



International Society for Krishna Consciousness  
Founder Acharya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

# HARE KRISHNA NEWS

MARCH / APRIL 2012



**Sita, A Divine Princess  
Subhadra's Wedding  
Hanuman, The Perfect Servant**

*B. G. Sharma*

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"You are a brave and powerful monkey to come all this way for Me, taking such risks. But tell Me, why has Rama not yet come to My rescue?"

"He does not know where You are. As soon as I tell Him, He will lead a powerful army to rescue you."

Sita begged Hanuman to act fast, for She could not survive much longer. Eager to rescue Her, he invited Her to climb on his back, saying he would take Her to Rama that very day.

"Now you are talking just like a monkey," She laughed. "How could I go anywhere on your back?" Hanuman had forgotten that he was only the size of a cat. He grew until he towered above Her. With blazing eyes and swishing tail he proudly declared that if he wished he could carry away the whole of Lanka.

"I see your power," admired Sita, "but I want Rama to come here Himself and defeat Ravana. That will be most fitting." She then unwrapped from Her cloth a large jewel. "Give Him this. Ask if He remembers the time He decorated my cheek with mineral dye after the rains. And tell Him to hurry. I have not got long."

*Ramayana, A Tale of Gods and Demons by Ranchor Prime. Illustration by B.G. Sharma. Published by Mandala*

## Editor's Note

### Dance Like No One's Watching

As a child growing up in ISKCON, festivals, large or small were a real treat. It was a time when we met our friends, sang, danced, and ate till we dropped. Nowadays, I'm too embarrassed to sing, almost always too tired for high energy dancing, and I have to eat healthy so I will survive to see my grandchildren.

I remember the excitement of putting on my favourite green satin *gopi* skirt and cream chiffon sash. My mom had made the same for my elder sister and my cousins. It was a sort of family uniform, which we wore with pride.

Another fond memory was dancing freely amongst the three chariots at the early Ratha-yatra festivals in Chatsworth. My friends and I loved running from one chariot to the next and then back again, just taking in everything and looking in awe at Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra Devi being pulled on their colourful chariots. If I recall correctly, one year, Subhadra Devi's chariot broke down and she had to be moved to Lord Jagannath's chariot. A little while later Lord Balaram's chariot broke down and He also had to be moved to Lord Jagannath's chariot. The unfolding drama of them riding together brought great enjoyment to us.

Now when I reminisce about the "younger" days I wonder why we as adults forget or choose to ignore enjoying the festival with youthful enthusiasm and zest. This year, let go of the inhibitions we inherit due to growing up. Let us dance like no one's watching, sing like we are nightingales and eat till our minds, bodies and souls are overflowing with spiritual happiness.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Festival of Chariots 2012.

*Haripriya Devi Dasi*

**Letters to the Editor**

Do you enjoy writing...

Make your voice heard.

Share your temple experience, spiritual or service related realisations.

Do you have questions???

Write to Haripriya Devi Dasi: [haripriya@nitai.co.za](mailto:haripriya@nitai.co.za)  
or Rasa-sthal Dasi: [rasasthal@nitai.co.za](mailto:rasasthal@nitai.co.za)

Design and Layout by Lashika Ravjee - 082 309 2396

# Ideal Leaders and Ideal Citizens

## Message from the President of ISKCON KwaZulu Natal

After being away for some time, I recently scanned a newspaper to get updated with current events. Not much has changed — bad news (murder, rape, car-jackings, extortion, climatic disasters, etc.) pervades all newspapers. On closer inspection, I noticed an alarming number of stories related to corrupt leadership in business, society, and government. Intelligent people seem to be fed up with the unprincipled and untrained leadership of today. But what are the alternatives and what can people hope for?

### **Leaders have to be of a high moral calibre**

Reading the anomalies in leadership, I was reminded of the conditions that prevailed when Lord Ramachandra (Lord Krishna's incarnation as the ideal ruler) ruled the planet some millions of years ago:

“Lord Ramachandra became king during Treta-yuga, but because of His good government, the age was like Satya-yuga [the golden age of religion]. Everyone was religious and completely happy. O Maharaja Parikshit, during the reign of Lord Ramachandra the forests, the rivers, the hills and mountains, the states, the seven islands, and the seven seas were all favourable in supplying the necessities of life for all living beings. When Lord Ramachandra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was the king of this world, all bodily and mental suffering, disease, old age, bereavement, lamentation, distress, fear, and fatigue were completely absent. There was even no death for those who did not want it.” (*Srimad Bhagavatam* 9.10.51-53)

This description seems imaginary and utopian for us today. It's easier to be a sceptic than to hope for such a situation. And if we do hear of a semblance, it's only in pre-election speeches. Srila Prabhupada teaches that Rama-rajya, the kingdom of Lord Rama, is possible and outlines the components necessary for this glorious atmosphere:

Rama-rajya can prevail when an ideal government is in place. An ideal government requires ideal leaders and ideal citizens. During Lord Rama's reign, people were trained in their respective roles in society and

they were all devotees of the Supreme Lord. When good citizens are prevalent, society is prosperous, peaceful and happy. Chaos prevails when there is a lack of good, trained citizens. The enforcement of laws to establish peace and stability is useless in such a society. “Throughout the entire world there are so many states, legislative assemblies, and parliaments, but still the citizens are rogues and thieves. Good citizenship, therefore, cannot be enforced; the citizens must be trained.” (*Srimad Bhagavatam* 9.10.50, Purport)

Ideal citizens can only exist if their leaders are ideal. In *Bhagavad-gita* (3.21), Lord Krishna declares: “Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues.” Leaders have to be of a high moral calibre and set proper examples

so that citizens can look up to them for guidance. Ideal leaders and ideal citizens are the two components necessary for a glorious situation, as in Ayodhya, to exist. However, the most vital component for Rama-rajya is Lord Rama Himself.

Srila Prabhupada writes, “People are very fond of the pattern of Rama-rajya, and even today politicians sometimes form a party called Rama-rajya, but unfortunately they have no obedience to Lord Rama. It is sometimes said that people want the kingdom of God without God.” (SB 9.10.50, Purport) During Lord Rama's time, the citizens of Ayodhya were all devotees. They were surrendered to Him and lived for serving Him, and thus they were entitled to share in His opulence.

Trying to enjoy the opulence and facilities of the Lord, while excluding Him, is a Ravana-like mentality. Ravana wanted to enjoy Sitadevi, excluding Lord Ramachandra. Ravana's result—death.

To establish Rama's kingdom, we must first establish Lord Rama's presence. *Kali-kale nama-rupe krsna-avatara*: in this age, the Supreme Lord is fully manifest in His holy name. By chanting *Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*, we can invoke the Lord's presence. Without His presence, there is no hope. But with it, Rama-rajya becomes a reality.

Hare Krishna.

Swarup Damodar Das



“The Supreme Lord, Rishabhadeva, instructed his devoted and well-behaved sons in transcendental science so that in the future they could rule the world perfectly.” (*Srimad Bhagavatam* 5.4.19)

## Past Spiritual Masters Jahnava Devi Leads

By Bhaktin Saras Naidoo

It may be surprising to know that about five hundred years ago, after the departure of Lord Caitanya and His associates, Sri Jahnava Devi became one of the leaders of the Vaishnavas (devotees of Lord Krishna or Vishnu). At that time it was practically unheard of that a woman led any society, let alone the Vaishnava society, dedicated to the highest goal of life. Of course, a basic Vaishnava principle is that we are not the body but the soul within the body and eternal servants of the Supreme. Jahnava Mata, as she was affectionately known, was chosen based on spiritual qualification. She was Lord Nityananda's (Lord Caitanya's chief associate famed for His unprecedented kindness) wife and was endowed with the same mercy as Lord Nityananda Himself. She was therefore also known as Nityananda-svarupini. Jahnava Mata overflowed with love for God. She delivered many atheists and sinners by her compassion.

