

ISKCON DAIVA VARNASRAMA MINISTRY
PROMOTING RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA



MINISTRY GUIDELINES

Documents Relating to Varnasrama Development in India

FEBRUARY – 2010

(Slightly Edited December 2017 by RP BRSwami))

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I. PROMOTING VRINDABAN VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

POSITION PAPER OF THE REGIONAL GOVERNING BODY FOR INDIA

Dated: 2 September 2008

THE MISSION REVEALED

As early as 1949, Srila Prabhupada described his mission in a letter to the Hon. Sardar, Dr. Vallabhaji Patel, Deputy Prime Minister of India, outlining four movements. The first was the "sankirtan" movement of chanting and philosophical discourse that was to be introduced all over the world. Then came the "temple entry" movement; organizing temples as centers of spiritual culture according to scriptures like Bhagavad-gita. Thirdly, he described the "spiritual initiation" movement, a movement that would be conducted under strict disciplinary methods to enable "mayajanas" to attain the perfection of human life. This would "be organized in such a manner that people all over the world may take interest in it." Finally, he described the "classless society" movement or the "scientific division of the caste system as envisaged in the Bhagavad-gita".¹

We can see that Srila Prabhupada had a clear idea how his preaching movement would be conducted as early as 1949. As the years went by he refined the concepts involved. In 1956 he published his "*Essay on Gita Nagari*" in Back to Godhead magazine, which reiterated the same "four movements" or divisions. Then again in 1966 Srila Prabhupada registered his International Society for Krishna Consciousness and began to systematically introduce these four divisions earlier identified in his 1949 letter and 1956 essay. As his mission expanded around the world he began to purchase farmland to develop rural communities. In October of 1977 this conversation took place:

Prabhupāda: What meeting going on?

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Oh, very interesting meeting. (We were) discussing our Gītā-nagarī community and talking about varṇāśrama. We were trying to reflect on all of the teachings in your books and what we had read about Kṛṣṇa's life and Nanda Mahārāja's community. How the vaiśya community lives, how the different varṇas and āśramas function together, and what their responsibilities are to each other. We're trying to set up our Gītā-nagarī community based upon the teachings which you've given in your books. Dhṛṣṭadyumna Mahārāja has designed the very ideal plan for all of the varṇas and āśramas to live together.

Prabhupāda: Hm. Do it.²

¹ Make Vrindavan Villages, Chapter One – Four Movements

² Room Conversation – October 8, 1977, Vrindavana

DEPARTING INSTRUCTIONS

In the last film footage of Srila Prabhupada we find him lying in his bed with HH Jayadvaita Swami holding a microphone to his lips. Carefully choosing the words for what were to become his final purports, he explained exactly why we need varnasrama:

“According to the association of different natures, we get a body. karanam guna sangasya sad asad yoni janmasu. Therefore we should always seek good association, devotee association. Then our life will be successful. If we live with good association, then we cultivate knowledge. . . A man is known by his company. So if we have the chance of association with devotees, then our character, nature becomes better. By hearing, by discussing Srimad Bhagavatam, this raja guna, tama guna are subdued. Then sattva guna remains. nasta prayesu abhadresu nityam bhagavata sevaya. Then raja guna, tama guna cannot do us harm. Therefore varnasrama dharma is so essential that people live in sattva guna. Tama guna, raja guna increases lust and greediness, and that implicates the living entity who exists in the material world in many, many forms. That is very dangerous. Therefore, they should be brought into sattva guna by the establishment of varnasrama dharma.” [Note: transcribed directly from the video, emphasis added.]³

We can understand from this statement, as well as from numerous similar references made by Srila Prabhupada, that he clearly expected his ISKCON society to establish varnasrama dharma within the context of agrarian based self-sufficient communities, the actual norm and standard of Vedic society.

SANATANA DHARMA - TWO FEATURES

*"The complete span of life of a human being is meant for preparing himself for going back to Godhead or to get rid of the material existence made of the repetition of birth and death. As such in the system of Varnashram Dharma every man and woman is trained up for this purpose of eternal life, in other words the system of Varnashram Dharma is known also as Sanatan Dharma or eternal occupation. The system of Varnasharam Dharma prepares a man for going back to Godhead..."*⁴

The two features of sanatana dharma are bhagavat dharma (activities of all the liberated souls in the spiritual world and a few in the material world) and varnasrama dharma (activities of most conditioned souls in the material world). In the material world, varnasrama dharma is meant to support the activities of bhagavat dharma; together both provide a complete science.

³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=35&v=UCZzx11-S-Q [11:28 minutes]

⁴ SB 1.19.4 [Purport]

"VARNASRAMA SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO BECOME A VAISNAVA"

When it was suggested that the chanting of Hare Krishna was meant to replace varnasrama for everyone, Srila Prabhupada replied:

Prabhupāda: *Yes, it can replace, but who is going to replace it? People are not so advanced. If you imitate Haridāsa Ṭhākura to chant, it is not possible . . . the sahajiyā's chanting will come. Just like our (name withheld). He was not fit for sannyāsa but he was given sannyāsa. And five women he was attached and he disclosed. Therefore varṇāśrama-dharma is required. Simply show-bottle will not do. So the varṇāśrama-dharma should be introduced all over the world, and...*

Satsvarūpa: *Introduced starting with ISKCON community?*

Prabhupāda: *Yes. Yes. Brāhmaṇa, kṣatriyas. There must be regular education.*

Hari-śauri: *But in our community, if the..., being as we're training up as Vaiṣṇavas...*

Prabhupāda: *Yes.*

Hari-śauri: *...then how will we be able to make divisions in our society?*

Prabhupāda: *Vaiṣṇava is not so easy. The varṇāśrama-dharma should be established to become a Vaiṣṇava. It is not so easy to become Vaiṣṇava. "*⁵

From the above, we can understand that the sankirtan movement as introduced by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu based on the chanting of the holy names and the performance of devotional service to Lord Krishna, is not meant to replace varnasrama as a means of societal organization. Rather the varnasrama dharma should be established in society as a supportive measure to help individuals become Vaisnavas.

In Sri Bhaktyaloka, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura also confirms that Lord Caitanya did not reject varnasrama for social organization. He quotes the following verse from the Srimad-Bhagavatam:

*dharmah svanuṣṭhitaḥ puṁsāṁ viṣvaksena-kathāsu yaḥ
notpādayed yadi ratim śrama eva hi kevalam*

*“The occupational activities a man performs according to his own position are only so much useless labor if they do not provoke attraction for the message of the Personality of Godhead. ”*⁶

He then comments:

⁵ Conversations, Māyāpura 14 February 1977.

⁶ SB 1.2.8

“Therefore karma-prayāsa is contrary to devotional principles in the same way as jñāna-prayāsa. The conclusion is that karma-prayāsa and jñāna-prayāsa are very detrimental. But a devotee who desires to properly pass his life still accepts his duties according to varṇāśrama, as those duties are favorable to devotional service and counted as part of devotional service. All these activities are no longer called karma.”⁷

From this one should not conclude that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has ordered us to discard varṇāśrama-dharma. If that had been the case, then He would not have instructed all living entities through His pastimes of completely following the orders of gṛhastha and sannyāsa. As long as one has a material body the system of varṇāśrama-dharma must be followed, but it should remain under the full control and domination of bhakti. Varṇāśrama-dharma is like the foundation of one's supreme occupational duty. When one's supreme occupational duty is matured and one achieves his goal, then the process is gradually neglected. Again, it is also abandoned at the time of death.

PROMOTING RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Srila Prabhupada expressed his desire to establish Krishna Conscious, self-sufficient communities and villages. He also gave instructions to make existing villages Krishna Conscious.

