



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

# HARE KRISHNA NEWS

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2012

**Spring Fest**

**The Blue Boy's Planet**

**The Karma Arrow**

**Shri Shri Radha Radhanath Temple  
Anniversary Celebration  
20 - 21 October**



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## Please Help Me Pass

### Editor's Note

I remember scurrying across the winding passage to the temple room in full recall of a night's cramming session. Worshipping the Lord before an examination puts me at ease. In my matric year the internet did not exist, which implied no Google to answer difficult questions, or access to electronic copies of past exam papers. All we had was the single text book kindly provided by the then apartheid government.

I offered my obeisances whilst reciting the normal prayers and then added my own prayer—born of deep desperation: "Oh my dear Lord, please help me pass this paper. I've studied so hard and chanted some rounds, so please have mercy on me." I sounded like a criminal on death row bargaining for my life. This prayer generally would continue on the 2.5km walk to school followed by the silent singing of Nrsimhadev prayers as the teachers handed out question papers.

In my childhood I was more devotional during examinations. "God helps those who help themselves," was my motto. As I grew older I realised that life is uncertain, except for the cultivation of deep devotion within our hearts. Lord Krishna says in *Bhagavad Gita* 9.22, "But those who worship Me with devotion, meditating on My transcendental form—to them I carry what they lack and preserve what they have." I believe that "devotion" in this verse implies worshipping the Lord constantly and unconditionally. I once heard that for every step you take towards the Lord, He takes ten steps towards you. So start walking.

To all the matriculants out there, remember to perform your spiritual activities with great devotion in a meditative and surrendered mood. Do your part, study well and make chanting of the holy name a daily priority. Everything else will fall into place as Krishna desires.

Happy Studying!

*Haripriya Devi Dasi*



Quoted verse translations and excerpts from purports to *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, *Shrila Prabhupada Lilamrita*, *Topmost Yoga System* and *Science of Self Realization* by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and his disciples, and photograph on page 10 are Copyright © The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, Inc. [www.Krishna.com](http://www.Krishna.com). Used with permission.

## Misdirected Compassion

By Swarup Damodar Das

Before being introduced to the clarity of Shrila Prabhupada's teachings of the *Bhagavad-gita*, I often wondered about the reasons for the increasing suffering in the world. There were so many charitable, philanthropic, medical and other relief organisations trying to service the needs of humanity, yet suffering still exists. Actually suffering is on the rise. The presence of a new hospital, it is surveyed, does not reduce the rate of disease contraction and mortality in that area; after feeding a starving person at a soup

kitchen, the next day he becomes hungry again...and so on, filling a long list exposing the illusion of how the well-intentioned misdirect their efforts in serving humanity.

Shrila Prabhupada writes, "Everyone in the material world is engaged in all kinds of political, philanthropic and humanitarian activities to make material life happy and prosperous, but this is not possible. One should understand that in the material world, however one may try to make adjustments, he cannot be happy. To cite an example I have given many times, if you take a fish out of water, you can give it a very comfortable velvet bedstead, but still the fish cannot be happy; it will die." (*Topmost Yoga System*, Chapter 3)

What then would be the best way to serve the needs of humanity? To make humanity truly happy?

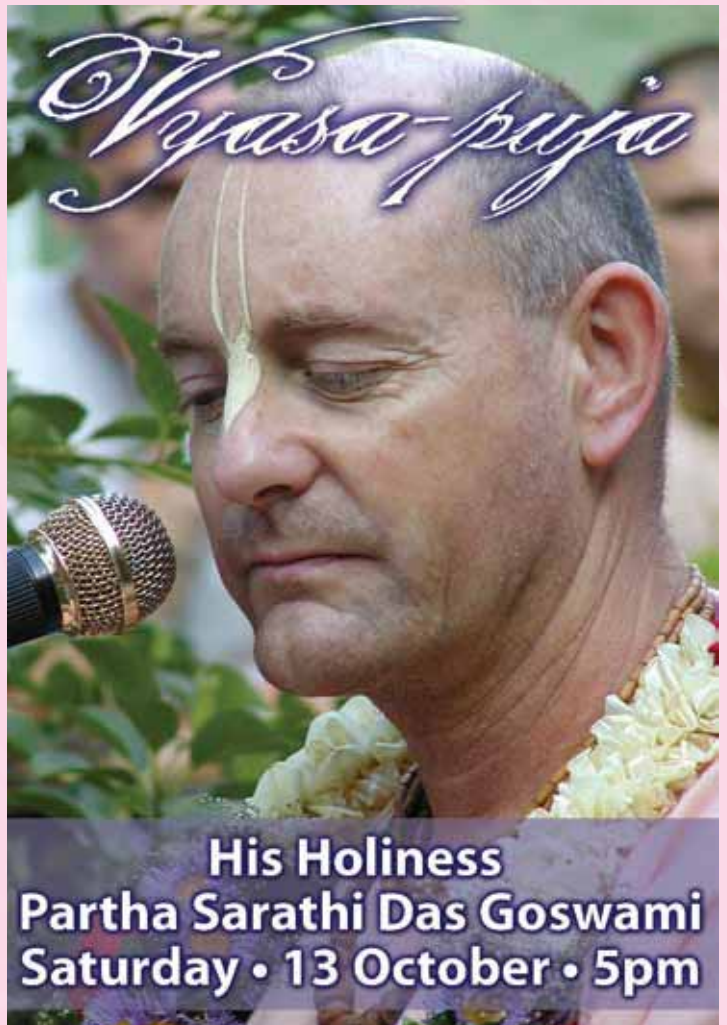
Shrila Prabhupada continues, "Because the fish is an animal of the water, it cannot be happy without water. Similarly, we are all spirit soul; unless we are in spiritual life or in the spiritual world, we cannot be happy. That is our position."

The basis of all suffering as revealed in the scriptures reveal is the living entities' forgetfulness of their eternal relationship with God, Krishna. Krishna is the reservoir of all pleasure and happiness, and by our connection with Lord Krishna we access that reservoir and experience unceasing joy. However, on forgetting Krishna, the living entity frantically searches out happiness in the form of wealth,

relationships with the opposite gender, beauty, fame, good health, and strength, etc., all of which decay with time or is ultimately and unceremoniously hijacked by death.

So, to assist humanity genuinely become freed from all forms of suffering, and not temporarily, the best welfare one can do is to reawaken everyone's lost relationship with God, and to engage them in that relationship by means of service, or *bhakti-yoga*. This is *para-upakara*, the best welfare work. All other

charitable attempts, no matter how well-intentioned and noble they may be are simply ignorant means to decorate a fish with comforts other than water, i.e. misdirected compassion.





## Past Spiritual Teacher Great-Minded One

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

Shrila Narottam Das Thakur remains one of the most exalted personalities in Vaishnava culture. Born to King Krishnanada Datta and Narayani Devi, Narottam appeared 45 years after Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Lord Krishna's incarnation who taught the simple and sublime method of developing love for God by chanting the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*.

