillies attacked my place and fired on us first.”

“But a man’s got a right to defend his property,” I said.

“It was a young kid who got hit in the car. He came from one of the bigger clans in the valley, and I guess the cops figured they had to arrest somebody. They put me in handcuffs and shoved me in the back of a cruiser. My son was living out here at the time, you know. He was about twelve then. A bullet ripped

through the trailer where he was sleeping about a foot above his head. If something would have happened to him, there would've been real trouble, believe me.”

“What happened after your arrest?” I asked.

“I posted bail and came back out to the farm. But as I sat there in the farmhouse it hit me: this could be the end of it. I could lose the farm, my family, the group, everything. And even though I can never forget this world isn't real, once it starts affecting you like it *is* real, then you have no choice but to react.

“So I made up my mind to fight—to protect my farm, my family, my work. To die or kill somebody if I had to. Because even though the group was just a bunch of potheads, at least it was a start. If I let the hillbillies scare them off then the serious people who might come in the next wave would have no place to settle. Besides, I'd made up my mind early in life that no matter what happened to me I'd never give in to fear.

“I've been asked why I did this, why I took up a gun to protect my farm. Well, I did it because those people [my students] were struggling for purity, struggling to become as little children. And you've got to protect that struggling, just like you'd protect a little child.”

Hayagriva claimed, however, that the “shoot-out” was nothing more than a carload of kids throwing firecrackers. Rose hadn't been attacked by gun-toting hillbillies; they were just a few drunk and rambunctious youngsters having some fun.⁶⁶

Inevitably, when some youngsters on Route 250 got drunk and rambunctious, they decided to drive over to Rose's house and throw some firecrackers. Late at night, of course. “We thought the firecrackers were gunshots,” Reg tells us. “Rose was running all around flicking on spotlights and handing out rifles, shouting, ‘We'll get 'em next time round!’ Naturally Don and the girls were terrified. I was just dazed. And sure enough, the car came back. When the firecrackers went off, Rose and Don started shooting out of the second floor window. A 17-year old boy was hit. They say he'll survive. The parents are suing.”

One contemporary account (and probably the most accurate of all) described yet a different scenario: the teenagers had neither shot at the house with guns, nor lit firecrackers: they had simply thrown a few rocks onto the property. The *Moundsville Daily Echo* reported: “Rose said rocks were thrown at him. Rose called the prosecutor's office Wednesday morning to report that he had taken shots at someone in a light colored car who had annoyed him with rocks.”⁶⁷

Richard Rose is under \$2,000 bond to appear before Squire Harley Moore on July 24 on a charge of malicious assault following a shooting affair at his farm on the north end of McCreary ridge Tuesday evening. David Rogerson, 17, of Sherrard, is in Reynolds Memorial hospital with a bullet still in his lung, reported doing well but it may be safer to leave the bullet in there, doctors say. . . .

The three boys in this incident said they were not out of their car; Rose said rocks were thrown at him. Rose called the prosecutor's office Wednesday morning to report that he had taken shots at someone in a light-colored car who had annoyed him with rocks. . . .

Three boys . . . drove up that way Tuesday evening. Their account is that they went on past the Rose place and heard a shot fired as they went by on toward Burch Run Lake; they turned around and came back, when they were greeted by a fusillade of rifle fire.

Officers found four bullet holes in the car, all at a level that would have hit a person had they gone inside. One shot went through the front fender; the next went into a door but was stopped there; the third angled in and out a rear corner; the fourth went into the trunk, on through the seat back and lodged in Rogerson's lung cavity.

Rose was indicted for malicious assault. Despite his acreage, he had little cash. If the boy's parents won the suit, he could lose his back farm. He needed money immediately to hire a good defense attorney.

After some hemming and hawing, Rose reluctantly accepted Hayagriva's proposal: four thousand dollars for a ninety-nine year lease. Exuberant, Hayagriva and Kirtanananda traveled to Montreal to discuss with Prabhupada the newest developments.

Kirtanananda sees his spiritual master again.

Although Hayagriva had seen Prabhupada only three months earlier in April, Kirtanananda had not seen his spiritual master for ten months, since he left India the previous year on September 22. It had been such a long time since the two had seen each other face to face. The long-awaited reunion was highly emotional, and both Prabhupada and Kirtanananda cried tears of joy. Kirtanananda presented Prabhupada with a quart of blackberry chutney and one of raspberry jam, made from wild berries picked at New Vrindaban. Hayagriva wrote that Prabhupada "forgave his renegade disciples in Montreal with a garland of roses and a shower of tears." ⁶⁸

Kirtanananda said, "Prabhupada was very happy to see us; he welcomed us. It was an emotional meeting for me. It had been nearly a year; he was very welcoming." ⁶⁹

Kirtanananda continued, "He embraced me warmly and said, 'Now it is confirmed that we cannot be separated!'" ⁷⁰

Prabhupada was pleased with Rose's agreement to lease the land for ninety-nine years, but asked, "What happens to the property after ninety-nine years?" Hayagriva responded, "I don't know. We won't be around then." "But the Society will," Prabhupada countered. "There must be an agreement that at the end of the lease, the property will go to us." He also specified that ISKCON should have timber and mineral rights.

Kirtanananda and Hayagriva remained in Montreal for five days. During this time, Prabhupada often spoke of his desire to see New Vrindaban become a holy place of pilgrimage like Vrindaban in India. "Sitting before him, we begin to see spiraling gold-domed temples in the West Virginia hills. Vaporous fantasies, perhaps, but so strong is Prabhupada's confidence that for us his New Vrindaban temples seem as tangible as his tin footlocker. . . . Talking leisurely in the cool Montreal afternoon, Prabhupada describes New Vrindaban so graphically that we envision great lines of tourists waiting for guides to lead them through marble temples and palaces." ⁷¹

While in Montreal, Kirtanananda Swami and Hayagriva acquired New Vrindaban's first deities: a set of wooden Jagannath deities which they purchased from an import house. The deities, Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra, are abstract and colorful forms of Krishna, his brother Balarama and his sister Subhadra, which are usually carved from wood. According to the *Skanda-Purana*, the original deities were commissioned by King Indradyumna many thousands of years ago.

Prabhupada taught them how to offer *mangal-aroti*, the pre-sunrise worship ceremony of the Gaudiya-Vaishnavas. "I am very glad to learn, Kirtanananda, you are feeling so much happy in serving a beautiful Jagannath Murtis which you have taken from Montreal. . . . Jagannath Swami is very kind to the fallen souls, because He is the Lord of the universe, and all the living creatures are His subjects; therefore, Jagannath Swami will bless you with all the required intelligence needed for knowing how to satisfy Him." ⁷²

The lease is signed.

When Hayagriva and Kirtanananda returned to West Virginia, the lease contract was finalized between Hayagriva (Howard Morton Wheeler) and Richard Rose, Jr., and his wife Phyllis E. Rose on August 7, 1968: a ninety-nine year lease on the 132.77 acres property for four thousand dollars, a very fair price

(\$30.13 per acre), with an option to purchase for ten dollars when the lease expired. Hayagriva put down a \$1500 deposit.⁷³

The lease specified that Hayagriva could lease the land “excepting and reserving, however, all of the coal within and underlying said property, . . . Also excepting and reserving all of the oil, gas and other minerals within and underlying said property, reserving unto the said parties of the first part, their heirs, personal representatives and assigns, the right to sell, lease and operate for said oil, gas and other minerals.”

The lease also specified that “the party of the second part [Hayagriva], his heirs, personal representatives and assigns shall pay all real estate taxes assessed against said property, . . . may not assign or sub-lease the demised property without written consent of the parties of the first part [Mr. and Mrs. Rose], their heirs, personal representatives or assigns, EXCEPT, however, that said party of the second part, his heirs or personal representatives, shall have the right to assign or sub-lease the demised premises, or any part thereof, to any religious foundation, or religious institution, or religious corporation, or to any group that shall hold generally to the philosophic concept of maintaining a religious retreat or philosophic Ashram, without the consent of the parties of the first, part, their heirs, personal representatives or assigns.”

The lease ordered that Hayagriva “accepts the buildings upon the demised premises, if any, in their present physical condition, and the parties of the first part, their heirs, personal representatives and assigns, shall not be obligated or required to maintain, repair or improve said demised premises or any buildings or improvements thereon, and that they shall not be liable for any damage occasioned by failure to keep said premises in repair, nor for any latent or patent defects in the premises and fixtures thereon, nor for any damages arising from the act or neglect of the party of the second part, his heirs, personal representatives assigns or the occupants of any building, co-tenants, or of any owners or occupants of adjacent or contiguous property.”

The lease specified that Hayagriva had “the right, at any time, during the term of this lease, to erect upon the demised premises such buildings or other improvements as he or they may elect,” and also that “if the said party of the second part, his heirs, personal representatives or assigns, shall neglect to make any payment of rent when due, or to pay the real estate taxes when due, or neglect to do or perform any matter or thing herein agreed to be done or performed by them, the parties of the first part, their heirs, personal representatives or assigns may declare this lease terminated and canceled and without notice, take possession of said premises without prejudice to any other legal remedy they may have on account of such default, retaining any rental payments therefore made, and any buildings or improvements on said demised premises, as liquidated damages.”

The lease concluded, “It is further agreed between the parties hereto that during the last year of the term of this lease, the party of the second part, his heirs, personal representatives and assigns shall have the right to purchase the demised property for the price of ten dollars (\$10.00) payable in cash; and upon payment of such sum, the parties of the first part, their heirs, personal representatives and assigns will deliver to the party of the second part, his heirs, personal representatives and assigns an apt and sufficient general warranty deed conveying fee simple title to said demised property.”

The *Moundsville Daily Echo* considered the signing of the lease important enough news to warrant a four-paragraph article on their front page: “Rose Leases Farm For Religious Group. . . . This is the land where a number of nonconformist people have been spending the summer in a sort of retreat, which attracted the attention of neighbors and that resulted in shots being fired at a passing car this summer. A Protestant minister who went to the farm to investigate reported he found them fascinating to talk with.”

Hayagriva explained, “Rishi Rose agreed to lease the property, figuring we’d never last the first winter. No insulation, no electricity, no way to get supplies up except by foot, the main farmhouse in disrepair, only a well and bucket for water, no heater, just the fireplace, and we were inexperienced with a chainsaw. . . . With just no idea about survival on a farm, we were New York hippies bound to leave before the January snowstorms. Rishi Rose figured on earning a fast fifteen hundred dollar deposit on his 99-year lease.”⁷⁵

“Now we can work with great enthusiasm for constructing a New Vrindaban in the United States.”

Prabhupada was pleased with the terms of the lease, except for their inability to restrict the mining of coal and other minerals on the property, and encouraged his disciples to construct “a New Vrindaban in the United States. . . . That is my great happiness.” He also outlined his plan for the development of the community: build a temple for the deities, residential quarters for brahmacharis and grihasthas, establish a post office, establish a connection with the electric company, plan for building seven principle temples like in Vrindaban, India, and eventually five thousand temples (“far distant scheme”). Prabhupada also named the goat and the cow, although the cow would not arrive until some seven or eight months later, in the spring of 1969.⁷⁶

As it is clear to everyone of us, now we can work with great enthusiasm for constructing a New Vrindaban in the United States. People who came from Europe to this part of the world, they named so many new provinces, and countries, just like New England, New Amsterdam, New York, so I also came in this part of the world to preach Krishna Consciousness and by His Grace and by your endeavor, New Vrindaban is being constructed. That is my great happiness. Our sincere endeavor in the service of the Lord, and the Lord’s assistants, to make our progressive march successful, are two important things to be followed in spiritual advancement of life. I think it was Krishna’s desire that this New Vrindaban scheme should be taken up by us, and now He has given us a great opportunity to serve Him in this scheme. So let us do it sincerely and all other help will come automatically. . . .

Concentrate in one temple, and then we shall extend one after another. Immediately the scheme would be to have a temple in the center as you have already taken the plan, and residential quarter for the Brahmacharis, or Grihasthas, and let us go ahead with that plan at first.

Our next attempt should be to establish a New Vrindaban post office at our door, and if you can arrange for this. . . .

You told me that you will arrange for the electricity immediately, so as soon as electricity connection is there, I shall go and stay in New Vrindaban for some time. Maybe, Krishna desiring, I may make my headquarters there. . . .

P.S. The goat can be named *Revachhagi*, and the cow can be named as *Surabhigai*. Also you will be pleased to note that I’ve asked Goursundar to make a layout of the whole land and I shall place 7 different temples in different situation, as prototype of Vrindaban. There will be seven principle temples, namely, Govinda, Gopinath, Madan Mohan, Shyamsundar, Radha-Raman, Radha-Damodar, and Gokulananda. Of course in Vrindaban, there are about more or less, big and small, about 5,000 temples; *that is a far distant scheme*.

Rose later claimed that his two tenants had tricked him and that they “put on bedsheets and began chanting gibberish” the day after the lease was signed. Hayagriva and Kirtanananda had originally told him that they had left the Krishna movement because the Krishna’s were too “close minded,” and they wanted to help Rose create a “non-dogmatic ashram.” Rose simply hadn’t reckoned that Ham and Wheeler might return to ISKCON. Despite Rose’s complaints about his tenants, he reportedly never lamented leasing his farm to them.⁷⁷

Rose never expressed outright regret over his decision to lease his “back” farm to Keith Ham and Howard Wheeler, even though they lied to him about their intentions and eventually turned it into a sprawling Hare Krishna empire that pressed against his farm from all sides. The New Vrindaban Community, as it was called, used their lease on Rose’s farm as a base to buy up most of the other farms in the area, and build the “Palace of Gold,” a huge structure featuring two hundred tons of white Italian and blue Canadian marble, and a dome covered with twenty-four-karat gold leaf.

“In some ways the Krishnites are better to have around than the hillbillies,” Rose said once. “At least they don’t get drunk and steal the radiators out of your trucks.”

Hayagriva applied for and received a position teaching English at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, a three hour drive from New Vrindaban. He arranged his weekly schedule so that he would teach Tuesday through Thursday in Columbus and work at New Vrindaban from Friday through Monday. Supplies for the community were purchased from his teacher’s salary. Hayagriva also started a preaching center in Columbus.

Brahmananda visits New Vrindaban.

Brahmananda, the New York temple president, traveled from New York City and visited New Vrindaban on September 5 and 6, 1968. Prabhupada wanted to be absolutely sure that Kirtanananda Swami and Hayagriva were actually following the principles of Krishna consciousness and the specific instructions which he gave regarding the formation of the West Virginia ashram. Brahmananda was apparently satisfied with what he saw; after returning to New York, he sent out a letter, approved by Prabhupada, to ISKCON centers (which now numbered twelve: New York City, San Francisco, Buffalo, Columbus, Montreal, Santa Fe, Los Angeles, London, Berlin, Seattle, Vancouver and New Vrindaban) to recruit “stout and sturdy devotees” to help build the New Vrindaban community.⁷⁸

7th September, 1968

ALL GLORIES TO SRI GURU AND GOURANGA

MEMO TO ALL DEVOTEES

RE: NEW VRINDABAN

I have just returned from a two days stay at our newest center New Vrindaban in Moundsville, West Virginia, near Wheeling. This New Vrindaban is under the direction of Sriman Hayagriva and Kirtanananda Maharaj and promises to be a great step forward for Krishna Consciousness in America. It has a farmhouse and several other structures, well, streams, hills (Govardhan, as named by Swamiji) pasture grounds (a cow will be acquired soon), ghat, pond, woodland, all situated on 138 acres. Prabhupada has requested that 7 temples be established there. Its main activity will be cow protection and to show the world that simply by living with cows and land and chanting HARE KRISHNA a perfect society will prevail.

A great deal of work is required and Swamiji has requested at least four devotees to go there immediately. New Vrindaban lacks so-called necessities as hot running water and toilets, so that only stout and sturdy devotees are needed, especially those with carpentry experience and can do manual labor. New Vrindaban will be especially attractive to householders who will want to raise their children in full K. C.

So, all devotees who are interested in living in New Vrindaban, either immediately or in the near future should please contact me. Those with carpentry experience should especially do so.

Approved

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Approved

Kirtanananda Swami

Approved

Signed

Brahmananda Das Brahmachari

Little Radha-Krishna deities acquired.

In September, New Vrindaban acquired a small pair of bell-metal Radha-Krishna deities from a devotee who recently returned from India. Prabhupada gave instructions for their worship, “I am very glad to learn that Harivilas has given you a pair of Radha-Krishna Murtis, so it appears that Radha-Krishna is very kind on you, because you went to Vrindaban, to live there but circumstantially, you could not live there, and you left. Krishna has given you New Vrindaban, as well as He has, out of His good will, He has come to you. It is very surprising. So please welcome the Deity and install Him in a nice throne. I think Vamanadev will be able to prepare a nice throne, and you have seen the New York Deities’ dress and process of worship, so you can do in that way. There is nothing to be added new. The same principle should be followed, and the Deities should always be well-dressed in clothing and some ornaments and flowers and incense. The Deities should always be attractive. And the more we are engaged in decorating the Deities, washing the room, the more we are engaged in Deity worship, the more we become purified. That is practical.”⁷⁹

Prabhupada wanted New Vrindaban to grow and suggested ways to recruit more souls to join the struggling community. He wrote to Kirtanananda Swami, “I hope that New Vrindaban will give shelter to so many unhappy men of this country and they will be happy by working there, and living there in good association of devotees. Pradyumna and Vamanadev are very good boys; keep them very nicely, and they will be very much helpful. . . . Yesterday, before coming here [to Seattle] I was talking with one hippy boy. He came to see me in my apartment in San Francisco, and was talking that hippies are in search after such peaceful place, like you have got in New Vrindaban. And they do not like to live in the cities anymore. So if some of us go and make some canvassing work among the hippies, that the thing which they are searching after is here in Krishna Consciousness, and as soon as they come they will understand, so somebody may be engaged in such propaganda work.”⁸⁰

To Hayagriva, Prabhupada requested, “If you can write a nice short article, inviting the hippies to take to Krishna Consciousness, and practice it in New Vrindaban, I think many sincere hippies who are looking after something genuine, peaceful, they will come. So our movement if it is introduced amongst the hippies, because so far I can understand, they are after such thing for peace of the mind. Not only for the hippies, but for everyone. Everyone is seeking after peace and happiness, but they are seeking in the material platform. That is not possible to be achieved there. One has to be elevated on the spiritual platform and then his aspiration will be fulfilled. I think you can write a nice article for publication in our *Back To Godhead*.”⁸¹

In November, Prabhupada gave specific instructions to Hayagriva to develop New Vrindaban into a place of pilgrimage “one mile long and one mile wide.”⁸²

New Vrindaban should be taken up very seriously because actually I want to develop a replica of Old Vrindaban. I have got ambition to construct there seven temples as follows: (1) Radha-Madana Mohan, (2) Radha-Govinda, (3) Radha-Gopinath, (4) Radha-Damodar, (5) Radha-Raman, (6) Radha-Gokulananda, (7) Radhya-Shyamasundar. The whole modern city of Vrindaban was established originally with these temples, started by different Goswamins. And later on, many kings and princes started their own temples, and thus the present Vrindaban is now full with small and big five thousand temples. We have to make

such a scheme in our New Vrindaban, gradually expanding to an area of one mile long and one mile wide. . .

Anyway, do not feel discouraged. As soon as New Vrindaban is connected with a link road as well as electricity, very soon it will develop into our idea. I shall personally go and stay there and see it is developed.

Hayagriva began publishing a “New Vrindaban Newsletter.” The December 4, 1968 issue reported: ⁸³

Work has been very strenuous these past two weeks. The main house is finally shingled, and the arbor is planted. We are looking forward to planting many crops this spring, so anyone gifted horticulturally is welcomed. We will also need people to work outside cultivating Krishna’s crops. A general appeal is also given herein for any carpenters who would like to come in early spring to begin construction of quarters so devotees will have a place to stay when they come out. At present there is only the main house, which is filled, and a dilapidated barn. Swamiji wants immediate construction of a kirtan hall and some brahmachari quarters.

The gathering and cutting of wood for winter survival is a larger ordeal than anticipated. Vaikunthajan’s broken axle has temporarily halted the operation. Hayagriva is considering getting coal. Meanwhile, New Vrindaban enjoyed a nippy 20 degrees the other day.

One by one, more hardy souls joined the pioneer community. Hayagriva explained: “We hurriedly patched the building that winter, heated one room with a 55-gallon drum filled with firewood, carried water in by hand from the spring, used kerosene lanterns for light and brought all food and other supplies in backpacks up two miles of muddy and snowy road.” ⁸⁴

The thought must have crossed Kirtanananda’s mind that when winter came the tiny gang of devotees might abandon their services and disappear to warmer climes. He wrote to Prabhupada expressing his doubts about remaining all alone at New Vrindaban during the winter, and Prabhupada replied: “I can understand from your letter that you are little concerned with remaining in New Vrindaban while the others are away, but in this connection you must remember that factually, you are not alone because you are always being protected by Lord Krishna. So I think that it is best that you stick to New Vrindaban, chant Hare Krishna, worship the deities and Krishna will send you help in men and money. So do not be agitated. If no one will come then you may live alone with Krishna and I am sure that Krishna will give you all facilities for progress in the very near future. Of course, you are always welcome to come see me, but while there is no one else to remain and to tend the deities, I think it best if you shall stay.” ⁸⁵

However, Kirtanananda was not abandoned; a core group of three other dedicated souls remained with him during the winter. Hayagriva wrote, “It was a miracle. . . . That first winter, Kirtanananda, Ranadhir, Hrishikesh [Harold Olmstead] and I were the only inhabitants.” ⁸⁶

“Pradyumna only stayed about a week before leaving for Columbus, and Vamanadev helped us repair the roof so it wouldn’t leak, but he also went to Columbus before the cold came. In January, my new wife [Shyama Dasi] came out.” ⁸⁷

Kirtanananda Swami summarized the activities of the devotees during the first winter: “The principal business was survival.” ⁸⁸

The February 20, 1969 *New Vrindaban Newsletter* reported: ⁸⁹

New Vrindaban finally has electricity. This week Swamiji wrote that if London plans are delayed, he will come to New Vrindaban March 4 to lay a cornerstone for a building project. All glories to Sri Gurudev! Actually, he proposed such a place dedicated to the transcendental pastimes of Sri Sri Radha-Krishna in the original ISKCON Prospectus printed in 1966. Now this proposal is being actualized.

New Vrindaban population is increasing. Satyabhama and Paramananda are scheduled to come out from New York Feb. 21. We are in need of greater accommodations, for we expect an influx when Swamiji comes. Our immediate concern is repairing the barn, which will accommodate a good number.

We are in the market for a cow (the Cow Fund is still open) and are clearing some pastureland of small trees and brambles. A lot of work has been possible lately for this has been, by Krishna's grace, a mild winter. We have only had light snows. The chain saw is working beautifully, and winter wood has been no problem.

We have already ordered spring flowers—500 gladiolas, roses, iris, lilacs, marigolds, hydrangeas, etc. We've also been fortunate this winter as far as flowers are concerned—one of the nurseries in Wheeling donates hundreds of roses and other beautiful flowers twice weekly. Our neighbors have been very friendly and are impressed that we have survived the winter.

Hayagriva wrote: "New Vrindaban wouldn't have lasted the first winter without faith in the instructions of the Guru and a lot of Hare Krishna chanting. Communal life isn't all honey and wildflowers."⁹⁰

Hayagriva continued: "We all just hung on. We had a couple of cats that nearly froze, and Revachugi, the goat. Electricity came in [February]. In April, Paramananda and Satyabhama came and made their home out of the chicken coop. Birbhadra and Girish also came. [Their first cow, Kaliya, also arrived in the Spring.] Then in May, Srila Prabhupada arrived."⁹¹

Swamiji becomes widely known as Prabhupada.

Although some devotees, such as Brahmananda,⁹² addressed their spiritual master—beginning in December 1967—by the respectful name of "Prabhupada," the practice had not widely caught on. Most disciples, including Hayagriva, still referred to him as "Swamiji" or "Bhaktivedanta Swami," as attested by his articles in the *New Vrindaban Newsletter* and *Back to Godhead*.

Govinda Devi Dasi explained how Swamiji's disciples received a great impetus to begin addressing their guru as "Prabhupada" when he explained: "'Ji' is a third-class form of address."⁹³

All along everyone knows him as "Swamiji." This is up until May 1968. And so [my husband] Gaurasundar decided he wanted to call me "Govindaji," and he asked Prabhupada [about it] and Prabhupada said: "No. Actually 'ji' is a third-class form of address. It's better not to call her 'Govindaji.'"

So I piped up—I was sitting right in front of him—I said, "Well, if it is a third-class form of address, why are we calling you 'ji?' Why are we calling you 'Swamiji?'" And he said, "Eh, it's not very important." And I said, "Oh, no. It's very important. If it's a third-class form of address, then we don't want to call you that. We want to call you the most first-class form of address. So tell us what would be a good name for us to call you by."

And he was very humble, very reluctant. But I pressed him, "I... like... you've gotta change this." And he [finally] said, "You can call me 'Gurudev,' 'Gurumaharaj,' or 'Prabhupada.'" So I said, "Well, that's three. We need one." And so I said, "Well, which one is the best?" and he answered: "Srila Prabhupada is nice. That is the best."

So I said, "From today, you will be called 'Srila Prabhupada!'" and so we told all the devotees. . . . We gradually started calling him 'Srila Prabhupada' from that time.

The April 18, 1969 issue of *Back to Godhead* announced the news of Swamiji's new form of address with a feature article titled: "Prabhupada."⁹⁴

The word Prabhupada is a term of the utmost reverence in Vedic religious circles, and it signifies a great saint even among saints. The word actually has two meanings: first, one at whose feet (Pada) there are

many Prabhus (a term meaning “master,” which the disciples of a Guru use in addressing each other). The second meaning is one who is always found at the Lotus Feet of Krishna (the Supreme Master).