So far, ISKCON India has become very successful at city preaching and large numbers of the populace have taken up to the chanting of the holy names sincerely, thus adapting their lives to the principles of Krishna consciousness. However, the establishment of a society based on the traditional village lifestyle has been neglected. Although one can still advance in Krishna consciousness living in the cities, the degraded influences of urban life place serious constraints on the progress most devotees can make. ISKCON must recognise the need to re-establish, develop, and maintain the ideals of village-based communities, the natural Krishna-conscious village lifestyle which was shown by Krishna and Balarama Themselves. Initially, perhaps only a few will want to take it up, but without it, Srila Prabhupada's mission in four phases or "movements", and ISKCON's preaching programs, remain incomplete. The following are but a few selected quotes supporting the need to remain in the villages:

“Actually, everyone should be engaged to produce food, but the modern set-up of civilization is that few people are engaged in producing food, and others are eating. They are offering... They are artificially getting money.”⁸

“Clever means that he must stay in his own land. He should not be cheated by the paper and go to the city.”⁹

⁷ Sri Bhaktyaloka, Six Faults that Destroy Bhakti, SBL 2, Payāsa

⁸ [Conversation 25/7/73 London]

⁹ [Conversation 25/7/73 London]

*“Gandhi's program was very nice, village organize so that they may not come to the city and help the capitalists. Remain satisfied in the village.”*¹⁰

*“So this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is trying to revive the original, constitutional position. So one of them, in Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, is village organization, as you are trying here.”*¹¹

*“India's civilization was based on village residence. They would live very peacefully in the villages.”*¹²

Therefore, the RGB vision is to develop preaching and development programs which involve the following specific village-oriented programs:

1. Establishing Krishna Conscious rural communities
2. Helping existing villages to become self-sufficient and Krishna Conscious.
3. Developing namahatta village preaching programs to expand Krishna Consciousness in rural India.

Each temple should expand and develop their rural preaching programs as an integral aspect of its preaching effort following these three aspects of rural Krishna Consciousness development.

ESTABLISHING A VARNASRAMA SOCIETY THROUGH EDUCATION

The varnasrama system is a complete educational institution in itself where the needs of individuals are met at all levels: physical, mental, social and spiritual. A varnasrama society, which is primarily agrarian based, provides an ideal educational environment. It is grounded on two important concepts and scientific principles of (1) aptitude-based learning, which leads to aptitude-based occupation, varna and (2) phased lifelong education, asrama, which leads to gradual self-realization. This education is formal and informal. In traditional village life the majority of the population is trained at home, imbibing the occupation of the family they are born into. Formal education, which is meant for the dvijas (brahmanas, ksatriyas and vaisyas), needs to be introduced by the revival of the original Vedic gurukula system as recommended by Srila Prabhupada. According to Vedic tradition, education is awarded based on merit. Srila Prabhupada describes this in his "Essay on Gita Nagari":

By a test of practical psychology and by examination of the birth horoscope of the child, with special reference to his birthright, sect and class arrangement, a student from the very beginning shall be given the education of a brāhmaṇa, of a kṣatriya, of a vaiśya or of a śūdra, as may be the case, according to his quality and destined work.

¹⁰ Conversation 12/9/76 Vrindavan

¹¹ Lecture 15/7/76 Gita Nagari

¹² Morning Walk 13/10/75 Gita Nagari

Formal training can only be given to those who have the right disposition and who display the appropriate attitude. Teachers also require the proper temperament and qualification. It is necessary therefore to give the utmost consideration when appointing gurukula teachers to ensure that they have proven, exemplary character. Students trained in such gurukulas will eventually graduate according to their nature and aptitude to take up key occupations in a developed varnasrama-based society. It is therefore essential that we immediately begin the work to develop this greater society. Srila Prabhupada stressed: "To train the innocent boy to be a sense gratifier at the early age when the child is actually happy in any circumstance is the greatest violence. *Therefore; brahmacari gurukule vasan danto guror hitam*".¹³ The curriculum of such schools needs to be derived primarily from sources as recommended by Srila Prabhupada.

There is not a full body of specific instruction from Srila Prabhupada spelling out all the details of how gurukula should be developed in ISKCON. The various efforts to follow whatever instructions he did give have born various fruits. In Mayapur, the Sri Rupanuga Paramarthika Vidya Pitha found that the closer they got to focusing on character development rather than academics, the more successful the graduates were in any sphere. The kind of character that is developed from appropriate gurukula training in general equips the majority of students to adapt to any future circumstance. In Puranic descriptions of gurukula there are many varieties according to the mood of the particular guru.

Apart from the gurukulas, Prabhupada ordered:

*The Varṇāśrama College has to be established immediately. Everywhere, wherever we have got our center, a varṇāśrama college should be established to train four divisions: one class, brāhmaṇa; one class, kṣatriya; one class, vaiśya; and one class, śūdra. But everyone will be elevated to the spiritual platform by the spiritual activities which we have prescribed. There is no inconvenience, even for the śūdras.*¹⁴

These colleges are required not only for practical training, but as a way to impart cultured behaviour.

The Vedic system does not condemn anyone. 'You are a potter. Oh, you are lower.' No. You are as good as a priest because you are doing your duty. Just like a brāhmaṇa is addressed as paṇḍita mahārāja. A kṣatriya as thākura saheb, a merchant as sethji and the laborer as choudhdhari -- leader. In this way everyone has got respectable position."¹⁵

So this Vedic scheme, varṇāśrama, is a very important scheme. If possible it should be introduced and taken up very seriously. That is one of the items of Kṛṣṇa consciousness

¹³ SB 7.12.1

¹⁴ Morning Walk, Vrindavan, 1974.

¹⁵ Conversation, July 1968.

*movement, to re-establish the institution of varṇa and āśrama. Not by birth, but by qualification.*¹⁶

This system of varṇa-based training, with appropriate asrama progression, is a scientific system designed to bring people to the mode of goodness, with the ultimate goal of achieving suddha sattva, the attainment of full Krishna Consciousness. So far, in general, we have failed to provide excellence in the gurukula system, or to provide much in the way of appropriate livelihoods to gurukula graduates. As a result, we find that there is a growing demand for western-style academic education. This type of education overlooks the fact that humans are born of four particular natures. Therefore, statistically, only a few students can gain any benefit from this system. In terms of spiritual life, this system can never impart the kind of character training that is obtained from the proper matching of teacher and student in the spiritual atmosphere of menial service to guru that should be provided in a gurukula. Krishna and Balarama set the perfect example when they attended the asrama of Sandipani Muni. By graduating from the gurukula, and progressing through the asramas of adult life in devotee association, all the while cultivating spiritual knowledge, the students gain realisation to enable them to perfect their lives.

COW PROTECTION & BRAHMINICAL CULTURE

Srila Prabhupada taught us that cow protection and brahminical culture are the keys to real prosperity and that they occur as a natural side effect of following varṇasrama dharma. So far in India we have had problems with some of our goshala programs, mainly because they have been developed in isolation, not within the framework of a greater varṇasrama social structure. Cows have been neglected and as a result brahminical culture is not thriving. The sastras warn us of this result.