After Lord Caitanya and His associates left the material world, Jahnava Mata continued their work, ideals of devotion and the congregational chanting of the holy names. As in the line of great *acharyas* she disseminated not only knowledge of the scriptures, but also realized knowledge of the nature of the Supreme. She initiated many disciples and developed a reputation as a superlative devotee. The Six Gosvamis treated her with utmost respect. It is said that Srila Rupa Gosvami himself explained Vaishnava literature to her when she journeyed to Vrindavan for the first time. Srila Raghunath Das Gosvami showed her the Radha Kunda area. Her purity of thought and action was a force that helped steer the Vaishnava tradition. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura prayed: "My mind is unsteady. This ship has no captain, no direction. I weep in despair,

seeing that I cannot cross over this ocean of misery. O Jahnava Devi! Today, by the power of your divine qualities, be merciful to this servant of yours. Dispel this illusion, which torments me and relieve me of the anguish of material existence." (*Kalyana Kalpataru*)



The first recorded observance of the birth anniversary of Lord Caitanya was held in Kheturi. There, Jahnava Mata undertook the installation of six deities, elaborate offerings, devotional games commemorating Krishna's pastimes and also directed the *kirtan*. Kheturi flooded with waves of divine love attracting Lord Caitanya and His associates to appear. Everyone bathed in the glory of the Lord's presence and then, He suddenly disappeared filling everyone with grief. Jahnava Mata explained that it was Lord Caitanya's grace on Narottam and Srinivas (two prominent devotees and poets of the time). And Lord Caitanya fulfilled His promise that wherever there is *nama-sankirtan*, there He [Lord Caitanya] appears.

Jahnava Mata extensively travelled with her disciples, visiting holy places like Mayapur and Vrindavan. Once, while the party was sleeping on a river bank during their travels en-route to Vrindavan, some men planned to attack and rob them. As they walked towards the sleeping pilgrim party, miraculously the path stretched endlessly and by morning the robbers realized that they hadn't moved. Feeling defeated and humbled, they begged for forgiveness and left. Later they became Jahnava Mata's followers.

Jahnava Mata broke all boundaries, standing on equal footing with men, excelling in service, devotional accomplishments and leading by example. Krishna says: "The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives fully devoted to my service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me." (Bg. 10.9)

**Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple**  
**Rama Navami Festival**  
 30 March - 1 April  
 Sunday  
 Public Worship and Offerings  
 Abhishek on  
 Main Altar • 11am  
 Rama Lila Katha • 2pm-6pm  
 Free Prasad  
 Rama Lila Katha  
 Friday, 7pm-9pm  
 Saturday, 4pm-8pm

**Festival of Kirtan**  
 Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple  
 14-15 April 2012  
 10am-10pm  
 With  
 BB Govinda Swami  
 Bhakti Caitanya Swami  
 Indradyumna Swami  
 Kadamba Kanana Swami  
 Madhava Das

## Srila Prabhupada At Advaita Bhavan

The *pujari* at Sri Advaita Acharya's house in Santipura, West Bengal, came to ISKCON Mayapur, in 1980, with a copy of a *Back to Godhead* article about Srila Prabhupada entitled *A Lifetime in Preparation*.

“Just recently an amazing realization occurred to me that I wanted to share with devotees everywhere. I have been the *pujari* and *sevaite* at the house of Advaita Acharya for many years. I was also there back in the 1940s and 50s. At that time, I noticed that one *grihastha* Bengali devotee used to come to the temple quite regularly. He was dressed in a white *khadi dhoti* and *kurta*, and he always came alone. He would sit in the back of the *mandir* without speaking, and would chant *harinama* on his *mala* very quietly and deeply. I noticed that he came on the weekends, usually once every month or two. After chanting there for many hours, he would always thank me when he left. His presence was profound, and I became attracted to him. Since his devotions were solitary, I never spoke to disturb him. Sometimes I happened to notice that while he was chanting, his eyes would be full of tears and his voice would be choked up.

Then, for a very long time he did not come. However, I distinctly recall that in August of 1965, I saw a saffron-clothed *sannyasi* sitting in the back of the *mandir*. In a moment I recognized him to be my old friend from before. Again he sat for a long time chanting Hare Krishna. I could see his beads moving, his eyes closed in concentrated devotion. He was weeping unabashedly..., while he chanted the holy name. Finally, as evening came, he paid his *dandavat pranam* for a long time. When he arose he came up to me and again thanked me for my *seva* here at Advaita Bhavan. I asked him, “Who are you? I remember you from so long ago.”

### **My gurudeva has given me an impossible mission.**

He replied, ‘My name is Abhay Caranaravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami. I am an unworthy disciple of His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, Srila Prabhupada, my divine master. I have been coming here for such a long time because my *gurudeva* has given me an impossible mission. His desire was for me to go across the ocean to the Western countries and spread the sublime teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. There are countless souls there who have never heard of Sri Sri Radha-Krishna, and so they are suffering greatly. I have not known how this mission of his will be successful, so I have been coming here to this special house of Advaita Acharya, where he, Nityananda Prabhu, and

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu would gather together to plan the *sankirtana* movement. It was here that they launched the inundation of love of God that swept India and continues to this day. Thus I have been praying very earnestly here that they will all give me their mercy that somehow they will empower me and guide me. I want to satisfy my *gurudeva*'s desire, but I am feeling unqualified to do this.’



Srila Prabhupada with his Western disciples.

As he was speaking to me, I saw tears falling down his cheeks again. Then he continued, ‘Tomorrow I am leaving for Calcutta to go upon a ship across the ocean to America. I do not know what will befall me there, but I am praying most earnestly here for help.’ Then he very humbly asked me for my blessings. I was indeed moved by this Vaishnava's sincerity and determination as I watched him depart upon his journey.

It was a few years later that I began noticing, for the first time, white Vaishnavas coming to Advaita Bhavan. They were wearing *dhotis* and *saris* and chanting on *tulasi-mala*. I never spoke to any of them, but then one of them gave me this *Back to Godhead* magazine from America. As I looked at the photographs, suddenly I recognized a painting of the Founder-Acharya who had brought Krishna consciousness to the West. It was a picture of my friend, Bhaktivedanta Swami, who had come and prayed here so many times before. Then I realized that he has actually accomplished that impossible mission of his *gurudeva*. I saw that it was indeed he, starting alone and without pretence, who had accomplished this glorious miracle against all odds.

As soon as I saw this, I came here to his temple in Mayapur to tell you this information. I know that he has gone from this world now, but I thought perhaps you might want to know this story about your and my beloved Srila Prabhupada.

—Our Srila Prabhupada, A Friend to All, Compiled by Mulaprakriti Devi Dasi

# Sita, A Divine Princess

By Bhaktin Kribashne Naidoo

Sitadevi, Lord Ramachandra's consort, embodies intelligence, beauty, poise and divinity. Her role in Vedic scripture is clear: She is the pleasure giving potency of the Supreme Lord, Ramachandra. She unequivocally carries out her duties as daughter, wife and mother and through these various roles she remains untainted.