As a young boy Narottam spent many years in Vrindavana under the shelter of Shrila Jiva Goswami and was awarded the honourific title Narottam Das Thakur Mahasaya (great-minded one). Narottam formed a part of the initial travelling preaching group by taking the original writings of Shrila Jiva Goswami to Bengal.

When Narottam went to Jagannath Puri, he had a vision. In his vision Lord Chaitanya embraced him and said, "Through you, I will develop a new type of *kirtan* that will mesmerize the entire universe. Through your *kirtan* I will reveal My mission, explain My message, and detail My intimate pastimes." It is described that Narottam sang and danced so breathtakingly that even the Gandharvas (heavenly musicians) were put to shame. When Narottam awoke, he found himself inside Lord Jagannath's temple. Moving forward to receive Lord Jagannath's blessing, a garland fell around Narottam's neck. In amazement, Narottam stumbled out of the temple and realised his mission on earth. Feeling blessed his life became transformed.

Taking Lord Chaitanya's instruction to heart; Narottam spent many years travelling and teaching. He had several encounters with philosophers, leaders and kings who challenged him. His eloquence, deep understanding of scripture and ability to defeat his opponents in a short space of time bear testament to his illustrious title. Narottam's life was filled with loving exchanges and his many pastimes are a reflection of his great personality.

Today, we most significantly honour Narottam Das Thakur as his songs form part of our daily devotion. *Prarthana* and *Prema-bhakti-chandrika* are his famous collections of poems. Shrila Prabhupada said about his poetry, "The prayers of Narottam Das Thakur ... is directly from the spiritual platform. And there is no need of understanding the language. It is just like a thunder burst. Everyone can hear the sound of thunder—there is no misunderstanding. Similarly, these songs are above the material platform, and they crack like thunder within your heart." (*Shrila Prabhupada Lilamrita*, Vol 1-2). The disappearance day of the Narottam Das Thakur Mahasaya is observed on 4 November 2012.

## Shrila Prabhupada Loving the Acharya

By Rukmini Devi Dasi

Love. Writers spend hours describing it. Singers emotionally evoke it. Love can inspire but is clichéd and self-centred and usually succumbs to the wrath of time. Yet, a glimpse into Shrila Prabhupada's life will leave one mesmerised at the sheer power of one man's pure love. He created a paradigm shift in global consciousness. Yet, he is also the tender-hearted spiritual father of every follower. The echo of his love belies time. Followers honour Shrila Prabhupada by celebrating the Vyasa-puja.



Devotees who fasted and served until the Janmastami midnight *arathi*, entered the kitchen without batting an eyelid. The preparation for Shrila Prabhupada's Vyasa-puja resumed with gusto. By *mangal-arathi* the gas fires had been long burning and the temple décor had magically transformed. Watching the devotees leap into the air with spirited vigour, to a recording of Shrila Prabhupada singing, made me feel the depth of their gratitude.

The deity of Shrila Prabhupada sat regally on a blooming white-lotus throne. Lord Chaitanya likens the white night-blooming lotus to the holy name that is particularly merciful in this dark age of Kali. Flanking Shrila Prabhupada were decorative white swans. A reminder of his urgent plea to become swan-like—only attracted by the crystal clear waters of the Gita. The water cascade behind him was an appropriate setting for such a devotional giant. He turned his back against Maya's downpour and spread the holy names everywhere.

Devotees expressed their love in the form of fragrant flowers and sincere sentiments. Shrila Prabhupada was offered a royal bathing ceremony and hundreds of delicious edibles. Bhakti Charu Swami wrote to Shrila Prabhupada, "You explained to me that the first and foremost responsibility of a leader is to take care of his followers...You take care of them and they will do anything for you." To this day the dedication of such followers and their followers remain a striking testimony of the eternality of Shrila Prabhupada's love.

## Spring Fest

By Rukmini Devi Dasi

With a burst of vibrant colour, the Bhakti Yoga Spring Fest 2012 was a definite sensation at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. This annual five-part fanfare marks the grand finale of the BYS programmes for the year.

The festivities kicked-off with special guest, Mercedes Benz Risk Manager, Naren Pema (aka Nrsinghananda Das). He spoke about "Bliss at Every Moment," aptly titled for the week's events. On day two, the campus lawns were a chilled spot for an outdoor exhibition of art and culture, vegetarian cuisine and the different yoga systems. Students stopped to peruse the display and hear the rhythmic chanting. Word of the Bhakti Yoga free lunch hour spread like wild fire across the campus, and five hundred lucky students were treated to a hot meal.

The much anticipated highlight of the festival was, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the Bhakti Yoga Parade. Gorgeously clad in colourful *saris*, *gopi* dots and waving flamboyant ribbons, the "bhakti yoga" girls danced along the campus pathways in style. They were closely followed by the boys with mantra boards and spring fest posters together with a saffron wave of devotees leading pulsating chanting. Others flanked the procession, distributing books, pamphlets and melt-in-the-mouth Simply Wonderfals. With helium balloons tied to their wrists, waists or even *sikas* (the tuft of hair on a male devotees' shaved head), everyone certainly had a "spring" in their step. The parade culminated in front of The Great Hall, the

venue of Shrila Prabhupada's two-day lecture, thirty-seven years ago. At the sound of the conch, amidst loud cheers of *Haribol*, the balloons were let loose.

Within an hour, the team transformed an ordinary lecture theatre into a spring forest with decorative vines, parrots and coloured drapes. Soft lampshades hung from the ceiling creating a special ambiance for the final programme, "An Evening of Kirtan". For two hours students were absorbed in the holy name and danced in wild ecstasy. It was wonderful to see familiar faces from the parade and the exhibition. The room was teeming with a kaleidoscope of smiles, marking the birth of a genuine spiritual experience.

Hats off to the Wits BYS team, may they be blessed with many such successes.



## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I attended the Women's Day event at the temple and heard you speak about raising children. My question is: with life being so hectic and kids being so demanding, how do you make time for God? In today's world kids just don't listen to what we do.

Godly Mom

Dear Godly Mom,

Women have been blessed with the natural ability to multi-task. We need to find those tasks that can be combined with spiritual activities. I personally find that driving is an excellent time to listen to a talk about devotion or a soothing bhajan. Cooking is another one of those household chores that can be combined with listening. This also contributes to the spiritual vibe in the home. If the family complains, then use headphones, so at least, you will get to hear. Cooking and listening to a spiritual class also adds good spiritual consciousness to food. Serving prasad is an excellent way to influence the family.

With regards to children not listening; they will be more accepting if you explain the significance of the spiritual activity. Even if they initially do it with the sole benefit of doing well at school, they will eventually take a natural liking towards it. This happens because spiritual activity, if performed consistently, will create taste to do it. Failing everything, get them to do at least one spiritual activity daily, like chanting one round of Hare Krishna, which takes roughly seven minutes. This can be done whilst they are being driven to school in the mornings. This worked well with my daughters. After many years of training, now it is a natural inclination for them to reach for their japa beads when we get into the car. I hope this is useful and you are able to include something into your daily life.