CONGREGATION AND YOUTH PREACHING

Internationally, many of our devotees are suffering due to lack of good association. Most devotees are forced to work and associate with non-devotees in order to survive in the outside world. In India and in certain parts of the world, some devotees are benefiting from such programs as Nama Hatta, Bhakta Vriksa, and similar congregational programs. Among our congregation of devotees, the youth are the key. It has been seen in some parts of the world that when youths are introduced to the concepts of varṇasrama dharma, they become enthused because they recognise that this is a system that lets them take their lives into their own hands. Rather than placing faith in the empty promises of the politicians and industrialists, they appreciate the opportunity to use what Krishna has given: the means of production - land and cows. Introducing varṇasrama concepts to our youth preaching teams is a new concept that can result in the conception of varṇasrama communities, therefore demonstrating the effectiveness of the Kṛṣṇa Consciousness philosophy. Srila Prabhupada predicted that by creating 'ideal units' of society, people

¹⁶ Conversation, July 1976

will want to give up the factory work to come and live in blissful communities wherein Krishna culture is practiced.

CITY TEMPLES AND RURAL COMMUNITIES IN TANDEM

Srila Prabhupada wanted that we should have farms supporting our city temples. In this way persons from the city can be shown how to live a simple Krishna conscious lifestyle. Srila Prabhupada predicted that many people will be attracted to Krishna consciousness in this way:

It is very good that the farm will be providing foodstuffs for both the farm and the temple in Paris. That is wanted. The farm program should be: grow your own food, produce your own milk, cloth and everything and chant Hare Krsna. ¹⁷[

Regarding Ahmedabad Centre, we must have a place there... (it is) one of the most opulent and important cities of India. We have to organize in the neighboring village... Now, our next program will be to organize farming land to set an example to the whole world how people can be peaceful, happy, and free from all anxieties simply by chanting Hare Krishna Maha-mantra and living an honorable life in Krishna Consciousness. ¹⁸

NETWORKING

The technical aspects of creating villages in which the process of varnasrama organization can begin will be a challenge. Many aspects of simple living are vanishing. There are, however, organizations in India that are already working with simple traditional systems. It may be beneficial for us to network with such organizations to make the progression to a simple rural life easier.

While there is an urgent need to develop the varnasrama aspect of the Krishna Consciousness movement in India, the work will have to proceed at a natural pace as interest can be aroused.

¹⁷ Letter to Bhagavan 14/11/75

¹⁸ Letter to Kartikeya Mahadevia 19/10/75

II. GBC PARTICIPATION IN FARM PROJECTS (RESOLUTION 310)

Resolution on Varnasrama Development Adopted by the GBC

Dated: February, 2009 (<http://www.dandavats.com/?p=7111#more-7111>)¹⁹

310. GBC Participation in Farm Projects¹⁹

[Guideline]

Whereas ISKCON farms and farmers often struggle to make their operations viable;

Whereas ISKCON farms, cow protectors, farmers, and those engaged in rural development often feel unsupported by ISKCON management;

Whereas the successful establishment of varnasrama and rural life was a key concern of Srila Prabhupada;

Whereas the Vedic system is supportive of agricultural and rural communities;

Whereas there has been a global decline in the general status of farm projects;

Whereas ISKCON farm projects in which GBC members put energy are often successful;

RESOLVED:

That all GBC members, as far as possible, commit themselves to spend 10% of their time helping to develop farm projects:

- by giving 10% of their classes on the importance of farm development and cow protection
- and/or by spending 10% of their time on a farm or farms to encourage the farm devotees

¹⁹ GBC Resolution, 2009, No. 310.

III. PURCHASING FROM ISKCON FARMS AND FARMERS (RESOLUTION 311)

Resolution on Varnasrama Development Adopted by the GBC

Dated: February 2009

311. Purchasing from ISKCON Farms and Farmers²⁰

[Guideline]

Whereas ISKCON farms and farmers often struggle to make their operations viable;

Whereas the majority of temples and centers do not buy produce from their local farm, farmers, or goshala;

Whereas in times of global economic crises, by not buying from our local farms there is danger of high prices and food shortage due to dependence on outside sources which are in turn dependent on oil-consuming transport companies;

Whereas other religious groups successfully purchase from their own projects thereby presenting an ecologically-friendly, self-sufficient lifestyle to the world;

Whereas it was Srila Prabhupada's desire that we, ISKCON, present an ecologically-friendly, self-sufficient lifestyle to the world "independent from outside help;"

Whereas the Vedic system was supportive of agricultural and rural communities;

Whereas there has been a decline in the development of ISKCON farms and most remaining farms are struggling;

RESOLVED:

That all ISKCON Deity kitchens, temples, restaurants, and relevant projects should purchase, wherever possible, produce, flowers, and milk products from ISKCON farms in their local region up to a ceiling of their current purchases, provided they are of reasonable quality and can be afforded.

Where practical, the ISKCON temples, restaurants, or projects concerned will explore the possibility of purchasing land and making it available to farmers to cultivate. Additionally, temples should make available, at a reasonable cost, space for farm produce to be sold.

²⁰ GBC Resolution, 2009, No. 311.

IV. VARNASRAMA GLOBAL MISSION

SUMMARY OF SEMINAR

Presented at the Festival of Inspiration, New Vrindaban – May, 2009

What this varnasrama seminar will give you

- Recent developments of the varnasrama mission
- Deeper insights into the varnasrama mission
- A greater appreciation for the varnasrama mission
- Ways and means to “Get Involved”

CONTENT

1. Why “Varnasrama”, “Global”, and “Mission”?
2. What is Happening in ISKCON Today?
3. ISKCON’s Four Waves
4. Sanatana Dharma in Two Features
5. A World in Peril
6. Issues for ISKCON
7. Towards Remedies
8. Varnasrama Reference Materials
9. What is Varnasrama Education?
10. Get Involved!
11. Conclusion

1. “VARNASRAMA”, “GLOBAL”, AND “MISSION”

VARNASRAMA... the future!

- Varnasrama was a major theme in all of Srila Prabhupada’s books, conversations and lectures (2,300 references in folio).
- Varnasrama is one of the most controversial themes among our devotees and for the general society, hence a need to seek clarifications.
- Srila Prabhupada has given a standing order... 32 years ago... to implement varnasrama...the next phase of our movement.

GLOBAL (with emphasis on local)

- Srila Prabhupada’s vision was global, hence he established the “International” Society for Krishna consciousness.
- Srila Prabhupada’s vision was bold: “if you are going to hunt, hunt rhinoceros”.
- From all sectors (economical, educational, social, political, ecological, spiritual, etc.,) our planet is in extreme peril.
- Srila Prabhupada has stated: “present civilization is doomed”, “cities will be destroyed”, “other than varnasrama, nothing will be successful”, etc.)
- The concepts and principles of varnasrama dharma are standard and are meant to be the norm in every society.
- The varnasrama mission is a global mission and is meant to be taken up both “locally “and “globally”.

MISSION

- It is one of four “movements” or “missions” within our society.
- Varnasrama is the standard social system within which we can best practice devotional service.
- ISKCON must see it as a “mission within a larger mission” to give it due consideration.

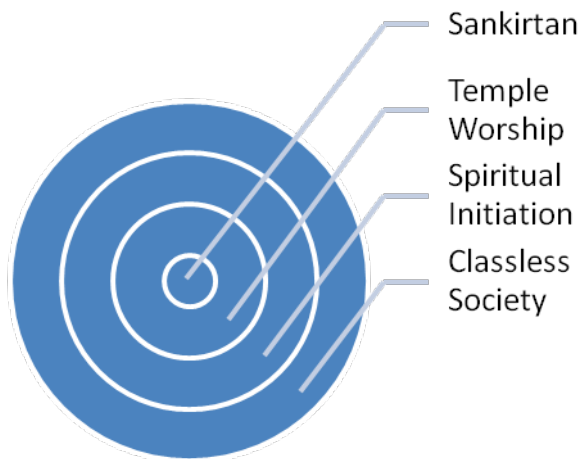
2. WHAT IS HAPPENING IN ISKCON NOW?