Upon hearing that Rama was exiled to the forest for fourteen years, Sita was neither saddened by the cancellation of Rama's coronation as King nor the demanded crowning of Bharat. Rather, Sita was overwhelmed with grief when Rama asked Her to remain in Ayodhya, separated from Him. Even though raised a princess and having married into the greatest royal family at the time, Sita would not hear of remaining in the safety and comfort of the city. Rama earnestly explained the rigours of life in the forest but Sita was adamant in following Him, thereby declaring the position of a dutiful wife. As She left Ayodhya, She relinquished Her valuable ornaments and fine clothing in perfect renunciation.

Whilst in the forest, Sita happily served Rama and His brother Lakshman. When Ravana heard of Sita's incomparable beauty, he set a trap and kidnapped Her. Flying over the forest on Ravana's chariot, Sita intelligently threw her jewels and scarf so that Rama could trail Her. When Rama found Her anklet He was able to deduce that Ravana had headed South with Sita.

In Lanka, in the Asoka garden, Ravana offered Sita servants and a life of luxury. He persistently tried to convince her to be his queen but Sita remained faithful and hopeful that Rama would rescue her. Seeing that no material wealth could win Sita, Ravana further taunted Her by enlisting the help of a magician who produced a slain head that resembled Rama. Boastfully, Ravana showed this head to Sita and again begged Her to become his. Even though Sita shrieked to see the head of her husband covered with blood and dust, She remained steadfast and did not succumb to Ravana's advances.

Sitadevi was not a wilting flower waiting for Rama to rescue Her, but divinely powerful. "The soldiers Lord Ramachandra recruited in the jungle were all monkeys and did not have proper equipment with which to fight the soldiers of Ravana, for Ravana's soldiers were equipped with weapons of modern warfare whereas the monkeys could only throw stones, mountain peaks and trees. It was only Lord Ramachandra and Lakshman who shot some arrows. But because the soldiers of Ravana were

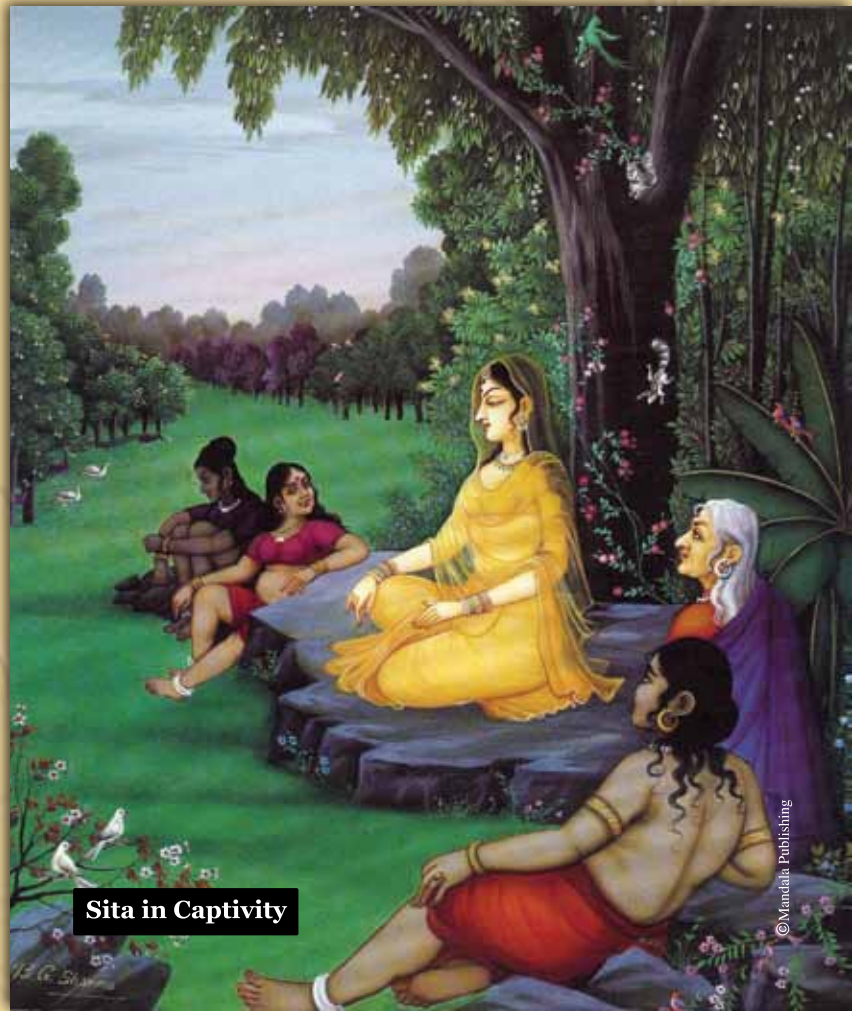
condemned by the curse of mother Sita, the monkeys were able to kill them simply by throwing stones and trees." (SB 9.10.20, Purport) Srila Prabhupada further explains that there are two kinds of strength—divine strength and strength achieved by one's own intelligence and power. The monkeys were divinely blessed by Sitadevi.

It is explained that when Ravana captured Sita, the captured form was an illusionary representation of Sita. After the great battle Rama requested Sita to enter a pyre to prove her chastity to the Kingdom. Without hesitation, She entered the pyre burning the *maya-sita* (illusionary Sita), and revealing the divine Sita.

Vedic literature explains the importance of chastity and devotion in a woman. Srila Prabhupada wrote: "Not only was mother Sita powerful, but any woman who follows in the footsteps of mother Sita can also become similarly powerful." (SB 9.10.27, Purport) Amongst the great personalities famed for their chastity are Sita, Mandodari (Ravana's wife) and Draupadi. The moral principle is that we should follow the standards set by these devoted women. The *Ramayana* is not merely a celebration of the victory of good over evil but provides a deeper understanding of ideal feminine qualities, devotion, family, and social values for millennia to come.

*For more information read Ramayana and Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 9.*

***Sita intelligently threw her jewels and scarf...***



**Sita in Captivity**

# Subhadra's Wedding

By Indulekha Sakhi Dasi

Eight types of marriages are described in the Vedas, four of which are more prominent: *brahma*, a daughter is given as a gift to a man learned in the Vedas; *daiva*, a daughter is given as a gift to the presiding priest of a Vedic sacrifice; *arsa*, where a father gives away his daughter after receiving a cow and a bull from the groom, and *prajapatya*, where a father gives his daughter to a man who promises monogamy. Another type, *rakhasa*, was practised only by the *kshatriyas* (kings and ruling class). The following recounts such a marriage.

Balaram had a close relationship with Duryodhana, the foe of the Pandavas. He was intent on giving His younger sister Subhadra to Duryodhana in marriage. Krishna did not approve but did not want to defy his elder brother's wishes. Pandava Arjuna, having heard of Subhadra's indescribable beauty from Gada, Krishna's cousin, resolved to marry her. When Arjuna was in exile he visited Krishna and inquired how he could win Subhadra. Krishna replied: "This princess is worthy of you in every way, O tiger among men, but who knows what would be her decision at a *svayamvara* [a ceremony where a princess selects her own husband]? For a hero the surest way to win a maiden is to carry her away by force. This is always the way of the powerful, and it is sanctioned by holy scripture." (*Mahabharat*, Chapter 13) Krishna then invited Arjuna to stay in Dwaraka for the remaining four months of his exile, disguised as a renunciant.