Haripriya Devi Dasi

### Letters to the Editor

If you would like to share your temple experience, spiritual or service related realisations then write to Haripriya Devi Dasi: [haripriya@nitai.co.za](mailto:haripriya@nitai.co.za) or Rasa-sthali Dasi: [rasasthali@nitai.co.za](mailto:rasasthali@nitai.co.za)



## Tis the Season...

By Venu Gopal Das

Saints and prophets across all faiths mention how everyday is celebrated as a festival in the spiritual kingdom. In accordance to this, those aspiring to go there should embrace all festivals we experience here, as to become accustomed to such a lifestyle. The months of October/November coincide with the



favourable Vedic month of Kartik, ideally suited for celebration. A simple Google search turns out more than thirty auspicious days dedicated to the Devatas (demigods). I decided to look further and noticed that for all faiths this period is special; Catholic, Islamic and Judaic festivals, are all present. There are numerous glorifications of the month of Kartik found in Vedic scripture:

“The month of Kartik is the topmost of all other months. It is the most meritorious and purified of all other months.” (*Hari-bhakti-vilasa* 16.36)

“If, even for a short time, somebody burns a lamp in the temple of Lord Shri Hari during Kartik, then whatever sins he has acquired for millions of *kalpas* (one *kalpa* equals 1000 *yugas*) are all destroyed.” (*Hari-bhakti-vilasa* 16.99)

Kartik is also the month in which Shri Krishna performed many of His most memorable activities. The popular picture of Mother Yashoda chasing four-year old Krishna, and fastening him to a grinding mortar, is an illustration of the Damodar-lila, which occurred during Kartik. To honour this special event the devotees of Lord Krishna offer *ghee* lamps everyday at our temples, whilst chanting the profound Damodarastakam prayers recorded by Veda Vyasadeva in the Padma Purana. It describes the philosophy behind Shri Krishna's humanlike actions and relationships. If you cannot come to the temple the same benefit

will be obtained from offering lamps at your home to a picture of Shri Krishna.

When Shri Krishna was seven years old, three years later on the day after the Damodar-lila, he initiated the worship of Govardhan Hill, a mountain that is located near Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India. In His youth, Bhagavan Shri Krishna lived in the village of Vrindavan, where the primary livelihood of the people were agriculture and rearing cows. Their productivity relied heavily on scheduled rainfall. To please the *devata* who is in charge of rain, Shri Indra, the residents of Vrindavan prepared huge food offerings made from the choicest ingredients. Shri Krishna argued with his father saying that even in the middle of the oceans, where no worship to Shri Indra occurs, it still rains...He stressed on the point that the *devatas* are still under the authority of the supreme Bhagavan. They are duty bound and none of their actions materialize without the consent of the Supreme Lord.

In this way, Shri Krishna managed to convince the residents of Vrindavan to offer their food preparations to the local *brahmins* instead. He also suggested that Govardhan Hill be honoured, as the hill provided grass, water and shelter for the cows. When the residents placed their offerings before Govardhan Hill, they were astonished to see the personification of Govardhan Hill accept their offerings. This personality appeared to be Shri Krishna Himself. Therefore, followers of Shri Krishna consider Govardhan Hill non-different from Him, thus worshipping in the form of Govardhan *shilas* (stones taken from Govardhan Hill). Till today, the worship of Govardhan *shilas* has been steadily increasing across the globe, including on the altars of our Hare Krishna temples.

Another hugely anticipated festival in Kartik is Diwali, the festival of lights. I remember as a child, looking forward to meeting all my relatives, burning





fireworks, putting our mothers in complete anxiety and eating all the sweets our tummies could handle. I attended a public school whose population was largely Indian and I recall Diwali was a school holiday. As kids, never had we thought a spiritual festival would be so exhilarating. Offering lamps, preparing *prasad*, listening to the stories of Rama and Hanuman...everyone had their favourites. These days however, a lot has changed. No holiday and we see relatives if Diwali falls on a weekend. Most of the fireworks worth burning are banned, the sweets have less sugar and the biscuits have gotten smaller (or maybe I've gotten bigger). Then I remember the essence of Diwali. Lamps were lit to celebrate the arrival of Lord Rama to Ayodhya, and proverbially, inviting God back into our lives. As much as I love everything mentioned above, I realize, what I miss the most is the spiritual aspect of the festival of lights. In recent years, the light of Diwali has been concealed by flashy "India festivals" and "Bollywood shows", social distortions and complaints in the paper about the use and abuse of fireworks. Why not celebrate this festival in the mood of Kartik, with depth and profound appreciation. Instead of giving our consciousness to negative or non-spiritual endeavours, let us try and be festive in a way that is satisfying to the soul and the Supreme Lord. If you cannot attend a prayer service, or go to any temple, find some spiritual literature to peruse. Offer lamps at home and listen to devotional music, do anything to invite the Lord back into your home.

Last but definitely not least, we have a festival to "butter us up" and set us in the mood for Kartik: Radhastami or the appearance day of Shrimati Radharani. Shrimati Radharani is the feminine counterpart of the Lord. Radharani is the internal potency of Shri Krishna. According to Vedic scholars, one cannot separate the energy from the energetic (the source), just as it is impossible to remove heat from fire...

The name Radha derives from the word *aradhana*, which means supreme worship, imply that she is the foremost worshiper of Shri Krishna. Radharani has many other names according to her qualities and characteristics. Some of the names that she is known by include Govinda-mohini—she who mystifies Govinda; Govinda-sarvasa—the all-in-all of Lord Govinda; Shiromani Sarva-kanta—the crown jewel of all the lord's consorts; and Krishnamayi—the one who sees Krishna both within and without. From this we derive that her character is never devoid of Krishna...

The devotees of Shri Krishna know that He can be influenced through Radharani. They know that Radha can take one to Krishna. She is also the compassionate nature of the Lord, and thus more easily approached than Lord Krishna. According to the *Kartik Mahatmiya*, She is also known as Kartik-devi, and is the presiding personality in the month of Kartik. We can take advantage of all the spiritual benefits offered in the month of Kartik, coupled with the empathy of Shrimati Radharani and increase our worship in whatever little way we can. Let's ride the wave, a blessing that's not in disguise and find our feet on a path to a happier life...one where we don't walk alone but with God at our side...

Visit [www.iskcondurban.net](http://www.iskcondurban.net) to download an audio of the Damodarastaka Prayers.