- Various projects are developing such as the one in Hungary (New Vraja Dham) under Shivaram Maharaja, in Brazil (Gaura Vrndavana) under Purusatraya Maharaja, in India (New Gokul Dham) under Devamrta prabhu, in Indonesia (Gita Nagari Baru) under Gaura Mandala Bhumi prabhu, in Canada (Saranagati Village) under Bala Krsna prabhu, and in many other places as well... all having different degrees of success.
- A Varnasrama Development Committee was set up in India in 2007. In 2008, its members produced a Position Paper entitled “*Promoting Vrindaban Village Development in India*” endorsed by the Regional Governing Body (RGB) for India. In April 2009, the India RGB established its national varnasrama ministry called Varnasrama-based Rural Development Ministry (India).
- A Varnasrama Development Committee has also been set up in North America in 2008 but has yet to produce any documents.
- The ISKCON Ministry for Cow Protection and Agriculture under Balabhadra prabhu, in cooperation with the Ministry branch in Europe, under the guidance of Shymasunadara prabhu at the Bhaktivedanta Manor, held an important conference at Krishna Valley in Hungary for which significant resolutions were passed.
- The Eco-Valley Foundation was established in 2008 in collaboration with the Hungary project and one of its facilitators, Radha Krishna prabhu, has given a seminar entitled “Sustainability” in Sri Dham Mayapur, February of 2009. The project was presented at the GBC level this year under the guidance of Shivaram Maharaja.
- Two important resolutions were passed at the GBC meetings in February, 2009, encouraging city temples to purchase produce from local rural projects and inviting leaders to more actively and openly support the varnasrama mission by visiting such projects and by giving 10 minutes time in all Srimad-Bhagavatam classes promoting the varnasrama mission.
- Global Varnasrama Seminars have been held in cooperation with MIHET both in 2008 and 2009 in Sri Dham Mayapur under the banner of GLOVESCO, Global Varnasrama Educational Social Cultural Organization, with 41 participants from some 20 countries participating.

- India’s first Varnasrama College offering a 3 month course entitled “*Land, Cows, and Krishna*” was given in South India at the Krishna Balarama Ksetra under the auspices of GLOVESCO.
- The Mayapur GBC has approved a plan to set up the Mayapur Varnasrama College in Sri Dham Mayapur and have allotted 19 acres of land for that purpose. Samba prabhu is spearheading this program.
- A series of books, Power Point Presentations, pamphlets, documentaries, articles and websites provide various information about the varnasrama mission, all of which can be reviewed at www.iskconvarnasrama.com

3. ISKCON’S FOUR WAVES or FOUR MOVEMENTS

Both Srila Prabhupada’s essay on *Gita Nagari*, entitled “*Conception of Gita Nagari*” published in BTG, 1956 and his letter to Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Patel, written earlier in 1949, spell out the four “movements” or “divisions” which later on Srila Prabhupada integrated within his ISKCON society. It is essential for every single devotee of our society to clearly understand these four divisions and to see them as a complete whole meant to compliment and support one another. These four “waves” of ISKCON are known as:



1. Sankirtan Movement (The Holy Names and Books)
2. Temple Worship Movement (Building Temples & Installing Deities)
3. Spiritual Initiation Movement (Congregation Development)
4. Classless Society Movement (Daivi Varnasrama Development)

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- These four “waves” remain the main focus of ISKCON today.
- These four “waves” are meant to support and complement one another. With any of them missing, Srila Prabhupada’s mission becomes jeopardized.
- The fourth “wave” has yet to come. It remains unfulfilled since Srila Prabhupada’s departure. It refers to Srila Prabhupada’s reference to bring a complete “overhaul” to present day society.
- The varnasrama movement or mission differs from the three previous movements in that it directly involves the *ksatriya* and *vaisya* element of society whereas the first three were mainly centered on *brahminical* concerns and activities, which may explain why we have been having difficulty implementing it.
- One reason we have failed to take up varnasrama has been our fixation on city temples. In order to accommodate the varnasrama mission, we need to make a paradigm shift. In order to accomplish this, education, exposure and training is a must. For this reason, Srila Prabhupada has urged us to establish Varnasrama Colleges, something we will elaborate upon in this presentation.
- A classless society can only exist when all individuals identify themselves as servants of Krishna while accepting roles within varnasrama as like a drama or play.

4. SANATANA DHARMA IN TWO FEATURES

BHAGAVAT DHARMA (for the liberated souls)

The perfect and eternal process in the spiritual world

VARNASRAMA DHARMA (for the conditioned souls)

The perfect and eternal process in the material world

There has always been in the history of mankind a duality between the materialists and the spiritualists, the humanists and the transcendentalists, the *asuras* and the *suras*, the non-devotees and the devotees. Even within spiritual circles, including our own Vaisnava culture, including our own ISKCON society, this same duality remains.

We have those who tend to give exclusive importance to the process of *Bhagavat-Dharma*, the internal development of pure devotional service, *bhakti*, which is the means to the ultimate goal for all living entities, Krishna Prema, pure love of Krishna.

We have those who tend to give importance to the process of *Varnasrama Dharma*, the external development of *varna* and *asrama*, which is meant to be a means and support for more easily practicing devotional service to also attain the ultimate goal for all living entities, Krishna Prema, pure love of Krishna.

There are quotes where Srila Prabhupada categorically states that *varnasrama* cannot be implemented in Kali-Yuga, only the Sankirtan movement of Lord Caitanya. Other quotes, however, clearly point to the opposite, that we **must** introduce *varnasrama*. Here are some quotes from our Acaryas that address the issue:

SRILA BHAKTIVINODA THAKUR

From “Sri Bhaktyaloka, Six Faults that destroy bhakti”

*“But a devotee who desires to properly pass his life still accepts his duties according to varṇāśrama, as those duties are favorable to devotional service and counted as part of devotional service. All these activities are no longer called karma.”*²¹

From “Sri Chaitanya Siksamrta, Chapter 3”

*“With the assistance of varnasrama dharma, a person should cultivate bhakti. It is also necessary to follow the rules of varnasrama in the cultivation of bhakti.”*²² [Chapter 3]

*“Though all humans have a right to practice bhakti, those who follow the regulations of varnasrama have a much easier time.”*²³

²¹ Sri Bhaktyaloka, Six Faults that Destroy Bhakti

²² Sri Chaitnya Siksamrta, Chapter 3

²³ Ibid

SRILA PRABHUPADA

“The classless society so often demanded by the people in general is made possible by the process of ‘yajna’ or sacrifice for the Supreme... Spiritual existence of devotional activities and classless society are two identical terms. The one without the other has no meaning”.²⁴

“Unless in the human society the varnasrama system is introduced, no scheme or social order, health order or any order, political order, will be successful”.²⁵

5. A WORLD IN PERIL

We all know the deep crisis in which modern day society finds itself. Those who are especially meant to be given protection, the cows, brahmanas, women, children and old men, no longer receive such protection.

Srila Prabhupada explains:

“The defenseless creatures, according to Brahma-saṁhitā, are the cows, brāhmaṇas, women, children and old men. Of these five, the brāhmaṇas and cows are especially mentioned ... Those who are helpless must be taken care of by their respective guardians, otherwise the guardians will be subjected to the punishment of Yamarāja... The assistants, or messengers, of Yamarāja are likened here to vultures, and those who do not execute their respective duties in protecting their wards are compared to serpents. Vultures deal very seriously with serpents, and similarly the messengers will deal very seriously with neglectful guardians.”²⁶

A FEW STATISTICS

• FOOD PRODUCTION

- India use to produce 21 tons of rice per hectare, 10 times more than what the world production is today.
- Most of the food we consume today is contaminated.
- Most ghee produced, including those advertized as 100% pure ghee, are impure, some having animal fat.
- Chemical fertilizers, chemical pesticides, the use of hybrid seeds and the use of tractors and similar machines are the greatest enemies to agriculture.