Subhadra lived in Balaram's palace and was not seen in public. Nevertheless, Balaram frequently invited ascetics and arranged for Subhadra to serve them so that she could increase her virtue. When Balaram invited Arjuna and he saw Subhadra for the first time, the princess captivated him. With her blue silk garments, gold earrings and ornaments, and long curling black hair she was as beautiful as Lakshmi. The princess caught him staring at her and she observed he did not resemble other ascetics. As he accepted the dishes she offered, she noticed his long, well-muscled arms. She could see that behind his beard the young renunciant was handsome. Balaram invited Arjuna to his palace frequently; and each time Subhadra served him, their attraction grew. The rains ended and it was

time for Arjuna to leave. Krishna then told him that there would be a festival on the Raivataka Hill. All the Yadus including Subhadra would attend.

Arjuna dispatched men to deliver his proposal to Maharaj Yudhisthira of his plan to kidnap Princess Subhadra. Yudhisthira, the Pandava king, gave his approval. Arjuna's year of exile was over and he cut his hair and resumed his normal princely appearance. He mounted a golden chariot on the pretext of going hunting. Subhadra was about to depart for Dwaraka when Arjuna forcibly placed her in his chariot and left for Indraprastha. Seeing that she was being kidnapped, Subhadra's military escort hurried to report her abduction.

Balarama was furious. However, he was pacified by Krishna: "I do not feel that Arjuna has insulted us. Indeed, My feelings are that he has enhanced our glory. Partha knows that we would not accept payment or gifts for our princess....Nor would Arjuna accept the maiden as a gift....He has therefore selected the method always favoured by powerful heroes." Thus the kidnapping of Subhadra was sanctioned and she married Arjuna in a place now called Bhadrupur (in Rajasthan). The priest performing the ceremony was given a conch shell (*shankh*) by Arjuna and an earring (*vali*) by Subhadra. The priest's village is now known as Shankhawali and exists till this day.

Nowadays you will see Subhadra Devi riding her chariot alongside her Brothers, Lord Jagannath and Lord Balaram, at Ratha-yatra festivals worldwide, blessing her devotees.

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## God and Demigods

### Hanuman, The Perfect Servant

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

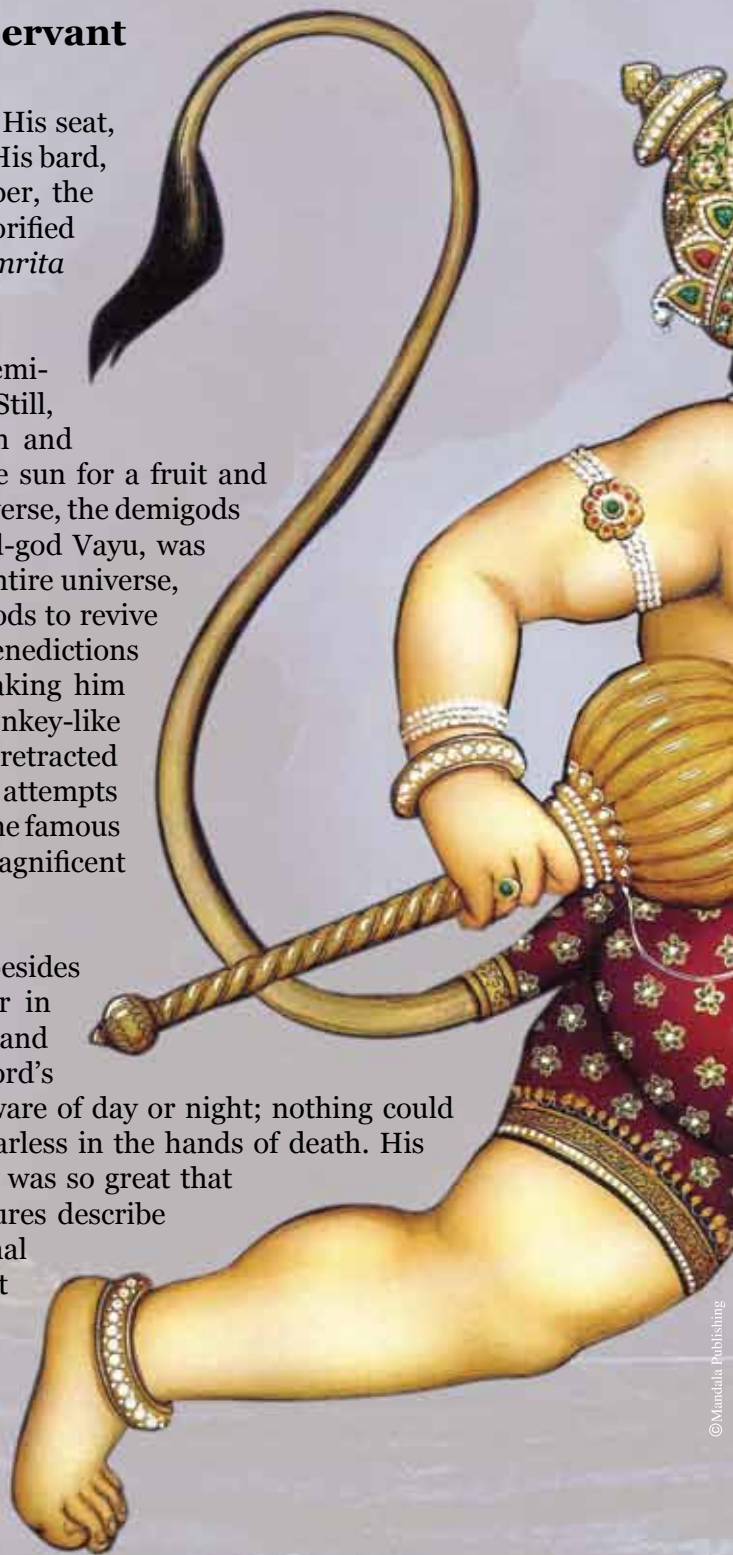
“You are the Lord’s servant, His friend, His carrier, His seat, His flag, His umbrella, His canopy, His fan. You are His bard, His adviser, His doctor, His general, His best helper, the expander of His infinite glories,” Narada Muni glorified Hanuman, the best of the Vanaras. (*Brihad Bhagavamrita* 1.24.65)

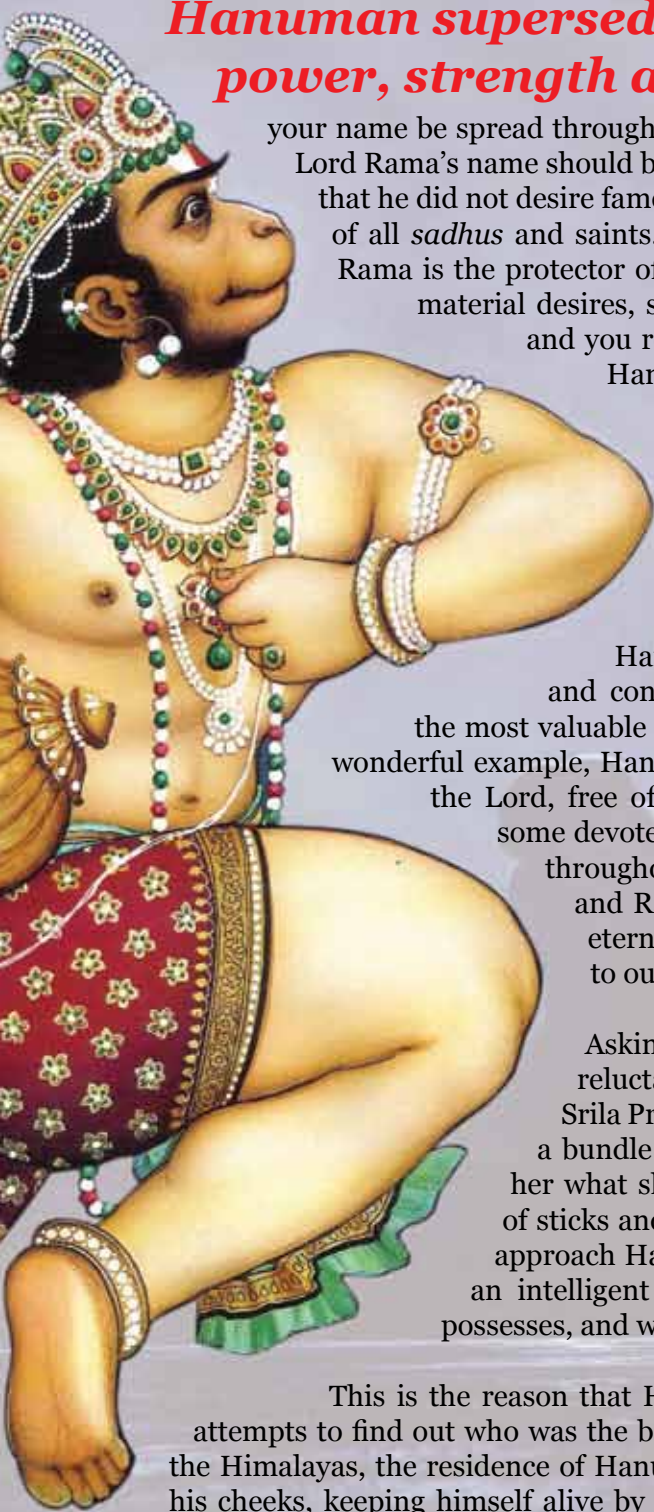
The Vanaras were half-monkey, half-human, semi-divine beings with yogic mystic perfections in full. Still, Hanuman superseded them all in power, strength and wisdom. When he was only a child, he mistook the sun for a fruit and wanted to devour it. In an attempt to protect the universe, the demigods struck Hanuman unconscious. His father, the wind-god Vayu, was greatly angered and took away the life force of the entire universe, causing it to suffocate. Thus, he induced the demigods to revive Hanuman and shower him with extraordinary benedictions of physical prowess and supernatural abilities, making him immune to old age and death. But, due to his monkey-like behaviour that disturbed the *sadhus*, the boons were retracted from him until he was reminded of them in his heroic attempts to find Sitadevi. From then onwards Hanuman became famous for his wonderful exploits, his heroic deeds and his magnificent feats of strength and bravery.

What made Hanuman stand out amongst others, besides him being the most powerful and mighty warrior in Lord Rama’s army, was his unflinching devotion and dedication to Lord Rama’s service. For the Lord’s service he didn’t feel hunger or thirst; he was unaware of day or night; nothing could deter him from the worst challenge, and he was fearless in the hands of death. His determination and undaunted spirit to serve Rama was so great that he would continually risk his life. Thus, the scriptures describe Hanuman to be the embodiment of spotless devotional service: “Maharaja Parikshit attained the highest perfection, shelter at Lord Krishna’s lotus feet, simply by hearing about Lord Vishnu. Sukadeva Gosvami attained perfection simply by reciting *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Prahlada Maharaja attained perfection by remembering the Lord. The goddess of fortune attained perfection by massaging the transcendental legs of Maha-Vishnu. Maharaja Prithu attained perfection by worshiping the Deity, and Akrura attained perfection by offering prayers unto the Lord. Vajrangaji [Hanuman] attained perfection by rendering service to Lord Ramachandra, and Arjuna attained perfection simply by being Krishna’s friend....” (*Caitanya-caritamrita*, Madhya 22.136)

Once, Hanuman watched Mother Sita applying *kumkum* to the parting of her hair and asked her the reason for this. She told him that it was for the long life and happiness of her beloved Rama. After a while, Sita saw Hanuman with his entire body covered in red *kumkum* powder. She laughed, enquiring about this behaviour and he innocently replied, “If a little *kumkum* on your head can give Rama happiness and a long life, imagine what so much of *kumkum* would do?” Such was Hanuman’s selfless desire to serve – his only pleasure was the pleasure of Lord Rama.

Another time, for Hanuman’s valour and bravery, Sitadevi awarded him her special pearl necklace. He took it in his hands and inspected each pearl, breaking it apart and biting into it. Rama and Sita were astonished. He explained that he was looking for Rama in them – how could he accept anything that was not filled with Rama’s presence?





## **Hanuman superseded them all in power, strength and wisdom.**

your name be spread throughout the three worlds.” Hanuman retorted, “Why me? My Lord Rama’s name should be famous throughout the three worlds!” Then recognizing that he did not desire fame or recognition, she said, “Then may you be the protector of all *sadhus* and saints.” Hanuman again exclaimed, “What! Me? No, my Lord Rama is the protector of every living entity.” Then seeing that Hanuman had no material desires, she said, “May Lord Rama eternally reside in your heart and you remain his servant forever.” Overjoyed with this blessing, Hanuman opened his chest revealing in his heart the beautiful forms of Sita Rama and demonstrating that every part of his being resonated with their presence.

Hanuman simply prayed, “Even though liberation destroys the bondage of material existence, I have no desire for liberation, in which I would forget that You are the master and I am Your servant.” (BB 1.4.68) Hanuman expressed his exclusive wish for the Lord’s service, and contempt for impersonal liberation because it denied him the most valuable privilege of a personal relationship with the Lord. By his wonderful example, Hanuman illustrates the mood in which we should approach the Lord, free of any kind of material desire, even liberation. Although some devotees of Hanuman may see him independent of Lord Rama, throughout the Ramayana, Hanuman is always the humble servant and Rama is always the Supreme Lord. Hanuman’s position is eternally at the lotus feet of the Lord and his role is to guide us to our constitutional position of fully surrendered servants.

Asking Hanuman for temporary material things, even if he reluctantly gives them to us, will not grant us real happiness. Srila Prabhupada gives the example of a poor old woman carrying a bundle of sticks who prays to God to help her. When God asks her what she wants, she says, “Oh Lord, please pick up the bundle of sticks and put them on my head?” Similarly, a foolish person may approach Hanuman to end his imminent source of suffering whereas an intelligent person may approach him for the greatest wealth he possesses, and which he will gladly give us – pure love for God.

This is the reason that Hanuman still resides on earth. The great sage Narada’s attempts to find out who was the best devotee of the Lord, led him to Kimpurusa Varsha in the Himalayas, the residence of Hanuman. Narada saw Hanuman with tears streaming down his cheeks, keeping himself alive by worshipping the deity of his Lord in great ecstasy. How can anyone understand his heart that is flooded with deep love, devotion and pangs of intense separation from Lord Rama?

“Since Hanuman’s life with Lord Ramachandra after the victory was so fortunate, one might ask how Hanuman could ever have left the Lord’s association. Why did he not return with Lord Rama to the eternal Ayodhya in Vaikuntha along with the other residents of the kingdom? The answer is that his Lord specifically asked him to stay behind on earth...by staying in this world Hanuman gave all its inhabitants a much better chance to take to the path of pure devotional service. Lord Ramachandra ordered Hanuman to make this severe sacrifice because the Lord wanted to bestow such mercy on the conditioned souls. Living in separation from the Lord is Hanuman’s most difficult and glorious service.” (BB 1.4.49, Commentary)

A pure compassionate devotee like Hanuman is willing to sacrifice the personal association of the Lord to deliver the souls in this material world. Just like Arjuna who knew there would be victory for him with Hanuman flying on his chariot flag, there will be victory for us when we take shelter of the Lord’s pure devotees who enlighten us on how to attain the same glorious position as a perfect servant.

## Me and My City

By Yamuna Devi Dasi

As the morning sun bathes the shimmering waters of Durban's beautiful warm beaches, I close my eyes, feel the soft sand under my feet, and embrace the cooling breeze of the Indian Ocean. Feeling the warmth of the marvellous sun piercing itself on the edge of the horizon, I hear the sound of crying seagulls signalling their greeting to the break of dawn...

Living in North Beach for more than twelve years, experience warns me that my peaceful and serene surroundings will soon be invaded by the arrival of thousands of tourists and beachgoers that flood Durban's shores over the Easter weekend. Like sardines, they flock to the Golden Mile annually, immersed in the pleasures the city has to offer.

To avoid the invasion, I quickly walk home. A few hours later my six year old daughter and I are on our way to the Marine Parade. The *Festival*

of Chariots, which has graced the shores of Durban for more than twenty years, has arrived. Docking our golden sands, this is an attraction I never miss. Standing on the sidewalk, I can clearly see the majestic chariots of Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra. As they glide through the street my heart skips a beat...the colour and magnificence leave me speechless and I feel a rush of adrenalin pulsating through my veins. Overwhelmed by their beauty and spiritual power, I am transported to another dimension where a feeling of love and bliss inundate my heart. I quickly try to grab the rope while people tug the chariots down the street. Accompanied by devotees chanting melodiously, my city and home is transformed into a spiritual abode. Beachgoers basking on the hot sand run towards the chariots hoping to get a glimpse of its wonder. I marvel at the sight of the parade. It converts the promenade into a wonderland of immense splendour and beauty.



## Mother Ganga

By Bhaktin Saras Naidoo

A pilgrimage to the Ganges has been on my wish list as it is for millions of people around the world. Once there, everything I have ever imagined went out the window and I was transported to a sacred time, space and realm that made me feel intrinsically connected to the amazing history of the descent of the Ganga to Earth.



Based on scriptural evidence and faith, King Bhagiratha, an ancestor of Lord Ramachandra, performed severe austerities and prayed for Ganga to appear and purify the Earth. From the divine waters in the spiritual realm, Ganga entered the universe and washed the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu before descending to Earth. Lord Shiva agreed to sustain the force and control the waves of the falling Ganga on his head.

In the evening my family and I walked across the Lutchman Jula (a bridge that was originally made of rope) in the company of locals and cows. The tumultuous sounds of hundreds of bells, conch shells and Vedic hymns that resonate nightly at the Ganga *arathi* ceremony create a magical and mystical atmosphere here in Rishikesh.

Known as the Daughter of the Mountain, Ganga runs a 1600 mile course from the Himalaya Mountain Glacier, Gaumukh, to the Bay of Bengal. Spotted along her majestic journey are various confluences, most famous of which is the Triveni, the site of the Kumbha Mela. Pilgrims have for millennia bathed in Ganga's sacred waters. Taking a bath anywhere along the Ganges, meditating upon, or glorifying

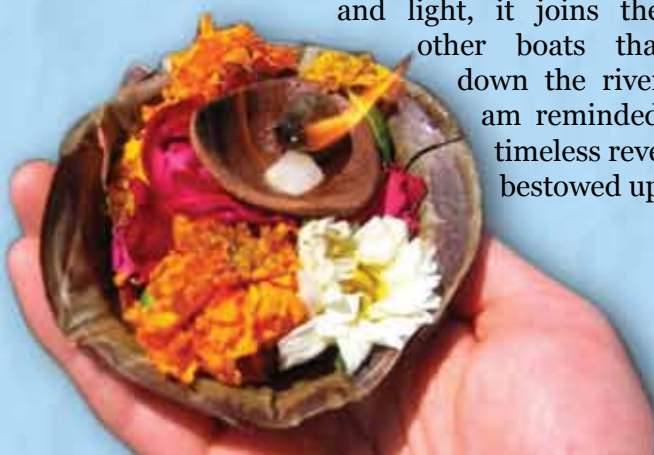
As the sun sets on Durban's golden sands, we walk to the festival site. Like in a trance I am spellbound by the sweet and vibrant chanting. My soul is touched by the devotees love for chanting Gods holy name. My daughter and I join in, tapping our feet and clapping to the accompaniment of angelic singing and rhythmic instruments. The melody is intoxicating and I resolve that I could live here forever; a resolution that certainly wouldn't occur to me at a Bollywood concert. As I glance around, North Beach resonates with spiritual vibrations. When the programme concludes I nudge my daughter indicating we have to leave. She blankly refuses and only after some convincing, she sadly agrees. On our way home, we meet a beggar at the stop street. Spotting my bead bag he raises his hands and with a huge smile chants "Hare Krishna". I guess we owe this transformation to the festival and its gift of the potency of God's holy names—a truly magnificent experience to end a memorable day.

Enthralled by its magic, getting my daughter to understand that the festival is here for four days only is as difficult a task as getting her to school on time. As she reluctantly falls asleep I lie awake thinking how this festival has truly become an integral thread in my life and the life of our diverse and rainbow city. It certainly adds a spiritual flavour that enhances Durban's glory and international recognition. Nourishing our souls, it is a luminous star on Durban's horizon and is the largest Festival of Chariots outside of India, worldwide. And for me and my city, well....that's a big deal.

her, facilitates spiritual life, purity and liberation. However, Srila Prabhupada explained that if one continues with sinful activities after bathing in the Ganga, it is like the bathing of an elephant—immediately after bathing, the elephant rolls in sand and throws dust on its body.

As an embodiment of mercy, Ganga accepts the most humble offering of love—her own water back to her. The divine nature of the Ganga's origin allows her to remain uncontaminated. Sri Krishna says, "Of purifiers I am the wind, of the wielders of weapons I am Rama, of fishes I am the shark and of flowing rivers, I am the Ganges." (Bg. 10.31)

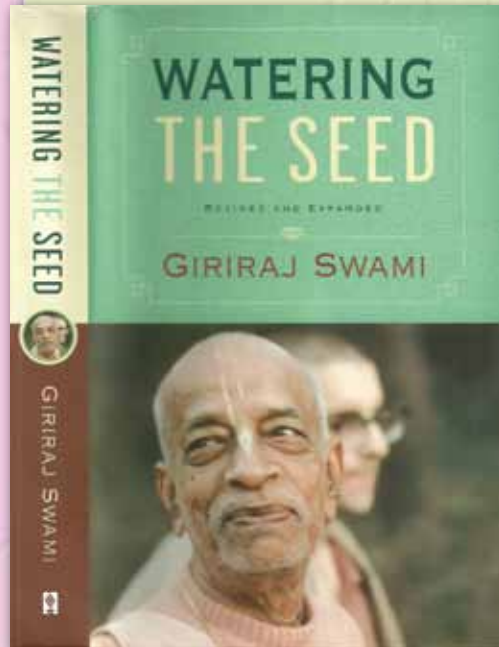
As we offer a leaf boat filled with flowers, incense and light, it joins the many other boats that float down the river and I am reminded of the timeless reverence bestowed upon her.