In the line of disciplic succession through which Krishna Consciousness is conveyed to mankind, there have been a number of figures of such spiritual importance as to be called Prabhupada:

Srila Rupa Goswami Prabhupada executed the will of his Master, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and therefore he and his associate Goswamis are called Prabhupada. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur executed the will of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, and therefore he is also addressed as Prabhupada. Our Spiritual Master, Om Vishnupad 108 Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj has, in the same way, executed the will of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada in carrying the message of love of Krishna to the Western world, and therefore we American and European humble servants of His Divine Grace, from all the different centers of the Sankirtan Movement, have followed in the footsteps of Srila Rupa Goswami Prabhupada, and prefer to address His Grace our Spiritual Master as Prabhupada, and he has kindly said “Yes.”

Prabhupada visits New Vrindaban.

Hayagriva Das described Prabhupada’s long-awaited arrival at New Vrindaban on May 21, 1969, and an unexpected mishap with their vehicle: ⁹⁵

Srila Prabhupada arrives in an old Lincoln Continental we’ve just bought for \$100 because no one around here can pay to keep it afloat. . . . As he gets out of the Lincoln at the old schoolhouse, he is escorted into a roaring, smoking and stuttering 1952 Ford Power Wagon. Upon surveying this vehicle, His Divine Grace says, “Why not walk?”

The devotees protest that it’s two miles up the muddy road to the Vrindaban farm. “No matter,” he says. “We can walk.” The devotees, however, insist that he ride in comfort in the Power Wagon over the bridge across the Snyder farm. Srila Prabhupada relents and takes off with jolts and bounces up the gravel road leading to the Snyder house and a back pasture.

The Snyders aren’t home—the devotees seek to ask permission to traverse their land—and it is decided to go on anyway as in the past Mr. Snyder has graciously permitted passage. As the Power Wagon stops for the second gate, it suddenly explodes with pops and bangs, then sizzles and dies. “What is that?” Srila Prabhupada asks, hardly surprised. The devotees look at the engine with quiet despair.

Mr. Snyder, furious, rides up on a tractor. “You might have asked permission,” he growls. Many apologies and explanations that this is our spiritual master and that we knocked at the house but no one was about, etc., etc., until Mr. Snyder surmises that *he* is going to have to pull the antique Power Wagon off his property, and grumbles, “Well, all right. But the next time ask permission.”

The devotees look up to see Srila Prabhupada walking down the hill to the muddy road. “Better walk,” he says, walking so fast that the devotees have a hard time keeping up. He glides up the two-mile road as if on transcendental roller skates, the devotees suggesting from time to time that he sit down on a log to rest, and he refusing, less out of breath than they. His Divine Grace walks the two miles without stop, smiling and sometimes commenting on the violets and new May flowers.

The residents of New Vrindaban had anxiously prepared for their spiritual master’s arrival. Lumber for repairs and construction was procured by tearing down old abandoned houses in Wheeling and salvaging the wooden boards. Ranadhir explained, “I had gone back to New Vrindaban from Columbus . . . and Srila Prabhupada was expected in a couple of days. We were working on completing the *vyasasan* and painting his quarters when Girish came up the road and told us that Srila Prabhupada was coming up the road! At that time there were NO steps to the *vyasasan*! So I got a couple of cement blocks and placed them like steps and threw a blanket over them so they wouldn’t look too bad (although they were a little

dangerous). We were hoping that he wouldn't go up the stairs to the second floor right away because they [the stairs] had JUST been painted, so the paint was wet. Srila Prabhupada came into the temple room and took *darshan* of the deities. He went to get on the *vyasasan* and he looked at the steps. He avoided the steps and went to the side of the *vyasasan*, sat down and pulled his legs up after him. He gave class and by then the staircase was dry.”⁹⁶

Hayagriva described the remainder of Prabhupada's first day at New Vrindaban:⁹⁷

Paramananda parks [the Power Wagon] before the farmhouse, and the devotees carry in Prabhupada's luggage—suitcases, boxes, a big trunk full of manuscripts, and the eternal tin locker. Purushottama and Devanananda install Prabhupada's Radha-Krishna Deities upstairs, in the small room sectioned off from Prabhupada's bedroom by cherry wood walls. Prabhupada can comfortably watch *aroti* from a new innerspring mattress, which we set on the floor without a bedstead. Because the room is a little dim, we set up gooseneck floor lamps. Two small windows open out on the big willow. . . .

Prabhupada likes the room. A window fan keeps the air fresh, and it is convenient for his personal servants to bring him *prasadam* from the kitchen. We request everyone to keep quiet around the house. Whenever Prabhupada has to work or take rest, silence must reign.

Kirtanananda cooks *dal* and a vegetable *kitri* for Prabhupada, and Hrishikesh keeps running upstairs with hot *chapatis*. Prabhupada eats five *chapatis* and comments how Kirtanananda is the best cook in the movement. “And also the first to learn,” he adds.

After eating, Prabhupada takes rest. We tiptoe around the house, cleaning and preparing for evening *aroti*. The women and children pick wildflowers in the fields—wild geraniums, buttercups, fiddle fern and the aromatic phlox—and arrange them in vases on the altar.

Prabhupada comes downstairs about an hour before sunset. He walks a short distance down the road to relieve himself, and Purushottama follows carrying his water pot. Finished, Prabhupada washes his hands beside the well as Purushottama pours from the pot. All the time, Prabhupada's sacred thread hangs over his ear. After washing, he unloops the thread, then puts on fresh saffron cloth and *tilak*.

Devanananda brings out the foam rubber mat and asks Prabhupada where he would like to sit. We suggest sitting beneath the willow, but again Prabhupada prefers the persimmon tree beside the well. Here, the ground is a little level, and he can sit comfortably and look out over the ridge without the house blocking the view.

Devanananda sets a little reading table on the grass before Prabhupada and on it places Prabhupada's *Bhagavad-gita* and reading glasses. Also the latest copy of *Back to Godhead*. About fifteen devotees gather around Prabhupada, sitting beside him on the grass. . . .

A conchshell announces evening *aroti*. We follow Prabhupada into the temple room. During the *aroti*, Prabhupada stands and plays cymbals. . . . Midway through *aroti*, Prabhupada encourages us to dance. Then he dances, dipping his body slightly forward on one foot, dancing in rhythm to the cymbals he plays, striking them deftly so that they ring loud and long.

To lecture, he sits on the modest *vyasasan* beside the fireplace. The dais is purple with golden cushions. Above it hangs a print of Lord Nrsimhadev tearing out the entrails of Hiranyakashipu. . . . After the lecture, Prabhupada goes upstairs to his room. We ask him if he'd like to walk outside for fresh air and a view of the stars. “Yes. Why not? Devanananda, get my *chadar*.”⁹⁸

We follow him outside as far as the open field beside the barn. The moon has yet to rise. The Milky Way, directly overhead, spans the dome of sky, a faint luster on black satin. . . .

Prabhupada walks a little distance down the road, but stops, again looks about, then turns back. It is too dark to walk very far. “No, Krishna has given you a very nice place here,” he says. “You have everything.

You are not needing cinemas or nightclubs here. At night, we can see the universe and just sit and listen about Krishna. Then take some warm milk and rest. Who would not be satisfied?" . . .

[The next morning] we attend the *aroti* ceremony, some twenty of us crowded into the downstairs temple room. . . . Prabhupada strikes the steel gongs with a mallet. He intently watches the Deities as Pradyumna, serving as *pujari* [priest], offers incense and camphor, water and handkerchief, peacock fan and yak tail whisk, circulating them before Lord Jagannath in the Deity alcove. . . .

After the offerings, Prabhupada goes upstairs and celebrates a second *aroti* before his own Radha-Krishna Deities. He sits on the new innerspring mattress and rings a small bell as Purushottama makes the offerings. After this *aroti*, Prabhupada sits alone in his room, chanting away. . . .

For breakfast *prasadam*, we eat cornmeal cereal ground from the small hand mill in the barn, fresh milk from Kaliya and local tulip honey. After breakfast, chores are assigned. . . .

Prabhupada walks out to the field by the barn to enjoy the early morning sun. Devanananda follows him and sets down the foam mat. Prabhupada sits down, and Devanananda begins to massage with mustard seed oil. Purushottama takes dictations during the massage. Afterwards, we arrange a hot water bath on the porch, heating the water in washtubs over an outdoor wood fire.

"So here at New Vrindaban only Krishna is master," he says. "In the material world, everyone is trying hard to be master, but here it is different. Here we all acknowledge that Krishna is master; therefore we have called this land New Vrindaban." . . .

"In this consciousness of knowing that we are all servants, we divide duties among ourselves. By carrying out the duty prescribed by the spiritual master, you attain your perfection. So everyone here has to make his own routine. For chanting and reading *Bhagavad-gita*, you should allow, say, up to three hours daily. If twenty-four hours are at our disposal, we can use six or seven for sleeping, and two or three for chanting and reading."

"At least five hours are devoted to *aroti* and kirtan," Kirtanananda says.

"And at least two hours for *prasadam*," Satyabhama says.

"And ten to twelve hours in the field," Ranadhir says.

"So what are you saying?" Prabhupada asks. "Do you want to stop chanting and reading?"

"No! No!" everyone protests.

"Then you can forego your sleeping and eating," Prabhupada says. "The Goswamis were doing that. If they could not finish their chanting, they would forego their eating and sleeping."

"But the Goswamis didn't swing axes all day," Paramananda says. "Did they?"

"No," Prabhupada laughs. "They were writing books. Anyway, you have to manage your own time. Just as I have to manage my own routine, you have to manage yours. But even if you don't have time to read one chapter of *Bhagavad-gita* daily, that is all right, because you're already engaged in *Bhagavad-gita*. Any duty done here at New Vrindaban is spiritual. Because Krishna was inducing Arjuna to fight, his fighting was also devotional service. Similarly, work done here at New Vrindaban is also considered reading *Bhagavad-gita*. But in any case, chanting must go on."

During Prabhupada's stay at New Vrindaban, many of his disciples at other ISKCON temples came to see their spiritual master. Chintamani Dasi wrote about her memories of Prabhupada at New Vrindaban: ⁹⁹

As I got nearer, I saw Srila Prabhupada. He was sitting outside on the grass with several devotees around him. He was beaming. It was a beautiful, sunny, transcendental spring day. Seeing Srila Prabhupada made

everything perfect. He was just sitting there, looking around at the devotees. It was obvious he really liked it in New Vrindaban. . . .

It was cold the first night we stayed in the barn. Morning came, and someone hit a gong—time to get up! Near the temple there was a small room where everyone put on *tilak* before entering the temple. *Mangal-aroti* was so ecstatic! Srila Prabhupada would come downstairs and sit on a raised platform that had a gold pillow on it. Kirtanananda Maharaj would play harmonium. Sometimes Hayagriva would blow his kelp horn that was so long he practically had to stand in the kitchen to play. Everyone danced ecstatically. Afterwards, Srila Prabhupada would give classes on *Srimad-bhagavatam*. . . .

Bhurijana Das wrote about his visit to New Vrindaban and the poverty of the community: ¹⁰⁰

In 1969, New Vrindaban was impoverished. When it came time for my second initiation, the temple could only afford two pounds of butter to heat into ghee for the fire sacrifice. Half of that small amount spilled as the devotee carrying the ghee pot slipped on his way to the sacrificial arena. Prabhupada simply shook his head when he was handed the pot with its tiny amounts of ghee. “In Vedic times,” he said, “tons of ghee were spared for a single *yajña* [fire sacrifice]. But now, just see!”

Six year old Dvarakadhish Das, remembered Prabhupada’s visit and his personal instruction that Krishna purifies everything, even stool. ¹⁰¹

I had my own, smaller Deities of Radha and Krishna. Every day I would bathe, dress, and decorate Them with jewelry and flowers. One day I even built a small temple for Them on the front lawn. I piled up red bricks on three sides to make the walls and left the front open. For a roof I used cloth. The structure was about two feet square and two feet tall. At night I went to sleep leaving my Deities in the new temple. The next morning at the break of dawn I eagerly went to see Them, but to my dismay I saw that the temple had been dismantled. Seeing a pile of horse dung, I concluded the horse must have knocked it over. I approached with apprehension, and to my relief I saw that the Deities were unharmed. At that time Srila Prabhupada was staying in New Vrindaban, so I asked him if he could purify my Deities because the horse dung had contaminated the area. Srila Prabhupada told me that my Deities weren’t contaminated, that Krishna purifies everything He contacts.

One time, Hayagriva Das tried to show Prabhupada one of the community’s modern conveniences. “I had learned to work the chain saw pretty well. When Srila Prabhupada was in the yard, I decided to demonstrate for him, to show him how smart we Americans were, and how we could zip right through a stack of wood. ‘What is that?’ he asked, when I started the chain saw up. I proudly revved the engine and started to rip through a log. Wouldn’t you know it! As soon as the chain hit the wood, it flew right off the bar, breaking a couple of iron teeth. Srila Prabhupada looked at the smoking machine curiously. Then, without saying word, he walked away. I was crushed.” ¹⁰²

One day, Richard Rose came to see Srila Prabhupada. Hayagriva wrote about his visit: ¹⁰³

“I hear your swami’s arrived,” he says. “I was thinking I might get a chance to talk with him.”

Rose visits Prabhupada in his upstairs room. We bring up a chair so he won’t have to sit on the floor. When Prabhupada learns that Rose is the land leaser, he is most hospitable, sending Purusottama running down for lemonade and kaucharis.

“I am hearing that you want to start an ashram,” Prabhupada says, “a spiritual community.”

“Yes, well, that was my plan,” Rose says.

“So then you must help these boys here construct this New Vrindaban,” Prabhupada says. “There is so much to be done.”

“Yes, well, you see I was interested in something appealing to seekers on all levels,” Rose says. “Not just your Krishna worship. I mean, that’s just one discipline, and not one that would appeal to everybody.”

“Nothing appeals to everybody,” Prabhupada says. “What do you suggest?”

“I...? Well, I’m thinking of leaving that open. You see, I don’t want to close any avenues. When you close avenues, you can’t let knowledge in. Now, over the years I’ve been giving this some thought, have met many wanderers on the paths of truth—”

“Just one thing,” Prabhupada interrupts.

“What’s that?”

“Here you must understand that in this material world everyone is trying to become God.”

“Oh?”

Rose looks around uncomfortably. He has told everyone at the Goat Farm that he is already God.

“Yes, everyone wants to imitate Krishna,” Prabhupada says. “Everyone here wants to dominate, to be master. That is why everyone’s in bondage to material nature, to suffering and death. That is the cause of our condition, our insanity.”

“Now wait a minute,” Rose says, his face reddening. “You aren’t gonna tell me that those salt and pepper shakers are gonna save you from dying.”

Salt and pepper shakers? I suddenly realize that he’s referring to the Jagannath Deities. If Prabhupada catches the irreverence, he doesn’t show it.

“No one escapes death,” he says. “It is there for everyone on all planets. Our concern is our consciousness at death. Our state of mind determines our next body.”

“But you can be liberated even in this body,” Rose says, almost gloating. “And you can see the universe for what it is, for what you’ve made it.”

“What have you made?” Prabhupada asks.

“My world.”

“*Your* world?” Prabhupada shakes his head, smiles. “That is our disease. We are each claiming proprietorship. ‘This is my land, my wife, my children, my house, my world.’ Everyone’s trying to be master, to be God. All this is going on, this insanity, just as in a madhouse.”

“But you don’t know the ‘me’ I refer to,” Rose says, sticking to his guns.

“Whatever. You can *never* become God. That you must understand. You may strive for millions of years, millions of lifetimes, but you will be frustrated. I’m telling you frankly. If I wanted to cheat you, I’d say, ‘Yes, you can be God. Here. Pay me money, take this mantra, and you’ll become God in no time.’ And then you’ll go away saying, ‘Oh, Swamiji is such a great guru.’ The cheaters and the cheated. But I don’t say that. I say that you will *never* become God, and that you will suffer and suffer until you understand that only God, Krishna, is God and you are his eternal servant. Not just you—everyone. So understanding this is real knowledge. Everything else is cheating.”

Rose almost chokes on his prasadam. He tells us that people are waiting for him down the road, that he’s sorry he has to hurry off. Again, Prabhupada invites him to join us in building New Vrindaban. Silently swallowing his anger, Rose walks quickly back down the road, ignoring the devotees outside.

“I think he’s offended,” Kirtanananda tells Prabhupada.

“Because we did not lie to him?” Prabhupada shakes his head sadly. . . .

“I’ve tried to talk to him about Krishna a number of times,” Kirtanananda says. He doesn’t want to understand.” . . .

“*Accha!* Then just induce him to take prasadam. Just that much will help him.”

Prabhupada stayed at New Vrindaban for over a month, from May 21 until June 23, 1969, and gave instructions for the development of the community. He wanted many buildings and a Krishna conscious school for children (*gurukula*, literally “the place of the guru”). New Vrindaban should become self sufficient and the residents (or inmates, as Prabhupada liked to call them) ¹⁰⁴ should produce their own food and necessities. Prabhupada also wanted seven temples built on seven hills, just like in Vrindaban, India.

Kirtanananda Swami summarized Prabhupada’s first visit to the community: ¹⁰⁵

Srila Prabhupada first visited his New Vrindaban in May, 1969. For one year we had been living in a pioneer shack on a small farm two miles up a muddy dirt road. When our only vehicle got stuck, Prabhupada was obliged to ascend the road on foot. This he did swiftly and effortlessly, although 73 years old. In this way he showed us the proper way to approach a holy place—on foot. Indeed, in India pilgrims circumambulate Govardhan Hill and other holy places barefoot as an austerity. But in 1969 we weren’t thinking of Prabhupada’s “New Vrindaban scheme” as a holy shrine. To us it was an undeveloped, landlocked West Virginia farm—perhaps, we feared, a hopeless dream. But on the day Srila Prabhupada walked up that road, New Vrindaban became more than a dream. It became a tirtha, a holy place, by the transforming power of the pure devotee. But at that time, none of us could comprehend it.

During that first visit, Srila Prabhupada discoursed on *Srimad-bhagavatam*, Vyasadev’s great narration of the pastimes of Lord Krishna. He especially explained how Vyasadev, being dissatisfied with his compilations of the Vedas, Upanishads and *Vedanta-sutra*, was inspired by his spiritual master, Narada Muni, to write directly of Lord Krishna’s divine birth, childhood and subsequent glorious activities. Thus Vyasadev wrote *Srimad-bhagavatam* and became completely satisfied. We also became completely satisfied listening to Prabhupada, who remained with us for one month, living quietly in the little farmhouse, sometimes translating *Bhagavad-gita*, sometimes lecturing, always inspiring us to try to develop his “New Vrindaban scheme.” Many of his suggestions were incomprehensible to us at the time. “Move this hill there, flatten this land here, build a footbridge to the next ridge, place seven temples on seven hills,” and on and on, throwing out new ideas that left us wide-eyed and wondering. But when he finally left for New York and London, we sat down beneath the old willow, contemplated our one cow and weedy pastures, and tried to think of how to “do it,” how to actualize Srila Prabhupada’s grandiose plans for a community centered about Lord Krishna. We had the go-ahead. The land was already sanctified—a holy dhama. Srila Prabhupada’s feet had touched the soil. It was now truly New Vrindaban.

Four major purposes of New Vrindaban.

New Vrindaban would fulfill four major functions for ISKCON:

- (1) Establish and promote the simple, agrarian Krishna conscious lifestyle, including cow protection,
- (2) create a place of pilgrimage in the West by constructing seven temples on seven hills,
- (3) train up a class of brahmin teachers by teaching boys at the *gurukula*, and
- (4) establish a society based on *varnashram-dharma*.

First, New Vrindaban would “bring the members [of the society] closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler and more natural way of life.” The community would demonstrate the natural Krishna conscious lifestyle of “simple living and high thinking,” that of a transcendental village simply dependent and focused on Krishna (the deities), the land (agriculture) and cows. The devotee residents would become artisans and craftsmen, and perhaps make money by selling their arts and crafts, but the economic

base would be based on land and cows, and not on any industry or manufacturing enterprise (*ugrakarma*).

The second purpose which New Vrindaban would fulfill would be “to erect for the members and for society at large, a holy place of transcendental pastimes, dedicated to the Personality of Krishna.” New Vrindaban would be ISKCON’s place of pilgrimage in the West; it would become a replica of old Vrindaban in India and contain many temples where devotees could come to festivals, such as Janmastami or Gaura Purnima, once or twice a year from their respective temples throughout North America and become spiritually refreshed.

Prabhupada also spoke of a third and fourth purpose for the New Vrindaban Community. Earlier he had explained that his mission in the West had two parts: first to train a society of qualified brahmins: educated men and women who could lead humankind back to the ideals of the Vedic civilization. The second half of his mission was to reestablish *varnashram* into society.

New Vrindaban would help fulfill one purpose by establishing a *gurukula* which would train young boys to become brahmins, and the other by naturally establishing *varnashram* in the community as it grew from a transcendental village into a city of perhaps ten thousand residents.

Prabhupada wrote, “My idea of developing New Vrindaban is to create an atmosphere of spiritual life where people in bona fide order of social divisions, namely brahmacharis, ghrihasthas, vanaprasthas and sannyasis, will live there completely depending on Krishna. The life should be simple without being hampered by laboring day and night for economic development with no spiritual understanding. The whole Vedic principle is to develop Krishna consciousness, without creating much botheration for the program of sense gratification.”¹⁰⁶

Hayagriva summarized Prabhupada’s visit in the May 29, 1969 *New Vrindaban Newsletter*:¹⁰⁷

Prabhupada (Swami Bhaktivedanta) arrived in New Vrindaban Wednesday morning, May 21st. He walked swiftly up the road, proclaiming that he enjoyed the walk, and quietly entered into country life. There have been 15 people at the ashram this past week, and Prabhupada has been lecturing as usual three nights a week. He likes New Vrindaban very much and is eager to see living quarters and temples quickly constructed.

Since he has been at New Vrindaban he has had quiet and a good opportunity to rest. In the morning he takes a walk about the property and sometimes in the late morning or afternoon lies out in the sun. “You don’t get tired outdoors like you do inside,” he said. He also said that Surabhi Ghai’s fresh milk is doing nice things for him.

More people will be coming out in June, and we request that people bring sleeping bags. Boots are also a good idea. We are still knocking down buildings, but are not able to construct on the property yet because much of our time has been diverted to fencing in the pasture for the horse and cow.

Now New Vrindaban is sanctified because the lotus feet of His Divine Grace have graced the hills and pastures. He enjoins us now to develop it so that men can see that all man needs is a little land and a cow to live properly. He recommends one cow per person and four acres per family. “You have sufficient land now,” he says. “Just try to develop it.”

Chintamani Dasi wrote about Prabhupada’s departure on June 23, 1969, and his parting instruction, “We must all follow in the footsteps of Kirtanananda Maharaj.”¹⁰⁸

Then the day came for Srila Prabhupada to leave New Vrindaban. We couldn’t keep him there forever, although I would have liked that. He had to spread Lord Chaitanya’s mercy to other fallen souls. I felt sad when he left. He walked down the two-mile path with all the New Vrindaban devotees following behind

him. Srila Prabhupada walked at a brisk pace. After we had been walking for a while, Kirtanananda Maharaj walked ahead of Srila Prabhupada and led the way. Srila Prabhupada turned and said, “We must all follow in the footsteps of Kirtanananda Maharaj.”

New Vrindaban: “not different from Goloka Vrindaban.”

Prabhupada had many times explained the importance of Vrindaban, India, where Krishna displayed his childhood pastimes some five thousand years ago. “Vrindaban is the only solitary transcendental abode within this universe where Krishna Consciousness automatically reveals.”¹⁰⁹

Gaudiya-Vaishnavas worship Vrindaban-*dhama* on Earth as equal to the Lord’s original abode, Goloka Vrindaban (Krishna’s planet in the spiritual sky). Vrindaban, India, therefore is non-different than Goloka Vrindaban. Prabhupada also claimed that New Vrindaban in West Virginia was qualitatively equal to Vrindaban in India, and also equal to *Goloka Vrindaban*.

Prabhupada explained in *Chaitanya-charitamrita*: “Whenever a householder glorifies the Supreme Lord in his home, his activities are immediately transformed into the activities of Goloka Vrindaban, spiritual activities taking place in the Goloka Vrindaban planet of Krishna. Activities exhibited by Krishna Himself at *Bhauma Vrindaban*, the Vrindaban-*dhama* existing on this planet, are not different from His activities on the planet Goloka Vrindaban. This is proper realization of Vrindaban anywhere. In our Krishna consciousness movement we inaugurated the New Vrindaban activities wherein devotees are always engaged in the transcendental loving service of the lord, and this is not different from Goloka Vrindaban.”¹¹⁰

New Vrindaban: better than Vrindaban, India

Prabhupada also indicated that New Vrindaban could be, in fact, *superior* to Vrindaban, India, for two reasons. First, many Mayavadis lived in Vrindaban, India, and poisoned the pure atmosphere with their impersonalist philosophy. Prabhupada hoped that New Vrindaban would be populated only by Krishna *bhaktas* following strictly the path of pure bhakti free from impersonalism and monism.

Second, beggars lived in Vrindaban; many people were unemployed. Prabhupada wanted the residents of New Vrindaban to be fully engaged in agriculture and cow protection: “So the New Vrindaban may not be turned into a place of retirement, but some sort of activities must go on there. If there is good prospective land, we should produce some grains, flowers and fruits, and keep cows, so that the inmates may have sufficient work and facility for advancing in Krishna consciousness. In India actually the Vrindaban has now become a place of the unemployed, and beggars. Kirtanananda has already seen it, and so there is always a tendency of such degradation if there is no sufficient work or service to Krishna.”¹¹¹

“I am always thinking of your New Vrindaban.”