²⁴ From BTG, Vol. III, Part IV, 1956, 'Yajna' or Sacrifice for the Supreme (Classless Society)

²⁵ Room Conversation, October 18, 1977, Vrndavana

²⁶ SB 3.16.10 [Purport]

- Genetically Modified seeds are introduced globally.
 - Government policies put in jeopardy organic farming.
 - In an article entitle “The Death of Rice in India”, the author points to the diminishing production of rice.
 - To meet its food needs, India must import grains from other countries.
- **UNPROTECTED COWS**
 - In India, from 120 indigenous pure breeds of cows, only 33 remain today.
 - Some 200,000 cows are slaughtered DAILY in India.
 - India is number four in meat export in the world today.
- **UNPROTECTED BRAHMANAS**
 - With separation of State and Church in most countries, the role of brahmanas is neglected.
 - With the neglect of food production and protection of cows, the brahmanas can no longer perform their rightful duties.
 - Due to lack of proper support from various institutions and governments, those who may be inclined to serve as brahmanas are forced to work for a living.
- **UNPROTECTED CHILDREN**
 - Millions of abortions are committed on a yearly basis.
 - Children and Youth continue to be sent to the present day slaughterhouse of modern education.
- **UNPROTECTED WOMEN**
 - Separation and divorce are on the increase in most countries of the world.
 - Women are forced to work in unnatural working conditions and are abused in many different ways.

6. ISSUES FOR ISKCON

- How is the varnasrama mission meant to be promoted within the ISKCON society and outside as well?
- What role does ISKCON expect to play in shaping world leadership, those who are meant to implement the varnasrama mission outside the ISKCON society?
- What adjustments are needed for implementing the varna aspect of the varnasrama mission? We hear from sastra: “therefore one has to become free from all designations. *Sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam tatparatvena nirmalam* [Cc. Madhya 19.170]. “*One has to become free from all designation or false egotism and thus become purified.*”²⁷ Then how Vaisnavas can adopt varnas one may ask.
- Do we need to introduce a different sacred thread ceremony and initiation standards for the varnas of ksatriya and vaisya?
- We hear Srila Prabhupada speak of Vaisnava brahmanas. Can we accommodate the concept of Vaisnava ksatriyas, Vaisnava vaisya and Vaisnava sudras?
- How will the four principles be followed within the different varnas?
- What number of rounds should be chanted by those in different varnas?
- Will ISKCON always remain a more ecclesiastic, brahminically oriented institution where we only award brahminical initiation to deserving candidates? Are all those initiated as brahmanas factually doing the work of brahmanas?
- Will ISKCON encourage or allow more independent activities from its members to help promote the varnasrama mission? In India, unless one is a full-fledged ISKCON entity or an ISKCON Approved entity which agrees to have in its legal structure a clause giving all rights to ISKCON to change Trustees, one is not considered authorized or recognized.
- Will ISKCON members be allowed to take up roles within the establishment of varnasrama communities outside the legal jurisdiction of ISKCON?
- What is meant to be the application of the village concept of “local governance” in our communities?

In the early days a devotee meant one who lived in a temple. To live outside a temple was considered maya. Gradually, devotees were also accepted among those who were shaved up and living outside the temple, thus our first devotee congregation. As the

²⁷ SB 4.24.44

movement progressed, congregational members who became initiated were also seen as devotees.

With more progress of the movement, those who supported our temples, in particular those who became Life Members, were also accepted as part of our congregation.

However, we still have not clearly defined our different varnasrama-based communities, some remaining within the ISKCON society, some remaining outside of ISKCON.

7. TOWARDS REMEDIES

The following are some of the developments taking place in different countries. These need to be taken up by more devotees in a systematic way so as to push forward the varnasrama mission. We need to increase awareness among our own devotees and also provide opportunities to become involved in practical ways.

- Introducing Varnasrama Colleges
- Establishing National Ministries in ISKCON
- Supporting the establishment of self-sufficient communities, farms worldwide
- Creating Varnasrama Research Teams
- Establishing Varnasrama Support Funds
- Varnasrama Book Trust
- Establishing Youth Hostels
- Reading and Studying Srila Prabhupada's books and instructions regarding the need to implement the varnasrama mission.

8. VARNASRAMA REFERENCE MATERIALS

The following materials can help devotees understand more clearly the importance of the varnasrama mission. These are available by visiting www.iskconvarnasrama.com or by sending your e-mail address where some material can be transferred to you:

- **Books**
 - Make Vrndavana Villages
 - Varnasrama Education
 - Implementing Varnasrama
 - Forgotten Principle of Education

- **Documentaries**
 - Save our Cows, Save our Villages
 - Varnasrama Shikshalayas
 - Varnasrama College
 - Four Waves to Re-Spiritualize the Whole World
 - Varnasrama Mission – Indonesian Success Stories
 - Questions and Answers on Varnasrama, Part I & Part II
 - Visva Mangala Gou Grama Yatra - 2009
- **Power Point Presentations**
 - ISKCON’s Four Movements
 - Varnasrama Education
 - Traditional Technologies
- **Pamphlets**
 - An assortment of various topics connected with the varnasrama mission
- **Up-coming Productions**
 - Book “Traditional Education – Selected Interviews”
 - Documentary “Make Vrndavana Villages”

9. WHAT IS VARNASRAMA EDUCATION?

Varṇāśrama education refers to the systems of *varṇa* and *āśrama* as a self-contained educational institution based on the Vedic teachings which lead individuals and society at large towards the perfection of life, i. e. individual and social emancipation. It takes into account the fullness of the living entity, fulfilling his physical needs, his emotional, intellectual and social needs, as well as his spiritual needs.

This system of *varṇa* and *āśrama* is best practiced within an agrarian based society where life remains simple and time can be given for self-realization. Economic development no longer remains the main obsession or preoccupation of individuals and society. One should not wrongly conclude, however, that automatically individuals will become poor and that society will revert to primitiveness. Traditional village life was valued and still remains ideal in all respects, including the material aspects.

Varṇa education is based on “aptitude based learning” which leads to “aptitude based occupations”. *Āśrama* education teaches “phased lifelong learning”, from gradual awakening of consciousness to full self-realization. *Varṇāśrama education is meant to be the norm and standard in society.*

FIVE PILLARS OF EDUCATION

The five pillars of training and education cover: 1. Definition, 2. Disposition, 3. Delivery, 4. Design, and 5. Direction.

1. **DEFINITION:** Actual education means the simultaneous cultivation of *jñānam* (phenomenal) and *viññānam* (numinous) knowledge through formal, non-formal and informal practices. [*Bhagavad-gita* 7.2]

2. **DISPOSITION:** A correct education entails that both the teacher and the student must demonstrate specific traits. A qualified teacher must display nine basic qualities: 1. peacefulness, 2. self-control, 3. austerity, 4. purity, 5. tolerance, 6. honesty, 7. knowledge, 8. wisdom and 9. religiousness. [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.42] Similarly, a qualified student must have three qualities: 1) submission, 2) inquiry and 3) service. [*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.34] Thus, education should only be offered to individuals who demonstrate proper motivation as well as natural ability and proper inclination. In light of the above, we should understand knowledge and education to be a privilege rather than a right.