## Tea Party with Krishna

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

An excited group of women  
In beautiful Eastern dress  
Gathered at the temple door  
For a morning of spiritual happiness

What I was about to experience  
Would impact my life so great  
"Women's Day" with Krishna's devotees  
What better way to celebrate

The sound of Krishna's holy name  
Created a magical scene  
Unaware of the dust it was removing  
In making the heart more clean

Women's faces aglow  
It was their special day  
But what is the big fuss  
The men may want to say

Shrila Prabhupada, our teacher  
Respected all women as mothers  
Their soft hearts and service mood  
Endears them to others

Shri Krishna, the Supreme Lord  
Is the only enjoyer, the original male  
In His eyes and as His servants  
Spiritually we are all female

Hearing the panel of ladies  
Speak in a profound way  
Made me appreciate their abilities  
And what they had to say

Spiritual topics discussed  
In a most interesting format  
About Vedic women of yore  
And how they faced combat

Integrating work with devotion  
Parenting and relationship skills  
Discussed from different angles  
Good health and how it fulfils

But it was not just all talk  
Fun and games, prizes won  
A fashion show extravaganza  
Depicting Vedic dress, well done

Delectable eats, social exchanges  
I did not enjoy as much  
As the loving mood, a changed heart  
A sign of Krishna's magic touch

Next time a tea-party with Krishna  
I'll be sure not to miss  
In the company of the Lord and His devotees  
Is a gift of spiritual bliss

## The Karma Arrow

By Ramvijay Das

Often people who have some understanding about the law of karma ask: "Can performing good actions cancel out the bad reactions that are coming to me?" or "Can I change my karma?"

Performing pious activity does not remove due negative karma; rather, pious activity will bring us positive reactions in the future. Similarly, performing impious activity will bring us negative reactions in the future.

We can decide whether to act or not. But, once performed, that due reaction will be experienced in the course of time. It is like shooting an arrow. Once the arrow is released, there is no way to change its course. However, prior to shooting it, we can change the speed and direction of the arrow, or even decide not to shoot. This is exactly how karmic reactions function. The same can be said of somebody wanting to jump off a building. The only time to affect the outcome is before the jump. Once they jump, having a change of heart while falling, will not help.

The process of atonement (*prayaschitta*), described in scripture, gives us some room to affect *karmic* reactions. There are specific recommendations in Vedic literature which do offer some room to minimise or even nullify specific sinful reactions. These processes, however, are not easy to perform and require proper guidance. The process of atonement, though, is not the answer. It does not cleanse the heart of the tendency or desire to commit sinful activity and therefore, it is not recommended. Without clearing these tendencies, even if we are successful in affecting some of the reactions coming our way, we are bound to commit more sinful activity, which again result in reactions to those activities.

The best activity is therefore to engage in *akarma*, or devotional service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By bringing us in contact with the Supreme Lord, devotional service cleanses the heart of material desires, thereby eliminating the root cause of the cycle of birth and death. Devotional service, which includes chanting the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*, is so powerful that it can burn to ashes, any material reaction.





# Open to Krishna

By Kaveel Singh

By nature I am not a religious person. In my practical experience, religion has become a tool of destruction and segregation. Often, I am told it is the converse of this idea. Fanatics of religion inform me that it is a symbol of hope, realisation and relevant direction for one's life.

Personally, I have found a centre ground. My profession (journalism) has allowed me to observe a more open minded point of view showing me that religion can be a very helpful tool to many sectors of society – thus giving hope to the hopeless and nurturing endearing qualities in the ordinary man.

It was with this mindset that I attended the KwaDukuza (Stanger) inaugural Ratha Yathra on Saturday, August 4.

I had attended the yathra at Durban's North Beach previously and found it to be an interesting experience. But I have to admit, most of the time I attended to eat the amazing free food and to engage in conversation with the Hare Krishna girls.

However, despite my lack of religious belief there's always a friendly, innocent "we're happy to have you here" energy from the ever positive people of the Hare Krishna organisation in North Beach.

I was hoping to have the same reception in KwaDukuza...I was not disappointed!

The good people of this organisation commenced their dominance on KwaDukuza with an entertaining rock 'n roll-like band playing in the CBD entertaining bustling shoppers with modest guitar solos and harmonious lyrical chants.

Of course this was simply the beginning of the not-so small town take over. The main chariot procession garnered positive responses from the diverse gathering of onlookers who clapped to the chants and in some cases even joined the procession for small periods of time.

Upon entering the Country Club Grounds (the main ground) the average visitor was run over by a freight train of colourful expression. I walked in (before the main procession arrived) armed with my digital camera snapping shots of the loyal "behind the scenes" Hare Krishna devotees.



Being a journalist, I have become accustomed to people often shying away from the camera...but not the Hare Krishna faithful! They were more than willing to, firstly, acknowledge my existence, offer a friendly smile, and thereafter prolifically pose.

Toward the middle of the day, the ground was moderately full with many visitors observing the traditional live music and as well as visiting the many stalls available that offered literature to purchase, a prayer section as well as a free culinary class.

What I observed on the day was truly all encompassing. There were even traditional Zulu dancers who gallantly performed to a much appreciated applause. In the last 10 years I've firmly believed in the existence of the universe and not God. I've often been criticised by elders and religious leaders for not having a select belief or direction.

But with the Hare Krishna organisation I have received nothing but positive energy that. They are a group of people who accept you for who you are. They do not judge, they do not mock. Instead they attempt to understand your point of view and accept a universal belief.

And they don't just say it to your face. Their core beliefs are practiced. It's something that is easy to see at events like the Ratha Yathra. The organisation and its beliefs are one of the largest in the world and it's easy to see why. Now they've captured a little bit more by heading north of Durban. Say thank you KwaDukuza, you've been blessed.

## Vaishnava Kitchen Nut Whispers

200g butter  
1/4 cup oil  
1 tsp vanilla essence  
1/2 cup icing sugar  
1/4 cup pecan nut powder  
2 1/2 cup self raising flour  
1/2 cup finely chopped nuts



Beat oil and butter until thick. Beat in essence and sugar until creamy. Mix in nut powder and flour until well blended. Pinch out pieces, roll into a ball, flatten, press with a fork and lightly sprinkle with chopped nuts. Bake at 180 degrees for 15 – 20 minutes.



## God and Demigods Lord Brahma, Part 2

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

"Krishna! Krishna!" the cowherd boys anxiously called out. Their calves had wandered into the forest and as always, Krishna's *gopas*, cowherd friends, took shelter of Him. Krishna had just been enjoying his lunch picnic with the *gopas*, but attended to their pleas for help by searching for the calves. Alas, Krishna could not find them anywhere, and when He came back to tell the *gopas*, they too had disappeared. Although Krishna knew exactly what had happened, he thought that if he would go back home alone, the cows and mothers of Vrindavan would be distressed. There was only one thing left for Him to do. He expanded Himself as the cowherd boys and calves, replicating their bodies, qualities, dress, and behaviour exactly as if they were present. When they all went home, their mothers were happier than usual to see them. The mothers loved Krishna more than their own children and calves, so now they could not understand the overwhelming love they felt for them. For an entire year, Krishna in the form of the cowherd boys and calves, reciprocated with the love of His dear devotees, who were ecstatic in His association. But the day came when it all had to end and the culprit who had instigated all this was exposed.