## Book Review Watering the Seed

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

"When a person receives the seed of devotional service, he should take care of it by becoming a gardener and sowing the seed in the heart. If he waters the seed gradually by the process of hearing and chanting, the seed will begin to sprout." (Cc Madhya 19.152)



In his book, *Watering the Seed*, Giriraj Swami describes how the seed of devotional service was planted in his heart by his beloved spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada. By sharing his exchanges and loving dealings with Srila Prabhupada, he explains how once he received

the seed of devotion to Krishna, he had to water it by the process of hearing and chanting about Krishna.

*Watering the Seed* is filled with sweet memories, anecdotes and wonderful accounts of Giriraj Swami's deep relationship with his spiritual master. His lectures in the book are also imbued with profound realizations and advice about the process of *bhakti*, thus enlightening us on how to water and cultivate our own devotional seed.

This new revised and expanded edition includes additional chapters from Giriraj Swami's talks about Srila Prabhupada and the holy name. His words of wisdom and deep insight serve to inspire and nurture our own *bhakti* seed. Consequently, by relishing the glories of Srila Prabhupada and Krishna through the eyes and heart of Giriraj Swami, our small seed of devotion will sprout and grow into a strong fragrant creeper.

I have had the good fortune to assist in the proofreading of *Watering the Seed* and I can attest that even after scrutinizing the text several times, the content is ever-fresh and uplifting, strengthening our faith and commitment to the process of Krishna consciousness.

"Giriraj Swami kindly shares his realizations with the honesty, wisdom and humility for which he is known and loved." (*Watering the Seed*, Foreword by Radhanath Swami)

## Animals Who Love God

By Bhaktin Kribashne Naidoo

My four year old daughter and I enjoy delightful discussions on the *Ramayana* but more especially on the many animals that served Lord Ramachandra. She eagerly speaks about the wonderful animals with endless fascination. Those animals were not mere creatures but were powerful; possessing intelligence and having studied scripture gained unimaginable strength and knowledge, and were eager to serve Lord Rama.

### *When a squirrel came forward to assist, the bigger animals laughed at him.*

When the lustful Ravana planned his trickery to capture Sita, Maricha transformed himself into a magical deer whose head was partly white and black, with horns like bright sapphires, with a perfect body and glossy black gem-like hoofs. While Ravana's chariot rose to the sky, Jatayu, the king of vultures, infuriated by what he witnessed, challenged Ravana with his sharp talons. A battle ensued and Jatayu broke Ravana's bow and chariot. Ravana still tormented Jatayu, and eventually cut off his wings. On their search for Sita, Rama and Lakshman came across the injured Jayatu who spoke his last words in praise of Rama. Rama declared that souls who practice piety and virtue are also found in the lower species. Due to the selflessness of this devotee, the Lord mourned his death and performed Jatayu's last rites. This reciprocal relationship is explained in *Bhagavad-gita* (4.11): "As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly."

At the peak of the Rishyamukha Hill Rama sought help from Sugriva, the king of the Vanaras. Sugriva had thousands of monkeys under his guidance. Monkeys and bears shouted, shrieked, thundered and pledged to destroy Ravana as they dispersed in all four directions with great faith and sincerity. The search for Sita began in earnest and the powerful Vanaras were mighty and heroic like tigers, possessing special qualities to move through land, water and air.

Further on their search, the monkeys met Sampati (Jatayu's brother) who was unable to fly as his wings were burnt by the sun. Although Sampati's wings were impaired, he was completely absorbed in service to Rama by offering his sight in search for Sita. As Sampati spoke of his love for Rama, he grew new wings and was able to fully participate in the search.

Headed by Nala, the great architect, the monkeys began building a bridge to Lanka. Varuna (the sea-god) pledged his service to Rama by assuring that no sea creature will attack the troupe in the process. When a squirrel came forward to assist, the bigger animals laughed at him. Disheartened, he approached Rama who consoled him.

At the beginning of the war, Lakshman and Rama were attacked by serpents. Garuda, Vishnu's great eagle carrier, appeared and bowed before Rama. Simply by his presence the serpents fled. When Lakshman was injured during the final battle, Jambavan the old king of the bears, instructed Hanuman to fly to Mount Kailash and bring back the healing *sanjivini* herb.

The stories of the animals in the *Ramayana* are not only for children. One cannot overlook the importance of the dedication and devotion these animals possess in serving Lord Rama, their meditation and desire to re-establish a relationship with the Supreme Lord by unconditionally serving Him in their capacity. The many animals found in the *Ramayana*: horses, bears, monkeys, buffalos, birds and deer, do not only provide spiritual and moral wisdom but also an understanding of the souls eternal position.



## Vedic Observer The Road Less Travelled

By Indulekha Sakhi Dasi

There are some things in life that are certain. It is certain that your husband will find and devour the last piece of chocolate cake that you hid behind the fruit bowl. It is certain that your son will wake you at 2.00 am to tell you that he needs his P.E shorts for a cricket game in the morning (you only bought one pair) and would you please wash it now. At 2.15am as you attempt to dry the shorts with a hairdryer (you don't own a tumble dryer because it's damaging to the environment) it is fairly certain that you will grumpily crave said chocolate cake and find it missing. While you bemoan the unfairness of the universe it is certain you will resolve to find a new hiding place for all confectionary. It is quite certain that this will make no difference because in his last life your husband was obviously some sort of super sleuth who can now find anything except his car keys. It's a vicious cycle.

The most certain thing in life though, is that should you accidentally stumble upon the news as you flip channels you will find some political leader making remarks so inane, so utterly absurd that it forces you to watch in morbid fascination. As you watch you wonder what heinous crimes you (and the rest of the world) committed in your past life to have these politicians inflicted upon you. You then realise that an absence of chocolate cake is the least of your worries.

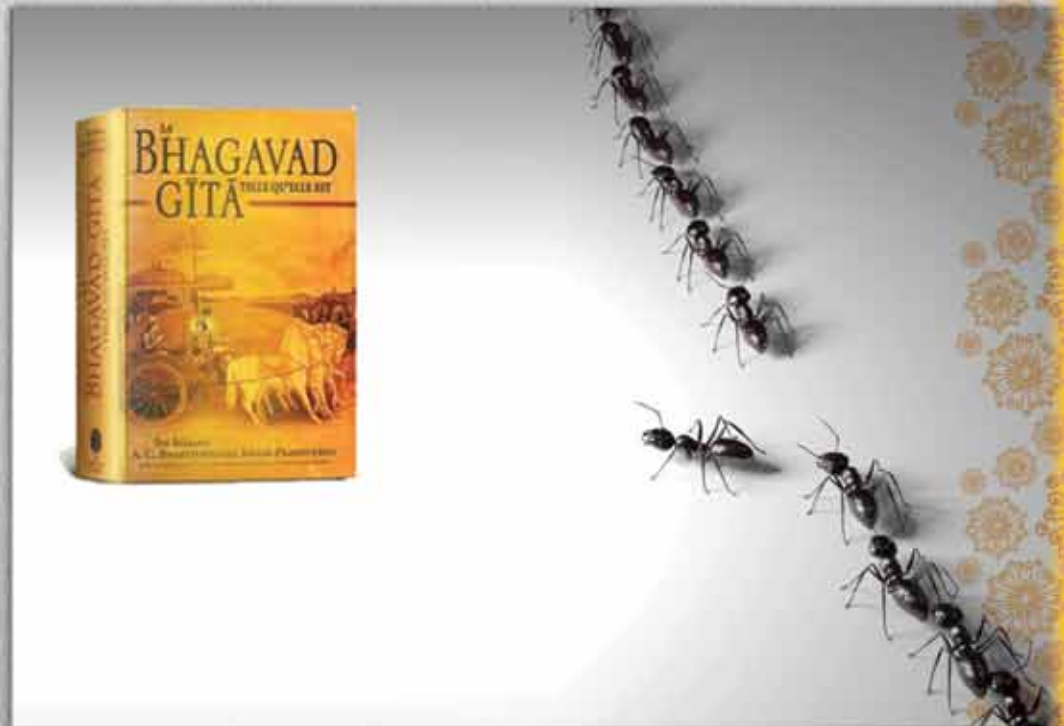
More importantly there exists, in our global village, a distinct lack of suitable leadership. In