3. **DELIVERY:** The ideal environment which fosters lifelong education and which provides the best training and education to all individuals is the scientifically planned village social structure. Such village organization, established on the principles of Vedic architecture (*Vastu-śāstra*), helps individuals elevate themselves to the mode of goodness and beyond. Training and education are best conducted within a boarding system where both the teacher and the student live together, as opposed to the formal modern day “schooling” system.

4. **DESIGN:** According to Vedic culture, *by definition and purpose, the systems of varṇa (aptitude-based learning) and āśrama (phased life-long education) are in themselves complete and scientific educational institutions.* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 16 1-3] They provide both training and education to all their members based on methodology and Vedic curriculum corresponding to each *varṇa* and each *āśrama*. This education and training encompass both the material and spiritual spheres, the foundation of which is the practice of *sādhana-bhakti* or practical devotion to God.

5. **DIRECTION:** The ultimate aim of all education and knowledge is to help individuals, and society at large advance towards self-realization and God consciousness. Education and knowledge, devoid of such objective, are incomplete and imperfect. [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18 64.65.66]

10. GET INVOLVED!

We have to understand that it is within our reach to make possible a complete overhaul of the society that is most necessary and urgent for this ailing world of false economy, misappropriate resource consumption, ecological imbalances, agrarian crisis, water scarcity, health challenges and civil unrest.

The basic conclusions that must be arrived at are:

1. That Srila Prabhupada expected us to make the transition back to an agrarian based lifestyle, which is the standard and the more natural way to live Krishna consciousness for the vast majority of people, including most of our devotees. That is how we should understand Srila Prabhupada's urging us to introduce a complete "overhaul in society" as he has explained:

"Who is producing food grain? But they are known as vaisya. What kind of vaisya? There is no brahminical culture; there is no brain. There is no ksatriya who can give you protection. There are so many defects. So if you want to remodel your life, the society, the human society, nationally or internationally—everything is spoken here, international—then you have to take to the advice of Krishna. This is the purpose of Krishna consciousness movement: wholesale, thorough, overhauling of the human society. We have not manufactured anything, concocted things. It is very scientific. If you actually want to fulfill the mission of your life, then you have to take to this advice of Bhagavad-g...t€, very scientific and spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, without any defects." ²⁸

2. That Srila Prabhupada wanted us to introduce the varnasrama system primarily based in villages where one can factually learn to be self-sufficient (he clearly says 'we don't want cities').

3. That Srila Prabhupada, while certainly wanting us to train people in Krishna consciousness everywhere, was not satisfied that we simply develop our congregations in the cities, but rather wanted our devotees and congregation to move out of the cities and relocate in a more natural, more sustainable environment which will facilitate our practice of Krishna consciousness.

Since Varnasrama Dharma is a vast, deep, complex and, at times, mind-boggling subject matter, those individuals who strongly desire to help implement varnasrama require a forum for communication (theoretical level) as well as avenues to make varnasrama become a reality of life (practical level). A **GLOBAL VARNASRAMA** Conference has been setup in pamho.net in this regard and to join the ongoing discussions, kindly write to Bhakti.Raghava.Swami@pamho.net

There are innumerable opportunities for one and all to get-involved in the mission of Daivi Varnasrama (henceforth referred to as: Varnasrama) and there is a need to engage

²⁸ Compilations, VD: 4 Instructions of the Previous Acaryas

various individuals, at whatever level may be suitable for them and in whatever activity they may be inclined or qualified to perform.

To provide such opportunities to devotees having some affinity, interest and desire to help develop some particular aspect of the varnasrama mission, the ISKCON India Varnasrama-based Rural Development Ministry has identified 15 service categories that one can take up in order to participate in fulfilling Srila Prabhupada's unfulfilled mission.

The categories listed below provide an initial choice of possible engagements for interested persons (more can be added or amended). All such services are purely voluntary and should be performed essentially for the pleasure of the Lord and His devotees. More than one service category can be chosen also.

Each "Service Category" is described under the sub-divisions (whose full details can be downloaded from the website: www.iskconvarnasrama.com):

1. Definition, 2. Duties, 3. Qualifications and 4. Application.

VARIOUS 'SERVICE CATEGORIES' ARE

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Consultants | 2. Coordinators |
| 3. Donors | 4. Editors |
| 5. Farmers | 6. Helpers |
| 7. Instructors | 8. Managers |
| 9. Moderators | 10. Monitors |
| 11. Proof Readers | 12. Researchers |
| 13. Skilled Labor | 14. Writers |
| 15. Reporters | |

If you feel you can be part of this glorious mission and can take up any of the above services, or want to know more about the description of the above service categories, kindly write to us.

11. CONCLUSION

The following is the Mission Statement proposed to the Regional Governing Body for ISKCON India on April 12, 2009. The name of the established national ministry will be:

ISKCON DAIVA VARNASRAMA MINISTRY PROMOTING RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

A. MISSION STATEMENT

The ISKCON Daiva Varnasrama Ministry Promoting Rural Development in India seeks to promote, establish and demonstrate the ideals of simple living and high thinking, based on the concepts and principles of daivi-varnasrama dharma, as desired by Srila Prabhupada. The ministry will work with the ISKCON India leadership to establish self-sufficient rural (village) communities, giving special emphasis to training and education.

We recommend that devotees and leaders in particular, consider forming national ministries to help promote the varnasrama mission more systematically. Hare Krishna.

For more information write to:

bhakti.raghava.swami@pamho.net or ramlakshman.brs@gmail.com

Or visit

www.iskconvarnasrama.com

www.srisurabhi.org

V. GUIDELINES FOR VARNASRAMA COORDINATORS

INTRODUCTION

The ISKCON Daiva Varnasrama Ministry Promoting Rural Development in India has been established in November of 2009 by the IRGB with a specific mandate to help promote the varnasrama mission within ISKCON India as defined by the ministry's (A) Mission Statement, (B) Mission Goals, (C) Strategic Plan, (D) Short Term Goals Defined, (E) Intermediate Goals Defined, (F) Long Term Goals Defined and (G) Duties of National Varnasrama Minister [1].

In section (C) Strategic Plan, the following two items are of particular relevance to understanding the duties and responsibilities of Varnasrama Coordinators:

- 1. To build working relationships with existing ISKCON ministries, temples, rural projects, educational institutions, etc.*
- 2. In consultation with ISKCON authorities, to appoint Local, District, State, Divisional and Regional Coordinators.*

It should be understood that the duties and responsibilities of all Varnasrama Coordinators (at the local, district, state, divisional and national levels) will be to assist the National Minister and the ministry itself in implementing the above mentioned items outlined from section (A) Mission Statement up to section (G) Duties of National Varnasrama Minister. As such the role of Varnasrama Coordinators is paramount to the proper implementation of the varnasrama mission.

What follows are general guidelines covering: (1) Definition of Varnasrama Coordinators, (2) Varnasrama Educational Steering Committees, (3) Qualifications of Varnasrama Coordinators, (4) Selection and Appointment of Varnasrama Coordinators, (5) Duties of Varnasrama Coordinators, (6) Application to become Varnasrama Coordinators and (7) Termination of Service for Varnasrama Coordinators.

(1) DEFINITION OF VARNASRAMA COORDINATORS

Varnasrama Coordinators are first and foremost “Facilitators”. A Coordinator is one who facilitates communication, develops effective net-working at all levels and helps

realize the overall aims and objectives of the varnasrama ministry. The concepts of decentralization and local governance are always within the mind of every Varnasrama Coordinator.

(2) VARNASRAMA EDUCATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEES

In order to give additional support and assistance to the varnasrama mission, as well as to train and empower as many individuals as possible, all Coordinators will seek to establish Varnasrama Educational Steering Committees composed of at least five devotees in good standing. This they will do in consultation with local ISKCON authorities.