The creator of the material realm and the most powerful of all demigods, Lord Brahma, appeared where the cowherd boys and calves were delighting in Krishna's company. Thinking that he was dreaming, he looked at them in bewilderment. It was he, who only moments ago, had stolen Krishna's calves and friends and hidden them away by his mystic power. Although Brahma revered Krishna as the Supreme Lord, he was doubtful how his Lord could be in the material world as an ordinary cowherd boy. Knowing that he was playing with fire, he had quickly returned, anxious and afraid to see the result of his mischievous test. A moment in Brahma's life far exceeds earthly time – so when Brahma appeared after moments, a year had already passed. What Brahma was about to see was enough to diminish his superior position and mystic prowess. He saw the calves and boys transform

into Vishnu forms with a bluish complexion and four arms. Then to his further amazement, he saw many other Brahmas, demigods, and various living entities, dancing around Lord Vishnu and worshiping Him. Lord Brahma then realized that the Vishnu forms were Lord Vishnu Himself expanded as the cowherd boys and calves. How could he forget the time when he was born from the lotus flower of Lord Vishnu? Gazing at Krishna, the origin of all these Vishnu expansions, Brahma acknowledged his creator. A glow worm's effulgence is visible at night and a pile of snow glitters during the daytime. Shrila Prabhupada describes Lord Brahma's mystic power in comparison

to Krishna's as a glow worm during the day and snow at night. Thus Brahma became perplexed in the presence of Krishna's extraordinary power. He felt like a puppet in the hands of the supreme master, Krishna.

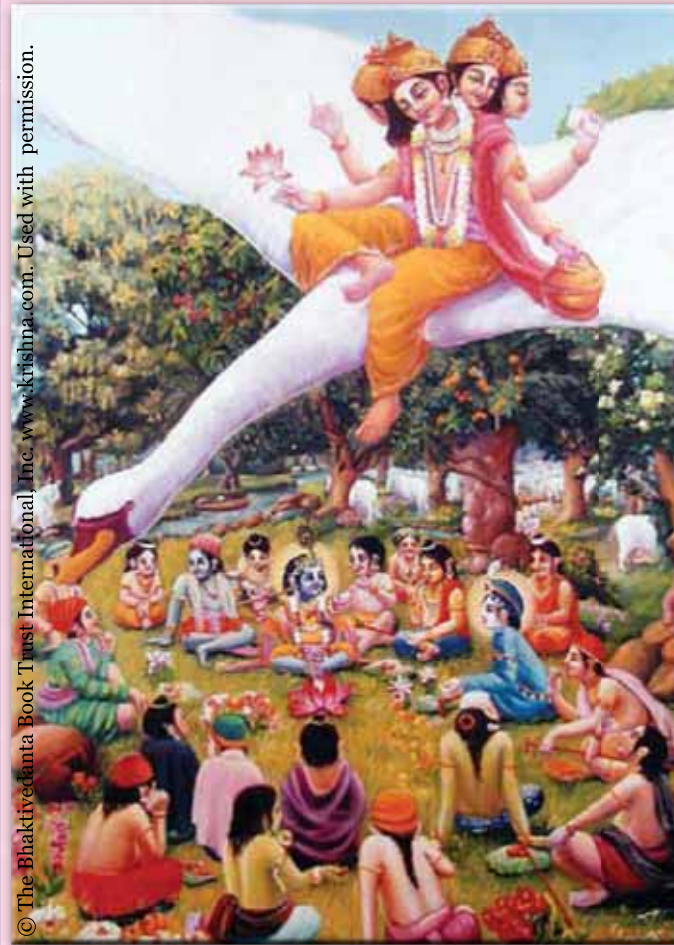
Lord Krishna, out of love and compassion for Brahma, removed his doubts and revealed to him the supreme position of Vrindavan and its residents. Lord Brahma bowed down repeatedly at Krishna's lotus feet, bathing them with his tears. He begged for forgiveness, addressing himself as Krishna's eternal servant. He continued to offer beautiful prayers to Krishna with great humility, respect and love.

"What am I, a small creature measuring seven spans of my own hand? I am enclosed in a potlike universe composed of material nature,

the total material energy, false ego, ether, air, water and earth. And what is Your glory? Unlimited universes pass through the pores of Your body just as particles of dust pass through the openings of a screened window." (*Shrimad Bhagavatam*, 10.14.11)

Lord Brahma glorified the residents of Vrindavan, the greatest devotees of Lord Krishna, and described how by serving them one would attain the favour and shelter of Krishna. "My greatest possible good fortune would be to take any birth whatever in this forest of Gokula and have my head bathed by the dust falling from the lotus feet of any of its residents. Their entire life and soul is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mukunda, the dust of whose lotus feet is still being searched for in the Vedic mantras. (SB.10.14.34)

The four golden mountain peaks surrounding



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Varshana, the residence of Krishna's topmost devotee Radharani, are the expansions of Lord Brahma, each representing one of his golden heads. Thus Lord Brahma's desire to serve Radha and Krishna in Vrindavan was fulfilled.

Previously at the time of creation, Krishna had addressed Lord Brahma, "You are the original rishi, and because your mind is always fixed on Me, even though you will be engaged in generating various progeny, the vicious mode of passion will never encroach upon you." (SB 3.9.35)

Although Lord Brahma is in charge of the material mode of passion, he is untouched by it. How then, did he become confused and steal Krishna's friends and calves? Shrila Prabhupada explains that sometimes such pastimes are manifested by the Lord in order to teach others about His transcendental position. Unless great personalities present themselves in a bewildered position, common men do not have the chance to understand Krishna and these truths would not have been explained. Such bewilderment of the Lord's devotees is also meant for their further advancement in knowledge of Him.

Lord Brahma was famous for fulfilling the wishes of demons like Hiranyakashipu and consequently he became ill famed throughout the world. This may be why we do not see many temples where Brahma is worshiped. However, even before Lord Krishna's advent, when the earth was being harassed by the evil Kamsa, Lord Brahma on behalf of the demigods invoked Krishna to appear. His apparent contradictory behaviour can be reconciled because his primary focus was to act as a dedicated servant, meant to assist the Lord's pastimes.

The place where Lord Brahma offered prayers to Lord Krishna is known as Brahma kund. This lake became so auspicious that Lord Shiva bathed there to obtain the form of a *gopi* and Narada Muni bathed there to become qualified to witness Krishna's rasa dance.

Lord Brahma submitted another plea at Brahma kund, "My dear Lord, I therefore pray to be so fortunate that in this life as Lord Brahma or in another life, wherever I take my birth, I may be counted as one of Your devotees. I pray that wherever I may be, even among the animal species, I can engage in devotional service to Your lotus feet. (SB.10.14.30)

Lord Brahma had understood the essence and how pleased Krishna was to fulfil his wish. When Krishna appeared as Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the most merciful incarnation of the Lord, Brahma appeared as His dear associate and loving devotee. His name was Haridas Thakur, and although he was considered of a low birth, his purity and attachment to chanting Krishna's holy name earned him the title of Namacharya, a venerable status of one devoted to the holy name. So whatever role Brahma played – as the powerful creator, the shelter of the demigods

or demons, a resident of Vrindavan, or as the pure devotee Haridas – the Lord helped him attain unconditional love for Him.

