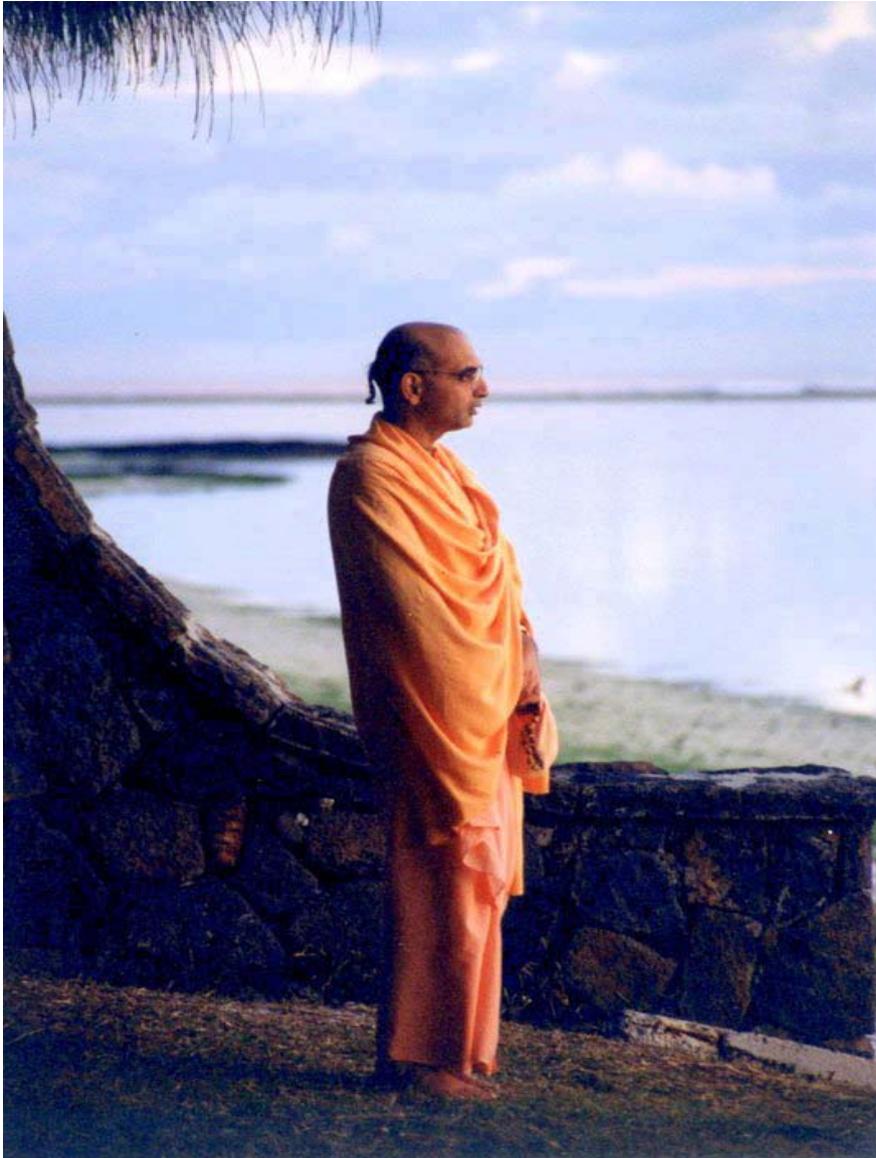


A Beautiful Project



One year went by since the inauguration the temple, but it seems just like the other day. I remember that last year at this time I was in such anxiety because things were not ready for the inauguration of the temple. The last few days were very hectic. Even the night before the inauguration, the whole temple room looked like a battlefield with scaffolding everywhere, the floor strewn with all kinds of debris, the ceiling not done, and the twenty-seven foot diameter painting yet to be put up. But everyone worked hard. All the people taking care of different areas, they actually had to work whole night. By Krsna's mercy, in the morning, everything was complete.

But one big job was to clean the temple room. Actually the temple was a construction site. So after mangala-arti, I made an announcement that those who wanted to clean the temple, they could come. About 2500 devotees were there for inauguration. Practically all who were there for the mangala –arti responded to the announcement and we all marched into the temple to start cleaning. From 5:30 to 7:00, within one and a half hour, everything was cleaned and the temple was ready for inauguration.

It was a wonderful experience. Not only a wonderful experience, it was an extremely memorable experience, at least for me and those who were present at that time.

Sometimes I wonder how I managed to build this temple in ten months time. The only thought that comes to my mind is that it happened by Krsna's mercy. This actually proves that if we sincerely try to serve Krsna, Krsna helps us and as a result of that all kinds of wonderful things happen.

This year, it is a lot more relaxed. Now the temple is built and everything is going on nicely. People who come here admit with great admiration that the temple atmosphere is beautiful, the deity worship standard is high, the srngara is beautiful and on top of everything, the deities are exquisitely beautiful.

Jananivas prabhu my God brother has been the head pujari in Mayapur for last thirty-five years, came for the temple opening. He was telling me that the Radharani here was most beautiful than Radharani in Mayapur or Vrndavan. When Jananivas prabhu say something like that you can be sure that he is speaking the truth because he does not say things just to flatter somebody, especially when it comes to talking about Radharani. He really means it.