The lowest committee level will be the local village level while the highest level will be the National Varnasrama Educational Steering Committee.

The National Varnasrama Educational Steering Committee will be composed of the National Varnasrama Coordinator and Varnasrama Coordinators at the Divisional and State levels.

Divisional Varnasrama Educational Steering Committees will be composed of the State Varnasrama Coordinators within that particular division.

State Varnasrama Educational Steering Committees will be composed of the District Varnasrama Coordinators within that particular state.

District Varnasrama Educational Steering Committees will be composed of the Village Varnasrama Coordinators within that particular district.

Village Varnasrama Educational Steering Committees will be composed of at least five devotees in good standing who are localized and living in the village. The committee members will elect their own Village Coordinator.

Project Varnasrama Educational Steering Committees will be composed of at least five devotees in good standing who are localized and living on the premises. The committee members will select their own Project Coordinator.

(3) QUALIFICATIONS OF COORDINATORS

Coordinators must be committed and focused primarily on Srila Prabhupada's varnasrama mission seeing it as the fourth division or movement meant to help complete and complement Srila Prabhupada's overall vision to spread the Sankirtan mission of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. They will also encourage and help promote the first three divisions or movements, namely (a) the Sankirtan Movement based on the holy names and books, (b) the Deity Worship Movement based on temple worship and (c) the Spiritual Initiation Movement based on congregational preaching programs. [2]

Coordinators must be dedicated to help realize the Mission Statement, Mission Goals and Strategic Planning of the varnasrama ministry.

Coordinators must be experienced in communication, dialogue and interpersonal relationships.

Coordinators must have a strong sadhana as they are meant to be examples for others.

Coordinators should be able to interact with individuals who may not be full-fledged ISKCON devotees, but who show interest in living a simple agrarian lifestyle.

Coordinators must be enthusiastic, determined and perseverant to help implement the varnasrama mission in all its different aspect and levels.

Coordinators at the national, divisional and state levels ideally should have a university background and have working experience, although this is not an absolute prerequisite.

Coordinators must be both visionaries and motivators.

(4) SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF COORDINATORS

The selection of Varnasrama Coordinators at any level (except at the National level which is done by the National Minister for varnasrama in consultation with the 4 Chairmen of each IRGB Divisional Council) should be done by an existing Varnasrama Coordinator at a higher level with the approval and blessings of either the National Varnasrama Coordinator and/or the National Minister for varnasrama. Varnasrama Coordinators may also be recommended by devotees in good standing at any level but must meet the approval of two Coordinators at a higher level.

Varnasrama Coordinators at the Divisional levels shall receive approval and blessings from the Chairman of each IRGB Divisional Council as well as the National Minister for varnasrama.

Varnasrama Coordinators at the State levels shall receive approval and blessings from the Regional Secretary of that State as well as from the National Minister for varnasrama, or in case there is no such appointed Regional Secretary, from the Chairman of that particular Divisional Council as well as from the National Minister for varnasrama.

Varnasrama Coordinators at all lower levels (district, village and project) shall receive approval and blessings from the Varnasrama Coordinator under whom they serve as well as from five devotees in good standing serving on their Varnasrama Educational Steering committee.

The names of all new Varnasrama Educational Committee members and Varnasrama Coordinators will be made known to both higher and lower levels by communicating names of individuals holding responsible positions (Varnasrama Educational Committee members and Coordinators) to the national, state and district varnasrama ministry offices, from where the information shall then be shared and distributed as needed.

All persons interested in the varnasrama mission will be directed to the appointed Varnasrama Coordinators in their area. The names of such Coordinators will later be listed on the varnasrama ministry website ([www.varnasrama.org.india/ResourceDirectory-Varnasrama Coordinators](http://www.varnasrama.org.india/ResourceDirectory-Varnasrama%20Coordinators)) so that those interested may get in contact with them.

To add further clarification as to the responsibilities of all Coordinators, the following details are being provided under the heading “Duties of Varnasrama Coordinators”.

(5) DUTIES OF VARNASRAMA COORDINATORS

1. To serve under the Varnasrama-based Rural Development Ministry as per the guidelines and directives of the IRGB approved Varnasrama-based Rural Development Ministry, in cooperation and in consultation with various members of the varnasrama ministry.

2. To network with ISKCON India Zonal Secretaries, Regional Secretaries, Temple Officials as well as various other entities connected with the ISKCON India mission such as Bhaktivedanta Institute, BBT and other ministries, etc. for the purpose of advancing the varnasrama mission in India.

3. To oversee the overall implementation and development of the Varnasrama-based Rural Development Ministry within their particular geographical area of service.

4. To help coordinate and promote the activities of Varnasrama National, Divisional, State, District and Local Coordinators.

5. To help establish and oversee the activities of Varnasrama Research Teams.

6. To help establish and oversee the activities of Varnasrama Shikshalayas at the village levels.

7. To organize seminars and workshops at various levels promoting the varnasrama mission.

8. To submit an Annual Report to appointed Coordinators serving within the varnasrama ministry and/or directly to the national minister in the case of both Divisional and National Coordinators.

9. To recruit members who will serve under the varnasrama ministry in any of the 15 Service Categories outlined by the ministry.

10. To follow and help implement all instructions given from time to time by the leadership within the varnasrama ministry.

11. To serve as Facilitators, helping individuals and groups to become better organized. They are not independent agents and they have no particular power save and except to help establish and coordinate the activities of established Varnasrama Educational Steering Committees and to help appoint or select new Varnasrama Coordinators.

12. To recommend individuals serving within their immediate jurisdiction for initiation, following the established guidelines given in the ISKCON By-laws.

(6) APPLICATION TO BECOME VARNASRAMA COORDINATORS

All candidates for becoming Varnasrama Coordinators must fill in the Varnasrama Service Application formula (see separate Proforma) by providing the needed data along with two passport photos taken within the last one year of sending the application.

Both the data and the two photos must be forwarded to the district, state or national office of the varnasrama ministry. One may also send scanned copies of all the information by e-mail to any of the appropriate Varnasrama Coordinators.

(7) TERMINATION OF SERVICE FOR VARNASRAMA COORDINATORS

Varnasrama Coordinators may be removed from their post by a majority vote of their local Varnasrama Steering Committee members in which they serve and with the approval of the Varnasrama Coordinator overseeing their activities.

APPENDIX

[1] See brochure “Ministry Guidelines”

[2] See pamphlet “ISKCON’s Four Movements”

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

www.iskconvarnasrama.com

www.srisurabhi.org

VI. ISKCON DAIVA VARNASRAMA MINISTRY PROMOTING RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA – (IDVM-India)

“MANDATE FROM THE REGIONAL GOVERNING BODY FOR INDIA”

Proposal Adopted by the Regional Governing Body for India

Dated: 11 November 2009

Whereas the India RGB established the India Varnasrama Development Committee in September 2007, for the purpose of helping promote varnasrama development in India,

Whereas the Varnasrama Development Committee has drafted a Position Paper on varnasrama which was officially endorsed by the India RGB leadership in September, 2008, entitled *Promoting Vrindavan Village Development in India*,

Whereas in their meeting with Bhakti Raghava Swami in Mayapur, Sivaram Swami, Devamrta Swami, and Romapada Swami suggested that it would be advisable to establish Varnasrama Ministries at national levels before officially forming a Global Varnasrama Ministry,

Whereas the India Varnasrama Development Committee has recommended establishing a national ministry in India for the purpose of promoting varnasrama-based rural development,

