

Need to Revive Preaching in the UK

Two recent articles posted on Dandavats, "Tory Leader to visit Hindu temple" and "20,000 to celebrate Diwali in a blaze of lights," highlight the urgent need for a revival of preaching. The United Kingdom, especially London, needs innovative methods in preaching to the masses.

I appreciate the effort of the present leadership, and their intentions are commendable. Many Hindus are taking to Krsna consciousness, and this is great. However, there is a misconception that politicians like Dave Cameron visiting Bhaktivedanta Manor or holding a Diwali festival with 20,000 Hindus attending is good publicity for Krishna consciousness. Such activities support the belief that the Hare Krishnas are part of the Hindu religion. In some countries, it may be beneficial to align with the local Hindus for preaching purposes; this is not so in Britain where there is a large Hindu population and Hinduism is just another minority religion.

Dave Cameron is the leader of the official opposition political party. He is visiting religious minority groups to gain support for his bid to become the next British prime minister. His visit to the Bhaktivedanta Manor on behalf of the Hindu population of the country was arranged by the Hindu Forum of Britain, who refer to the Manor as a major Hindu temple in Watford. Such a high-profile leader visits a Hindu temple as part of his political campaign canvassing the minority religions. How much more loudly does one need to broadcast to the population of Britain that the Hare Krishnas are Hindus?

Something needs to be done separately, to address the lack of preaching amongst other groups, mainly the populations whose ancestors' heritage is from the British Isles. The activities at the Manor should continue, so as not to cause a disturbance. The situation can be beneficial if the devotees there were encouraged to co-operate with financial and utilitarian support for broader preaching.

London is getting much degraded, in my opinion. Young men in their late teens and early twenties take drugs, join gangs, drink alcohol and commit crimes. Even some ten- and 11-year-olds are drifting into delinquency. Their limited vocabulary seems almost an emblem of their limited potential. With little or no parental guidance in some cases, the children look only to each other. Family values seem to be breaking down. I see little hope for these future leaders of Britain except to give them Krsna consciousness. Amazingly, most of these youngsters have not even heard of the Hare Krishnas. Hare Krishna should be a household name. Even in third-world countries in Africa, Hare Krishna is known by the common people.

No material education is necessary to understand the language of Bhakti. Dynamic preaching is needed. I propose a dynamic resurgence of preaching, as during the days of Srila Prabhupada. To the east, west, north and south of London are many boroughs, districts and towns and villages with thousands of streets and millions of people. All are searching for happiness.

To inspire the younger devotees of this country, I propose that the GBC of the UK invite all stalwart, experienced and enthusiastic homegrown devotees -- such as Janananda Prabhu, Mahavisnu Swami, Bhakti Vikas Swami, Prabhavisnu Swami, Partha Sarathi das Goswami and others -- to head a resurgence in preaching on a huge scale. Partha Sarathi Maharaj -- formerly from England, but little-known there, unfortunately -- was instrumental in spreading KC through mass distribution to people using innovative methods, such as his tent campaigns in South Africa. His experience is valuable.

Actually, all the devotees I've mentioned are constantly preaching in all parts of the world, and they are great achievers for Srila Prabhupada. They have dedicated their lives to his mission. Charity begins at home, and these senior devotees should be encouraged by the GBC to cooperate in taking Krsna consciousness to every corner of London and to reach out to every little street in every part of the country.

Some planning is required. However, it is counterproductive to get tied down with unnecessary meetings, wasting hours of valuable time speaking of strategies, getting anxious and all fired up, but without action. Just reach out and preach. This will surely please Srila Prabhupada.

About the Author

<http://Chakra.org> is a Vaisnava website designed to encourage the growth of devotion, foster critical thinking, and promote communication among Vaisnavas world-wide. Although differences of opinion will occur, we aim to provide a forum for mutual respect among the multiple strands of our community.

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