Therefore, from any position or situation, if we connect with the Lord in devotional service, all ends well in our journey towards Him.

*To find out more and what happened after Krishna forgave Brahma, please read Shrila Prabhupada's "Krishna Book."*

## A Day of Magic

By Yamuna Devi Dasi

While growing up there are certain things that leave indelible impressions on the heart and mind. One such impression for me was the movie Gopal Krishna. I remember watching it a hundred times, fascinated by the appearance of the Supreme Lord and His extraordinary pastimes. It was a magical experience that mesmerized me. Ever since, I had desired to see and feel that magic become a reality.

Twenty-five years ago, the Janmasthami festival at the Shri Shri Radha Radhanath Temple fulfilled my desire. It was my first celebration of the appearance of Lord Krishna. For me, witnessing the captivating deity forms of Lord Krishna and Shrimati Radharani certainly superseded my movie experience. Since then, I have anxiously anticipated the arrival of this day year after year.

Annually this momentous festival is superbly organized to spiritually energize, and this year was no exception. As early as 4am, devotees and guests flocked to the temple for a glimpse of the Deities in their splendid new outfits. The atmosphere was intoxicating as many intensely sang and danced in jubilation. Throughout the day there were numerous events to absorb one's consciousness in remembrance of Lord Krishna. Discourses, entertainment, food distribution, chanting, and bathing of the deities in the temple room were just a few.

The entrance with its striking décor welcomed you to a mood of festivity. As evening approached, the temple lit up like a shimmering jewel against the night sky. This year's crowd was colossal and the meals prepared were doubled from last year. When the most anticipated moment of midnight arrived, a hush of uncontrollable love and emotions inundated the temple. Thousands packed both the temple room and marquee, where a live stream of the Deities midnight arathi was projected. This enthralling moment of pure magic was and is an experience that just gets me coming back for more and more...



## Devotee Focus A Friend to All

By Nanda Kumar Das

Just as a lady decorates her body with valuable jewels and ornaments, the character of a Vaishnava is decorated with innumerable wonderful qualities. Some of these qualities are tolerance, mercy and friendliness to all. By sincere and staunch engagement in devotional service all the good qualities of the demigods become manifest in the personage of such a Vaishnava.

Attachment is the natural propensity of the living entity. The Vaishnava, by his association, awakens our attachment for the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna. We, in South Africa, are blessed to have such Vaishnavas in our midst, and His Grace Shyamlal Prabhu is one of them. Shyamlal was initiated by Srila Prabhupada and personally served him on many occasions. It was Srila Prabhupada who personally instructed Shyamlal to preach in Africa, partnering with ISKCON stalwarts like Brahmananda, Jalakara and other notable devotees, like our own Ramanujacharya.

Shyamlal's service was to make life members and he continued to do this with great expertise, when he settled in South Africa. The secret to success in spiritual life is to please the spiritual master by making his instructions one's life and soul and we can say with confidence that Shyamlal's service is pleasing to His Divine Grace. Based at the Society's then headquarters in Cato Ridge, Shyamlal and many other devotees travelled the length and breadth of South Africa making life members and winning people over to the mission of Krishna consciousness. Everyone knows him. Even now, if one goes to the most remote part of the country and if there are Indians living there, they will know Shyamlal. That is the nature of a devotee... he is compassionate and wants to engage everyone in the service of the Lord.

Shyamlal's warm and easy going nature endeared him to all. He has the uncanny ability to remember names and family connections and this certainly

won the hearts of many. Whilst visiting someone in Grobblersdal, he would make the link with that person's 45th connection in Uitenhage which usually resulted in the person becoming a life member. This ability really impressed people because it showed that he cared for them. It was not just about making a life member, but his desire was to connect those people to Krishna.

As the construction of the Shri Shri Radha Radhanath temple neared completion, the devotees were really endeavouring to raise funds. Shyamlal was by far the most successful fund raiser in the Indian community. After the temple opening, Shyamlal continued making life members and collecting donations. The arrival of His Holiness Indradyumna Swami and His

Holiness Bhakti Bringa Govinda Swami in South Africa saw the dynamics change. Ratha-yatra became the key focus area for attracting people to Krishna consciousness. Travelling with the Maharajas, Shyamlal would take them to the people he had befriended in Krishna consciousness and thus raise funds. Ratha-yatra in South Africa is now widely acclaimed as the biggest and most successful festival outside of India.



In recent years, Shyamlal began to co-ordinate Shrila Prabhupada's Appearance and Disappearance Day festivals. Being Bengali by birth, Shyamlal took great delight in securing the special vegetables and spices from India.

He personally cooked Shrila Prabhupada's favourite dishes. He took pleasure in serving the feast to the devotees. The way one treats the agents of the holy name is indicative of one's own relationship with the holy name. Shyamlal's greatest pleasure was to serve the devotees in any capacity. He never demanded respect and was always humble in his dealings with devotees.

It came as a great shock to many when Shyamlal was diagnosed with cancer. Although from a material point of view this is calamitous, the most wonderful lesson for all of us is observing his consciousness which is firmly fixed in remembrance of Shrila Prabhupada.





I caught the gymnastics of the London 2012 Olympics on the telly. With a hot drink in hand, I had grown grass roots in my lounge. The funny thing is that I am particular about what I view on TV. I consider my time to be valuable, so my rule of thumb is to only view something if I can learn from it. These athletes were mesmerizing. The gymnasts were twisting in the air, flipping and landing gracefully.

The commentators used words like power, strength, skill, agility, grace and stamina. The Judges were rating the athletes on difficulty and execution. The next day I found myself glued to the diving event. Aha, I just learnt that the perfect dive means effortless entry into the water with least amount of splash. Of course, fluidity of movement is of utmost importance. Another day, the swimming heats had me entranced. When our very own South African, Chad Le Clos won his gold medal, I smiled along with him and rejoiced.

Gosh, sports can be spellbinding and enthralling. The Olympics is a mega showdown in sporting prowess. This year 10 490 athletes from 204 countries assembled in London to compete for the coveted gold, silver or bronze medals. This event attracted 8.75 million spectators and worldwide TV audiences. The cost of the Olympics was 9.3 billion pounds. India ranks dead last in medals as weighted by population. The country of more than one billion people has won only one Olympic gold medal in an individual sport in 2008.

It got me thinking. The land of saints, yogis and avatars is best known for its temples, scriptures and mantras. In the West, people are especially in illusion by the bodily concept of life. They concentrate on physical fitness instead of spiritual elevation. In India however, it is understood that our span of life on earth is short, so this human form of life should not be wasted. Time should be spent to perfect ourselves spiritually and to render service to the Lord and His devotees.