***Some political leader making remarks so inane, so utterly absurd that it forces you to watch in morbid fascination.***

the other *yugas* there were exemplary leaders such as Lord Rama, Maharaja Parikshit and King Prithu. Kali-yuga has given us (and it's hard to feign any surprise here)...nothing. Okay I embellish, there have been a few selfless leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela who worked altruistically for real change but these leaders are an archaeological rarity. Perhaps then, the past is where answers lie. Despite being amongst

the oldest treatise on leadership known to man, the *Mahabharat's* teachings have endured and still have relevance. In there, Maharaja Yudhishtira enquires from grandfather Bhishma regarding how a ruler should behave. Bhishma answers: "Righteousness is the watchword of a ruler....A righteous ruler can easily conquer the entire world....Malice should have no place in the heart of a ruler. His senses should be perfectly under control. He should use his intelligence and he will then be glorious..."

*Aha. Edison light bulb moment.* Intelligence, it seems, is a prerequisite of a good leader. Pity, since most leaders seem to display a copious lack thereof. Increasingly in this age of Kali-yuga, and more importantly, world rulers fail to lead appropriately because they are unable to control their own minds and senses. If the ruler is not able to direct his senses, then the citizens suffer the consequences of a leader who is too easily swayed. Resultantly, the



government itself becomes the den of corruption, dishonesty and thievery. Bhishma also mentions righteousness. The dictionary definition is: acting in accord with divine or moral law, free from guilt or sin. It would be a task of Herculean proportion to find rulers who encompass this word yet Bhishma specifically states that one who possesses this quality could rule the entire world.

How then will rulers, who truly lead, arise? Bhakti Tirtha Swami tells us that as the peoples' collective consciousness becomes elevated, they will naturally produce more elevated leaders from amongst them. The first step, as always, comes from within. Robert Frost speaks, in his 1920 poem, about the road less travelled. Should leaders discover this road in the ancient Vedic texts then, I say, take it. Oh, and get better speech writers.



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## SPOT 10 DIFFERENCES



### Bring the Yamuna River Back to Vrindavan

Currently 100% of the water from the Yamuna is blocked above Delhi and this water is diverted for industries and irrigation. Below the dams above Delhi there is simply a dry river bed. The water that we presently find in the Yamuna River bed is runoff from the Delhi sewerage system, and from the streets of Delhi and the towns above Vrindavan.

To read more go to [www.saveyamuna.org](http://www.saveyamuna.org)

## Vaishnava Kitchen Dill and Potato Biscuits

Submitted by Candrasekhara Baichan

These herby biscuits are among the types of biscuits I enjoy. The potatoes in them make them not only delicious but also hearty. You can make it as thin as possible or medium thickness. The thinner they are, the crispier they get. The thick puffed ones are softer.

### Ingredients

2 cups self-rising flour  
3 tbsp butter, softened  
pinch of salt  
1 tbsp finely chopped fresh dill  
1 cup mashed potatoes (I steamed about 2 potatoes and mashed them)  
2-3 tbsp milk, as required

### Method

Preheat oven to 230°C.  
Sift the flour in a bowl.  
Add the butter, salt and dill.  
Stir until combined.  
Mix in the mashed potatoes and enough milk to make a soft, pliable dough.  
Roll dough on a well floured surface until fairly thin.  
Cut into rounds using a cutter.  
Repeat until all the dough is used.  
Place biscuits on a greased baking sheet.  
Bake for 20-25 minutes or until risen and golden.  
Makes about 25.



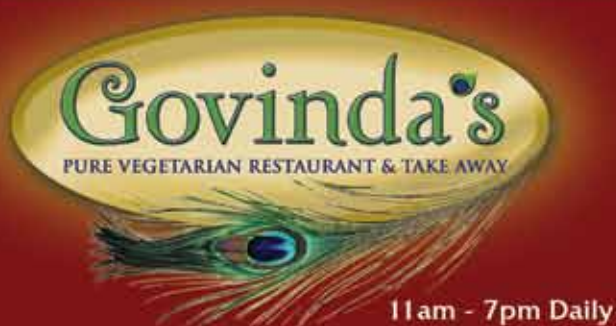
## Notice Board

- Ombudsman Balaram Das PSDG can be contacted on 0828770753 or balaram@absamail.co.za
- His Grace Harihar Das, a disciple of HH Krishna Das Swami passed away on Monday, 6 February 2012. The Vaishnava community miss him and offer our deepest condolences to his family.
- If you would like to receive SMS or e-mail notifications about various happenings and updates, e-mail us at: kzn@pamho.net
- For general queries call the temple at 031-4033328 between 9.30am-5pm.

## Vaishnava Calendar

1 April 2012	Rama Navami • Fast till sunset
3 April 2012	Ekadasi
4 April 2012	Break fast time: 06:08-06:49
6-9 April 2012	Durban Festival of Chariots
14 April 2012	Tulasi Jala Dan begins
16 April 2012	Ekadasi
17 April 2012	Break fast time: 07:52-10:02
21 April 2012	Appearance of Sri Gadadhara Pundit
24 April 2012	Chandana Yatra begins
30 April 2012	Appearance of Srimati Sita Devi and Srimati Jahnava Devi
2 May 2012	Ekadasi
3 May 2012	Break fast time: 06:26-10:03
4 May 2012	Disappearance of Jayananda Prabhu
5 May 2012	Appearance Day of Lord Nrsimhadeva • Fast till dusk
6 May 2012	Appearance of Srinivas Acharya
14 May 2012	Tulasi Jala Dan ends
16 May 2012	Ekadasi
17 May 2012	Break fast time: 06:34-10:06
31 May 2012	Ganga Puja

**Note:** Fast from all grain, beans and legumes on Ekadasis.





# Festival of Chariots

6-9 April • 12pm - 10pm  
Old Durban Drive In

Highlighting Lord Rama's  
Pastimes and Leadership

Music Store  
Youth Lounge  
Cow Protection  
Soul Discussions  
Devotional Movies  
Bhajans • Gift Shop  
Bathing of Lord Rama  
Lord Jagannath Mandir  
Free Food • Food Court  
International Performers  
Ancient Wisdom Book Shop  
Traditional and Fusion Dance  
World Class Live Entertainment  
Blue Mountain Children's Theme Park

Chariot Processions  
Friday, 6th April • 1:30pm

(starts at South Beach)

Monday, 9th April • 5pm

(starts at Festival Site)

**FIREWORKS**

Saturday Night



The Witness



The Drama of the Walking Deity  
Saturday, 7th April • 7pm

Free transport from Chatsworth and surrounding areas to and from the festival at specific times.

For more information: 031 4033328 or [durban.rathayatra@pamho.net](mailto:durban.rathayatra@pamho.net)

Visit [www.festivalofchariots.blogspot.com](http://www.festivalofchariots.blogspot.com) for regular updates and detailed programme