Whereas there is an urgent need to train and educate our devotees about the varnasrama mission, to establish model rural projects based on varnasrama principles, and to develop a resource base to support the concept that "I want the world to see by our example that life can be lived naturally, peacefully if one is self sufficient with land, some cows and chanting Hare Krishna", (SP Letter to Jagadisa, 74-06-18)

Whereas the 2009 GBC resolutions (1) "310. GBC Participation in Farm Projects" and (2) "311. Purchasing from ISKCON Farms and Farmers" both lend support to the need for promoting the varnasrama mission,

Whereas Bhakti Raghava Swami has been active in promoting the varnasrama mission both here in India as well as in other countries and is agreeable to help set up such a ministry,

Therefore, the India RGB hereby establishes the Varnasrama-based Rural Development Ministry with the following mandate:

1. To encourage the establishment in India of models of Krishna-conscious rural communities (villages):
 - a. to demonstrate in a practical way how the principles of varnas (aptitude based occupations) and asramas (phased lifelong spiritual emancipation) are universal and standard principles meant to be implemented
 - b. To demonstrate the principles of self-sufficiency, sustainability, and localized economy based on proper utilization of land and cow protection.
2. To encourage, wherever possible in India, varnasrama-based rural development centered on the land, cows, and Krishna.
3. In order to accomplish the above, to establish training programs, publish resource materials, organize conferences and seminars, establish libraries and resource centers, etc.

Bhakti Raghava Swami is hereby appointed as minister.

The existing RGB Varnasrama Development Committee will continue with the following mandate:

1. To regularly review the activities of the ministry and advise on its functioning.
2. To organize periodic assessments of the work of the ministry when requested to do so by the IRGB.
3. To be available to advise the IRGB on any varnasrama development issue that may be brought to its attention, whether related directly to the ministry or not.

VII. ISKCON DAIVA VARNASRAMA MINISTRY PROMOTING RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA – (IDVM-India)

“STATEMENT OF PROJECTED MISSION, STRATEGY AND GOALS”

Proposal Drafted by the ISKCON Daiva Varnasrama Ministry – India
Dated: 11 November 2009

DETAILS OF THE STATEMENT

- A. Mission Statement
- B. Mission Goals
- C. Strategic Plan
- D. Short Term Goals Defined
- E. Intermediate Goals Defined
- F. Long Term Goals Defined
- G. Duties of the National Varnasrama Development Minister

A. MISSION STATEMENT

The Varnasrama-based Rural Development Ministry seeks to promote, establish and demonstrate the ideals of simple living and high thinking, based on the concepts and principles of daivi-varnasrama dharma, as desired by Srila Prabhupada. The ministry will work with the ISKCON India leadership to establish self-sufficient rural (village) communities, giving special emphasis to training and education.

B. MISSION GOALS

1. To help set up models or micro-units of varnasrama communities (villages) where the principles of varnasrama dharma will be promoted.
2. To demonstrate in such communities how the principles of varnas (aptitude based occupations) and asramas (phased lifelong spiritual emancipation) are universal and standard principles.
3. To demonstrate in a practical way the concepts of self-sufficiency, sustainability and localized economy based on proper utilization of land and on cow protection.
4. To encourage the establishment of educational and training facilities such as Varnasrama Shikshalayas (pre-gurukula), Gurukulas (younger students) and Varnasrama Colleges (older students) for the purpose of realizing the above where both formal and non-formal education will be given.

5. To compile, publish and distribute literatures (pamphlets, booklets, books, magazines, newsletters, etc.) for the sake of informing and educating people about the varnasrama mission.
6. To help revive interest in India's traditional practices of village technologies.
7. To systematically and methodically conduct seminars and workshops to provide training and education on the concepts and principles of the varnasrama mission.
8. To work with other secular educational, scientific, social, religious and cultural institutions that may have similar goals and objectives.
9. To promote organic and natural farming avoiding the use of the following four dangerous practices: (1) chemical pesticides, (2) chemical fertilizers, (3) hybrid seeds and (4) modern machines, all of which create ecological imbalances in nature and destroy the environment.
10. To promote general research in and help increase awareness about the varnasrama mission.

C. STRATEGIC PLAN

1. To build working relationships with existing ISKCON ministries, temples, rural projects, educational institutions, etc.
2. In consultation with ISKCON authorities, to appoint Local, State and Regional Coordinators.
3. To invite the active involvement of ISKCON youth groups in India.
4. To encourage the participation of devotees, especially Nama Hatta devotees living in the villages, in helping realize the above mentioned Mission Statement and Mission Goals.
5. To establish libraries, asramas, cultural centers, residential quarters, small-scale cottage industries, etc., which will all help manifest and develop the varnasrama mission.
6. In consultation with the appropriate ISKCON authorities, to raise funds for the Varnasrama-based Rural Development Ministry.
7. To establish Varnasrama Research Teams for the purpose of involving more individuals in the varnasrama mission and whose members will work closely with various ISKCON entities.

D. SHORT TERM GOALS DEFINED (within one year)

1. To compile a list and maintain a Database of all existing varnasrama projects in India.
2. To distribute basic information about the varnasrama mission to all ISKCON temples in India.
3. To conduct a varnasrama seminar in each of the four Divisional Council zones of India.
4. To begin appointing State and Regional Coordinators for India.
5. To produce a Varnasrama Manual giving general guidelines about the varnasrama mission. This will be an official ministry publication.
6. To publish the *Varnasrama Guide and Resource Directory* for India. This will be an official ministry publication.
7. To hold a National Varnasrama Conference for State and Regional Coordinators.
8. To help organize the yearly on-going Global Varnasrama Seminar in Sri Dham Mayapur at Gaura Purnima.
9. To conduct a yearly 3-month Varnasrama College course.
10. To establish one model of a Varnasrama Research Team.
11. To produce one video documentary *Make Vrndavana Villages* before Gaura Purnima 2010.
This will not be an official video documentary of the ministry.
12. To print the book *Traditional Education* before Gaura Purnima 2010. This will not be an official ministry publication.

E. INTERMEDIATE GOALS DEFINED (within 3 years)

1. To work towards establishing one Varnasrama College in each State of India.
2. To work towards establishing one Varnasrama Research Team in each State of India.
3. To work towards establishing Varnasrama Shikshalayas in each State of India.
4. To visit all the existing ISKCON rural/farm communities in India.

F. LONG TERM GOALS DEFINED (within 5 years)

1. To have one working model of a developing varnasrama community in each State of India.
2. To have dozens of Varnasrama Shikshalayas established in each State of India.
3. To have Varnasrama Research Teams set up in all the major cities of India.
4. To request the India RGB to make a formal proposal to the GBC for the formation of a Global Varnasrama Ministry.
5. To work towards establishing the Headquarters of the Global Varnasrama Ministry at Sri Dham Mayapur.

G. DUTIES OF NATIONAL VARNASRAMA MINISTER

1. To serve under the India RGB leadership as per their guidelines and directives and in consultation with the established India RGB appointed Varnasrama Development Committee.
2. To network with ISKCON India Zonal Secretaries, Regional Secretaries, Temple Officials as well as various other entities connected with the ISKCON India mission such as Bhaktivedanta Institute, BBT and other ministries, etc. for the purpose of advancing the varnasrama mission in India.
3. To oversee the overall implementation and development of the Varnasrama-based Rural Development Ministry.
4. To oversee the activities of Varnasrama State and Regional Coordinators.
5. To oversee the activities of Varnasrama Research Teams.
6. To help establish Varnasrama Shikshalayas at the village levels.
7. To organize annual seminars promoting the varnasrama mission.
8. To submit an Annual Report to the India RGB EC and to the India RGB appointed Varnasrama Development Committee.

For further information

www.iskconvarnasrama.com

www.srisurabhi.org