Athletes who are spending countless hours perfecting their particular sport are creating a mentality to become that particular type of entity in their next life. At their time of death, they will remember their activities and gain a suitable body. Those who are inclined to flying in the air will become birds. Those who are diving in water will become fish, big fish. In *Bhagavad-gita* 15.8, Lord Krishna says: "The living entity in the material world carries his different conceptions of life from one body to another, as the air carries aromas". Thus he takes one kind of body and again quits it to take another.

Just as we enjoy challenging, jousting, fighting, running, and competing in chivalry, the Supreme

Enjoyer, Krishna, also takes pleasure in it. All these propensities for sport originally exist in Krishna. He is swimming and sporting in the river Yamuna. He is dancing the rasa-dance with the *gopis* in Vrindavan. He is wrestling with His playmates

and carrying the triumphant cowherd boy on His shoulders.

Suffice to say, I don't aspire to be a Michael Phelps, Usain Bolt or Andy Murray. While they have fame, big bank accounts, some gold medals and lucrative advertising contracts, I aspire to sport with God in His abode eternally.

### **Magic and Games with Krishna**

By Rasa-keli Sowamber

On Sunday, 4th August there was an exciting and unique "birthday party" for Krishna. Initially, I was apprehensive about whether I would find anything at the party that would interest me, as I am soon going to be teenager. However, when the party started, excitement prevailed and I got swept into the current of activities on offer to the hundred or so children who attended.

Firstly, I had the opportunity to paint my face with gopi dots. We felt like gopis and gopas getting ready to receive Krishna and celebrate His birthday with Him. Throughout the games and entertainment I noticed that the kids and pre-teens were smiling. It felt magnificent to see all the little people brush past me wearing an array of brightly coloured garments and beaming with happiness.

Next we played musical chairs with devotional music and chanted the maha-mantra as we circled the chairs. There were lovely prizes. The magic show made me rip with laughter. The magician revealed secrets to some magic tricks and performed new ones like "water from India" by emptying a jug of water. The jug had an unlimited amount of water inside and it was hilarious that the flowing stream of water would never end despite the many times he lowered the jug to empty it. He ended each trick with a catch phrase: "...and that's magic." The magician made flowers appear and said that we should offer it to Krishna. We were also reminded that Krishna is the ultimate magician!

Later, devotees dressed as Krishna and Radharani arrived. We sang "Happy Birthday" to Lord Krishna as "Krishna and Radharani" cut the birthday cake. There was also an interactive puppet show depicting the Aghasura (snake demon) pastime. A delicious meal was served at the end of the party and we left with party packs which included a special sand art kit of a picture of the temple. It was really memorable and fun to attend. I hope that another one will be held next year.



## Soul Learners

By Bhaktin Anisha Gangaram

“What a wonderful opportunity for so many learners of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to come together and experience such spiritual upliftment!” remarked Mala Parsad, a Hindi Language educator, who attended the Learners Vedic Arts and Culture Festival, along with almost 2000 learners and educators from 18 neighbouring schools.

Hundreds of smiling faces entered the Shri Shri Radha Radhanath Temple on 6 and 7 August, in anticipation of a day of fun. And fun it was! Fun which appealed to the head and also spoke to the heart.

Learners participated in the dances and short plays, one of which depicted the futility of living a life without spirituality. The programme was designed to educate learners on moral and social issues, as well as to render personal service to the Lord. Prominent members of the community enlightened learners on a variety of issues, including drug abuse and self-defence. But for many, the most enjoyable part was the temple experience: swinging the Deities, drinking in the radiant beauty of the Deities, and of course, dipping into the delectable sweets.

Linekar Manyeye, a learner from Ganges Secondary, commented that the festival afforded learners the opportunity to learn about the Vedic culture, and was impressed with the purity, dedication and joy which pervaded the entire atmosphere.

When one considers what this festival represents, it is easy to overlook the freezing weather and rather boisterous behaviour of some learners. It was a fountain of mercy to these young people, many of whom had visited the temple for the very first time. They received a rare gift but most importantly, chanted the Lord's holy names, the process for self-realization in this age.

It was a festival during which the seeds of transformation were planted in the consciousness of impressionable minds, and we trust that these will someday fructify.



## The Blue Boy's Planet

By Bhaktin Saras Naidoo

Nothing unites people more than a common goal or...threat. A positive to emerge from climate change is that people across the globe are uniting in their newfound respect for nature. In light of this, the ISKCON Vaishnava Research



Forum supported by the Department of Agriculture and Environment, hosted a Food Garden and Environmental Awareness Day on 5th August, at the Shri Shri Radha Radhanath Temple.

Speaking to a filled amphitheatre, Deputy Director Ntshangase Njabulo highlighted the Department's mandate to develop the “one home one garden concept”, with the aim of eradicating poverty. The workshop provided the attendees skills to start a garden—planning, preparation, and care of seedlings. Eager participants were rewarded with garden tools for their feedback and all were given seeds and fertilizer.

Mr Kuben Moodley referred to the Department's research into indigenous plant species like Vetiver and Moringa. Vetiver, aka khusa grass, is traditionally regarded as uncontaminated and is used in Vedic ceremonies. With its dense root system, it is suitable for natural dam structure. Moringa (drumstick) has invaluable medicinal properties and applications.

Shri Shri Radha Radhanath's “green ambassador” Mayapur Chandra Das, described gardening as recreation and the benefits of being part of the recreation (planting) process. Anyone with garden gloves will attest to feeling energized after an hour in the garden. He emphasized the need to see beyond the problem of just feeding the belly and to complete the cycle by offering the harvest to the Original Creator. Mrs. Shameen Rajbansi recommended utilizing all available space by planting fruit trees. Vanessa Pather, a teacher from Cavendish Primary, plans to incorporate these ideas into her natural science class.

In his address His Holiness Ram Govinda Swami said that Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, loves the cows, frolicked on the land with his cowherd friends, sported in the river Yamuna, and mesmerized the gopis (milkmaids of Vraja). In any country where these four aspects (cows, land, rivers and women) are protected, there is sure to be peace and prosperity.



## Honouring Our Elders

By Bhaktin Saras Naidoo

Traditionally elders were well versed in scripture and evenings were filled with the retelling of stories from the puranas and other scriptures—Arjuna's bravery, Queen Kunti's trials, and Draupadi's surrender were among the favourite topics embellishing family gatherings. They even resolved family disputes by citing scripture just as a lawyer would reference past cases. Shrila Prabhupada explains: "The whole of material civilization is based on this originally large volume of questions put by young men to their elders. When elderly persons give the proper answers to the questions of the youngsters, civilization makes progress, one step after another." (*Science of Self Realization*, Chapter 1)

Part of our celebration of Shri Krishna's birth is that we treat our senior citizens from Chatsworth and surrounding areas to a Vedic festival. The festival began with a stage production depicting the *Curse of Maharaja Parikshit* and then *kirtan*. Our elderly were then welcomed into the temple. Each person got to bathe the deity of Lord Krishna, swing Radha and Krishna, and offer a ghee lamp to the Deities. Madri Devi Dasi facilitated an interactive mantra meditation session and discussed Krishna's relevance in our

lives. Everyone received a set of chanting beads and a bead bag. In true Hare Krishna style our senior citizens were treated to an especially prepared lunch.