Recently I heard that during his Vyas puja celebration in Bombay, His Holiness Radhanatha Maharaj mentioned that the Ujjain project will become the most important project of ISKCON. He said that it is only a matter of time and Ujjain will become the most important and vibrant project of ISKCON. So I can see that the devotees are feeling so positive, optimistic, and hopeful about this project. This naturally inspires me to really do something wonderful here.

Somehow Krsna bought me here. This is an important place. It is Krsna's and Balarama's place of education. Our mission is also to educate people. The

Krsna consciousness movement is actually an educational movement. It is teaching people how to become devotees of Krsna, by understanding who Krsna is, how to develop our relationship with Him, and by establishing that relationship with Him, how to make our life successful. The understanding of sambandha, abhideya and prayojna is the very basis of all our activities. So, gradually I want to make this place into a place of education for Krsna consciousness.

What I am mainly concerned about is that whoever comes here get very good treatment and gets very nice impression of our movement. Actually devotional service, although it is focused on devotion to Krsna. Krsna consciousness means to recognise the importance, the greatness the exalted position of the devotees. Krsna says "Those who think that they are My devotees, they are not My devotees, but those who are the devotees of My devotees, they are My devotees."

Devotional service is actually rendered by serving the devotees of lord. And that is what I am trying to remind everybody here. Yes you are serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead , but the Supreme Personality of Godhead is manifest in this planet in the form of his devotees. So when we serve His devotees, He is served. When His devotees are pleased Krsna is pleased. Therefore the first and foremost consideration is to serve the devotees and make them happy. And this service for devotees means respectful attitude towards the senior devotees, friendship among the equal affection and compassion towards the juniors. This is the first and foremost education we all need.

And then, of course, there are subsidiary branches of education also. Let us see how far I succeed. I would very much like to set up an international school here, where children can come from all over the world and get educated. They will be groomed up to see the reality of world. Although they would be getting the training to become devotees, at the same time they will have the practical education to deal with this world.

Yesterday we also had a very wonderful celebration of the ground breaking ceremony of a Food for Life building. The Madhya Pradesh government has given us the assignment to cater for the Mid-Day Meal project which will feed

20,000 school children in this area. So for that we just started to build the kitchen. It will be quite a large kitchen. It will be one hundred feet long and seventy feet wide. So that way it will be 7500 square-feet. The kitchen will be equipped with all kinds of automatic machines. In this area people take chapattis so we have to serve chapattis to school children. We will have a chapatti making machine that can produce ten thousand chapattis per hour. There will also be a puri making machine that will make ten thousand puri per hour. We will also have six steam jackets which will prepare about three hundred litres of sabji in twenty minutes. So in this way we are preparing ourselves to cater to the need of feeding 119 schools within a ten kilometres radius of Ujjain city. And we will be catering to 20,000 school children. So this is how we are making a head-way to have some sort of connection to the school children in this area.

Eventually we will set up our own school as well. I am planning to start the construction of a primary school this year. There will be a kindergarten and a primary school adjacent to our temple. And then eventually, we will set up our international school. I am looking for a one-hundred acre plot of land to set up that school. It will be a first class residential school with all kinds of facilities that the best school in the world offer. We must bring them up in the most wonderful way, in the best possible way, because these children are going to become the leaders of world tomorrow. Therefore we have to train in such a way that they can become leaders. In that way, they can really guide the world towards achieving the real goal of life. And it is not just spiritual prosperity. Along with spiritual prosperity the material prosperity also will come. Vedic India was the greatest nation, the greatest country in the world at that time. It was the most opulent and powerful county. So Krsna consciousness establishes the most opulent, the most influential and the most effective culture. That is how we have to bring up our children.

Let us see how krsna will guide us in achieving these plans. I am simply depending in His mercy. And in my own simple way, whatever I can do, I am just trying to do. And things are happening. It is not that i built this temple just to sit down here and have a nice time. No, rather everyday my responsibility and my anxiety are increasing because this is just the beginning. This temple is just the beginning and we want to do so many other things. I know that as the

responsibility increases, anxiety will also increase. But we have to take this anxiety for Krsna. That is how this movement is going to grow. If we just want to eat and sleep, then who will make this movement spread all over the world in every town and village? That is how Krsna will be pleased and that is how Krsna will shower his mercy upon us.

Our project is already expanding. Now our guesthouse is ready. Guest who comes to Ujjain are already staying there. This guesthouse is probably only one of its kind in ISKCON because it is made of pure white marble from Makrana, the best marble in India. Not only our guesthouse but our brahmachari ashrama is made of pure, white marble. We have also developed a beautiful garden here. It is very colourful with many varieties of flowers. So the project is going on nicely and newer projects are developing. Whoever comes to Ujjain appreciates it and expresses their desire that some day they would like to come and settle down here.

I am happy that somehow we are able to do something for Srila Prabhupada. My only lamentation is that I could not all these things when Srila Prabhupada was present on this planet. I would so much like to just walk up to Srila Prabhupada and tell him all that I am doing. And what would I not give to just see him smiling with appreciation for whatever little I am trying to do for him. But I hope that from the spiritual sky Srila Prabhupada is watching me and he is pleased with my endeavour to serve his lotus feet.