Shortly after Prabhupada departed from New Vrindaban he wrote to Kirtanananda and encouraged him, “I beg to thank you very much for your kind attention for me continually for one month, and I was so happy to remain in New Vrindaban. . . . I am always thinking of your New Vrindaban. The first thing I find is the difference in the taste of the milk. The milk which we are taking [in the city] is not at all comparable with New Vrindaban milk. Anyway, there must be a gulf of difference between city life and country life. As poet Cowper said, ‘Country is made by God, and city is made by man.’ Therefore my special request is that you try and keep as many cows as possible in your New Vrindaban.”¹¹²

Prabhupada even proposed that the ISKCON centers could finance the purchase of cows for New Vrindaban, “As far as milk is concerned, I can arrange for financing in the matter of purchasing cows.

The arrangement will be like this, that I shall ask all the centers to finance at least for one cow, and you will have to pay them back the price by supplying ghee. Suppose somebody advances \$200 for purchasing a cow; you will have to repay the debt by supplying \$200 worth of ghee. After that, the cow becomes your property.”¹¹³

During winter: “This New Vrindaban land is hellish!”

Certainly Prabhupada enjoyed his month-long visit to New Vrindaban and was happy to encourage the residents to establish a Krishna conscious community based on land and cows, but he had some reservations. He mentioned to his disciple Hansadutta, who was planning to open a temple in California, “When you get to California, try to find some land for an ashram; this New Vrindaban land is hellish!”¹¹⁴

Hansadutta explained, “I think Prabhupada was referring to the climate; the West Virginia winters were bitterly cold. He liked warm climates. In India, for instance (or California for that matter), Krishna consciousness was easier to pursue; devotees didn’t have to spend so much time working so hard constructing buildings and gathering firewood to protect themselves and the cows from the cold weather.”¹¹⁵

Cows living in tropical or semi-tropical climates might graze cheaply on pastures of grass all year long, but cows in temperate regions must have large quantities of hay and feed stored for use during winter. Certainly it was much more expensive to care for cows in temperate regions.

One New Vrindaban inmate described some of the austerities the winters brought on the cows, “Cold weather is always hard on the herd, and this has been an especially hard winter. All that heats the barn is the cows themselves and they do a good job down to around zero. When it gets colder than that (it was down to minus twenty at one time) they start to feel it. The water bowls freeze, cows near the door get frost on their tails and heads, even the dung in the gutters starts to freeze. We’ve had a lot of trouble with water lines freezing up. And just having to stand on concrete month after month takes its toll in the form of sore legs and feet.”¹¹⁶

Another devotee described the New Vrindaban winter in an article titled “The Coldest Shower I Ever Took.”¹¹⁷

I woke up that morning dreaming I was freezing in the attic above Sri Sri Radha-Vrindaban Chandra’s temple only to find that actually I was. The attic was the main brahmachari ashram in those days. . . .

A key austerity at New Vrindaban in those days was visiting Bahulaban’s *ghat*. Usually a *ghat* is a bathing place on the bank of a river, but what went on behind the old cow barn was really something else. A small spring fed fresh water into a pipe, which ran many yards downhill into a devotee-dug ditch lined with heavy plastic. . . .

The process for bathing was to take a cutoff plastic jug, scoop some water from the ditch, and pour away. . . I began to wonder where we were going to bathe when it got cold. There was talk of converting the old milk house into a bathhouse again. But as summer turned to fall, the *ghat* was still the place to go. What would the water be like when it really started to freeze?

That morning, October the 28th, I found out. Wearing a sweatshirt and a towel, I crept downstairs and out the door. The thermometer on the porch read 28 degrees. I saw that the mud was frozen into hard ruts. . . .

Loud cries of “Haribol!” filled the morning air. In the moonlight, I saw just-bathed bodies steaming in the cold, reaching for towels. Some bathed with the gusto of polar bears, others with the poise of Himalayan yogis. The more timid bathed limb by limb and saved the head ’till last. . . .

I stood up straight, raised the jug above my head, and froze. . . . If hundreds and thousands of icicles shot up at once into my brain, they might resemble how that water felt when it hit my spine. . . . I swear I felt the icy hand of death reach into my heart, and try to yank me out. . . . Three days later, I left New Vrindaban.

Hladini Dasi also described some of the wintertime austerities residents faced in a poem titled *The Fire of Devotional Service*:¹¹⁸

Vrindaban, Vrindaban, all covered with snow,
Where did all your *surabhi* cows go?
The green, scenic pastures are covered with ice;
To live in Vrindaban is not a cheap price.

The icy cold winds come demanding the rent,
For all those sweet summer days you spent.
The sunshine, the flowers, the cows running free,
Are now transformed to austerity!

The supplies are depleted, the wood pile is low;
Devotees are shivering, no warm place to go.
Four blankets on top of five layers of clothes;
Still you don't know if you'll wake up all froze.

The stoves are so smoky you can't see the door,
And your bowl is froze to the *prasadam* room floor.
The nights bring in minus sixty chill factor,
And Bhavishyat Das [the wood cutter] won't come up with the tractor.

You're wondering if the cold ever will stop;
It's ten thirty at night and there's more wood to chop.
You start to ask, "What am I doing here?
I'm sick and I'm suffering and the end isn't near."

But the answer unfolds in the room with the heater [the deity room],
As the loving exchanges get sweeter and sweeter.
Their warmth and *Their* pleasure is what we're here for;
And if this be the price, we're ready for more!

Some devotees actually preferred the cold: the extra austerities gave them more spiritual realization: "It snowed last night, and when I looked out of the window after *Bhagavatam* class I saw the New Vrindaban that I know and love. The winter-time atmosphere is actually much nicer than that in the summer. The consciousness of the devotees becomes very serious and blissful. You can know that those devotees who make it through the winter have made lots of spiritual advancement."¹¹⁹

"In New Vrindaban, winter is the time for performing severe austerities. One time Kirtanananda Maharaj mentioned that everyone is staying here the year long on the strength of the austerities they perform in the winter."¹²⁰

Conflict between Kirtanananda and Hayagriva.

In addition to difficulties due to frigid winters, devotees experienced some difficulty in community morale, partly because of frequent disagreements between Hayagriva and Kirtanananda. Although they

were co-founders of New Vrindaban, they often did not agree on how to run the community. Who was to be ultimately in charge? Who was the higher-ranking leader? Temple president or resident sannyasi?

Prabhupada recommended to Hayagriva that “Kirtanananda Maharaja may be the supreme authority for the New Vrindaban center. . . . [but also] he should be completely aloof from everyone. . . . whatever is practical can be adopted in this connection”¹²¹

Kirtanananda Maharaja may be the supreme authority for the New Vrindaban center, but the management should be entrusted to the Brahmacharis and next the Grihasthas. He should not directly interfere with the management—he can simply give direction and the Brahmacharis and Grihasthas can carry out the management. . . . Best thing is that he should be completely aloof from everyone, and assisted by one Brahmachari. But he should be the man in charge to give direction. So far as the two of you working in conjunction, you and Kirtanananda Maharaja, whatever is practical can be adopted in this connection.

As the higher-ranking Vaishnava at New Vrindaban, Kirtanananda overrode Hayagriva’s decisions on a number of occasions. This caused Hayagriva great consternation, and during Prabhupada’s first visit to New Vrindaban, Hayagriva specifically asked Prabhupada to define in more detail the limits of the authority of the temple president and the resident sannyasi. Hayagriva assumed that since he was providing the funding for New Vrindaban from his work at Ohio State University, and also since he was serving as temple president, he should have the final say in decision making, but from practical experience he discovered that Kirtanananda more often had his way. Who should ultimately be in charge?

Prabhupada suggested again that the sannyasi should be given the top post, but Hayagriva retorted that he’d rather leave New Vrindaban completely: “Unless I am in charge, I don’t want to stay.” Prabhupada tried to convince Hayagriva to continue his service: “You have started this New Vrindaban. You must finish it.” Prabhupada wanted Hayagriva and Kirtanananda to work together: “Both of you are required. . . . You should work conjointly.”

Hayagriva frankly admitted that factually Kirtanananda was already ultimately in charge and that they seldom had disagreements, but he still wanted to have the final say in certain matters, such as regarding his vehicles, or whether a particular tree should be cut for firewood or left standing. Prabhupada seemed to think this last example—cutting or not cutting a tree—was trivial. Prabhupada tried to lighten the situation by joking: “This deposition is very difficult to solve. (laughing) You want [the tree] to stay, and he wants to burn it. (laughing)”

But Hayagriva was not amused; he was deadly serious. Conflict with Kirtanananda was a big problem for him and he wanted a clear answer: “Yes. I mean it will come down to something very basic like this, something very simple. Now you said that according to you it should be burned. According to you. . . . If the president is in charge, then if he says to cut it down, it gets cut down.”

But Prabhupada obviously did not want Hayagriva to have the final authority at New Vrindaban: “No. The committee. The majority decision will be [final].” Hayagriva was still not satisfied. Prabhupada tried to pacify Hayagriva by assuring him that the sannyasi should always be traveling and preaching, and only sometimes visiting New Vrindaban, but again, from practical experience, Hayagriva knew that Kirtanananda spent a great deal of time at New Vrindaban, and that he was indeed needed in the community to keep the devotees steady and on track.

After a long discussion, Hayagriva finally admitted that he’d prefer *not* to have the ultimate authority and responsibility for community management: “because it’s too much work. I mean I don’t want to be in that sense responsible for the whole thing.” He remembered that once the school year started in September

he'd be away teaching at Ohio State University in Columbus at least three days a week, and wouldn't be able to manage the daily affairs of the community continually.

Kirtanananda remained silent during the entire conversation except for a brief "Haribol" once or twice. The issue appeared unresolved, and the fighting between Kirtanananda and Hayagriva continued for several years, as neither Hayagriva nor Kirtanananda appeared able to compromise on some issues.¹²²

Prabhupada: Another thing is that, as I suggested, that Kirtanananda Maharaj, being sannyasi, he should be given the top post to give honor to the position of a sannyasi. Otherwise in our society there is no meaning of a sannyasi. . . . From *sampradaya* point of view, sannyasi has to be given the top post. Do you think he will overrule you? (Laughs)

Hayagriva: Well, I have to make one request on that. . . . That I not stay here.

Prabhupada: Unless you become president?

Hayagriva: Unless I am in charge, I don't want to stay. I mean there are too many responsibilities that I've already assumed, and not to have the decisions as to what to do with the vehicles, what to do with this, what to do with that, I'd rather not have any part of it.

Prabhupada: No, anyone who can manage everything, he should be in charge of the whole thing.

Hayagriva: Well, factually he's in charge. Actually we very seldom have any disagreements on things.

Prabhupada: All right. That's all right. Then you remain president. And let him become vice president. That will be all right? In case of your absence he will preside in the meeting. Will that be all right?

Hayagriva: No, that's all right as long as I have final decision in certain matters, as to what to do with my vehicles, what to do with this and what to do with that.

Prabhupada: No, you will hold meeting and decide in that meeting. If you form a committee, then whatever you do, something serious, you should consult the committee and do it. . . .

Hayagriva: Well, you make the final decision. You can have anybody you want in charge here. I just make a request, personal request, that I not stay here. That's all. So I mean you can put anybody you want in charge. What I have given of the place is yours. I don't even care to have it.

Prabhupada: (chuckles) This is not a good proposal. . . . No. That is not good idea. You have started this New Vrindaban. You must finish it. So you must be in charge of this place. We have to do so many things. So...

Hayagriva: What about... Why can't two people be in charge? Why can't we both...?

Prabhupada: No. Then he will work as vice president? Or what do you want? Temple command?

Hayagriva: I don't know. The title doesn't make any difference. The title doesn't matter. It's just that we agree on basic issues which I think that we should agree on, not that an issue comes up, and I have one idea about, and he says, "No. I want it this way," and I can't do anything about it. For instance, say I don't want to cut down the tree there, and he says the tree must be cut down. That doesn't leave me anywhere. See? That leaves me to say, well... He can pull rank on me, which is something... I mean I'd just as soon not be involved.

Prabhupada: So you disagree in every point?

Hayagriva: Not every point. We don't often disagree. But I might want this tree to be left here.

Prabhupada: Or what you decide and he must disagree that? Whatever you decide and Kirtanananda Maharaj must disagree with that point? Is that the situation?

Hayagriva: That's not necessarily so.

Prabhupada: But suppose if Kirtanananda says, “Then I’ll leave this place,” then what will be the situation? As you say that “Unless I am in charge, I leave this place,” similarly, if he says that “If I am not in charge, then I will leave this place,” so would you like that he should leave this place?

Hayagriva: No.

Prabhupada: Then both of you are required. Then how you can say that “I’ll leave this place,” how he can say he’ll leave? You must jointly work because both of you, you have started this New Vrindaban, and you have to work jointly. There may be sometimes disagreement, but you should settle up. Otherwise how you can make progress? He’s a sannyasi. He has got the right to travel. That is his business. He can go and preach. That is actually his business. His business is not to stay any place. Just like I am also; in this old age I am traveling—*parivrajaka*. So if you think that you can do without him, then he can travel and sometimes he may come here.

Hayagriva: Well, I think he’s necessary here. Definitely we need him.

Prabhupada: So if his presence is necessary, then he is a sannyasi; he should be given some responsible post. And if he is not necessary, then his main business is to go. Now, if I... I am getting older. If he travels all over the centers and sees as superintendent what things are going on, that will be also nice. And in my absence he can deliver speech and in that way he can get experience. Now he went to North Carolina. He did nicely. So... I know that both of you are required here to develop this center. Not that if you say, “I go,” and if he says “he goes,” then this place, the advancement which is progressing, this will be stopped. It is now in the nascent stage. You should not neglect now. You should work conjointly.

Hayagriva: Well, what do you want to do, Kirtanananda Maharaj? You have no preference at all.

Kirtanananda: No.

Hayagriva: He says he has no preference at all.

Prabhupada: So... But you require his assistance also.

Hayagriva: Yes.

Prabhupada: So I think... Then the difficulty is that you say that whatever you decide, he says no?

Hayagriva: If I don’t want this tree to be cut down and he says, “Cut down the tree,” does the tree get cut down? That’s what I want to know. I say, “I want this tree to stay here.” He says, “We want to burn it for firewood.” Now does the tree stay or does it go?

Prabhupada: Well, if... This deposition is very difficult to solve. (laughing) You want to stay, and he wants to burn it. (laughing)

Hayagriva: Yes. I mean it will come down to something very basic like this, something very simple. Now you said that according to you it should be burned. According to you... If the president is in charge, then if he says to cut it down, it gets cut down.

Prabhupada: No. The committee. The majority decision will be...

Hayagriva: That’s democracy. That’s democracy. That’s no good.

Prabhupada: Democracy? This is the age of...

Hayagriva: I thought you said we should have enlightened monarchy.

Prabhupada: No. Monarchy is out of date now. When you form a committee... But what can I say? If you disagree in that way, then... If you have to live together, you have to work together; if you disagree in that way, it will be a difficult job.

Hayagriva: Well, I don't care. I'll leave it up to you then. I'll leave it up to you. You can do what you want.

Prabhupada: No... You... My... I have explained. He is... As a sannyasi, he should live everywhere temporarily just like I live temporarily—*aniketa*. A sannyasi should not have a permanent place. Anywhere he goes, temporary. So because you think that his service is required, then he should remain here. Otherwise, as he has accepted sannyas order, he should travel, go and preach. And especially nowadays, I cannot go everywhere. He can go, and he can recruit members. He can make propaganda of New Vrindaban to many persons, to the, I mean to say, foundations. As I have suggested, make pamphlet. So he can do outside work very nicely for developing Vrindaban.

Hayagriva: How much of his time do you think should be spent doing this? . . . Preaching and traveling.

Prabhupada: He should always preach and travel. Always. There is immense field here. He should convince people that we are developing such centers. And you make a nice literature, picture. You go. He is educated. He is intelligent. He has studied our philosophy. He can go and speak.

Hayagriva: But he shouldn't stay here at all.

Prabhupada: No. He can come. He stay for some time and go, in that way. That... When he comes here you take his advice, what to do, and then you execute in that way. The final is yourself, whatever you do. He will come and... Now, for developing this center we must require so many things. So he can do the outside work.

Hayagriva: Well, I mean I don't care that much. If you want to put him in charge...

Prabhupada: That is... No. So far, if you ask my advice, he should do that work, outside propaganda, preaching. But as you say that his presence is required, therefore I say he may remain here. Otherwise, to remain here is not his duty as a sannyasi. That is actually your duty, to organize the local management and everything. And his duty is outside work, preaching. He may have one assistant, and he can travel. He can educate your countrymen that "Here is a nice thing we are developing. Please come and cooperate." Invite him, and when he comes you receive him and give him good reception. In this way you have to make propaganda, outside and inside. Just like Krishna is making outside and inside propaganda. Inside He is Supersoul; outside He is spiritual master to reclaim these fallen souls. Similarly, we should also work outside-inside. And for making outside propaganda, I think he will be the best man.

Suppose if he goes to New York, stays for some time, sees respectable foundation and presidents and just to attract their attention this side... Similarly, if he goes Los Angeles, San Francisco, all other cities, Boston, and sees important men, makes propaganda that "We are doing this. Please come and help," that will be very nice. Arrange lectures from... Our local temples may arrange lectures, and he can impress people about the importance of this movement. Not only one, I require several such preachers now. Now we are improving. We are increasing our propaganda. We require several such assistants. So those who have decided to remain brahmachari, some of them, those who are experienced, they can accept this sannyas order and preach. Outside propaganda is also required. Don't you think? Outside propaganda?

Hayagriva: Well, I don't know if it's that important. I think more important than that is that he develop the place. I mean actually I think that's good at the beginning, but there's still a degree...

Prabhupada: His outside work means developing this place, but not by remaining here. He may come, remain here. Say for three months he remains, and again he goes three months outside. Again he comes one month. Why three months? One month here, again goes out. Two months outside, again comes. He sees how things are going on. He can suggest, "You do like this. You can do like this." And you execute with your assistance. Will not that be nice? He gives your suggestion that "You should..." He can give yourself that "You burn this tree." But if you like, you can burn. Otherwise you don't burn.

Kirtanananda: Haribol. . . .

Prabhupada: Suppose if we want to construct a temple here. So in this way we have to cooperate. Otherwise how it can be developed?

Hayagriva: I'd rather not be totally in charge because it's too much work. I mean I don't want to be in that sense responsible for the whole thing.

Prabhupada: Then in your absence this secretary will do or this matha command will do. . . .

Hayagriva: Well, what happens when I leave? Then if he's not here and I leave, what happens then?

Prabhupada: Then the matha command, secretary. Not with you, not that all, everyone, is leaving. You may leave sometimes. You want to go to your college, university, like that?

Hayagriva: Well, I'll be gone every week about half a week for the whole school year. So somebody has to be here to take charge for three days out of the... I'm at least gone three days at least.

Prabhupada: So then the Paramananda is there, and he is there. They are not fools. They are also intelligent. They can manage. . . . What do you think, Kirtanananda Maharaj?

Kirtanananda: Haribol.

Once Hayagriva wrote to Prabhupada about a disturbance regarding some girls at New Vrindaban,¹²³ but Kirtanananda told Prabhupada there was no problem. The two co-founders of New Vrindaban were clearly not seeing eye-to-eye on some critical issues. Prabhupada indicated in a letter to Kirtanananda: "Regarding the girls, Hayagriva informed me that there was disturbance, and you informed me that it is all right. So how can I advise in this matter? Try to settle things amongst yourselves. But my idea is that New Vrindaban should be peaceful. There should be no unnecessary disturbances."¹²⁴

Despite Prabhupada's desire for peace between Kirtanananda and Hayagriva, the atmosphere at New Vrindaban was not always tranquil. Bhagavananda remembered the constant tension: "Kirtanananda and Hayagriva were like the Hatfields and the McCoys,¹²⁵ always fighting. I couldn't believe it. They had a feud one time, and Kirtanananda moved down and created Bahulaban."¹²⁶

Kirtanananda and Hayagriva's love-hate relationship.

It appears that Hayagriva and Kirtanananda Swami may have developed a love-hate relationship: "a personal relationship involving simultaneous or alternating emotions of love and enmity. Sometimes the person may love the other person/object, but hate oneself for it. This relationship can, but does not have to, be of a romantic nature. It may occur when people have completely lost the intimacy within a loving relationship, yet still retain some passion for, or perhaps some commitment to, each other."¹²⁷

We assume that by this time, Hayagriva and Kirtanananda had stopped having intimate relations with each other, as they had both accepted vows of celibacy, or in Hayagriva's case, celibacy except for relations with one's wife. However, considering their former intimate relationship, is it is not unreasonable to presume that Kirtanananda might have inadvertently become jealous after Hayagriva's December 1968 marriage to Shyama Dasi. If so, this might explain why Kirtanananda was constantly getting on Hayagriva's nerves; he might have been subconsciously irritating Hayagriva because of jealousy of Hayagriva's new partner.

We cannot expect that two lovers as intimate as Hayagriva and Kirtanananda could suddenly ignore their deep-rooted attraction for each other, despite having vowed to follow regulative principles regarding sexual relations. It must have been very difficult for them to learn to associate with each other simply as godbrothers, and tensions between them should have been expected.

Hayagriva, however, was not the only one who had difficulties with Kirtanananda. Prabhupada's first sannyasi had problems cooperating with other godbrothers, including Brahmananda. Once Kirtanananda had requested Brahmananda to give him money from the ISKCON account for New Vrindaban expenses, and he claimed that, as a sannyasi, he outranked Brahmananda, so Brahmananda should give him the money. Brahmananda asked for Prabhupada's advice in a letter dated August 25, 1969.

Prabhupada replied to Brahmananda: "nobody should try to claim any extra honor on account of an official position." Prabhupada also explained the four stages of sannyas, and indicated that he had asked Kirtanananda to function in the second stage. In effect he was telling Brahmananda that Kirtanananda was not a highly-advanced sannyasi.¹²⁸

I do not know what you mean by cooperation with Kirtanananda Maharaja. In our society everyone, either a brahmachari or sannyasi or grhastha, who has dedicated his life and soul for this movement, they are all on the same level of sannyasi. For the present moment, nobody can claim an extra honor from his Godbrothers. Everyone should treat his Godbrothers as Prabhu. But nobody should try to claim any extra honor on account of an official position. I do not know why Kirtanananda Maharaja says that his authority overrides yours. At the present moment everyone is working under my authority. Similarly, Kirtanananda also should work under my authority. So the condition imposed by Kirtanananda as stated by you does not look well.

A sannyasi has got four stages of elevation: *kuticak*, *bahudaka*, *parivrajaka* and *paramahamsa*. The sannyasa in the *paramahamsa* stage is the Spiritual Master of everyone. I have asked Kirtanananda Maharaja to work on the *bahudaka* stage for the present. I discussed this point with him when I was in New Vrindaban. This stage means he should move amongst people to draw their attention to the New Vrindaban scheme and try to attract their attention for its development. So he should immediately begin this *bahudaka* program and collect money from outsiders, not from insiders. And as he is in charge of New Vrindaban, he may invest all such collection for the development of New Vrindaban, and before this Hayagriva must transfer the property to the society's name.

So far as investment of the society's money for New Vrindaban is concerned, certainly it will be done in New Vrindaban, and not only the money which Kirtanananda Maharaja collects, but also, if need be, any center will invest money. But that investment should be in proportion to food and salt. To make it more tasteful, one adds salt to his food, and similarly, every center should be independently developed by supplying the food, and the society, if required, will supply the salt.

For the present, all energy should be diverted to start a nice press for our publication work. So there is no extra money for the society to invest in New Vrindaban. Neither you can spare any money to anyone without my permission. Whatever you possess now in funds, that is not your personal money, so how can you execute the request of Kirtanananda at the present moment? I think you will understand the matter rightly and do the needful.

New Vrindaban traveling preaching parties.

New Vrindaban residents did not simply stay on the farm; they sometimes accompanied Kirtanananda Swami on his traveling preaching engagements, even as far south as New Orleans for Mardi Gras, and they also regularly sent *harinam* chanting parties to the universities in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, every Saturday, at least for a time. The *New Vrindaban Newsletter* (March 5, 1970) reported:

This year the drunken hordes at New Orleans Mardi Gras were blessed with transcendental sound vibrations for five full days as the New Vrindaban devotees descended upon the Crescent City. There were seven of us altogether, and actually we were very well received. We had a good kirtan at Tulane before the campus cops nipped us. One of the students put us up in his apartment for the duration of our stay. Millions crowded the city for Mardi Gras, and at night, on Bourbon Street, a great river of humanity and

bourbon flowed. But we were well-received in the city, and hundreds of thousands heard the mahamantra and many even joined with us in chanting, even though intoxicated. The New Orleans police were especially receptive. One sergeant, in particular, suggested that we open a center there and invited us back for a Buddhist convention. We left the city when Mardi Gras ended and were joyful to find the trip so rewarding.

Kirtanananda has also been leading kirtan parties to universities in Atlanta and into Florida, as far south as Miami, in Tennessee, Knoxville, and in Lexington, Kentucky, all within the past month. This week he is up in Detroit and Ann Arbor, Michigan, with a kirtan party. In two weeks we will be going down to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where students congregate for the summer break.

In addition to Kirtanananda Maharaj's sankirtan party, every Saturday a New Vrindaban contingent drives into Pittsburgh (50 miles distance) and holds kirtan in the area of Pitt University [University of Pittsburgh]. The response has been consistently good and a number of college students have expressed interest in a center opening in Pittsburgh.

The community expands.

Little by little, despite the frigid winters, sincere and steady devotees (along with a few individuals who were rejected from ISKCON city temples) gradually came to New Vrindaban and helped build the tiny ashram into an austere Krishna conscious village. Cows were purchased and bred, calves were born, and the bovine population increased. Hand-tended gardens were planted, tended and harvested. Horses—and eventually oxen—were trained to pull plows and cultivators and wagons in the agricultural fields, and crops of corn and hay were sown, harvested and stored in silos for the cows to eat during the winter. By August 1970, there were three dozen residents living at the community.¹²⁹

Adwaitacharya Das described the importance of the horses to the community, “The horses were our lifeline. The horses would move the hay from farm to farm, and carry the *bhoga* and cow grain to the waiting devotees and cows at the Vrindaban farm. They would spread the manure, cut the hay, bail the corn shocks, and in the winter their main engagement was to bring in the firewood. They carried it in on wagons and sleds. Giant logs were hauled into the woodsheds with the help of heavy chains.”¹³⁰

A “great sinister movement is within our society.”

During January 1970, Prabhupada moved to Los Angeles and made the newly-purchased Watseka Avenue ISKCON temple his headquarters. It was the finest physical facility in all of ISKCON. “We don't require such a nice place for ourselves,” Prabhupada told the temple president, Gargamuni Das. “We are prepared to live anywhere. But such a nice place will give us opportunity to invite gentlemen to come and learn about this Krishna consciousness.”¹³¹

Under Prabhupada's personal direction, the Los Angeles center became a model for the rest of ISKCON. At the morning *Bhagavatam* class, for example, he had the devotees responsively chant the Sanskrit verses after him, and he asked that this become the standard program in all his temples. In May he wrote to all of the ISKCON temple presidents inviting them to visit him at Los Angeles.

Prabhupada was pleased by the rapid expansion of ISKCON. Twenty-six centers had been established, including eighteen centers in the United States, three in Canada, and one each in England (London), France (Paris), West Germany (Hamburg), Japan (Tokyo), and Australia (Sydney). During this time in Los Angeles Prabhupada also created the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT), to (1) publish his books and literature, and (2) establish temples throughout the world, including three temples in India: Mayapur, Vrindaban, and Jagannath Puri.

Despite the obvious successes, Prabhupada was disturbed by a “poison” which he believed had infected ISKCON. His suspicions began in April when a letter arrived from his disciple Achyutananda Das, who had been preaching in India for two years and accepting hospitality from Prabhupada’s godbrothers at various Gaudiya Math temples. Achyutananda had explained that some of Bhaktisiddhanta’s disciples objected that their godbrother, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, was honored by his disciples with the name “Prabhupada.” Only their guru, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, they said, should be honored with that title. Achyutananda had written about this and other sensitive matters in his letters, and Prabhupada saw these innocently-written remarks as a symptom of a greater threat to his absolute position as founder and *acharya* of ISKCON. His immature disciples could easily become misled by his envious godbrothers.

Prabhupada believed some of his godbrothers were conspiring against him to prevent him from establishing a temple in Mayapur. “I am so sorry to learn that there is a sort of conspiracy by some of our godbrothers as not to give me a place in Mayapur.”¹³²

Prabhupada observed other offenses. During the July 1970 San Francisco Ratha-Yatra parade some leading disciples prevented Prabhupada from riding on the Ratha cart, even after he insisted, and the disciples rode on the cart themselves—as if in his place. (The leaders tried to explain to Prabhupada that earlier in the day some angry blacks had thrown stones at the cart and started a fight, and they thought Prabhupada might be injured if he rode in the cart during the parade.)

One time Prabhupada noticed that a devotee who had cleaned his room had carelessly placed his photograph upside down. Prabhupada also discovered that his secretary had allowed the temple authorities to read and censor his mail; at their discretion they withheld from him letters they considered petty or disturbing. The Los Angeles managers even prevented some of Prabhupada’s disciples from having personal *darshans* with their own spiritual master.

Another time, someone had accidentally put salt instead of sugar in the deities’ *charanamrita* (bathing water). Prabhupada discovered, to his horror, that not all initiated devotees were chanting sixteen rounds daily, and some said that the temple authorities had instructed them that it was better to do service than chant the required number of rounds. Prabhupada was also insulted by Tamal Krishna who asked, in a letter from Paris, if Prabhupada had been subjected to the laws of material nature during his previous life. Prabhupada replied, “A spiritual master is always liberated. In any condition of his life he should not be mistaken as ordinary human being.”¹³³

In addition, the ISKCON press had committed a great blunder: it had misprinted Prabhupada’s name on a new paperback book. His name appeared on the cover as simply “A. C. Bhaktivedanta.” Omitted was the customary “His Divine Grace” as well as “Swami Prabhupada.” To make matters worse, when Prabhupada opened the book, the binding cracked, and some pages fell out. Prabhupada was furious.

Prabhupada was so disturbed by all these things that he was unable to concentrate on his translation work. Prabhupada confided in Hansadutta, “During the last few months I was very much mentally depressed.”¹³⁴

Prabhupada suspected that a poison from India had infected his society. The poison was impersonalism; considering the spiritual master to be an ordinary man. The Mayavadis sometimes compare the guru to a ladder. One uses the ladder to reach a higher position, but when the ladder is no longer needed one kicks it away. Prabhupada’s position as the founder and *acharya* of ISKCON was slowly but surely becoming minimized.

One disciple reported, “With so many disturbing incidents coming mostly from his senior men, Prabhupada can understand the purport of these omens—his position is being minimized by an element of

maya emanating from India. A relative conception of his stature as Spiritual Master has infiltrated the Society. He sees seeds of calamity in his movement, although his young disciples are not consciously plotting. But Srila Prabhupada knows that if this tendency continues, the movement will go off the track and he could lose his authority. The entire mission will be compromised as a result. As far as Prabhupada is concerned, there is a major crisis in ISKCON.”¹³⁵

Even Kirtanananda Swami had inadvertently contributed to his master’s pain. Prabhupada had planned to attend the August 21-23 Janmastami festival at New Vrindaban.¹³⁶ However, when he spoke to Kirtanananda on the telephone about the festival, his first sannyas disciple casually mentioned that “it wasn’t necessary for him to come.”

Prabhupada was visibly upset by Kirtanananda’s words and walked out of the Los Angeles temple into the garden, where he announced to Brahmananda, Gargamuni, and his secretary Devananda, “So you do not need me.” Prabhupada told them he was leaving, and it was final; he would return to his rooms at the Radha-Damodar temple in Vrindaban, India, and his disciples would have to manage ISKCON without him.¹³⁷

Prabhupada wrote, “At the present moment in our ISKCON campus politics and diplomacy has entered. Some of my beloved students on whom I counted very, very much have been involved in this matter influenced by *Maya*. As such there has been some activity which I consider as disrespectful. So I have decided to retire and divert attention to book writing and nothing more.”¹³⁸

Prabhupada takes immediate action to protect his society.

Yet after due reflection, Prabhupada decided that he would not abandon his misguided disciples; he would try to save his mission with immediate and firm action. Prabhupada decided to (1) award sannyas to some of his disciples who were becoming enamored with the power from their managerial positions and force them to travel and preach, (2) leave Los Angeles and travel to India, where he hopefully would be free to preach and translate without disturbance and halt the spread of the “poison” at its source, and (3) create a Governing Body Commission (GBC) to manage the society in his absence. Hayagriva Das was one of the twelve leading disciples selected to form the original GBC, along with ten other householders (Bhagavan, Hansadutta, Jagadish, Karandhar, Krishnadas, Rupanuga, Satsvarupa, Shyamasundar, Sudama, and Tamal Krishna) and one brahmachari (Bali Mardan).

Prabhupada wrote to Hansadutta, “Regarding the poisonous effect in our Society, it is a fact and I know where from this poisonous tree has sprung up and how it affected practically the whole Society in a very dangerous form. . . . You are one of the members of the GBC, so you can think over very deeply how to save the situation. It is a fact however that the great sinister movement is within our Society. . . . All of you may try to save the Society from this dangerous position.”¹³⁹

On July 20, Prabhupada initiated four brahmacharis into the sannyas order: Brahmananda, Gargamuni, Subaldas, and Vishnujan. Four days later, Prabhupada initiated two more sannyasis, Devananda Swami and Karttikeya Swami, his secretary and personal servant, respectively. Soon after, another sannyasi was initiated: Madhudvisa Swami. ISKCON now had eight sannyasis.

On August 7, Prabhupada left Los Angeles for India, via Hawaii and Japan, accompanied by four sannyasis, Devananda, Karttikeya, Madhudvisa, and Kirtanananda, and one householder, Tamal Krishna. The newly-formed GBC scheduled their first meeting to be held during the upcoming Janmastami festival at New Vrindaban, where four of the new *sannyasis* (Brahmananda, Gargamuni, Subaldas, and Vishnujan) were also headed.

The first annual New Vrindaban Janmastami festival.

Very few local Marshall County residents knew about the New Vrindaban ISKCON farm community at first. The Old Vrindaban farm was located at the end of a muddy and rutted two-mile road, and devotee traffic on McCreary's Ridge Road was minimal. When a dhoti-clad shaven-headed young man appeared in Moundsville, en route to the commune, it was an event worthy of publication in the local newspaper. "A young man in yellow robe and head shaved with a pigtail on back got off a bus this morning here, and looked for a way to get to New Vrindaban. He is the former Chuck Paulin of Seattle, Washington, who since he joined the Krishna Consciousness temple there, has been named Gopal Das. He came to live for a while at the ISKCON colony here, at the north end of McCreary ridge, which is the only rural colony of the growing movement that is an offspring of ancient Hindu writings."¹⁴⁰

To help publicize their first annual Janmastami festival, Ranadhir visited the *Moundsville Daily Echo* offices and spoke with editor and publisher Sam Shaw. The *Echo* reported:¹⁴¹

Public Festival At Krishna Farm Next Weekend.

The public is welcome to the first annual festival next weekend at New Vrindaban, the farm colony of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness—on McCreary Ridge—but they have to walk a pilgrimage of two miles to get there. Ranadhir, the camp director, said that it just is not going to be possible to get the present jeep trail bulldozed into an auto road in time. It is a beautiful walk down a little stream called Big Run, through the woods, finally emerging onto a roadway up the hillside with a view of the farm buildings across the fields.

The public festival is Friday, Saturday and Sunday, August 21, 22-23, at seven o'clock each evening, with booths and dioramas, plays, puppet shows, a religious service, and a free feast of *prasadam*, pronounced as "prashadam," of vegetarian items permitted to devotees.

They expect over a hundred visitors from other colonies of the growing movement around the country—but their hopes for having the spiritual master of the movement, Swami Bhaktivedanta here, fell through when he went to Honolulu recently. . . .

Bhaktivedanta brought the faith from India in 1966, and there are a number of colonies in cities, but this is the first rural colony. Some 45 people live in the Marshall county colony.

Sam Shaw accepted Ranadhir's invitation to visit New Vrindaban during the festival, and he walked the two-mile road on Saturday afternoon. Sam was impressed with the beauty of the trail, the colorful orange robes of the men, and the long Indian sari dresses worn by the women. He observed some similarities between the Vaishnavas and the Catholics and Presbyterians. When heavy rains came down, Sam departed along the muddy road, on which he "slid around as on ice." Finally "darkness overtook us," "the wet road turned into a river," and Sam began "desperately fighting splosh by splosh toward the outside world."¹⁴²

Saturday evening we hiked out to New Vrindaban to visit their festival. Today, Monday, is their anniversary of the birth on earth of Krishna, God, as a baby—thus corresponding to our Christmas. It is a beautiful walk from the old Oakdale school building, down the run and then up the hill to their farm that lies southeast of Burch Run Lake.

They had the road bulldozed this summer in the hope that the public could come in cars to visit the festival—but the fact that it crosses the run three times, plus the fact it is a clay soil shaded by trees that holds moisture, kept it unsafe for anything less than 4-wheel-drive vehicles, and they got the word to come, but not all, that the last two miles would have to be walked.

We arrived to find perhaps 150 people at the colony that normally is one-third that size. Many were devotees from all over the world, men in orange robes, often bare above the waist; women in long Indian sari dresses that come to the ankles. There were also a few out of uniform: some folks who are more or less

interested in this revival of the ancient Hindu scriptures, a few spectators like the Roger Pettit family and this writer.

They were serving a feast of *prasadam*, or “Kosher” food, all vegetables. We found on our plate half an ear of corn, a concoction based on rice, a pile of dark-brown material like spinach, a couple of items that were light brown outside and rather sweetish.

It was a colorful scene. A few of the people were blacks, and at least one couple was East Indian—who would have this type of religion already in their backgrounds. Most of the folks we saw seemed to be people in their 20s or early 30s who had become dissatisfied with the current Western way of life and are looking for something.

However, this something different has an impressive amount of parallels with Christianity. The monastic way of retreat from the world has been going on for thousands of years in the Catholic Church. The repeated chanting to the glory of God occurs in many churches. In fact, the Westminster catechism which is supposed to be the core of Presbyterianism, has as its first paragraph that the first end of men is to glorify God.

There were booths of photos and literature, and a new open-air shelter they had put up since the last time we visited there, which they were using as a temple. And in that milieu of the austere and simple life, and a religion going back four thousand years, what did we see—a modern videotape recorder playing back on a TV set pictures of their celebration the evening before!

A gong sounded and the people moved into the temple-shelter, and began singing the “Hail to God” chant in Sanskrit: “Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna” that is the theme of their daily living. They sang it over and over again, and some were bouncing around to the music.

Then came the rain—gentle at first.

They invited us to stay on the farm overnight, but though we wanted to, we couldn’t—we had a date . . . for ten p.m. to get welded a broken roller arm on our new press. So we started back down the road.

Then the rains poured.

The water lubricated the top layer of the road, so that one slid around as on ice. We caught up to a black family of four from St. Louis, who were trying to get back to their car. They hadn’t known about the two-mile hike, and the woman who was a member of the faith, had worn only sandals. She was soon in foot trouble.

Slowed down by the awful walking, darkness overtook us. Other people came along. The wet road turned into a river. Now there were ten people with only three flashlights slogging through the mud, desperately fighting splosh by splosh toward the outside world. Finally, victory!

And there at Oakdale school, we found about a dozen people just arriving, and advised them strongly against trying to go in the road that night. Two had already unrolled sleeping bags on the school porch. One fellow in his robe said his VW bus had broken down at Zanesville en route from Chicago, and needed someone to go out and pull him in. We asked, “How can people in such self-enforced poverty afford repairs on cars?” Answer, “Krishna will provide; He always does.”

As we pulled out to drive back, our radio came on, with a chorus singing, “Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer’s praise.” We had just heard a hundred tongues doing that, up on the hill. The rain came down in sheets and pillowcases and cats and dogs, and our wiper on high speed could just keep up with it but not with the fogginess. We got around one woman driver who had stopped right in the road, because she couldn’t see.

ISKCON crisis at New Vrindaban.

Besides the heavy rains and mud, the August 21-23, 1970, Janmastami festival was notorious for another reason: it was the scene of a great crisis in ISKCON which was precipitated by four errant newly-initiated sannyasis who preached to the devotees at New Vrindaban that Prabhupada had abandoned them and fled to India because his disciples had not recognized that he was actually God.

Yet this heresy was not without due cause. Brahmananda remembered a month or so earlier in Los Angeles when Kirtanananda telephoned Prabhupada and indicated something to the effect that “it is not necessary for you to attend the Janmastami festival.” As explained earlier, Prabhupada was very hurt and told Brahmananda and others that he intended to abandon his disciples and go to India because his disciples had minimized his position. Brahmananda and Gargamuni were sincere disciples—although perhaps not yet perfectly fixed up in the philosophy—and they took Prabhupada’s words to heart. After serious reflection, they devised a solution to save ISKCON: instead of minimizing Prabhupada, they would maximize him. During their travels they convinced their fellow sannyasis Subal and Vishnujan of the crisis in ISKCON, and their solution to save the movement.

Satsvarupa Das Goswami described the “nightmare” at New Vrindaban: ¹⁴³

The Janmastami-*Vyasa-puja* festival in New Vrindaban had become a nightmare. Hundreds of devotees had converged there from the East Coast, with many others from California and even Europe. They had come for a blissful festival [which they expected Srila Prabhupada to attend], but instead had found Srila Prabhupada’s newly-initiated sannyasis expounding a devastating philosophy.

The sannyasis, speaking informally to groups here and there, would explain how the devotees had offended Prabhupada and how he had subsequently withdrawn his mercy. The sannyasis revealed their special insights that Prabhupada was actually God, that none of his disciples had recognized him as such, and that all of them, therefore, beginning with the sannyasis, were guilty of minimizing his position. And that was why Prabhupada had left for India; he had “withdrawn his mercy” from his disciples.

The devotees were devastated. None of them knew what to say in reply. The sannyasis, by their preaching, had projected gloom everywhere, which was proper, they said; everyone should feel guilty and realize that they had lost the grace of their spiritual master. No use trying to cheer one another up by chanting Hare Krishna or eating a feast; everyone should accept the bitter medicine.

Yet Brahmananda claimed he was forced into saying that Prabhupada was God. He explained. “At one open session during the impromptu New Vrindaban meetings, one devotee challenged me by asking if Srila Prabhupada was so great as to be Krishna. ‘Is Srila Prabhupada Krishna?’ Silence fell over everyone; it was a tense moment. If I answered in the negative, then my mission to convince the devotees to maximize Srila Prabhupada would have been defeated. I had to answer the affirmative. Arguments broke out; and the atmosphere of the festival was permeated with suspicion and doubt. For the first time, there was a serious crack in our brotherhood.” ¹⁴⁴

Satsvarupa continued: “Although Prabhupada had given his disciples three volumes of *Srimad-bhagavatam*, as well as *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, *The Nectar of Devotion*, *Teachings of Lord Chaitanya*, and other literature, none of the devotees were well-versed in them. Many devotees wondered if the philosophy the sannyasis were preaching was correct, but none of them knew enough of the scriptures to immediately refute it. The devotees turned to the new GBC men, Prabhupada’s appointed leaders and guardians of ISKCON. The GBC, along with other senior devotees, began carefully searching through Prabhupada’s books to ascertain exactly what he had said about the position of the spiritual master.”

Hayagriva leads battle against errant mayavadi sannyasis.

Out of all the twelve GBC men, only Hayagriva understood clearly what had happened. Satyabhama Devi Dasi remembered, “The GBC kept meeting and discussing and trying to figure out what was going on. Because it felt really weird, really off, but nobody knew the philosophy well enough, except Hayagriva, who had done all the editing of the books. Rupanuga was baffled. Hayagriva was the only one who had them pegged. He was unequivocal. His final analysis was, ‘They say Prabhupada is God, and Prabhupada is the spiritual master, and sannyasis will become spiritual master. These are the sannyasis, the leaders of the movement, the future spiritual masters. So they’re going to be God. And that’s what this is all about.’”¹⁴⁵

“Subsequently, Hayagriva wrote an essay, ‘The Spiritual Master: Emissary of the Supreme Person,’ which appeared in the next issue of *Back to Godhead* to clear up the matter for the whole society and for the public at large. Prabhupada congratulated Hayagriva for having thoroughly grasped the concept of the spiritual master.”¹⁴⁶

At New Vrindaban, a serendipitous letter from Prabhupada arrived from Tokyo which turned the tide in the nick of time. Although Prabhupada could not have known about the current crisis at New Vrindaban when he wrote this letter some days earlier, perhaps he suspected something might be amiss. He knew that Brahmananda and Gargamuni Swamis were going to attend the New Vrindaban festival, and Prabhupada recently had some grievance with them. Only one month earlier on July 31, Prabhupada had written to the two brothers and begged them: “I am fervently appealing to you all not to create fracture in the solid body of the Society. Please work conjointly, without any personal ambition. That will help the cause.”¹⁴⁷

There is still another reason why Prabhupada might have sent this particular letter to his New Vrindaban disciples at this time. As he was originally scheduled to attend this Janmastami festival, he knew his disciples would be greatly dejected when they discovered that his travel plans had changed. Prabhupada may have sent this letter to encourage and reassure his disappointed disciples at New Vrindaban. Satsvarupa described Prabhupada’s timely letter:¹⁴⁸

Hayagriva announced that a letter had just arrived from Srila Prabhupada in Tokyo. As soon as the devotees all gathered under the pavilion roof to hear, Hayagriva read aloud: “My dear Sons and Daughters,” and then Prabhupada listed almost all the New Vrindaban residents. The devotees immediately felt a wave of hope. Just to hear Prabhupada say, “My dear Sons and Daughters,” was a great relief.

Hayagriva continued to read: “Please accept my blessings.”

Prabhupada hadn’t rejected them!

The letter went on to say that Srila Prabhupada was pleased with the work of the New Vrindaban devotees, and he promised to come and visit them. Soon he would send for other devotees to join him in India, he said. As he described what preaching in India would be like, the devotees became caught up in the momentum of Srila Prabhupada’s preaching spirit. They cheered. They felt blissful.

Then Prabhupada specifically referred to the difficulty facing ISKCON: “Purge out of New Vrindaban the non-Vrindaban atmosphere that has entered.” His letter turned the tide against the Mayavada teachings.

Errant sannyasis banned from ISKCON.

Tamal Krishna Goswami later summarized the fiasco and described how the errant sannyasis were banned from ISKCON by Prabhupada himself:¹⁴⁹

Prabhupada detected . . . challenges to his absolute authority in the behaviour of certain leaders of his Los Angeles headquarters. Increasingly, in the guise of protecting his privacy for his translating, the leaders denied devotees direct access to him. In San Francisco at the Festival of the Chariots, there was no seat for him on any of the carts. Thus, he saw on a number of places moves to minimise his position. With an adroitness which was characteristic of his administrative skills, he acted suddenly to check this latest threat. First, he awarded the renounced order of sannyas to his errant managers, commanding that they give up their administrative roles in exchange for traveling and preaching. Simultaneously, he appointed twelve of his most trusted disciples as members of the first Governing Body Commission. As a final act, he announced that despite his poor health and advanced age, he would himself leave for establishing ISKCON's mission in India, the source of the attack on his movement [by some of his Gaudiya Math godbrothers].

But the cancer had not been checked. Halting in Japan en route to India, Prabhupada learned that four of his new renunciants had begun preaching a strange gospel. At a huge gathering of ISKCON faithful at New Vrindaban on Krishna's birth anniversary, 1970, they had announced that by leaving America, Prabhupada had rejected his disciples for failing to recognise that Prabhupada was actually Krishna Himself. This was nothing but another aspect of impersonalism. While Kirtanananda had previously failed to distinguish between the personal and impersonal conceptions of Godhead [during his bout with *maya* three years earlier], the new sannyasis had failed to distinguish the guru from the Godhead. Vaishnavas teach that the guru is the servant of God, but never the Godhead Himself. A Vaishnava spiritual master will never say that he is God or that God is impersonal.

In Japan, Prabhupada revealed the underlying implication: by making him God, the seat of the guru was now vacated to make room for one of his Gaudiya Matha godbrothers. He was, in effect, being kicked upstairs. He asked Sudama Das and Tamal Krishna Das, the two GBC representatives with him in Tokyo, what they intended to do. In unison they responded that the four errant sannyasis should be driven out of ISKCON. Prabhupada immediately agreed.

The GBC members at the New Vrindaban festival had already begun to expose the fallacious teachings of the four sannyasis by citing numerous references from Prabhupada's books. But they were surprised by the harsh edict that came from Japan. Nevertheless, they carried out the order, relaying Prabhupada's instruction that the sannyasis must now preach separately from the institution, depending solely on Krishna for their support. Though penniless and without institutional shelter, the forced independence appeared to strengthen their connection with Prabhupada, and they headed in different directions to carry out his order to preach.

Prabhupada's stern response seems to indicate that he was prepared to sacrifice a few individuals to save his Society from being seriously infected with what he considered impersonalist poison. He did not, however, reject the errant sannyasis; he had merely quarantined them from other disciples to prevent further harm to his movement. He continued to correspond with them and encouraged them to preach. Gradually purified by the ordeal, each was eventually incorporated back into ISKCON and went on to perform important service for the Society.

Kirtanananda preaches in India.

Prabhupada returned to India for the first time in almost three years, and arrived in his hometown, Calcutta, on August 29, 1970, with Kirtanananda Swami and other disciples. Some of Prabhupada's godbrothers and old friends were present to receive him, and a kirtan party from the Chaitanya Math helped create an auspicious welcome. The reception was large and festive. During subsequent days, Prabhupada's party of ten devotees chanted and danced at Dalhousie Square for several hours daily. Hundreds of Bengalis gathered to watch Prabhupada's "dancing white elephants," as he affectionately called them. Soon dozens of Prabhupada's disciples from America and Europe arrived in India to assist

their spiritual master. During this time Prabhupada also inaugurated the ISKCON “Life Membership” program.

After establishing two centers in Calcutta, Prabhupada traveled west to Bombay and Amritsar. Kirtanananda Swami remained in Calcutta during September and October, and traveled to Gorakhpur in November to help establish a new ISKCON temple there.

But Kirtanananda was unhappy in India—just as he had been unhappy during his previous visit with Swamiji three years earlier—and he missed his friends in America. Prabhupada was sympathetic toward his distraught disciple, and wrote to Hayagriva on November 24, 1970, “Kirtanananda Maharaj is feeling double separation. If he likes, he can go back to New Vrindaban. Let him feel only one separation. . . . P.S. I have advised K. Maharaj to return to New Vrindaban.”

Around this time, September 1970, the Pittsburgh ISKCON center was established. Prabhupada wrote to Hayagriva, “I’m very pleased that you’re opening a nice center in the important city of Pittsburgh. Please develop the Pittsburgh and New Vrindaban plan conjointly. If Pittsburgh center can help contribute financially to our New Vrindaban, that will help relieve many financial problems. I am often thinking of New Vrindaban and I’m so much glad that you have taken the initiative to establish that program. Before I came to your country, I was thinking to establish an ideal Vedic community. So please work very hard to make New Vrindaban grow.”¹⁵⁰

Giant five-foot-tall Jagannath, Balarama and Subhadra deities were carved by Naranarayan Das from a huge New Vrindaban log, and were installed in the Pittsburgh temple early in 1971, probably on Gaura Purnima. When Srila Prabhupada first saw these huge deities his eyes opened wide and he exclaimed: “But they are so big!”¹⁵¹

More properties purchased: Madhuban, Bahulaban, Guruban; incense factory established.

More properties were purchased for New Vrindaban, beginning with the ninety-acre Madhuban tract. Hayagriva Das explained, “In 1970, Madhuban went up for sale for \$7,000. At last, we thought, a place on the road! It seemed too good to be true. I was too nervous to try to buy it myself, so we hired a real estate agent named Mr. Carter. This Mr. Carter had no idea what was happening. He thought I was some kind of nut to want that property. He even told me that the old farmhouse was actually dangerous. ‘I don’t know what kind of organization you represent,’ he said candidly, ‘but that building’s a liability, not an asset.’ It may have well been. . . . At that time it was beautiful to us. At last, a manor on the road!”¹⁵²

“The second farm we purchased, Madhuban, contains 90 acres and a two-story house. Because it’s on the main road and has developed pastures and good pine forests, we paid \$7,000 for it, which is a little over \$77 an acre.”¹⁵³

During the winter of 1970, an incense manufacturing factory was established in Pittsburgh—operated by Ranadhir—to generate income for community maintenance and expansion; orders were sent out to ISKCON city temples from New York City to Nairobi. In 1971, the operation moved to the newly-purchased Madhuban farm. Suresvara Das, one of the incense dippers, related:¹⁵⁴

[in 1971] New Vrindaban was the incense capital of ISKCON (east of the Mississippi anyway). Crates of plain sticks arrived regularly from the Far East via Los Angeles temple. Bahulaban shipped and received orders from New York to Nairobi, supplying Lord Chaitanya’s legions with crores¹⁵⁵ of scented swords to help fight the war on *maya*. In between shipping and receiving, the task of dipping the sticks in oils was given to Ranadhir and a few of us at Madhuban.

Madhuban was brand new territory. We were the first devotees to tend cows and plant crops there. In the mornings, Stan (now Satadhanya Maharaj), Anthony (now Ambarish Das) and myself dipped incense and

fought off the flies. Afternoons, we worked in the gardens or on a thousand and one other projects. What times. Pots-and-pans kirtans, fireside prasad, classes by candlelight after big electrical storms (or bills). . . . As summer faded the air turned cool. Soon the sun was too weak to dry the incense properly, and our hands began to numb during dipping. Finally, we were forced to move the whole operation down to Bahulaban into the old barn. We shared the barn with the cows—half Spiritual Sky, half Goloka.

Hayagriva Das explained, “Making Spiritual Sky incense and distributing it through the city temples . . . proved to be a real gold mine. By the spring of ‘71 sufficient money came in to enable us to buy the other two farms, and as soon as we did people started pouring in.”¹⁵⁶

The third property purchased by the community was the 151-acre \$20,000 Bahulaban tract, which included a large and sturdy house, a big barn and silo, two concrete garages, and a concrete milk house. The milking cows were relocated to the newly-acquired barn, and Bahulaban soon became the center of the community. “Bahulaban, in short, is a fully developed farm.”¹⁵⁷

A fourth property was purchased in 1973, Guruban, which, according to the *Moundsville Daily Echo*, was “to be prepared as a residence for their ‘Pope,’ their spiritual master, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada Swami, who now makes his headquarters in Los Angeles, but plans to live here.”¹⁵⁸

Neighbors make pact not to sell property to devotees, or sell at inflated prices.

When New Vrindaban devotees attempted to purchase subsequent properties, they discovered an obstacle: some farmers had made a pact not to sell their land to the Krishnas, and those who would sell would only do so at dramatically inflated prices. The local people realized that New Vrindaban wanted to purchase the entire McCreary’s Ridge. Hayagriva explained, “The local people now understand what we’re doing and are asking more money.”¹⁵⁹

One friend of the devotees, a retired steel worker who lived near the community, Russell C. (Randolph) Gorby, came to their aid by negotiating with local farmers and purchasing land in his name, and then secretly turning over the deeds to the New Vrindaban community. Sometimes devotees would negotiate land sales and deny, when questioned, their involvement with the commune.

Neighbors claimed that they had been deceived by the Krishnas and their agents. When the Petit family let it be known that they wanted to sell their 118-acre farm, they were approached by an older man who said he wanted to buy the property for his son. “We asked him if he was connected with the Krishnas,” said Mrs. Petit, “and he said he was not an agent for them.” The man bought the farm and three weeks later the Petits found that he had not been lying, technically. He was not an agent. He was actually a member of the commune.

When confronted by the Petits, the devotee explained that he was afraid that they would not have sold the land if they had known the truth. Mrs. Petit explained, “My husband answered, ‘That’s not necessarily true,’ and it wasn’t. We would have asked for more money.”¹⁶⁰

The reaction of neighbors to the Krishna presence in their community was mixed. Some were friendly to the devotees and helped to teach them some of the tricks of farming and cattle raising. One Marshall County resident said, “I don’t consider ’em heathens. I don’t mind havin’ ’em here. They’re peaceful. I never approved of the people who tried to run ’em out.”¹⁶¹

Others were nonplused. Marvin Eddy, the owner of the gasoline station and general store on Route 250, said, “I believe everybody has a right to their religion, though theirs is an awfully queer one.” Donna Whipkey, who with her husband owned Whipkey’s General Store, said, “I just feel sorry for them. Most of them would be pretty nice if they weren’t brainwashed.”¹⁶²

Enmity with neighbors.

Some neighbors were offended by the devotees lack of respect for private property. One local woman who lived on McCreary's Ridge Road "observed a person in Krishna Society garb picking flowers from the flower bed she had planted in front of her home. She remonstrated him, whereupon he replied it was all right, for, he said, 'God made these flowers.'" ¹⁶³

Another farmer's wife complained, "When I asked him nicely to move after a half-hour, he said, 'Lady, shut your mouth.' Then he told me to go back to the city where I belong." ¹⁶⁴

Another neighbor described two problems he had with the New Vrindaban devotees: ¹⁶⁵

I require a justifiable reason for disliking an organization; and in the case of the Krishna cult, I have a personal one. . . .

I had two separate confrontations with them. . . . The first incident occurred when Krishna farm workers destroyed several yards of my fence line. Despite the pleas of myself and the authorities they refused to restore the fence.

A year or two later . . . two others [cows] destroyed my barn floor and some fence. Again, an appeal to their leader proved fruitless. I refused to release the two animals until such time as the floor of my barn was fixed. They promptly sued me for six hundred dollars and the possession of their two remaining animals. A hearing was set but they did not appear. A new hearing was set, but before the date, they relinquished ownership of the two cattle rather than repair the barn and fence.

Sam Shaw, the editor and publisher for the *Moundsville Daily Echo* explained, "When they first came, you had to hike two miles to see them. As soon as they had acquired property on the hard road, that's when they became noticeable. They were buying up farms and it made the rest of the people feel isolated, so they sold out, too." ¹⁶⁶

"At first everyone thought they would come and go," said the Bureau Chief for the Marshall County edition of the *Wheeling News-Register*. "People on that ridge had lived there for generations. They were used to doing things their own way. Then these new people move in. They are different, and people didn't know what to make of them. It was like strangers coming in and trying to take over." ¹⁶⁷

Devotees were, in fact, sometimes harassed. There were two drinking establishments on McCreary's ridge, and sometimes the patrons got drunk and yelled profanities at devotees walking along the road. Once occupants in a passing pickup truck threw a live snake at Vidya Devi Dasi, who was walking along the road. Sometimes fights broke out. Occasionally rambunctious rednecks fired hunting rifles to startle the devotees. ¹⁶⁸

Kirtanananda was also harassed. During one especially severe winter, several New Vrindaban cows died and some neighbors took Kirtanananda to court for animal abuse. He was found guilty and spent a day in jail. When Kirtanananda returned, he admonished his followers to protect him "from such things in the future."

Kuladri Das, who joined the community during the autumn of 1969, explained: ¹⁶⁹

[During] the early 70s, Kirtanananda Swami was charged and had to spend a day in jail. We had a large snowstorm in West Virginia and a number of cows had died on the property. . . . and neighbors took Kirtanananda to court, charging him with animal neglect or some kind of animal abuse. He spent a day in jail and subsequently was found guilty. And then the people dropped the charge on appeal. And he came back from spending a day in jail, and said he never wanted to spend another day in jail, and that it was the responsibility of his devotees and followers to protect him from such things in the future. ¹⁷⁰

Kuladri admitted, “I’m not trying to make us out to be angels. Sometimes we have arguments with our neighbors. But our philosophy is one of nonviolence. That’s why we’re vegetarians. Every day we ask God to help make us more tolerant than a tree and more humble than a blade of grass.”¹⁷¹

Kirtanananda Swami succinctly explained the local neighbors’ antagonism in one word: “Harassment. These people try to do anything they can. The first property we had was way in a hollow where nobody had lived for years and no one paid much attention. But as soon as we bought property on the road, the attitude changed. We want to create a transcendental village here, a little space that would create a Krishna consciousness. There were always people who were a little nasty. . . . Human nature is always the same. There are demons, and there are devotees, and they are always at loggerheads. You’ll never convince the demons to become devotees or the devotees to become demons. So they are always destined to fight.”¹⁷²

“Besides,” Kirtanananda Swami concluded, “these kind of people are pretty backward. . . . They are not educated people.”¹⁷³

Sri Sri Radha-Vrindaban Chandra arrive.

Exquisitely beautiful deities hand-carved from white marble were imported from India, installed at New Vrindaban on *Janmastami*, August 13, 1971, and named Sri Sri Radha-Vrindaban Chandra: the most beautiful Radharani and Krishna (the moon of Vrindaban). Kuladri Das explained, “Srla Prabhupada personally picked out Radha-Vrindaban Chandra for New Vrindaban. They were carved by the same *murti-wala* (probably in Jaipur) who created the Rukmini-Dvarkadish and Radha-Londonishvara deities for Los Angeles and London. The installation was a major event in the life of the community; the temple room was packed with devotees (I don’t know where they all came from). The deities had only one set of clothes; a purple and silver outfit made by Hayagriva’s wife, Shyama Dasi. There was a large curtain for the deities’ privacy; it had a long drawstring which the *pujari* would pull and the curtain would slide along a track on the ceiling.”¹⁷⁴

One Brijabasi¹⁷⁵ (resident of New Vrindaban) remembered: “Radha-Vrindaban Chandra . . . were first worshiped by Kutila and Hladini. If I remember it correctly, Hladini told me they did the bathing and dressing *puja* once a week, and that it took quite a long time even with the two of them to perform the service. At that time They had only wrap-around pieces of cloth for outfits, and pop-it bead jewelry. The Deity paraphernalia included a pair of pliers and the circular center of a mason jar lid as the ghee wick holder. The *pujari* had to hold the mason jar lid piece with the pliers to offer the ghee wicks (oil wicks then) because the metal became too hot to hold. Kutila and Hladini would wash, dry, and style Their wigs as part of the *puja*, that took hours to complete. There was a period also when the ‘Tie-Dye King’ of the time had come to visit and donated bolts of material. For a time, EVERYTHING was tie-dyed including Radha-Vrindaban Chandra’s clothes.”¹⁷⁶

“Everyone who comes here . . . gets to see the Lord in His beautiful feature of Radha-Vrindaban Chandra. It is not like coming to some tomb and standing over a casket which once held the remains of some mundane hero. No. Krishna is living. He is ever-fresh. He is a beautiful cowherd boy. He is always accompanied by his lovely consort Srimati Radharani, and anyone who comes to New Vrindaban can always see Them in Their full splendor.”¹⁷⁷

New Vrindaban residents begin rising early in the morning.

New Vrindaban residents were not always known for rising early and finishing their rounds before *mangal-aroti*. Prabhupada had insisted that all his disciples—and especially the leaders—rise from sleep

early in the day to chant *japa* and attend the temple functions: “The time early in the morning, one and a half hours before sunrise, is called *brahma-muhurta*. During this *brahma-muhurta*, spiritual activities are recommended. Spiritual activities performed early in the morning have a greater effect than in any other part of the day.”¹⁷⁸

At New Vrindaban, rising early was not always strictly enforced, especially when Kirtanananda was away traveling, but one day Kirtanananda suddenly became very strict about getting up early in the morning, chanting sixteen rounds in the temple before *mangal-aroti*, and attending the entire temple program. He also began insisting that all residents rise early. Kirtanananda claimed, “I would rather die than miss the *brahma-muhurta*.”¹⁷⁹

Once residents developed a taste for this austerity and became regulated at rising early at two a.m., they became more steady at performing their daily duties. Bhagavananda explained:¹⁸⁰

There was a point when people weren’t chanting their rounds. The community was going to hell in a hand basket, it seemed. But somehow I was on a roll. I was getting up every morning at three o’clock, chanting my rounds before I went to the services, and I was ready to start the day. I was on fire. But people were just moping around and nothing was happening. Everybody was getting in everybody’s way.

And one day Kirtanananda came to me and he said, “I need some guidance as a godbrother. What should I do?” And I told him what I was doing because he knew I was doing something. So I said, “I’m getting up early in the morning, I’m chanting my rounds. I’m reading Prabhupada’s books. I’m developing discipline.” (Kirtanananda told me years earlier that discipline is doing the same thing at the same time each day, and I used to do that even at the old farm.)

Anyway, so Kirtanananda started doing it, and then everybody started doing it. It seemed that the community started to come together.

Taru told the story from his perspective in a 1976 article, “The Surrender Goes On”:¹⁸¹

“It’s two o’clock, prabhu, time to get up.” The voice sounds calm and pleasant but what is this personage doing shining a flashlight in my face in the middle of the night? I try to pull the blankets over my head, but the persistent caller politely pulls them back and after some time I realize that actually he’s right, this is when I’m supposed to get up. I don’t want to do it, but then I can see there’s no way to continue sleeping with a light in my face and someone shaking me by the shoulders. So crawling to my knees to offer obeisances to my spiritual master I grope around for a towel and a change of clothes, and head out to the bath.

Strange as it may seem, this is not some rare case; rather, nearly half of the devotees who reside at Bahulaban, New Vrindaban’s main farm, rise at 2:00 a.m. and nearly everyone is up by three. This was not always the case. Four years ago it was rare to see anyone up before 3:30. In those days Kirtanananda Swami used to walk upstairs with his cane and wake almost everyone up himself. Gradually, he just started calling us a little earlier. For the longest time Maharaj got up at 2:30 every morning. After some years, a good number—perhaps a majority—of the devotees were also rising at this time.

Then, early this spring, Maharaj one day began rising at 2:00 and, of course, encouraged us to do the same. Most of us were a bit outraged internally, although we tried to maintain a submissive demeanor. Anyway, no one made too much of an effort to follow his example. So just like in former days, Maharaj began climbing up to the third floor ashram first thing in the morning, singing “*jiva jago*” (“wake up, sleeping souls!”)¹⁸² and slapping the floor with his cane.

Taru gave a brief description of the devotees’ daily schedule:¹⁸³

By about 2:30 there's a goodly number of devotees chanting japa in the temple. The ideal is to finish all sixteen rounds before *mangal-aroti* so you'll be able to go to work right after breakfast. Factually, most of the devotees are doing this now. It used to be a pretty remarkable event, "Wow, I finished all my rounds before *aroti*!" But now that is the standard everyone aims at. Again, it has only been by Maharaj's indefatigable example and constant preaching that we have tried to improve. . . .

At 4:30 a.m. the altar curtain rises to reveal Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha Vrindaban Chandra, the most beautiful Deities in the world, as we have been informed by Srila Prabhupada himself. Beautiful and soothing like the rays of the moon in the early morning hours, the faces of Their Lordships enkindle Their devotees' desire to render Them some service. By this process of regulated Deity worship the mind is trained to remember the form of the Lord for Whom he is rendering service. . . .

Mangal-aroti is immediately followed by worshiping Tulasi Devi, Krishna's favorite plant, and then by *Guru-puja*, worship of the spiritual master. Thus over an hour is spent in kirtan, or congregational chanting of the Lord's Holy Names.

There are a few readings from the Vedic scriptures, then *Srimad Bhagavatam* class. During this time the Deities are bathed and dressed. At 6:30 the curtains are again opened and the devotees again have the opportunity to greet Radha-Vrindaban Chandra, newly attired in Their morning outfit.

Breakfast, which follows immediately at 6:45, is as regulated as the rest of the schedule. Oat water and rice is the daily menu with everyone being treated to a portion of maha-prasad, the food offered on the altar to the Deities. Contrasted to the devotees' simple foodstuffs, Radha and Krishna feast six times daily on wonderful delicacies, featuring a wide array of milk preparations. Fifteen gallons of whole milk are used daily simply for the Deity preparations. So each morning the devotees sample a portion of this maha-prasad along with their rice and oat water.

By 7:30 the work force is swinging into action. . . . After a good day's work, everyone is ready to come in for *Bhagavad-gita* class in the evening, and the final *aroti* at 8:00 p.m. Once again we are enlivened by the transcendental presence of Sri Sri Radha-Vrindaban Chandra. After *aroti*, the devotees take some hot milk prasad and then retire.

Kirtanananda's Traveling Road Show.

Early during 1971, Kirtanananda Swami—or "Maharaj" as he was often addressed—began contemplating improving his kirtan and lecture programs at colleges and universities. College students seemed to enjoy the customary kirtan, lectures and prasadam, but he wondered how he could make the programs more dynamic. He remembered the "mantra rock dances" he had organized at the Montreal temple several years earlier. Could something like this be done on a traveling sankirtan program? Maharaj traveled often to various college campuses in West Virginia, western Pennsylvania, western New York, Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana for preaching, assisted by his newly-recruited, dedicated and devoted servant, Kuladri Das.¹⁸⁴

New Vrindaban is a very simple farm community with no strong preaching program to keep a sannyasi active. So Kirtanananda wants to travel and preach with Kuladri, his servant. Together they do a number of college programs, which they consider very dynamic.

Bloomington, Indiana, is a big college town where Kirtanananda likes to do programs. In a vegetarian restaurant run by Sufis, Maharaj plucks a tamboura and chants while Kuladri plays mridanga. After chanting, Kirtanananda gives a talk on bhakti-yoga. The program is popular, and everyone in the restaurant enjoys the spiritual mood. When the restaurant closes its doors, the two devotees retire to the Sufi house for more kirtan and to stay the night. They next day they go to the University to meet the Department heads and arrange to give classes.

Kirtanananda has a vision for traveling and preaching. He wants to do something more for the college programs, but he's not exactly sure what that is. He has been doing radio programs in Columbus, Ohio, with a new bhakta named Maha Mike [Mangalananda Das]. The chemistry is already there, and Kirtanananda is always looking to get more people involved in his program.

Mangalananda explained, "I joined the Krishna movement on January 1, 1971, in New Vrindaban, West Virginia, and in the spring of that year Kirtanananda Swami heard me playing guitar at the Columbus temple. He liked it and had me perform at his lectures on radio shows and at college programs."¹⁸⁵

During these engagements Kirtanananda often wondered how he could present Krishna consciousness in a way which would be more attractive to college students. "Hayagriva had started the Columbus temple, one of the places where Kirtanananda Swami goes regularly to lecture. He always does programs at Ohio State University, and Mangalananda is there with his guitar. The idea develops to refine the college presentation. Eventually it could evolve into a full campus program, enhanced by music and drama."¹⁸⁶

During August 1971, Kirtanananda Maharaj sent out word through the ISKCON grapevine that he wanted devotees with musical and theatrical backgrounds to come to New Vrindaban to establish what eventually became known as ISKCON's first Transcendental Road Show. Devotees gradually began arriving at New Vrindaban to participate in this exciting and novel preaching program.

Radha-Damodar deities acquired.

During a visit to the New York City temple in August 1971, Kirtanananda noticed some uninstalled silver Radha-Krishna deities which had been purchased six months earlier by Damodar Das for the Washington D.C. temple. But Damodar could not install them at his temple because Prabhupada ordered that a temple must have eight brahmins before deities can be installed. Kirtanananda requested permission from Damodar to "borrow" the deities, and Damodar reluctantly agreed.

Damodar explained, "When Kirtanananda phoned me to ask for the loan of the Deities, I had a good impression of him, although I knew he was somewhat cagey. He was a wily wheeler and dealer, and a good bargainer. That reputation had definitely grown. He did say he just wanted to borrow the Deities, and as soon as I wanted them back I could have them. I didn't trust him, and I knew that it was quite possible we would never see the Deities again. But They weren't doing anybody any good sitting in our closet. How could I refuse him."¹⁸⁷

A bus was procured for the deities and the devotees, and the Transcendental Road Show hit the road. Kirtanananda left New Vrindaban under the care of Hayagriva and Paramananda. The bus party traveled through Georgia, Florida, Alabama and Louisiana, and later in New York and Massachusetts, preaching at churches, nightclubs, rock concerts, colleges and universities, and on radio and television. Their presentation featured kirtans, singing and rock music, dramatic skits, lectures by Kirtanananda Swami, and *prasadam* feasts.

Kuladri, Narada Muni, and Toshana Krishna traveled ahead of the troupe to book engagements. At first, they hitchhiked from town to town, visiting colleges and universities. After some time, they bought a used Cadillac. It was practically a wreck; it didn't even have a roof. When it rained, the three men tied a dhoti to the side windows and over the front seat in a mostly futile attempt to give them some protection from the elements.

While the bus was in motion, the Radha-Krishna deities were tied, for their own protection, to their altar with rope. Kirtanananda asked Prabhupada to name the deities Radha-Damodar, after the pastime in which Krishna was tied up with rope by his mother Yashoda as a punishment for his childish mischief.

Prabhupada was pleased by the reports he heard about the traveling road show, and replied in a letter to Kirtanananda Maharaj, dated January 20, 1972:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated January 2, 1972, and I am very very pleased to hear from you again and to hear that your roving party is having great success and opening many temples. Actually that is the process, traveling preaching, taking opportunity wherever Krishna offers it and leaving behind solid centers where propaganda will continue to go on nicely. You are doing very good work and I am very much pleased upon you for such sincere effort. Your program of speaking in colleges and other places and getting paid is very much liked by me; in this way, try to penetrate every school and college and introduce our books profusely—is nice you are taking advantage of every opportunity for speaking Krishna Consciousness by speaking on radio, attending engagements, etc. That is the method recommended by my Guru Maharaj—now you are practically demonstrating this fact with good results. So go on like this, you have all of Krishna’s blessings.

It is very nice that even the Mayor [of Orlando] was convinced by you to buy our Krishna Book. That is a very good sign. Yes, you may name your naughty boy Radha-Damodar because He is always being tied-up with ropes.

On Kirtanananda’s invitation and with Prabhupada’s permission—during January or February 1972 near New Orleans—Vishnujan Swami joined the group from Texas, where he had established several preaching centers. Vishnujan brought a professional quality to the Road Show; he made it more dramatic, more theatrical, like a big stage production.

Kirtanananda Swami returns to New Vrindaban, takes over management.

However, there was trouble at New Vrindaban during Kirtanananda Swami’s absence. During April, 1972, Prabhupada received a disturbing report from Labangalatika Devi Dasi claiming that Radha-Vrindaban Chandra were being neglected. Prabhupada replied from Tokyo to Labangalatika in a letter dated April 22, 1972: “Upon inquiring from Hayagriva prabhu regarding the deity worship program at New Vrindaban, I have been assured that everything is going on nicely now, and that Radha and Krishna are receiving proper care and service. It is very good that you are feeling so much responsibility for the welfare of Their Lordships, and I hope that you will very enthusiastically engage yourself in tending to Their needs. Always remember that cleanliness and promptness are two very important requirements in Deity worship.”¹⁸⁸

Five days later, Prabhupada wrote to Hayagriva from Japan and invited him to come to Los Angeles and personally help him edit his books. Prabhupada also indicated that he wanted to give Hayagriva some “personal instruction”:¹⁸⁹

As you know, I am very eager to devote my full attention to writing my books when I return to Los Angeles. Therefore I am keeping Pradyumna with me and training him personally in Sanskrit work. I wish also that you join me when I return to Los Angeles so that the editing work may go on very efficiently. With both Pradyumna and yourself at my side then the work will go on very speedily. It is my serious desire to devote the fag end of my life to translating *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and so many other Vaishnava literatures so by assisting me in this regards you will be performing the highest service to Krishna. I am anxious to hear from you concerning this proposal so you may send your reply care of our Hawaii branch and I shall receive it there.

Another thing is that I wanted that each GBC man spend one month with me out of the year so that I may personally instruct him. When I am in Los Angeles this program should be initiated. Since you will be coming then you will be the first and then the others may come succeedingly.

Although Hayagriva was the co-founder of New Vrindaban and the temple president, he was not always an inspiring leader for the Brijabasis. One resident reported: “I joined New Vrindaban early in 1972. The other mothers told me to honor Hayagriva as a great devotee who was very dear to Prabhupada, but I couldn’t see it. I didn’t find him inspiring at all. He would walk through the temple room without removing his boots leaving a trail of mud on the floor, go down into the basement, and use up all the hot water for his shower. He sometimes beat his wife.¹⁹⁰ He was no leader who taught by example. I disliked him greatly.”¹⁹¹

Kirtanananda Swami, who was in Brooklyn, New York, with the Road Show, received a call from Prabhupada to come see him in Los Angeles to participate in a sannyas initiation ceremony on May 27th, and so he left the traveling Road Show in Vishnujan’s care. Four new sannyasis were initiated in Los Angeles: Satsvarupa, Rupanuga, Bali Mardan and Hridayananda. When Kirtanananda met with Prabhupada, he was ordered to return to New Vrindaban and take over the management. “He [Prabhupada] is concerned that New Vrindaban is not being managed properly in the absence of Kirtanananda Maharaj.”¹⁹²

“At that time the farm was not faring very well, and there was some talk of closing it down.”¹⁹³

Before Kirtanananda went to New Vrindaban, he first returned to Brooklyn to preside at an initiation ceremony and to chant on the new initiates’ beads. When a new devotee becomes an initiated disciple, the guru chants one round of japa on the new initiate’s beads, then presents the beads to the disciple along with his or her Sanskrit name. Normally Prabhupada would have done this, but ISKCON was growing so rapidly—there were over fifty centers by this time—that he could not possibly chant on all his new disciples’ beads and preside at all the fire sacrifices; he had to appoint a trusted senior disciple to officiate on his behalf. The new disciples were Prabhupada’s disciples, but Kirtanananda officiated at the ceremony as Prabhupada’s representative. This was the first time when anyone besides Prabhupada was permitted to chant on new initiates’ beads, and it was a great honor for Kirtanananda.¹⁹⁴

After the initiation ceremony, Kirtanananda Swami returned to New Vrindaban in June and recognized a problem instantly: Radha-Vrindaban Chandra were, in fact, being neglected. “The first thing Maharaj did was to bring the deities down from the original [Old Vrindaban] farm to the newly-acquired Bahulaban farm, which had [in the meantime] become the center of most activities. Deity worship became the number one business, and because of this policy all opulence followed.”¹⁹⁵

Prabhupada wrote to Kirtanananda, “I am very glad to hear that you are giving your full attention to the worship of Sri Sri Radha-Krishna there at New Vrindaban, and it shall be your task to make certain that they will never be so much neglected in the future. Your proposal is very nice to make the atmosphere of the Deities very, very opulent, and the temple must be kept always very nice. That will be the attractive feature and people will come to see for that reason.”¹⁹⁶

Kuladri expressed his appreciation of Kirtanananda Swami’s devotion to the deities, “Just like the Goswamis, you serve the deity of your heart, Sri Sri Radha-Vrindaban Chandra. You would come right on the altar, bringing more jewelry than the rest of the deities in ISKCON combined.”¹⁹⁷

Hladini Dasi praised Kirtanananda Swami’s devotion to Sri Sri Radha-Vrindaban Chandra:¹⁹⁸

Just as Lord Chaitanya sent Rupa and Sanatan Goswamis to reestablish Vrindaban which was just a field, Srila Prabhupada sent you to establish New Vrindaban which was simply a farm. Before you came, Radha-Vrindaban Chandra had nothing opulent. They had only two meager dresses and a couple strands of dime store jewelry. They ate off stainless steel plates and rarely were They offered nice preparations cooked in ghee.

Then Prabhupada sent you back here to stay. Within hours of your arrival, the place was buzzing. You escorted Their Lordships to Bahulaban and built Them an altar. You decorated Them with big garlands and whatever jewelry They had. Then you ran into the kitchen and spent hours preparing the most incredible feast They'd ever had. Not only was there an immense ghee feast, but ghee lamps were burning all over the altar. It just so happened that you had a whole silver set in your van from the road show to offer the feast on. The whole atmosphere became surcharged with your enthusiasm.

Within a few more days, you went to New York and came back with *pujaris*, cooks and seamstresses.¹⁹⁹ Radha-Vrindaban Chandra were repainted and Their features revealed Their new contentment. They looked so beautiful and happy. It was the first time ever that I had seen Srimati Radharani smile. You brought back a topaz on a gold chain for Radharani and ran from room to room with a huge smile, showing it to all the devotees. Everyone was drowned in your enthusiasm even though we couldn't understand what was going on.

Another Brijabasi confirmed that caring for the deities should be the number one community priority:²⁰⁰

The Deities had only two outfits. We dressed Them every Saturday. There was no *sringasans* [thrones] or marble altar, no garlands or nice jewels. We saw Their Lordships every morning and evening, but other than that there was little direct service.

The philosophy seemed to be, "Work hard and become self-sufficient. Then we'll be able to think about becoming Krishna conscious." What a draggy time that was. The men were out in the fields all day and the women cooked for them or did laundry or spent the rest of the day 'engaging' their children. With no school, each woman was spending all day with her own child. It was difficult to understand it all in relation to Krishna.

Then, by the mercy of Srila Prabhupada, Kirtanananda Swami returned and began straightening things out. First of all, he brought Radha-Vrindaban Chandra down to Bahulaban, the main farm, and made Them the center of the community. He said we should take care of them first, and then everything else would run nicely. This has been our only philosophy since that time. Whenever we experience some decline in our service, it is inevitably traced back to some laxness in the Deity worship.

Maharaj started the sewing department. He said every woman should sew at least half an hour a day for the Deities, and he began bringing jewelry back from New York. One time he brought Kuladri back with him and Kuladri began to upgrade the altar standard.²⁰¹

The men began going on the altar more often. All around enthusiasm was increasing. We were beginning to see the Deity as the center of all our activities.

Radha-Vrindaban Chandra were treated royally and the Brijabasi became satisfied: "Most important to the devotees here, New Vrindaban is the home of the Supreme Lord in His form of Radha-Vrindaban Chandra. Here in our temple and temple kitchen the servants of the Deities are always meditating on new and exciting ways to please Their Lordships, Who are the life and soul of all the inhabitants of the New Vrindaban Community. The Deities are served six complete offerings daily of the most wonderful Vedic preparations. They are serenaded throughout the day with melodious Vaishnava songs, and the devotees can always be seen picking flowers and making flower garlands, and dressing Them in breath-taking jeweled outfits, just to allure the minds and loving attentions of everyone."²⁰²

Hayagriva resigns.

When Kirtanananda returned to New Vrindaban to take over the management, Hayagriva had already tendered his resignation (1) as the New Vrindaban temple president, and also (2) as an ISKCON GBC member. He had accepted Prabhupada's proposal to go to Los Angeles and help edit his books. Hayagriva's temperament was more conducive to doing the work of a brahmin rather than that of a

kshatriya; the English language was his field of expertise, not inspiring and leading masses of devotees to selfless sacrifice and decisive action.

Prabhupada spoke to his GBC men in Los Angeles about Hayagriva's resignation: "Now, so far Hayagriva Prabhu is concerned, he has resigned from this. And he'll concentrate on editorial work. And Kirtanananda will become the president of New Vrindaban. . . . So Hayagriva Prabhu is exit from GBC."²⁰³

Sometime after Hayagriva's resignation, Kirtanananda appointed his loyal servant Kuladri to serve as temple president. From this time forward, Kirtanananda Swami became the uncontested and final authority at New Vrindaban; all others, from the temple president to the pot washers, would have to either (1) unconditionally obey his orders, (2) defeat him at debate—which apparently never happened, or (3) hit the highway.

Kuladri explained: "Kirtanananda Swami was beyond question. If anyone raised question about his philosophy, it was either he had to be more advanced than them, and if that was the case, then they had to shut up and listen to him, or they had to get out [of the community]."²⁰⁴

Kuladri concluded: "Kirtanananda had the last say in everything."²⁰⁵

Only Prabhupada outranked Kirtanananda Swami.

Kirtanananda Swami becomes known as a pure devotee.

It was during this time, in 1972 or perhaps earlier, that Kirtanananda Swami began to be respected, admired, loved, and even worshipped as a pure devotee—a *paramahansa* (supreme swan)—,²⁰⁶ by the Brijabasis.²⁰⁷ "Like Srila Prabhupada, you [Kirtanananda] are exhibiting the finer qualities of the swan-like man."²⁰⁸

As the swan is equally at home on land or water, similarly the *paramahansa*, or self-realized sage, is equally at home in the realms of matter and of spirit. The swan is also, according to Indian legend, able to separate milk from water. Thus, the swan symbolizes the ability of a self-realized master to separate truth from the insubstantiality of delusion.

New Vrindaban residents rarely got the opportunity to personally associate with their spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada—he was always traveling to the far corners of the world leading his expanding ISKCON society—but they could associate with Kirtanananda Swami nearly every day. He served as Prabhupada's representative; he was the devotees' link to Prabhupada. Kirtanananda Swami was respected as a *shiksha* guru: an instructing spiritual master.

[You are] a devotee who is in one sense my godbrother. But even though we were both initiated by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, I feel offensive addressing you in any other way than guru.²⁰⁹

Although Srila Prabhupada is my initiating spiritual master, because of the personal contact with you, you bring to life Srila Prabhupada's instructions. You enliven us with practical Krishna Conscious solutions in a personal loving way. Just as Srila Prabhupada is the representative of supersoul, you are the perfect representative of Srila Prabhupada.²¹⁰

It is stated in the shastras that the guru is one. Therefore, what the instructing guru and the initiating guru are saying is the same thing. Krishna appears as the spiritual master to instill Krishna consciousness in the fallen conditioned souls. Because of your firm faith in Srila Prabhupada you have been empowered with all good qualities. . . . In your presence I feel the presence of Srila Prabhupada.²¹¹

The word *gurun* is plural. Anyone who gives spiritual instructions is accepted as a spiritual master. The initiating guru gives one the mahamantra and the instructing gurus aid one's progressive advancement in Krishna consciousness. . . . In your instructions your only business is to guide us back home, back to Godhead. . . . You are opening our eyes which are covered by the darkness of ignorance." ²¹²

Just as one cannot approach Krishna without approaching the spiritual master, similarly we cannot approach Srila Prabhupada without approaching you. . . . No one can estimate your love for Srila Prabhupada and Radha-Vrindaban Chandra. ²¹³

You are our only link with Srila Prabhupada and the disciplic succession from Krishna. ²¹⁴

Kirtanananda Swami was loved by the Brijabasis like an older brother, because he taught his younger siblings how to love and serve their spiritual father, Srila Prabhupada: "The elder brother cares affectionately for his younger brothers [and sisters] just as much as the father. In your instructions your only business is to guide us back home, back to Godhead." ²¹⁵

Some New Vrindaban residents also regarded Kirtanananda as their spiritual father: a foster father who reared them in Prabhupada's absence.

You're a father to us all. You're our eternal well-wishing friend. ²¹⁶

You have rescued our fallen souls, kind as a father to a disobedient son. . . . You so patiently wait for your children to respond. ²¹⁷

It is said that the loving father gives special attention to the child who is totally dependent. Thank you for helping the slow ones. ²¹⁸

As Lord Krishna's and Srila Prabhupada's pure servant, Maharaj was our mother, father, master, maintainer, and dearest friend. His detachment was real because it was based on a deep love for Krishna and all His devotees. ²¹⁹

Kirtanananda was admired throughout ISKCON for his renunciation—his ability to resist temptation. As early as March 1967, Kirtanananda Das Brahmachari impressed the Montreal devotees with a seemingly-impossible austerity: he ate only one or two sweet balls per day. Hansadutta, who was trained up by Kirtanananda Swami in Montreal, said: "Kirtanananda was always known to be austere." ²²⁰

One Brijabasi elaborated: "Tonight I got Maharaj's prasada, and I brought also for him a maha cookie that Mother Manipusaka made. When Maharaj saw it he said that I'm not helping him any. A sannyasi should eat simple foods, not such rich and opulent things. He said that I will make him fall down. He took a tiny bite and told me to eat the rest. I said that this is the way I can tell that he is a real sannyasi. Prabhupada says that real renunciation is when one is surrounded by so much facility for sense enjoyment, but still remains detached. Maharaj said that next I would be bringing beautiful girls in and saying, 'You are a real sannyasi, it won't bother you.'" ²²¹

Another devotee gave an example of Kirtanananda's detachment: "'Maharaj,' I asked . . . 'is it true you just ate oatmeal here the first winter?' 'It all comes out the same,' he said with a transcendental twinkle in his eye. Boy, this person was detached." ²²²

New Vrindaban residents compared Kirtanananda Swami to the shining full moon which dissipates the darkness of the night.

As Srila Prabhupada has said, "I would rather have one moon than many stars," you are certainly that wonderful moon, providing light and warmth and hope to those of us condemned to this material dungeon." ²²³

Srila Prabhupada has said that he wasn't interested in a large number of disciples. His mission was to make one person a pure devotee of Krishna. "Better to have one moon than thousands of stars." The ordinary moon glows only at night, but you are shining forth day and night, blessing us with the soothing moon rays of Krishna *nama* [names of Krishna].²²⁴

Your presence is like Vrindaban Chandra's [presence], a moon shining amongst all of us. You set the example and are as steady as the moon. . . . You are the moon shining and showing us the way.²²⁵

Vrindaban Chandra means the "Moon of Vrindaban." Prabhupada also said that he wanted one of his disciples to be a moon: "It is better to have one moon than thousands of stars." So we are fortunate here [at New Vrindaban] to have two moons that shine brightly, dissipating the darkness of the material world. Vrindaban Chandra is one moon and you are the other. Reflecting His original brilliance, you are no less bright. As long as we have your association we are free from the darkness of *Maya*.²²⁶

Kirtanananda Swami was admired for his love for Prabhupada, and for his humility: "I remember when you had just gotten back from [a trip to] India. . . . As you were lecturing, your eyes just sung and your tongue echoed the glories of your spiritual master. You talked so strongly, yet gently, that I could understand that you must love him very much. . . . You are so humble that you do not take any glory for yourself, you simply glorify Srila Prabhupada. Once on your appearance day, we offered you some gifts, and you said, 'I am only accepting these on behalf of my spiritual master.' . . . I pray to my spiritual master [Prabhupada] that I may become humble, chaste and submissive, so that I may always take shelter of your lotus feet."²²⁷

Kirtanananda Swami was "the perfect leader," because he "followed perfectly."²²⁸

All that I know has been taught by you.
All that I have has been given by you.
All that I want I can see in your shining eyes.
Because you have followed perfectly you are the perfect leader.

Your devotion inspires me. Your intelligence defeats me.
Your steadiness comforts me. Your humility shames me.
Your boldness amazes me. Your cane motivates me.
Your mercy sustains me. You are my worshipful Master.

I take shelter at your precious lotus feet.

Kirtanananda's walking cane.

Devotees were especially fond of Kirtanananda's walking cane, which he would sometimes use to brandish, prod, poke, or even strike a devotee who was especially lazy or incompetent.

Your cane motivates me.²²⁹

Although you are the most compassionate, you can raise your cane and sauce [chastise] a man up and down before he can blink his eye.²³⁰

One should always feel oneself a fool before one's spiritual master. For me this is very easy, being quite foolish by nature. Still, that element of fear is ecstatically manifest in your instructions, in your fiery glance, and especially in your cane. That cane is the force which is moving New Vrindaban.²³¹

One time Kirtanananda Swami gave the carpenter Somadas Das a good solid whack with his cane, and the cane split in two. Soma was unharmed, but he treasured the rebuke and built a beautiful wood and glass display case for the broken cane which he proudly hung up on the wall of the wood shop.

Getting hit by Maharaj's cane was a mark of distinction in the eyes of the Brijabasis, and a source of prestige. I prayed to get the mercy of Maharaj's cane; until that precious moment arrived, I did not feel like a full-fledged Brijabasi. When I finally got the mercy (a whack), I danced in ecstasy: Kirtanananda Swami had finally accepted me as his servant!

Kirtanananda repeated purely the message of Srila Prabhupada.

Yet the greatest reason the New Vrindaban residents admired and loved Kirtanananda Swami was because they heard the voice of their beloved spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, speak through him.

With the quality of unmotivated service, you are . . . bringing forth, with resplendence, the voice of Srila Prabhupada. ²³²

Hearing Prabhupada's message emanating from your lotus-like mouth dispels the ghostly haunted gloom of my crypt-like mind. ²³³

You are presenting the knowledge of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* just as Srila Prabhupada spoke it to you. We are relishing it even more because you are giving it more sweetness. ²³⁴

All glories, all glories to Kirtanananda Swami
Who has touched the feet of the Lord's pure devotee.
The same divine message Srila Prabhupada has spoken
Kirtanananda Swami is now speaking unbroken. ²³⁵

Acharya means one who teaches by example. But for your grace it would not be possible to even begin to appreciate the exalted position of Sri Gurudev and the sweetness of surrender unto him. You are so purely teaching us how to serve the lotus feet of our beloved spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. ²³⁶

By the mercy of Krishna, Srila Prabhupada took me from the ocean of nescience and by his mercy you have accepted me as your servant. You once told us that there's no way to think of Srila Prabhupada without thinking of Krishna, and that we cannot think of Krishna except by remembering what Prabhupada has told us. Similarly, we only know Srila Prabhupada through you, and as soon as we think of you we automatically remember Prabhupada. ²³⁷

Here you are compared to an ecstatic tear which has fallen from the love-swollen eyes of our beloved spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada. Within my dark, empty heart you remain as a guiding star pointing the way back to Godhead. Your greatness cannot be measured. ²³⁸

New Vrindaban residents, without a doubt, loved Kirtanananda Swami. This was collaborated by a devotee from a Canadian ISKCON farm project who visited the community and sent a letter of appreciation to Kirtanananda Swami: "It was very enlivening to us to visit New Vrindaban, especially with our experiences at New Gokula [the ISKCON farm in British Columbia], as we could relate to all the programs which are underway there. It is unfortunate that we could not spend more time there. . . . I hope I can capture some of the unflinching faith and conviction which you display and which is the necessary ingredient to a successful community project. . . . Srila Prabhupada told me once that the secret of good management was love. If the devotees love you, then they will do anything for you. This was the predominant feature about New Vrindaban. That all the devotees love Sri Sri Radha-Vrindaban Chandra, Srila Prabhupada and Kirtanananda Swami. I was very much impressed by the devotees' Krishna Consciousness." ²³⁹

Kirtanananda was highly respected throughout ISKCON.

Kirtanananda Swami was highly respected throughout ISKCON as an expert preacher. Prabhupada expressed his great confidence in Kirtanananda in a letter dated May 2, 1972: “You are the first sannyasi of my institution so I expect greater things from you than the others. Lord Krishna has given you the chance, so do this preaching work very nicely. He will continue to give us all opportunity if we remain sincere and serious.”²⁴⁰

Prabhupada sometimes requested Kirtanananda to substitute for him at college engagements. “Today Kirtanananda Swami has left for North Carolina to take my place in lecturing there at two college engagements. This is very satisfying to me, and I wish that many of my disciples may become expert preachers so they may assist more and more in the great preaching work that we have to do for the benefit of mankind.”²⁴¹

Kirtanananda also preached with the pen, and wrote sixteen articles and poems which were published in *Back to Godhead* between 1966 and 1974, including a series of eight essays on the first eight chapters of the *Bhagavad-gita*.²⁴²

When Kirtanananda Swami visited other temples, he was often idolized as a celebrity. Brahmacharis especially fawned over him, eager to render some personal service. They attentively listened to his classes and darshans as if each word from Kirtanananda’s mouth was a drop of nectar falling directly from the spiritual sky.²⁴³

One graduate student at the University of Illinois working toward her Ph. D. in anthropology met Kirtanananda Swami and interviewed him during a 1972 visit to the Boston Temple. She described the adulation he received in her doctoral dissertation, which was later published in 1974 as a book: *The American Children of Krishna: A Study of the Hare Krishna Movement*.²⁴⁴

At the close of a long interview and taping session with Kirtanananda, the researcher was stopped by a young brahmachari who was busily painting the front door of the temple. He anxiously begged me to reveal some fragments of my interview with Kirtanananda. His interest was so deep and sincere that I repeated a couple of anecdotes from Kirtanananda’s conversation while he clung hungrily to every syllable. When word about the interview got around the temple, the researcher was asked by other members to share the Kirtanananda tapes with them. Finally, with Kirtanananda’s permission, I loaned the tape to those who wished to hear it. The maharaj is considered a great devotee. He is particularly distinguished for his early membership in ISKCON, for his close association with Prabhupada, for being the first man to take sannyas in India, and for his high rank as Swami. The devotees therefore wish to learn all they can from him about spiritual advancement.

Kirtanananda Swami was worshipped not only the brahmacharis; he was also adored by the brahmacharinis [unmarried female devotees]. Another researcher described the adulation Kirtanananda Swami received from the single women during a visit to the New York City temple during December 1972:²⁴⁵

Fourteen Hare Krishna sannyasis around the world spend their time mostly in travel, carrying a three-pronged staff. Four of the Hare Krishna sannyasis live in the United States. Two are presidents of temples. . . . Two others are wanderers. . . . [One is] Kirtanananda Maharaj, who alone among disciples has been authorized by Prabhupada to initiate other devotees. Kirtanananda Maharaj’s arrival provokes the brahmacharinis in the New York temple into a flurry of hero worship. Their eyes get starry. Many of them say to me, “Isn’t he wonderful!”

New Vrindaban residents generally did not like to see Kirtanananda Swami leave to go traveling and preaching. Sometimes it seemed that whenever Maharaj left New Vrindaban, all sorts of misfortunes plagued the devotees, and when he returned all peace and tranquility prevailed: “Auspiciousness exists

here only due to the presence of the Swami. This is proven by the fact that whenever he leaves to go to India or somewhere else to spread Krishna Consciousness, inauspicious events occur. In the winter we will suddenly get extremely cold weather which mysteriously warms up when he returns. There have been cases of fire, disease and government actions present, all of which vanish upon Maharaj's return.”²⁴⁶

The New Vrindaban devotees understood that Kirtanananda Swami was their life and soul, and their connection to Prabhupada and Krishna. Without his presence, they often felt listless and morose: “In New Vrindaban, ten thousand times a day our eyes search out Maharaj and find him. Time and again we look and Maharaj is still there. This ocean of mercy can only come from Lord Krishna Himself, Who knows that the Brijabasis are too weak in the head to endure much separation.”²⁴⁷

“From time to time, he [Kirtanananda Swami] would leave New Vrindaban unannounced, travel and preach, and come back ‘when you’re ready to hear.’ When Maharaj left, the separation was almost intolerable, not to mention the bedlam. So Kuladri was begging Maharaj never to leave again because without him we were hopeless.”²⁴⁸

One resident described the loneliness he felt when Kirtanananda was away during a trip to India, the guilt he felt due to his fallen condition, and the joy he experienced when Maharaj returned:²⁴⁹

It is a very dark and cold morning in this little village in the Spiritual Sky. Walking about are thirty or forty huddled and restless souls. No one is talking and the only sound that can be heard is the tapping of the mridanga. The moon cannot be seen for the lingering quality of loneliness and anticipation that has clouded our hearts here in New Vrindaban. Some of us have stayed and some have gone, taking with them their enthusiasm. But those who are still here know a secret. Simply stay. Simply stay here and you will see Vrindaban. Simply stay here and you will dance with Krishna. In the hearts of these young boys and girls is the restless murmur of truth imparted by their beloved Kirtanananda Swami, first disciple of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in the Western world. He has been away in India, the cradle of Vedic culture now in ruins, to plunder its riches of transcendental paraphernalia for their Lordships Sri Sri Radha-Vrindaban Chandra. He has been gone so long a time. Will he ever come back? Perhaps he has found some disciples who really appreciate him and he will never come back. Why did we treat him so casually? When he goes to city temples you cannot even approach him after a class, he is so possessed by every young brahmachari who can get near enough. But here we have accepted him as a servant, waking us, feeding us, teaching us even how to bathe properly. So many words are missing from the lips of the devotees this morning. The only thing we realize is that we are helpless without him, and this is Krishna's mercy. This human form of life is not meant for supplying the demands of the body, he would say, but for reestablishing our relationship with Lord Krishna, the Supreme Absolute Truth, the father of all living entities. The eyes are cast down and even the children seem to be absorbed in this mood of separation. A vehicle suddenly enters the driveway, and he is here. The kirtan begins bringing with it a morning of tears and jubilation. Boxes and boxes of nectarine deity paraphernalia, offerings of love and obeisances, and prasadam. This is not an ordinary place I am seeing, and these are not ordinary people. They are become effulgent by their loving attitude for this man who is as tough as he is gentle, as vulnerable as he is forbearing. He is delivering Srila Prabhupada, by whose mercy we are receiving Krishna.

Prabhupada showed confidence in Kirtanananda.

Prabhupada encouraged his New Vrindaban disciples to take shelter of Kirtanananda: “We must all follow in the footsteps of Kirtanananda Maharaj.”²⁵⁰

Kuladri Das explained how Srila Prabhupada encouraged him to serve Kirtanananda Maharaj:²⁵¹

When Prabhupada took me into his service, he encouraged me to serve Kirtanananda Swami. I used to spend literally every minute of the day with Maharaj. For the first three years I was in the movement I was

constantly with him. I could see that he was always dedicated to serving Prabhupada. I never saw him spend any time, money or energy on himself, but he was always trying to do something for Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada always used to tell me that whatever Kirtanananda Maharaj does, I should try to assist him. He said, “Please follow my instructions and go on developing New Vrindaban to your heart’s content. And whatever Kirtanananda Maharaj asks, please help him.”

Prabhupada had authorized Kirtanananda to be the first disciple to chant on new initiates’ beads, as explained earlier. Prabhupada wrote to Kirtanananda, “Now I am getting so many requests to take first initiation from temples in your country, and once before [during June 1972] I had empowered you to chant the beads on my behalf, so henceforth, as long as I am away from America and Canada, I am requesting all of the temple presidents in that zone of North American and South America to send the beads of the new devotees to you at New Vrindaban. The candidates for new devotees will send me their letters as usual, and I will give them names myself and enter in our records, simply you must chant on their beads and then return to them.”²⁵²

In addition to chanting on beads, Prabhupada also sometimes allowed Kirtanananda to select the Sanskrit names for new initiates.²⁵³

According to one disciple, Prabhupada once claimed that Kirtanananda was a pure devotee. Yasomatinandan Das, who was initiated in New Vrindaban in September 1972, wrote: “I was present in Los Angeles on the day when Srila Prabhupada said on the morning walk: ‘Kirtanananda, he is a pure devotee.’”²⁵⁴

Prabhupada once reportedly said, “Kirtanananda, he is first in everything!”

The “cult of Kirtanananda.”

Kirtanananda and his followers essentially created a “cult of Kirtanananda.” The word cult (an ideological organization held together by charismatic relationships that demands total commitment)²⁵⁵ is derived from the Latin *cultus*, meaning “care” or “adoration.”²⁵⁶ Cults can be categorized as positive or negative.

Prabhupada admitted that *bhakti-yoga* was a cult. He used the word “cult” hundreds of times in his books, lectures and conversations: “the bhakti cult,” “the cult of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu,” “the cult of devotional service,” “the cult of Krishna,” “the Vaishnava cult,” etc. However, Prabhupada considered the cult of *bhakti-yoga* to be a positive force for the salvation of the world.

Kirtanananda’s authority at New Vrindaban, like Prabhupada’s authority within ISKCON, was to a great extent due to his charisma. The sociologist Max Weber defined charisma as: “a certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader.”²⁵⁷

A charismatic leader can wield his considerable power for both positive or negative ends; thus, Charles Manson²⁵⁸ and Jim Jones²⁵⁹ could be reasonably considered charismatic leaders. Eileen Barker asserted in *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction* that almost by definition, charismatic leaders are unpredictable, for they are not bound by tradition or rules. Such leaders may be accorded by their followers the right to pronounce on all aspects of their lives, including, in the case of ISKCON, choosing a member’s service (occupation), ashram (celibate, married, or wandering mendicant), spouse, and sometimes even when to eat. According to Prabhupada, a brahmachari was supposed to fast unless he was given permission to eat by the spiritual master. Barker warned that in some cases the leader may lack

any accountability, require unquestioning obedience, and encourage a dependency upon the movement for material, spiritual and social resources.²⁶⁰

Benjamin Zablocki, a professor of Sociology at Rutgers University, claimed that groups that have been characterized as cults are at high risk of becoming abusive to members. He states that this is in part due to members' adulation of charismatic leaders which contributes to the leaders becoming corrupted by power.²⁶¹

While it is true that an ordinary man in the position of a charismatic cult leader will in time become drunk with power and abuse his followers, there is no danger as long as the leader is free from selfish desires. If the guru is a pure devotee—a *maha-bhagavata* or *uttama-adhikari* Vaishnava—, his followers can fearlessly give their hearts to their guru and safely make rapid advancement in devotional service. Such a leader is selfless and does not demand anything for himself, he is only concerned with the advancement of his disciples and the world at large for the pleasure of Radha and Krishna.²⁶²

Prabhupada explained that a spiritual master should ideally be situated on the *uttama-adhikari* platform. A less advanced Vaishnava can also act as guru, but his disciples will not be able to advance to the highest stage: "One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of *uttama-adhikari*. A neophyte Vaishnava or a Vaishnava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance. Therefore a disciple should be careful to accept an *uttama-adhikari* as a spiritual master."²⁶³

However, even if the guru is not yet a *maha-bhagavata*, if he strictly follows the process of *bhakti*, he can eventually attain the *uttama-adhikari* platform. During his devotional journey, the imperfect guru²⁶⁴ may err occasionally in his instruction or act with improper behavior, but will always humbly admit his mistakes, pull the weeds of sinful desire from his heart, rectify himself by penance, continue on the path of progress in the association of devotees, and eventually arrive at the *uttama-adhikari* stage when "one's heart becomes illuminated like the sun."²⁶⁵

By the process of executing regulated devotional service, one is actually elevated onto the transcendental stage, beyond the material modes of nature. At that time one's heart becomes illuminated like the sun. The sun is far above the planetary systems, and there is no possibility of its being covered by any kind of cloud; similarly, when a devotee is purified like the sun, from his pure heart there is a diffusion of ecstatic love which is more glorious than the sunshine. Only at that time is the attachment to Krishna perfect.

Spontaneously, the devotee becomes eager to serve the Lord in his ecstatic love. At this stage the devotee is on the platform of *uttama-adhikari*, perfect devotion. Such a devotee has no agitation from material affections and is interested only in the service of Radha and Krishna.²⁶⁶

However, if the guru becomes stuck in a rut, so to speak, or blocked in his advancement—if he becomes addicted to adoration and position, or falls down from his vows repeatedly without remorse or correction—the weeds of desire within his heart will eventually choke the tender *bhakti* creeper,²⁶⁷ and he will certainly abuse his power and create havoc for both himself and his disciples. This type of guru, one who imitates the stage of *uttama-adhikari*, is sure to fall down and become degraded. Srila Prabhupada explained: "One should not imitate the behavior of an advanced devotee or *maha-bhagavata* without being self-realized, for by such imitation one will eventually become degraded."²⁶⁸

In the beginning, Kirtanananda Swami might have discouraged his followers from worshiping him as an *uttama-adhikari*, but as time passed, he became less likely to rebuff their attempts to glorify him. From his university studies of the great historical preachers of religious revivalism and from his own personal experience, he understood the importance of maintaining his "divinely-bestowed" charismatic authority to command the adoration of his followers and to attain his objectives.

Perhaps this co-dependent relationship between Kirtanananda and his followers may have, in the beginning, been a good thing to unite and mobilize the community to accomplish far-reaching goals, such as building New Vrindaban into a place of pilgrimage in the West as Prabhupada envisioned, but it also placed great demands on Kirtanananda to maintain his image of perfect purity at all costs, and great demands on his followers to constantly sacrifice more and more to follow his never-ending orders to “surrender more and more to Krishna.” Only time would tell whether the Brijabasis’ perception of Kirtanananda as a *maha-bhagavata* was based on fact or fiction.

New Vrindaban: a place of pilgrimage.

As the community gradually stabilized—beginning in June, 1972—under the new and unified dual spiritual and managerial team of Kirtanananda Swami and Kuladri, and New Vrindaban residents became steady and reliable in their *sadhana* (spiritual practice) and service, thoughts naturally turned to the next stage of community development: building the first of seven temples on seven hills.

Kuladri explained, “For the first few years, New Vrindaban was conceived simply as a Vedic village, a community of simple living and high thinking, where residents grew their own food and protected cows. This all changed, however, soon after Kirtanananda left the traveling road show and returned to New Vrindaban at Prabhupada’s request. He attempted to begin the manifestation of Prabhupada’s vision for New Vrindaban as a place of pilgrimage in the West, with seven temples on seven hills.”²⁶⁹

Kirtanananda Swami understood that once New Vrindaban fulfilled its first function as a simple village where everyone lived depending on nature’s protection and the cows, it was time to begin fulfilling its second function: to reconstruct the transcendental places of pilgrimage of Vrindaban, India. When Kirtanananda Maharaj was asked about his plans for New Vrindaban, he replied:²⁷⁰

My plans? I don’t have any plans. But I am trying to understand what is Srila Prabhupada’s plan. Since the very beginning I’ve understood his plan to be to form a transcendental village—a transcendental community—a replica of Krishna’s Vrindaban which he himself has described as a very simple village where everyone lives simply—plain living, high thinking, simply depending on nature’s beauty, nature’s protection, and the cow as the basis for the economy.

Here at New Vrindaban we are trying to do that. We are trying to formulate a program based upon plain living and high thinking as the central point of our economy. The cow takes what we can’t eat: grass, and gives us the most valuable food: milk. Practically this milk is necessary for spiritual culture. Milk creates finer brain tissue which allows us to think upon self realization. So milk is very important.

Right now, of course, we are in a very primitive stage here. We have to do so much just to create and build enough cottages to live in and temple for worship. But our long range goal, of course, is to complete seven magnificent temples, replicas of the seven temples of the Goswamis of Vrindaban. And around each of these temples there will be a small community of devotees. Brahmacharis, grihasthas, vanaprasthas and sannyasis. They will be happily chanting Hare Krishna and be an example on how to fulfill the mission of human life. The mission of human life is to make a solution between birth and death so that one does not have to again take birth.

Prabhupada said he would come again to New Vrindaban that summer (1972), and all the residents worked hard to prepare for his arrival. However, few at the time could foresee the radical change in direction the rural community would take soon after Prabhupada’s second visit.

Next Chapter Summary: Chapter 6—“Prabhupada’s Palace of Gold”—begins on August 31, 1972, when Prabhupada came to visit New Vrindaban for the second time, and ends seven years later on September 2, 1979, when the Palace was dedicated. Topics and events discussed are: Prabhupada’s second visit, the birth of New Vrindaban sankirtan, the dedication for the proposed Govindaji temple and Prabhupada’s house (later to become Prabhupada’s Palace), the June 1973 gang attack, New Vrindaban sued for one million dollars, Prabhupada’s third visit, GBC members criticize “Kirtanananda’s Folly,” the first Christmas Marathon, New Vrindaban quarantined by West Virginia governor, Prabhupada’s fourth and final visit to New Vrindaban, Prabhupada leaves the planet, the Palace marathon, and the grand opening of Prabhupada’s Palace.

¹ Abhay Charan De was Prabhupada’s name before he accepted the sannyas title in 1959.

² Satsvarupa dasa Goswami, *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta*, vol. 1: “A Lifetime in Preparation” (Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Los Angeles: 1980), 189.

³ Abhay Charan De, “How to Broadcast the Teachings of *Bhagwat Geeta*” (in two installments), *Back to Godhead*, vol. III, part VI (May 20, 1956), 2; and vol. III, part VII (June 5, 1956), 4.

⁴ Satsvarupa dasa Goswami, *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta*, vol. 2: “Planting the Seed” (Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Los Angeles: 1980), 167, 168.

⁵ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Brahmananda dated January 25, 1967.

⁶ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva dated April 23, 1967, *Brijabasi Spirit*, “The New Vrindaban Letters” vol. VI, no. 6 (September 1979), 2.

⁷ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva dated October 19, 1967.

⁸ Hayagriva Das, *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, 229.

⁹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, cited by Hayagriva Das, *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, 229.

¹⁰ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (1.1.15), purport.

¹¹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (4.8.69), purport.

¹² Brahmananda Das, cited by Hayagriva Das, *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, 229.

¹³ Hansadutta, telephone conversation with the author (August 15, 2003).

¹⁴ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hansadutta (January 22, 1968).

¹⁵ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Brahmananda (February 26, 1968).

¹⁶ The *Oracle* sometimes published photographs and articles about A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. The December 1966 issue contained a photograph of Swamiji standing by a tree in New York City’s *Washington Square Park* with the caption, “Bring Krishna Consciousness West. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.” p. 8.

The January 1967 issue contained a 1½ page feature article by “Mukundah Das Adhikary” titled “The New Science” which announced the arrival of “His Holiness, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, a 71-year-old sannyasi who, by disciplic succession, is a genuine spiritual master” who “was instructed by his spiritual master in India, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Maharaj to continue teaching the science of God in the United States.” Mukunda continued, “Swamiji, as he is known to his devotees, will conduct daily classes in the *Bhagavad-gita*, discussions, chanting, playing instruments, and devotional dancing in a small temple in the neighborhood. He arrives this month. . . . Swamiji’s chanting and dancing is more

effective than Hatha or Raja Yoga or listening to Ali Akbar K Khan on acid or going to a mixed media rock dance. I know from experience because I am his devotee.” pp. 4, 8.

¹⁷ Richard Rose, cited in “Richard Rose: Zen Master, Poet, Philosopher, Friend.” (<http://www.richardrose.org>)

¹⁸ Gaudiya-Vaishnavas consider losing one’s identity and merging into the impersonal Brahman effulgence of the Supreme Lord to be vastly inferior to retaining one’s individuality and rendering loving devotional service to the Lord. Prabhupada explained: “Transcendentalists are divided into two primary groups: the *nirvisesa-vadis*, or impersonalists, and the *bhaktas*, or devotees. The impersonalists do not accept spiritual varieties of life. They want to merge into the existence of the Supreme Lord in His Brahman feature (the *brahmajyoti*). The devotees, however, desire to take part in the transcendental activities of the Supreme Lord.” (*Srimad-bhagavatam* 5.17.3, purport)

“The desire to merge into the impersonal Brahman is the subtlest type of atheism. As soon as such atheism, disguised in the dress of liberation, is encouraged, one becomes completely unable to traverse the path of devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” (*Chaitanya-charitamrita*, Adi-lila 1.92, purport)

“A devotee’s aim in life is to attain perfection in loving the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Those who aspire to merge into the Brahman effulgence are as abominable as demons. Devotees who aspire to associate with the Supreme Lord to render Him transcendental loving service are far superior.” (*Chaitanya-charitamrita*, Adi-lila 5.36, purport)

“Mayavadi philosophers desire to merge into the existence of the Brahman effulgence, although this aspect of liberation is always neglected by devotees. Srila Prabodhananda Sarasvati Thakura, describing this kind of mukti, which is called *kaivalya*, or becoming one with the Supreme, has said, *kaivalyam narakayate*: “Becoming one with the Supreme is as good as going to hell.” Therefore the ideal of Mayavada philosophy, becoming one with the Supreme, is hellish for a devotee; he never accepts it.” (*Chaitanya-charitamrita*, Adi-lila 8.19, purport)

“Lord Vishnu’s impersonal aspect is known as Brahman. So when the *jiva* soul, a product of Lord Vishnu’s superior, spiritual energy, attains *sayujya-mukti*, or liberation by merging with Brahman, it is not at all surprising. The energetic principle always enjoys the prerogative of enfolding within itself His own energy, but that does not destroy the energy’s eternal individuality. The impersonalists, desiring to merge with Brahman and knowing that it is feasible, still experience intense suffering in their effort to reach *brahmananda*, ‘the bliss of Brahman.’ The Lord’s devotees consider the pleasures of such liberation worse than hell. The impersonalists, in trying to destroy the illusion inherent in material forms, do away with even the eternal spiritual forms. That is indeed very foolish. Treating a patient to cure his disease is one thing, but ending the patient along with the disease is the work of an idiot.” (*Renunciation Through Wisdom*, 2.13)

¹⁹ Richard Rose reached this conclusion after reading the writings of Ramana Maharshi. See “About Richard Rose” (http://www.richardroseteachings.com/about_rr.html).

²⁰ *The Albigen Papers* was not published until 1973. Other books by Rose were: *Energy Transmutation, Between-ness and Transmission* (1975), *Psychology of the Observer* (1979, 2001), *Meditation* (1981), *The Direct-Mind Experience* (1985), *Profound Writings, East & West* (1988), and *The Three Books of the Absolute* appears in *The Albigen Papers* and in *Profound Writings, East & West*.

²¹ Tony Kalar, “Chance Encounter,” *The TAT Forum* (August 2005). (<http://tatfoundation.org/forum2005-08.htm>)

²² Rose passed away on July 6, 2005 at the Weirton, West Virginia, Geriatric Center after a ten-year battle with Alzheimer’s.

²³ Rose had also dabbled in politics; he had been certified as a bearer of petitions for George Wallace’s presidential candidacy, and Rose himself had been a candidate for the Republican nomination for justice of the peace.

²⁴ Jake Jaqua, “The Guy Who Saved My Life,” *The TAT Forum* (August 2005). (<http://tatfoundation.org/forum2005-08.htm>)

²⁵ See “Richard Rose,” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Rose).

²⁶ H. John Rogers, “Of Swamis and Rednecks,” *Brijabasi Spirit* (September 1994), 15.

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- ²⁷ Art Ticknor, *Self Discovery Multi-site Portal* (<http://www.selfdiscoveryportal.com/gtBioSk.htm>).
- ²⁸ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva (March 17, 1968).
- ²⁹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva (March 17, 1968).
- ³⁰ Elsie and F. Gerald Ham, conversation with the author in Madison, Wisconsin (June 30, 2003).
- ³¹ Elsie and F. Gerald Ham, conversation with the author (June 30, 2003).
- ³² Kirtanananda Swami said: “I came out here in 1968, at the end of March.” See: “Ista-Goshthi,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 5, no. 3 (April 1978), 11.
- ³³ Richard Rose, quoted by David Gold, *After the Absolute: Real Life Adventures With a Backwoods Buddha* (Writer’s Club Press: 2002), chapter 16.
- ³⁴ George Ivanovich Gurdjieff (1866?-1949) was an Armenian-Greek mystic, a teacher of sacred dances, and a spiritual teacher. He is most notable for introducing what some refer to as *The Work*, connoting work on oneself according to Gurdjieff’s principles and instructions, or as he first referred to it, the *Fourth Way*.
- ³⁵ Hayagriva Das, *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, 231.
- ³⁶ In *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, Hayagriva called Richard Rose “Mr. Foster.”
- ³⁷ Peter D. Ouspensky (1878-1947) was a Russian philosopher who invoked geometry in his discussions of psychology and higher dimensions of existence. During his years in Moscow, Ouspensky wrote for several newspapers and was particularly interested in the then-fashionable idea of the fourth dimension. Ouspensky is well-known for his expositions of the early work of the Greek-Armenian philosopher-mystic and psychological teacher G. I. Gurdjieff, whom he met in Moscow in 1915.
- ³⁸ “Hold Rose In Shooting ‘Hippie Farm’ Snooping,” *Moundsville Daily Echo* (August 18, 1968).
- ³⁹ Kirtanananda Swami, from “The Spiritual Frontier” (1976), an ITV film by Yadubar Das and Vishakha Devi Dasi.
- ⁴⁰ Kirtanananda Swami, cited by Hayagriva Das, *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, 238.
- ⁴¹ The Fostoria Glass Company closed its doors permanently in 1986.
- ⁴² Kirtanananda Swami, quoted in “Istagosthi,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 3, no. 6 (June 1976), 10.
- ⁴³ “While still in New York [during October 1967], Kirtanananda and Hayagriva replaced A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami’s name as author of the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* manuscript with Kirtanananda’s name as the author, and Hayagriva as the editor. They solicited publishers trying to get ‘their’ book published. But publishers became suspicious when they met Kirtanananda because they could see he was not a Sanskrit scholar or even Indian, and who knew more about the Bible than the *Bhagavad-gita*. This was discovered by Rayarama when he later tried to get Swamiji’s manuscript published and was meeting with publishers.”—Brahmananda Das, from an e-mail letter to the author (October 9, 2003).
- ⁴⁴ Brahmananda Das, from e-mail letters to the author (October 8 and 9, 2003).
- ⁴⁵ Kirtanananda Swami, telephone conversation with the author (May 31, 2003).
- ⁴⁶ Kirtanananda Swami Bhaktipada, letter to Kurma Das and Hare Krishna Devi Dasi of Pizers Creek, Australia (April 19, 1988).
- ⁴⁷ “Srla Bhaktipada Nectar,” *New Vrindaban News* (January 17, 1986), 4.
- ⁴⁸ Hayagriva Das, *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, 232, 233.

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- ⁴⁹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Janardan (April 26, 1968).
- ⁵⁰ Conversation between Prabhupada and Hayagriva Das quoted by Hayagriva Das, *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, 234.
- ⁵¹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Mukunda (May 6, 1968).
- ⁵² The Poconos is a forested mountainous region and popular recreational area in northeastern Pennsylvania.
- ⁵³ Kirtanananda Das, from “Following Srila Prabhupada: A Chronological Series” DVD 1: Nov. 1965-July 1970,” (ISKCON Cinema: 2006)
- ⁵⁴ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda Swami (May 23, 1968).
- ⁵⁵ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Brahmananda (July 29, 1968).
- ⁵⁶ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda (June 24, 1968).
- ⁵⁷ “I have advised Kirtanananda Maharaja that girls who are living in New Vrindaban should be engaged in the following activities; (1) taking care of the children, (2) cleaning the temple, kitchen, etc. (3) cooking, and (4) churning butter.” A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Labangalatika (June 24, 1969).
- ⁵⁸ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva (June 14, 1968).
- ⁵⁹ Richard Rose, quoted by Hayagriva Das, *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, 241.
- ⁶⁰ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda (June 30, 1968).
- ⁶¹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Brahmananda (June 28, 1968).
- ⁶² A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva (July 10, 1968).
- ⁶³ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Upendra (July 4, 1968).
- ⁶⁴ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Dayananda (July 7, 1968).
- ⁶⁵ Richard Rose, quoted by David Gold, *After the Absolute*, chapter 8.
- ⁶⁶ Hayagriva Das, *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, 242-243.
- ⁶⁷ “Hold Rose In Shooting ‘Hippie Farm’ Snooping,” *Moundsville Daily Echo* (July 18, 1968).
- ⁶⁸ Hayagriva Das, “Chant,” *Brijabasi Spirit* (November 1981), 20.
- ⁶⁹ Kirtanananda Swami, telephone conversation with the author (May 31, 2003).
- ⁷⁰ Kirtanananda Das, from “Following Srila Prabhupada: A Chronological Series” DVD 1: Nov. 1965-July 1970,” (ISKCON Cinema: 2006).
- ⁷¹ Hayagriva Das, *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, 247.
- ⁷² A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda and Hayagriva (August 23, 1968).
- ⁷³ Lease available for viewing at Marshall County Courthouse.
- ⁷⁴ “Rose Leases Farm For Religious Group,” *Moundsville Daily Echo* (September 3, 1968).
- ⁷⁵ Hayagriva Das, “New Vrindaban Diary,” *Brijabasi Spirit* (April 1981), 30.

⁷⁶ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda and Hayagriva (August 23, 1968). See also “It Is Very Surprising: Srila Prabhupada’s First Instructions Regarding New Vrindaban,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 6, no. 6 (September 1979), 15.

⁷⁷ Richard Rose, quoted by David Gold, *After the Absolute*, chapter 16.

⁷⁸ Brahmananda Das, “Memo to all devotees,” dated September 7, 1968, published in *Letters from Srila Prabhupada*, vol. 1, 507.

⁷⁹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda Swami (September 22, 1968).

⁸⁰ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda Swami (September 22, 1968).

⁸¹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva (September 22, 1968).

The article about New Vrindaban which Prabhupada requested Hayagriva to write was published in the April 18, 1969 issue of *Back to Godhead*.

⁸² A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva (November 18, 1968).

⁸³ *New Vrindaban Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 3 (December 4, 1968), reprinted in “Notes From the Beginning: From Our Early Newsletters,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 4, no. 7 (October 1977), 12.

⁸⁴ Hayagriva Das, “New Vrindaban: the Making of a Village,” *Mother Earth News*, no. 16 (July 1972), lifestyle section, L29.

⁸⁵ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda (December 2, 1968).

⁸⁶ Some claim that Kirtanananda heroically struggled all alone at the farmhouse during the first winter, even breaking the ice at *Keshi ghat* to bathe (for instance, see Adwaitacharya Das, “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 2, no. 3 [c. April 1982], 20.), but Hayagriva’s diary should be accepted as authoritative: four devotees stayed at New Vrindaban during the first winter, and in January the number increased to five.

⁸⁷ Hayagriva Das and Shyama Dasi were married in a ceremony conducted by Prabhupada in Los Angeles on December 25, 1968. The match was arranged by Prabhupada: “So today’s wedding ceremony between Sriman Hayagriva brahmachari and Srimati Shyama Dasi is practically negotiated by me. I am the marriage maker and I am the negotiator also.”

⁸⁸ Kirtanananda Swami, cited by Adwaitacharya in “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 2, no. 3 (c. April 1982), 20.

⁸⁹ *New Vrindaban Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 6 (February 20, 1969), reprinted in “Notes From the Beginning: From Our Early Newsletters,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 4, no. 7 (October 1977), 12.

⁹⁰ Hayagriva Das, “New Vrindaban: the Making of a Village,” *Mother Earth News*, no. 16 (July 1972), lifestyle section, L29.

⁹¹ Hayagriva Das, “New Vrindaban Diary,” *Brijabasi Spirit* (April 1981), 30.

⁹² See Brahmananda’s “Memo to all devotees” (September 3, 1968).

⁹³ Govinda Devi Dasi, from “Following Srila Prabhupada: A Chronological Series” DVD 1: Nov. 1965-July 1970,” (ISKCON Cinema: 2006)

⁹⁴ *Back to Godhead*, vol. 1, no. 23 (April 18, 1969), 24.

⁹⁵ Hayagriva Das, “It Is Very Surprising,” *Brijabasi Spirit* (c. August 1981), 6,7.

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- ⁹⁶ Ranadhir Das, quoted by Jahnava Devi Dasi in an undated manuscript in the New Vrindaban Archives, mmd. 5a.
- ⁹⁷ Hayagriva Das, "Paramahansa in the Hills," *Brijabasi Spirit* (c. September 1982), pp. 22, 23, 24, 25.
- ⁹⁸ A chadar is a cloak.
- ⁹⁹ Chintamani Dasi, "Srla Prabhupada in New Vrindaban," *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 14, no. 3 (c. October 1985), 23, 24.
- ¹⁰⁰ Bhuijana Das, *My Glorious Master* (Vaishnava Institute for Higher Education, New Delhi: 1996), 46.
- ¹⁰¹ Dvarakadhish Das, "Growing Up With Krishna," *Back To Godhead*, vol. 21, no. 12 (December 1986), 12.
- ¹⁰² Hayagriva Das, "New Vrindaban Diary," *Brijabasi Spirit* (April 1981), 30.
- ¹⁰³ Hayagriva Das, *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, 324-326.
- ¹⁰⁴ The word "inmate" refers to "a person living with others in the same building, especially one confined with others in a prison or institution." (Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition, Classics Edition, 1983, p. 726.) Prabhupada also used this word "inmate" in his 1953 prospectus for *The League of Devotees*: "Scholars from all countries will be welcome to remain as inmate of the institution if they agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the institution."
- ¹⁰⁵ Kirtanananda Swami, from the "Introduction" to *Understanding God Through Bhagavat Dharma*, a series of seven lectures by and one interview with Prabhupada during his September 1972 visit to New Vrindaban, published by Palace Press (1983).
- ¹⁰⁶ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva (August 17, 1968).
- ¹⁰⁷ *New Vrindaban Newsletter* (May 29, 1969), reprinted in "Notes From the Beginning: From Our Early Newsletters," *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 4, no. 7 (October 1977), 12.
- ¹⁰⁸ Chintamani Dasi, "Srla Prabhupada in New Vrindaban," *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 14, no. 3 (c. October 1985), 23, 24.
- ¹⁰⁹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Janardan, Hansadutta, Himavati and Pradyumna (June 29, 1967).
- ¹¹⁰ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Chaitanya-charitamrita, Madhya-lila 7.69*, purport.
- ¹¹¹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva (July 14, 1968).
- ¹¹² A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda (June 24, 1969).
- ¹¹³ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda (June 24, 1969).
- ¹¹⁴ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, cited by Hansadutta Das, telephone conversation with the author (August 15, 2003).
- ¹¹⁵ Hansadutta Das, telephone conversation with the author (August 15, 2003).
- ¹¹⁶ Taru Das, "Kow Katha," *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 4, no. 3 (March 1977), 30.
- ¹¹⁷ Sureshvar Das, "The Coldest Shower I Ever Took," *Brijabasi Spirit* (October 1981), 20, 21.
- ¹¹⁸ Hladini Dasi, "The Fire of Devotional Service," *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 2, no. 2 (February 1982), 27.
- ¹¹⁹ Ganendra Das, "New Vrindvanamrta," *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 3, no. 12 (December 1976), 18.
- ¹²⁰ Taru Das, "Celebrating the Appearance of the Lord," *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 4, no. 6 (September 1977), 8.

¹²¹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva (March 18, 1969).

¹²² Tape recorded conversation with Prabhupada and devotees at New Vrindaban (June 9, 1969).

¹²³ It appears that there was a problem in funding for some girls who came to New Vrindaban from Los Angeles. Prabhupada wrote: “The money matters dealings are somewhat an embarrassment to me. I do not know what they have paid and what you have received. The best thing is as you suggested that the girls who are there may come back to Los Angeles. I have asked Tamala also to write them. If Tamala is not sending their money, he should look after their comfort, and the best thing would be that you ask them to come back to Los Angeles, without any hardships and burdens on you. You take care of Girish and Birbhadra nicely, and I shall ask Silavati to send the money directly.” – A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva (July 31, 1969).

Earlier there appeared to be a problem with accommodations for devotees at New Vrindaban: “So in the absence of sufficient accommodations we may now restrict the influx of devotees to New Vrindaban. Unless we have got sufficient place it will not be possible to make separate arrangements for brahmacharis and women and children. There is sufficient place there but there is no buildings.” – A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva (July 12, 1969).

¹²⁴ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda Swami (August 6, 1969).

¹²⁵ The Hatfield-McCoy feud (1878–1891) is an account of American history that has become a metaphor for bitterly feuding rival parties in general. It involved two warring families of the West Virginia-Kentucky backcountry along the Tug Fork River, off the Big Sandy River.

¹²⁶ Bhagavatananda Das, telephone conversation with the author (June 30, 2005).

¹²⁷ See “Love-hate relationship,” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love-hate_relationship).

¹²⁸ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Brahmananda (August 30, 1969).

¹²⁹ See letter from A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (August 18, 1970).

¹³⁰ Adwaitacharya Das, “The Mad Horse Offense,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. X, no. II (April 1983), 12-13.

¹³¹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, cited by Satsvarupa Das Goswami in *Srila Prabhupada-Lilamrita*, vol. 4, 87.

¹³² A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Damodar Maharaj, cited by Vaiyasaki Das, *Radha-Damodar Vilasa* (Sravanam-Kirtanam Press: 1999), 275.

¹³³ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Tamal Krishna, cited by Vaiyasaki Das, *Radha-Damodar Vilasa* (Sravanam-Kirtanam Press: 1999), 277.

¹³⁴ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hansadutta dated August 16, 1970

¹³⁵ Vaiyasaki Das, *Radha-Damodar Vilasa* (Sravanam-Kirtanam Press: 1999), 278-279.

¹³⁶ In a letter to Satsvarupa (July 19, 1970), Prabhupada wrote, “So far it is fixed up that I go to New Vrindaban for Janmastami day by the 20th August.”

¹³⁷ Kirtanananda Swami and Prabhupada, cited by Vaiyasaki Das, *Radha-Damodar Vilasa* (Sravanam-Kirtanam Press: 1999), 344-345.

¹³⁸ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Satsvarupa and Uddhava (July 26, 1970).

¹³⁹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hansadutta (August 16, 1970).

¹⁴⁰ “Jots,” *Moundsville Daily Echo* (August 4, 1970).

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- ¹⁴¹ “Public Festival At Krishna Farm Next Weekend,” *Moundsville Daily Echo* (August 15, 1970).
- ¹⁴² “Hare Krishna,” *Moundsville Daily Echo* (August 24, 1970).
- ¹⁴³ Satsvarupa Das Goswami, *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta*, vol. 4: “In Every Town and Village,” 111-112.
- ¹⁴⁴ Brahmananda Swami, cited by Vaiyasaki Das, *Radha-Damodar Vilasa*, 308.
- ¹⁴⁵ Satyabhama Devi Dasi, cited by Vaiyasaki Das, *Radha-Damodar Vilasa*, 309.
- ¹⁴⁶ Vaiyasaki Das, *Radha-Damodar Vilasa*, 349.
- ¹⁴⁷ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Brahmananda, Gargamuni (July 31, 1970).
- ¹⁴⁸ I have heard that this was not one, but three different letters from Prabhupada. Satsvarupa had combined different points from the three letters apparently in the interest of dramatic principle, to keep the story line simple and flowing.
- ¹⁴⁹ Tamal Krishna Goswami, “The Perils of Succession: Heresies of Authority and Continuity in the Hare Krishna Movement,” *ISKCON Communications Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1 (June 1997).
- ¹⁵⁰ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva (November 8, 1970).
- ¹⁵¹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, cited in “Parikrama,” *Brijabasi Spirit* (August 11, 1974), 7.
- ¹⁵² Hayagriva Das, “New Vrindaban Diary,” *Brijabasi Spirit* (April 1981), 30.
- ¹⁵³ Hayagriva Das, “New Vrindaban: the Making of a Village,” *Mother Earth News*, no. 16 (July 1972), lifestyle section, L29.
- ¹⁵⁴ Suresvara Das, “Memories and Miracles,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 4, no. 6 (September 1977), 12.
- ¹⁵⁵ An Indian crore is equal to 100 lakh or 10 million.
- ¹⁵⁶ Hayagriva Das, “New Vrindaban: the Making of a Village,” *Mother Earth News*, no. 16 (July 1972), lifestyle section, L29.
- ¹⁵⁷ Hayagriva Das, “New Vrindaban: the Making of a Village,” *Mother Earth News*, no. 16 (July 1972), lifestyle section, L29.
- ¹⁵⁸ “Krishna Colony,” *Moundsville Daily Echo* (May 30, 1973).
- ¹⁵⁹ Hayagriva Das, “New Vrindaban: the Making of a Village,” *Mother Earth News*, L31.
- ¹⁶⁰ Mrs. Petit, quoted by Linda S. Herskowitz in “Krishnas in West Virginia: Gold, Guns,” *Philadelphia Inquirer* December 31, 1978), 6A.
- ¹⁶¹ Floyd Carpenter, quoted by Randy Sue Coburn, “Krishnaland,” *The Washington Star* (August 31, 1979), D10.
- ¹⁶² Marvin Eddy and Donna Whipkey, quoted by Edward Schumacher, “West Virginia Marvels at Indian Palace,” *New York Times* (September 3, 1979).
- ¹⁶³ “Jots,” *Moundsville Daily Echo* (August 18, 1972).
- ¹⁶⁴ Betty Coffield, quoted by Linda S. Herskowitz in “Krishnas in West Virginia: Gold, Guns,” *Philadelphia Inquirer* (December 31, 1978), 6A.
- ¹⁶⁵ Denzil Butler, “Conflict With Krishnas,” *Moundsville Daily Echo* (October 18, 1986).

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- ¹⁶⁶ Sam Shaw, quoted by Ann Griffith, “Neighbors Have Mixed Feelings About New Vrindaban Residents,” *Charleston Daily Mail* (June 26, 1985), 7A.
- ¹⁶⁷ Jim Cochran, quoted by Ann Griffith, “Neighbors Have Mixed Feelings About New Vrindaban Residents,” *Charleston Daily Mail* (June 26, 1985), 7A.
- ¹⁶⁸ Redneck is a term for those of Southern or Appalachian rural poor backgrounds—or more loosely, rural poor to working-class people of rural extraction.
- ¹⁶⁹ Kuladri Das, cited by Halasz & Halasz, court reporters, “United States of America, Plaintiff, v. CR 90-87 Keith Gordon Ham, Terry Sheldon, Steven Fitzpatrick, New Vrindaban Community, Inc., Govardhan, Inc., Cathedral of Healing, Inc., Defendants, before: Honorable Robert R. Merhige, Jr., United States District Judge and a Jury, Day III” (March 13, 1991), Martinsburg, West Virginia, 488.
- ¹⁷⁰ From this time forward, Kirtanananda Swami had no legal connection to New Vrindaban; he was not listed as an officer of the community, he owned no property or vehicles, he signed no checks, and his name did not even appear in the attendance roll of the weekly General Management Board meeting reports. For the most part, all his instructions were verbal. He essentially legally disappeared.
- ¹⁷¹ Kuladri Das, quoted by Edward Schumacher, “West Virginia Marvels at Indian Palace,” *New York Times* (September 3, 1979).
- ¹⁷² Kirtanananda Swami, quoted by Lynn Darling, “Krishna Land,” *The Washington Post* (September 3, 1979).
- ¹⁷³ Kirtanananda Swami, quoted by Linda S. Herskowitz in “Krishnas in West Virginia: Gold, Guns,” *Philadelphia Inquirer* (December 31, 1978), 6A.
- ¹⁷⁴ Kuladri Das, conversation with the author at New Vrindaban (October 8, 2003).
- ¹⁷⁵ “Brijabasi” is the colloquial form of the Sanskrit term “Vrajavasi,” and “Vasi.” “Vraja” is another name for the original Vrindaban where the Supreme Lord resides eternally in his original form of Govinda, the ever-fresh all-attractive supremely-beautiful youth, accompanied by his eternal companions, the cowherd boys and girls, and especially by the cows. The word “Vraja” specifically means: “One who resides.” Taken together, “Vraja” and “Vasi” indicate “One who resides in Vrindaban.” –Ragunath Das, “The Brijabasi Spirit: The Gateway to Perfection,” *Brijabasi Spirit* (September 1982), 16.
- ¹⁷⁶ Rupa Rameshvari Devi Dasi, “New Vrindaban Deity Lore, Part 1,” *Brijabasi Spirit Online* (October 28, 2007).
- ¹⁷⁷ Taru Das, “Celebrating the Appearance of the Lord,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 4, no. 6 (September 1977), 10.
- ¹⁷⁸ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Srimad-bhagavatam* 3.20.46, purport
- ¹⁷⁹ Kirtanananda Swami, cited by Sureshvara Das, “Brahma-muhurta: the Best of Times,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 6, no. 1 (January 1979), 22.
- ¹⁸⁰ Bhagavatananda Das, from a telephone conversation (June 30, 2005).
- ¹⁸¹ Taru Das, “The Surrender Goes On,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 3, no. 2 (c. November 1976), 12.
- ¹⁸² This is the opening of the Bengali song by Bhaktivinode Thakur: “Arunodaya Kirtana Song 2” from *Gitavali*.
- ¹⁸³ Taru Das, “The Surrender Goes On,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 3, no. 2 (c. November 1976), 13-14.
- ¹⁸⁴ Vaiyasaki Das, *Radha-Damodara Vilasa*, 134-135.
- ¹⁸⁵ Mangalananda Das, cited in *Harmonie School of Conscious Art*, <http://www.consciousart.de>.
- ¹⁸⁶ Vaiyasaki Das, *Radha-Damodara Vilasa*, 135.

¹⁸⁷ Damodar Das, cited by Vaiyasaki, *ibid.* 137.

¹⁸⁸ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Labangalatika Devi Dasi (April 22, 1972).

¹⁸⁹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Hayagriva (April 27, 1972).

¹⁹⁰ It should be noted that wife-beating was a common occurrence at New Vrindaban during the 1970s and early 1980s, and was sometimes recommended by temple authorities, including Kirtanananda Swami, as a necessary disciplinary technique for husbands to train an unsubmitive wife. Kirtanananda reportedly said on a number of occasions: “Three things improve with a good beating: your drum, your dog, and your wife.”

¹⁹¹ Name withheld by request, conversation with the author (April 10, 2007).

¹⁹² Vaiyasaki Das, *Radha-Damodara Vilasa*, 510.

¹⁹³ “A Life of Leadership,” *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-Puja* (September 4, 1978), 5.

¹⁹⁴ This initiation ceremony took place in Brooklyn, New York, in an old bank building which the Road Show devotees had converted into a theater. The Radha-Damodara deities presided over the ceremony. The initiations were held at the theater, because the temple did not have room for thirty Road Show devotees. See: Vaiyasaki Das, *Radha-Damodara Vilasa*, 507-508.

¹⁹⁵ “A Life of Leadership,” *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-Puja* (September 4, 1978), 5.

¹⁹⁶ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda Swami (June 25, 1972).

¹⁹⁷ Kuladri Das, “Vyasa-puja Homage” (*Sri Vyasa-puja*: September 4, 1978), 6.

¹⁹⁸ Hladini Dasi, “Vyasa-puja Homage” (*Sri Vyasa-puja*: September 4, 1978), 43.

¹⁹⁹ It should be noted that the New York City ISKCON temple authorities were furious that Kirtanananda had come and “stolen” their hardworking men and women for New Vrindaban.

²⁰⁰ Parayana Devi Dasi, *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 3, no. 6 (June 1976), 25.

²⁰¹ Kuladri had stayed with the Road Show, helping to book new engagements.

²⁰² The editors, “New Vrindaban Community,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 3, nos. 7-8 (July-August 1976), inside front cover.

²⁰³ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, conversation with the GBC, Los Angeles (May 25, 1972).

²⁰⁴ Kuladri Das, cited by Halasz & Halasz, court reporters, “United States of America, Plaintiff, v. CR 90-87 Keith Gordon Ham, Terry Sheldon, Steven Fitzpatrick, New Vrindaban Community, Inc., Govardhan, Inc., Cathedral of Healing, Inc., Defendants, before: Honorable Robert R. Merhige, Jr., United States District Judge and a Jury, Day III” (March 13, 1991), Martinsburg, West Virginia, 498.

²⁰⁵ Kuladri Das, cited by Halasz & Halasz, court reporters, “United States of America, Plaintiff, v. CR 90-87 Keith Gordon Ham, Terry Sheldon, Steven Fitzpatrick, New Vrindaban Community, Inc., Govardhan, Inc., Cathedral of Healing, Inc., Defendants, before: Honorable Robert R. Merhige, Jr., United States District Judge and a Jury, Day II” (March 12, 1991), Martinsburg, West Virginia, 459.

²⁰⁶ *Paramahansa* is a Sanskrit title of honor applied to spiritual teachers of lofty status who are regarded as having attained enlightenment. *Paramahansa* is the fourth and highest stage of the sannyas ashram, following *kuticak*, *bahudaka*, and *parivrajaka*.

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- ²⁰⁷ It should be noted that only three years earlier, Prabhupada had specifically asked Kirtanananda Swami to serve in the *bahudaka* stage, the second stage of sannyas. See A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Brahmananda (August 30, 1969).
- ²⁰⁸ Bhaktimarga Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-Puja* (September 3, 1979), 20.
- ²⁰⁹ Vrindapati Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 34.
- ²¹⁰ Sukhavaha Devi Das, *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-Puja* (August 21, 1981), 91.
- ²¹¹ Sri Galima Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 30.
- ²¹² Papasteya Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 8.
- ²¹³ Sankirtan Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 29.
- ²¹⁴ Kasyapa Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 12.
- ²¹⁵ Papasteya Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 8.
- ²¹⁶ Pippalada Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 25.
- ²¹⁷ Garga Rishi Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 18, 19.
- ²¹⁸ Gopinath Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 12.
- ²¹⁹ Suresvara Das, "Ready to Hear," *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 10, no. 5 (c. September 1983), 25.
- ²²⁰ Hansadutta Das, telephone conversations with the author (August 15 and August 21, 2003). See also Hansadutta Swami, "Reminiscences," *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 5, no. 6 (October 1978), 17.
- ²²¹ Gandendra Das, "anew Vrindavanamrita," *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 3, no. 2 (November 1976) 22-23.
- ²²² Suresvara Das, "Ready to Hear," *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 10, no. 5 (c. September 1983) 25.
- ²²³ Vahna Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-Puja* (September 3, 1979), 35.
- ²²⁴ Krishnashravana Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 71.
- ²²⁵ Manasvini Devi Dasi, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-Puja* (September 3, 1979), 49.
- ²²⁶ Kuladri Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 8.
- ²²⁷ Kutila Devi Dasi, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 36.
- ²²⁸ Atmabhu Maharaj, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 14.
- ²²⁹ Atmabhu Maharaj, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 14.
- ²³⁰ Brsakapi Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 16.
- ²³¹ Rasalila Devi Dasi, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-Puja* (September 3, 1979), 38.
- ²³² Garga Rishi Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 18.
- ²³³ Bhagavatananda Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 9.
- ²³⁴ Mudakari Devi Dasi, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 39.

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- ²³⁵ Vishnu Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 35.
- ²³⁶ Rasalila Devi Dasi, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 48.
- ²³⁷ Parayana Devi Dasi, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 49.
- ²³⁸ Bhagavatananda Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 9.
- ²³⁹ Rocana Das, “Letter of Appreciation,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, (February 11, 1976), 11.
- ²⁴⁰ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda (May 2, 1972).
- ²⁴¹ See letter from A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada to Gargamuni (May 15, 1969).
- ²⁴² *Back to Godhead* printed the following eighteen poems and articles by, and interviews with Kirtanananda Swami:
- 1966 Vol. 01, No. 01, “untitled poem, no. 1”
 - 1966 Vol. 01, No. 01, “untitled poem, no. 2”
 - 1966 Vol. 01, No. 01, “untitled poem, no. 3”
 - 1966 Vol. 01, No. 02, “untitled poem, no. 4”
 - 1969 Vol. 01, No. 29, “Man’s Link to God”
 - 1969 Vol. 01, No. 31, “Krishna’s Light vs. Maya’s Night”
 - 1970 Vol. 01, No. 32, “Prasadam: Food for the Body, Food for the Soul and Food for God”
 - 1970 Vol. 01, No. 33, “Observing the Armies on the Battlefield of Kuruksetra, Part 1”
 - 1970 Vol. 01, No. 34, “Contents of the Gita Summarized”
 - 1970 Vol. 01, No. 35, “Karma-yoga—Perfection through Action, Part 3: Sankirtana”
 - 1970 Vol. 01, No. 37, “Transcendental Knowledge, Part 4: He Is Transcendental”
 - 1970 Vol. 01, No. 38, “Karma-yoga—Action in Krishna Consciousness, Part 5: Work in Devotion”
 - 1970-1973 Vol. 01, No. 40, “Sankhya-yoga: Absorption in the Supreme”
 - 1970-1973 Vol. 01, No. 41, “Knowledge of the Absolute: It Is Not a Cheap Thing”
 - 1970-1973 Vol. 01, No. 42, “Attaining the Supreme: What Is Brahman?”
 - 1974 Vol. 01, No. 66, “Turning Our Love Toward Krishna”
 - 1977 Vol. 12, No. 12, “The Things Christ Had to Keep Secret”
 - 1986 Vol. 21, No. 07, “The Heart’s Desire: How can we find happiness that is not purchased with our pain?”
- ²⁴³ Although the younger devotees idolized Kirtanananda Swami as a pure devotee, the older, more experienced ISKCON leaders sometimes regarded him with circumspection.
- ²⁴⁴ Francine Jeanne Daner, *The American Children of Krishna: A Study of the Hare Krishna Movement* (Holt, Reinhart and Winston, New York: 1976), 77-78. Daner refers to Kirtanananda as “Vasudev” in her article; she apparently changed the names of the interviewees to protect their privacy.
- ²⁴⁵ Faye Levine, *The Strange World of the Hare Krishnas* (Fawcett Publications, Greenwich, Connecticut: 1974), 45-46.
- ²⁴⁶ Bhavisyat Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 28.
- ²⁴⁷ Bimbadhara Das, offering in *The Most Blessed Event: Sri Vyasa-puja* (September 4, 1978), 26.
- ²⁴⁸ Suresvara Das, “Ready to Hear,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 10, no. 5 (c. September 1983), 44.
- ²⁴⁹ “A Little Village in the Spiritual Sky,” *Chintamani: A Journal of New Vrindaban*, no. 3 (Oct-Nov. 1973), 4.

²⁵⁰ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, quoted by Chintamani Dasi, “Srla Prabhupada in New Vrindaban,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 14, no. 3 (c. October 1985), 23, 24.

²⁵¹ Kuladri Das, “Srla Bhaktipada’s Vision,” *Brijabasi Spirit*, vol. 6, no. 6 (September 1979), 8-9.

²⁵² A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda (January 5, 1973).

²⁵³ “So far your naming of the new initiates, Syamasundara tells me that there are several duplications, and this is not very much desirable. So in future, better to telephone or somehow contact my secretaries and get the names from them, and in that way there will be no duplication in the future.” A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, letter to Kirtanananda Swami (June 25, 1972).

²⁵⁴ Yasomatinandan Das, “Vyasa-puja Homage,” *Sri Vyasa-puja* (August 21, 1981), 6.

²⁵⁵ Dr. Benjamin Zablocki, Paper presented to a conference, *Cults: Theory and Treatment Issues* (May 31, 1997) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

²⁵⁶ Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary entry for cult.

²⁵⁷ Maximilian Weber, *Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Chapter: “The Nature of Charismatic Authority and its Routinization” translated by A. R. Anderson and Talcot Parsons, 1947. Originally published in 1922 in German under the title *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* chapter III, § 10 (available online)

²⁵⁸ Charles Milles Manson (b. 1934) led the Manson Family, a quasi-commune that arose in California in the later 1960s. He was found guilty of conspiracy to commit the Tate-LaBianca murders, which members of the group carried out at his instruction.

²⁵⁹ James Warren “Jim” Jones (1931–1978) was the American founder of the Peoples Temple, which became synonymous with group suicide after the November 18, 1978 mass murder-suicide in their isolated agricultural intentional community called Jonestown, located in Guyana, South America. Over 900 people died from cyanide poisoning or gunshot wounds in the aftermath of Jones ordering his men to kill visiting Congressman Leo Ryan and numerous members of his entourage.

²⁶⁰ Eileen Barker, *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction* (1990), Bernan Press, ISBN 0-11-340927-3

²⁶¹ Dr. Benjamin Zablocki, Paper presented to a conference, *Cults: Theory and Treatment Issues*, May 31, 1997 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

²⁶² Prabhupada described the three classes of devotees in *Srimad-bhagavatam* (4.22.16), purport: “There are three different kinds of devotees, namely *kanistha-adhikari*, *madhyama-adhikari* and *uttama-adhikari*: the neophyte, the preacher and the *maha-bhagavata*, or the highly advanced devotee.”

²⁶³ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Nectar of Instruction*, no. 1, verse 5, purport.

²⁶⁴ Sometimes we see this type of guru in ISKCON today; he is not yet a fully self-realized soul, but is working toward that goal and (hopefully) making progress in the association of devotees.

²⁶⁵ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Nectar of Devotion*, 131.

²⁶⁶ Krishna confirmed that a devotee who has an accidental falldown is not to be rejected; he is to be considered still saintly: “Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination.” (Bhagavad-gita, 9.30)

Prabhupada elaborated on this verse: “Sometimes . . . it may be seen that a person in Krishna consciousness commits some act which may be taken as most abominable socially or politically. But such a temporary falldown does not disqualify him. In the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* it is stated that if a person falls down but is wholeheartedly engaged in the transcendental service of the Supreme Lord, the Lord, being situated within his heart, purifies him and excuses him from that abomination.

The material contamination is so strong that even a yogi fully engaged in the service of the Lord sometimes becomes ensnared; but Krishna consciousness is so strong that such an occasional falldown is at once rectified. Therefore the process of devotional service is always a success. No one should deride a devotee for some accidental falldown from the ideal path, for . . . such occasional falldowns will be stopped in due course, as soon as a devotee is completely situated in Krishna consciousness.” (A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-gita*, 9.30, purport.)

In the same purport, Prabhupada provided a warning to those who might commit sinful activities repeatedly; such a person cannot be considered “saintly” by any stretch of the imagination; he can hardly even be considered “still a devotee.” He is “not a high devotee,” he becomes a neophyte devotee. “No one should take advantage of this verse and commit nonsense and think that he is still a devotee. If he does not improve in his character by devotional service, then it is to be understood that he is not a high devotee.”

²⁶⁷ For more about the *bhakti-yoga* creeper, and a description of the various kinds of weeds which can choke it, see A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Srimad-bhagavatam*, 2.2.30, purport.

²⁶⁸ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Nectar of Instruction*, no. 1, verse 5, purport.

²⁶⁹ Kuladri Das, conversation with the author in New Vrindaban (October 8, 2003).

²⁷⁰ Kirtanananda Swami quoted in “An Interview with His Holiness Kirtanananda Swami,” *Chintamani*, no. 3 (October-November 1973)