Amby Murugen (68 years), from Woodhurst, said she was amazed that the activities here were so similar to that of the temples of India. She reflects that even though she has

lived in Chatsworth for many years, this was only her second visit to the temple. She also shared that she felt inspired to chant Hare Krishna when she received her chanting beads.

Retirement is referred to as the golden years, characterized by fewer family responsibilities, and can be the ideal opportunity to invoke the mood of the golden age (satya-yuga), when the mind and activities were always dedicated to the Supreme Lord.



Mrs. J. Maharaj

## Vaishnava Calendar

7 Oct 2012	Shrila Prabhupada's arrival in the USA
11 Oct 2012	Ekadasi
12 Oct 2012	Break fast 05:21 - 09:35
24 Oct 2012	Ramachandra Vijayotsava
25 Oct 2012	Ekadasi
26 Oct 2012	Break fast 05:06 - 09:28 Disappearance of: Shrila Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami Shrila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami Shrila Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami
29 Oct 2012	Purnima Shri Krsna Saradiya Rasayatra Fourth month of Caturmasya begins (urad dhal fast for one month)
4 Nov 2012	Disappearance of Shrila Narottama Dasa Thakura
7 Nov 2012	Appearance of Radha Kunda (Bahulastami)
10 Nov 2012	Ekadasi
11 Nov 2012	Break fast 04:54 - 09:24
13 Nov 2012	Diwali
14 Nov 2012	Go Puja Govardhana Puja
17 Nov 2012	Disappearance of Shrila Prabhupada (Fast till noon)
21 Nov 2012	Gopastami Disappearance of: Shri Gadadhara Dasa Gosvami Shri Dhananjaya Pandit Shri Shrinivasa Acharya
24 Nov 2012	Ekadasi Disappearance of Shrila Gaura Kishora Dasa Babaji (Fasting till noon, with feast tomorrow) First day of Bhisma Pancaka
25 Nov 2012	Break fast 04:48 - 09:09
28 Nov 2012	Purnima Shri Krishna Rasayatra Tulasi-Saligrama Vivaha (marriage) Last day of Bhisma Pancaka
29 Nov 2012	Katyayani vrata begins

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

## Health Tip Aiding Digestion

Raw vegetables and juices are essential in maintaining optimum health and vitality. Increasing the intake of salads before a meal increases the fire of digestion thus enabling quicker and further absorption of nutrients in the body.

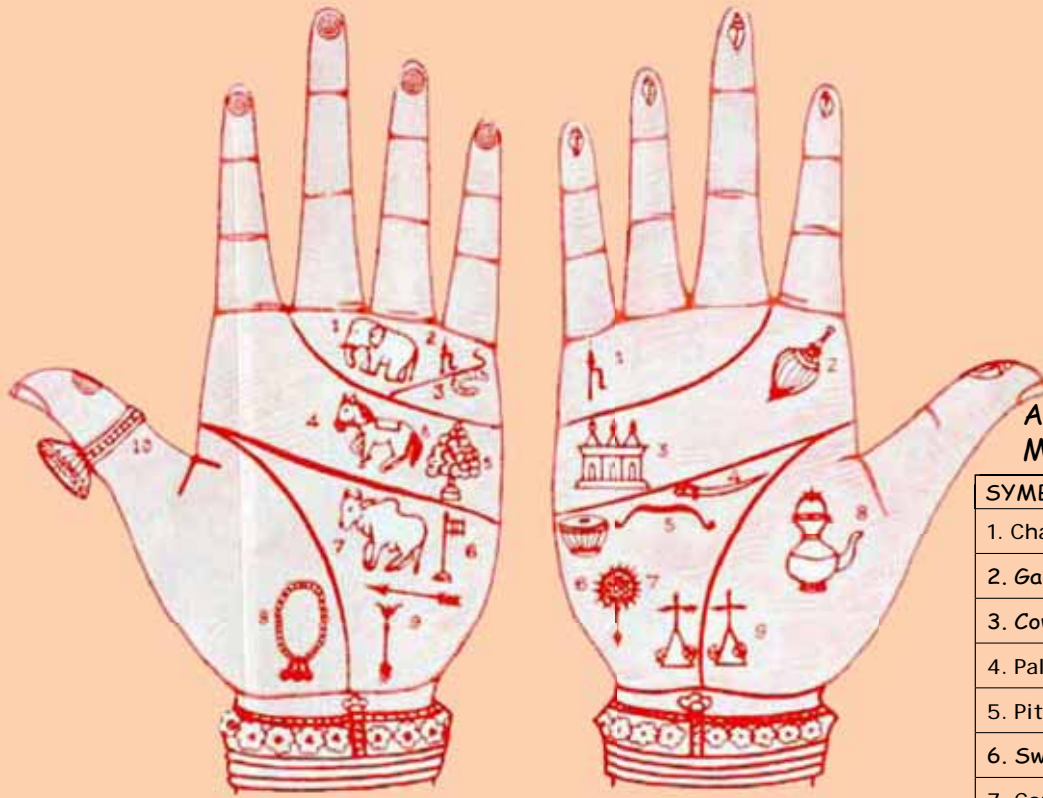
Hint: Breakfast should be the largest meal for the day.



## Young Vaishnavas Column Shrimati Radharani's Hands

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

The birth of Shrimati Radharani is special. Let us take a look at the auspicious symbols on Shrimati Radharani's lotus hands. You can make a beautiful frame of Shrimati Radharani's hands by colouring it in, cutting out and sticking on decorated board, place on the altar and worship.



### Activity 1

Identify on which hand (right or left) the following symbols appear:


Spear  
Drum  
Horse  
Tree  
Flag

Chakra  
Water pot  
Bull  
Cow  
Unstrung bow

### Activity 2

Match the symbol to their meaning:

SYMBOL	MEANING
1. Chakra	a. Animal that provides milk
2. Garland	b. Container to store liquid
3. Cow	c. Weapon used for destruction
4. Palace	d. A bladed weapon
5. Pitcher	e. Creates auspiciousness when blown
6. Sword	f. Beautiful place to live
7. Conch	g. Flower strung to offer worship



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Visit us at [www.iskcondurban.net](http://www.iskcondurban.net)

For general queries call the temple at 031-4033328 between 9.30am-5pm.

Krishna Prasad Prabhu passed away on Sunday, 1 September. The Vaishnava community will miss him and offers their deepest condolences to his family.

Ombudsman for ISKCON South Africa:  
Tribhanga Sundar Das  
[tribhangasundar@gmail.com](mailto:tribhangasundar@gmail.com)  
SMS 072 271 5400  
P.O. Box 434, Bruma, 2026

Congratulations to Jahnavi and Nihal on the arrival of their baby boy.

**Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare  
Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare**