



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

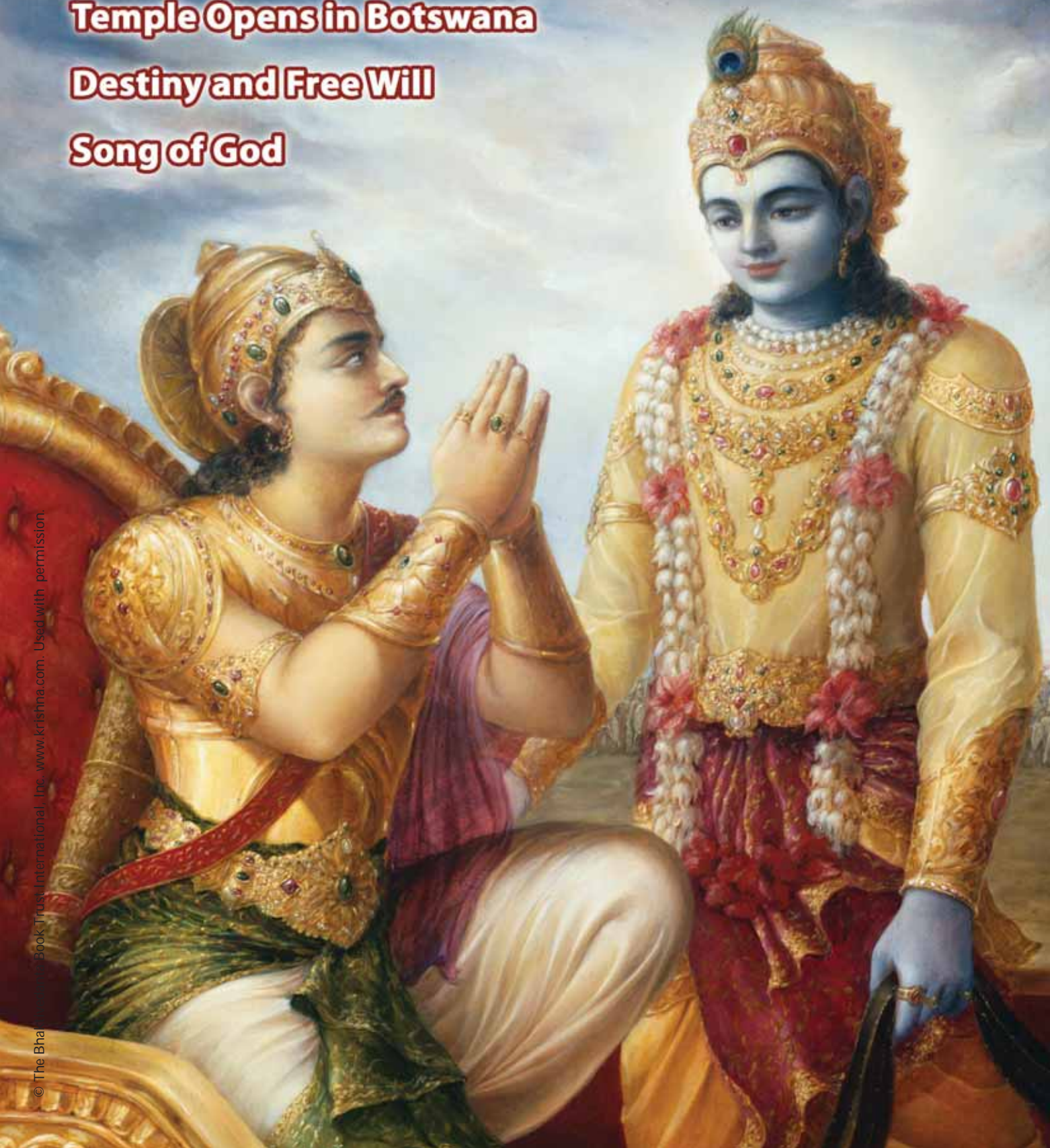
HARE KRISHNA NEWS

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2012

Temple Opens in Botswana

Destiny and Free Will

Song of God



Contents

Message from the Co-President of Shri Shri Radha Radhanath Temple Book Buyers and Sellers	3
Past Spiritual Teacher Jiva Goswami	4
Karma Series Destiny and Free Will	4
Srila Prabhupada Purity – The Ingredient for Success	5
Special Report Temple Opens in Botswana	6
God and Demigods Saraswati The Goddess of Learning	8
Reports Modern Day Heroes Gurukul Excursion	10 10
Vaishnava Kitchen Peanut Brittle	10
News BYS Road to Soweto	11
Special Report A Young Boy's Dream	12
Vedic Observer Age of Austerity	13
Devotee Focus Teaching for Krishna	14
Young Vaishnavas Column Book Basics	15
Notice Board	15
Vaishnava Calendar	15
News Song of God	16
Holy Place Kurukshetra	16

On the Cover

Shri Krishna speaks Bhagavad-gita to His devotee, Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

Quoted verse translations and excerpts from purports to *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, and *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, room conversations, letters, and photographs and paintings on pages 1, 5 and 16 are Copyright © The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, Inc. www.Krishna.com. Used with permission.

Reflections

Editor's Note

"A new year is a land mark in our lives and a time for reflection on where we have been, where we are and where we want to go. It's also time to ponder on our failures and mistakes in our spiritual lives. In the path of *bhakti* every occasion and everything is for the purpose of transformation. If the previous year brought sufferings in our lives we can take solace in the fact that all sufferings and punishments in this world are for our healthy rectification. Today we need to meditate on what I really want in life." (His Holiness Radhanath Swami, January 2012)

2012 has been an exciting year for the newsletter team. We have welcomed new and vibrant contributors as well as bid sad goodbyes to some of our favourite writers. As I reflect on the passing year, I feel a deep sense of gratitude to everyone who has played a role in making this publication successful. It takes a team over a period of two months to get the newsletter to final distribution. They work tirelessly over long hours to ensure that every issue is interesting, informative and fun to read.

I am humbled to be working with such a fantastic group of dedicated, committed and enthusiastic people. I would like to use this forum to express my heartfelt gratitude to each one of them for their team spirit, their tolerance, encouragement and most especially, their inspiration.

Thank you to our readers, who have become ardent followers of the *Hare Krishna News*. Some of you have come up to me and offered encouragement and suggestions, all of which is much appreciated.

My team and I look forward to continuing to serve you in this way.

Haripriya Devi Dasi



Book Buyers and Sellers

Message from the Co-President of Shri Shri Radha Radhanatha Temple

By Vibhu Caitanya Das

From time immemorial, people have engaged in different activities to enjoy material profit. Leaders have falsely promised and manipulated the world for personal gain. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the founder and acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, in his purity and virtue, taught how to engage in devotional service to God and go back to our eternal home, the spiritual world.

Any form of devotional service is pleasing to Lord Krishna, but the sacrifice that pleases Krishna the most is *sankirtan* – a Krishna conscious person engages in teaching the glories of the Lord. This is called *kirtan*. A devotee always remembers the activities of the Lord. Due to his sincere love and concern for all souls, he attempts to spread God's name and glories thereby giving others a chance to re-awaken their dormant love for God by establishing a relationship with Him.

Devotional service must be free from personal gain and speculations. We learn Krishna consciousness, or pure devotional service, from the authorities and previous spiritual teachers. This God consciousness is a gradual cultivation of activities and application into our lives.

Shrila Prabhupada has provided a library of transcendental literatures. He sacrificed many years in order to translate sacred texts into English so that we may derive the utmost benefit from them. His books focus on who we are, who God is, what our relationship with God is and how we can return to the kingdom of God. His books have now been translated into Russian, Hindi, Telegu, Gujarati, Spanish, French, Zulu, Xhosa and many other languages. Shrila Prabhupada and his servants are making a prophecy, that foretold one day the holy name will be sung in every town and village and save the entire world, into a reality.

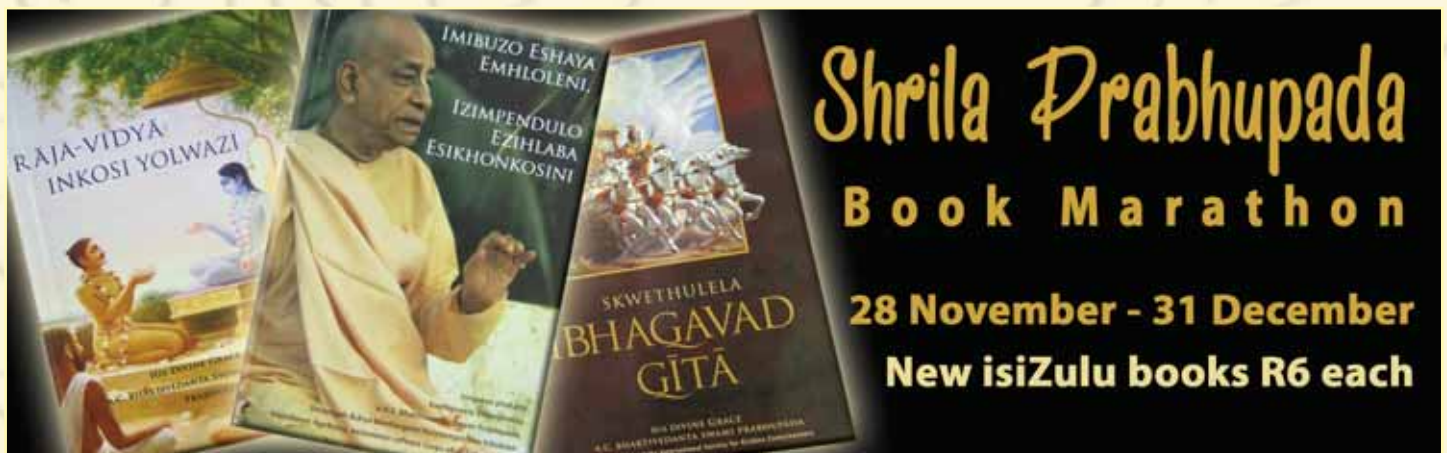
Nelson Mandela once said that if you speak to a man in a language he understands, it will go to his head

but if you speak to a man in his own language, it will go to his heart. It is for this reason that we attempt to reach people in their mother tongue, to connect to their hearts.

Shrila Prabhupada described that his books are ticking time bombs. One may purchase a book with no intention of reading it. We place them on our book shelves and they lie there, collecting dust. However one day, by Krishna's mercy, in happiness or distress, people will open the book and the ticking time bomb explodes into revelation, realisation and relish.

Volumes of invaluable knowledge can be found in Shrila Prabhupada's books. Over decades, devotees all over the world have been mercifully going out day and night, in the rain, cold, heat, storm and sometimes even dangerous conditions, to deliver this transcendental knowledge in a form of a seemingly simple book. Now that we have understood the value of both the books and the *sankirtan* "warrior", let us take a moment from our busy lives and welcome them with a smile and hear what they have to say. It is definitely worth hearing as it will surely be something that can help us lead better lives, and ultimately attain the goal of life.

Going out onto the streets alone, with a few books, may appear like a difficult task. It does seem easier to arrange a fire sacrifice or worship the deity in the temple. Personally, I have also shied away from book distribution. In fact, whenever devotees invited me to go out to distribute books, I would make some excuse to engage in another form of devotional service. However, after hearing about and understanding the importance of book distribution, I realised that this is not only a duty, but also should be a sincere attempt to share the incomparable happiness found in Krishna consciousness. Devotees remember that they are instruments of Krishna and following in the footsteps of the great souls try to do something for the benefit of humanity. Please join our brave "soldiers" in their glorious attempts, by either joining them on book distribution or buying a book from them.



Jiva Goswami

Past Spiritual Teachers

“To understand Lord Caitanya, one has to follow the direct descendents of Lord Caitanya – the Six Goswamis – and especially the path chalked out by Shrila Jiva Goswami. Shrila Jiva Goswami is the most authoritative *acharya* in the Gaudiya Sampradaya.” (*Teachings of Lord Caitanya*)

After the disappearance of his uncles, Rupa and Sanatana Goswamis, Jiva Goswami became the *acharya* of all the Vaishnavas. He consolidated the works of his uncles, and compiled twenty-five books of over 400 000 verses based on the Vedic scriptures, proving conclusively that Shri Caitanya’s teachings were the essence of Vedic wisdom. Jiva Goswami established Vrindavan as the headquarters for the Gaudiya Vaishnavas.

He established a school in Vrindavan to teach Sanskrit, based on the devotional writings of the Goswamis. His first students were Narottam Das Thakura, Shrinivas Acharya, and Shyamananda Prabhu. Jiva Goswami became the most systematic teacher, and was soon acclaimed as the greatest philosopher in all of India.

“Jiva Goswami, by his vast erudition attracted scholars from throughout India to come and study with him. They turned the temple precincts into a rare philosophical research station, and produced

vast numbers of Vaishnava scriptures and philosophical treatises.” (*Temples of Vrindavan* by R.K. Das)

In 1570, Moghul Emperor Akbar came to Vrindavan to meet the widely acclaimed Goswamis. The Emperor was deeply impressed with Jiva Goswami and reciprocated by erecting a library at Radha-Damodara to enshrine the Vaishnava literatures. Twenty years later, Jiva Goswami praised him, a glorification carved in the red sandstone walls of the Radha Govindaji temple: “Emperor Akbar is a very kind hearted person and a Vaishnava. I give my blessings to Emperor Akbar. In his kingdom all the Vaishnavas are living very peacefully.”

To benefit humanity, Jiva Goswami ordered Narottam Das Thakura, Shrinivas Acharya and Shyamananda Prabhu, three perfect exemplars of the teachings, to broadcast the message of Krishna consciousness in Bengal and Orissa. This was the beginning of book distribution.

Adapted from Prabhupada at Radha Damodar by Mahanidhi Swami.



Shyamasundara Das and the late George Harrison at Jiva Goswami’s resting place.

Destiny and Free Will

Karma Series

By Ramvijay Das

Like any subject, as we gain further understanding, deeper questions arise.

One such frequently asked question is the relationship between destiny and free will.

“If everything I am doing is pre-determined by my karma, then where is the room for free will?” “Why am I, then, responsible for my actions if everything I do is dictated by karma?” “Am I just like a puppet pulled by the strings of fate and have no independent ability?”

The answer lies in understanding what fate or destiny refers to. Destiny, or fate, is the aggregate of all our karma that has not yet come to pass. In other words, karmic reactions, based on our actions in this life and previous lives that have not yet been experienced, is commonly called destiny or fate. This destiny presents us with various situations/reactions in our current lifetime as the reactions to past actions fructify.

How does free will fit into the equation? Free will is



the choice of how we respond to a situation. Two people faced with identical situations could respond differently. Thus by their reaction to the same situation, they create different karmic reactions. These karmic reactions are stored and will manifest in future scenarios.

We are responsible for how we

react to any given situation and therefore the karmic reaction is for us to bear.

Devotional service purifies our consciousness in such a way, that no matter what the situation, we respond in the best possible way. Apart from devotion to the Supreme Lord, not creating karma and freeing us from the cycle of birth and death, the effect on the consciousness helps us respond in a way where our lower, base instincts are curbed. This results in the best possible outcome in any given situation. By improving our overall state of consciousness, devotion makes it possible for us to face karmic reactions without being affected by them. In addition, as one surrenders to the Supreme Lord, even one’s karmic reactions become minimised. Therefore, in every situation, taking up devotional practices like the chanting of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*, is the best action we can do for ourselves.

Purity – The Ingredient for Success

Shrila Prabhupada

By Venu Gopal Das

Upon the arrival of his new born progeny in 1896, an unpretentious Calcutta man had only one wish... that his son, Abhay Charan, become devoted to Shrimati Radharani and Shri Krishna. In 1922, when the young Abhay Charan met the revered Vaishnava Swami, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, that wish began to materialize. During this meeting the Swami suggested that he would like Abhay to share the wisdom of the Vedas with the Western world. More than a decade later, Abhay received a letter from Bhaktisiddhanta Swami requesting him to devote his life to teaching Vedic knowledge in the English language. Two weeks later Swami Bhaktisiddhanta passed away. The words and instructions from the great saint were forever engraved in Abhay's mind and thoughts.

After fulfilling all of his family commitments, Abhay took these instructions to heart and later became internationally recognized as His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Apart from the wonderful temples and thousands of sincere disciples worldwide, his greatest accomplishment was his literary contribution.

Over the millennia, the sacred Vedic philosophy was written in the Sanskrit language. The complete compilation is commonly known as the Vedas and is the largest body of spiritual literature in existence. Swami Prabhupada spent early hours of the morning dictating and translating Vedic literature before continuing with his other duties. Concurrent to translations, in 1944, Swami Prabhupada created an English magazine called *Back to Godhead*. Single-handedly, he would write, edit, oversee the layout, proof-read, print and sell copies. This magazine is still being published today and is managed by the disciples of Swami Prabhupada.

Shrila Prabhupada's commitment to his spiritual master's instruction was exemplary and he continued to translate even on his deathbed. He managed to translate numerous Vedic works but most noted are *Bhagavad Gita As It Is* and the 18 000 verse, multi-volume, *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. Swami Prabhupada left us with over thirty completed books based

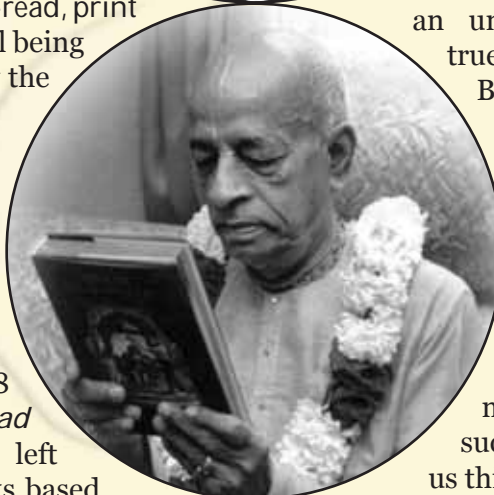
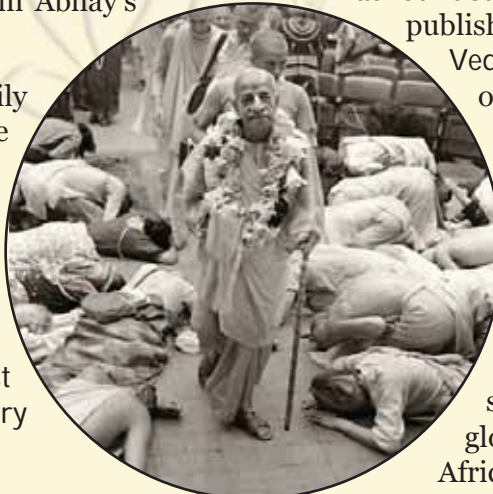
on the understanding of Vedic philosophy. In a letter to a disciple (Hayagriva, 10 June 1967), Swami Prabhupada showed deep concern with regard to his works stating: "Although I am practically on the path of death, still I cannot forget about my publications." He also mentioned on many occasions that his Guru "...liked publication of books more than construction of temples..." (Tamal Krishna Goswami, 15 May 1970)

With this in mind, Swami Prabhupada utilized his resources to establish a global publishing company to help carry out his Guru's desire. On the 29th of May 1972, the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) was founded. The BBT is now the worlds' biggest publisher of books exclusive to the field of Vedic teachings. Besides producing all of Swami Prabhupada's books and the *Back to Godhead* magazine, the company produces books on yoga, meditation, karma and philosophy. They also publish audio CDs, videos and other multimedia presentations.

The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust has seven branches scattered across the globe, including the recently formed African division located in Gauteng. They are responsible for publication in each associated region. As a result, the teachings of the Vedas are now published in eighty-one different languages.

The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust is a non-profit organization; all proceeds go to a trust fund that is divided into sub-categories for either producing more books, or the construction and renovations of ISKCON temples.

More than a century later, the wish of an unpretentious Calcutta man comes true. The vision of an exalted saint, Bhaktisiddhanta Swami, becomes a reality, as across the globe people chant the names of Krishna and practice Vedic teachings. All this is only possible through purity-purity in the message, the endeavour and the actions. Being pure means never being independent of the Lord; with the Lord in our hearts and minds, certainly our actions will be successful. Swami Prabhupada teaches us this by his compassionate example.



Temple Opens in Botswana

By Bhaktin Bhavna Ramsarup

It took 1100 cubits of concrete, 6250 bags of cement, 570 000 bricks, 10 000 square meter tiles, years of hard work, enthusiasm and a deep-rooted desire to please the Lord, that made the dream of many devotees a reality. Arriving at the ISKCON Botswana Shri Shri Krishna Balaram Temple, in Gaborone, and looking



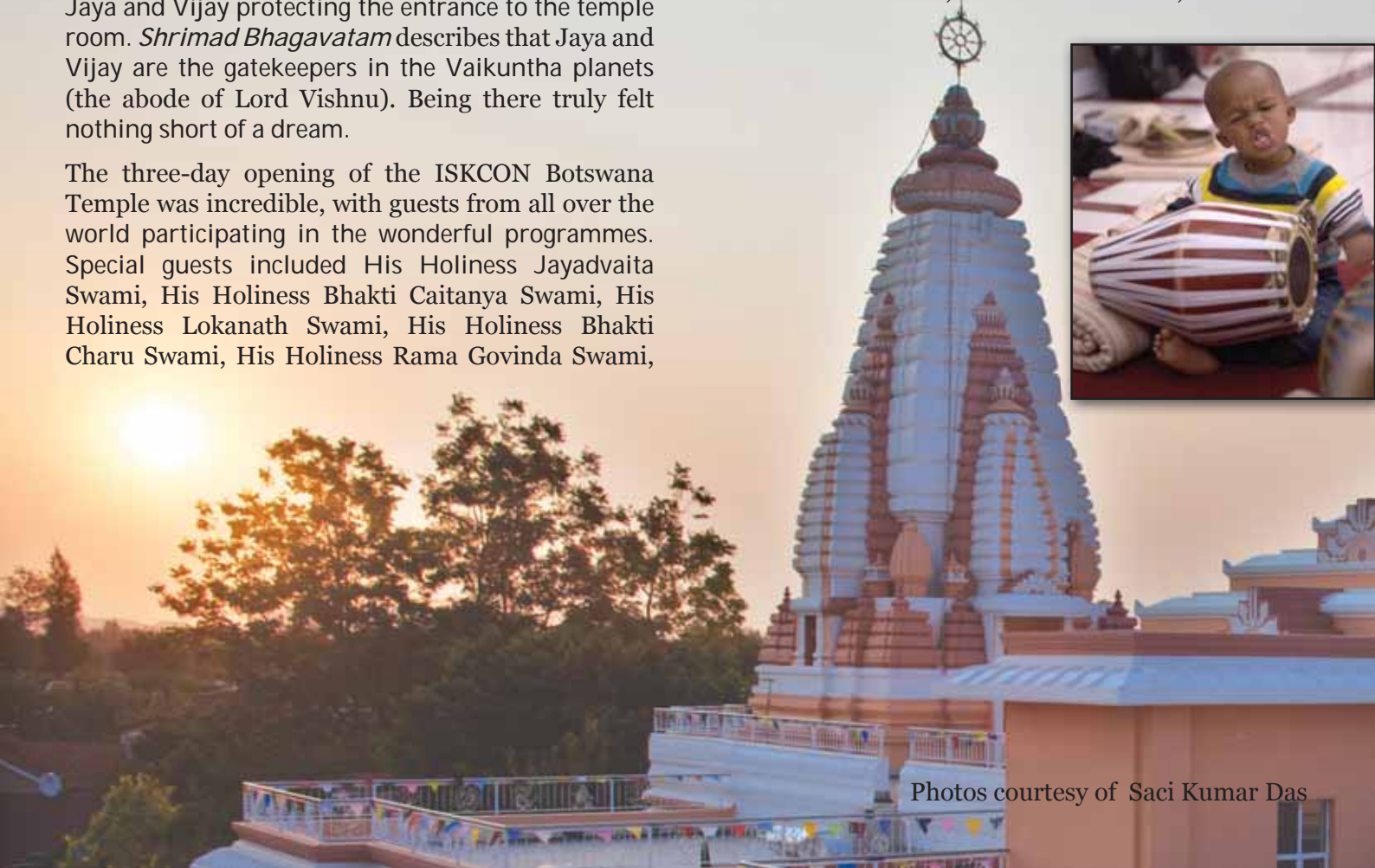
Ponatshego Kedikilwe, the Vice-President of Botswana, entering the temple.

at the three domes and magnificently detailed temple was absolutely breathtaking. The temple's massive outside gate was adorned on either side by two elephants and the boundary wall was decorated with lotus flower bas-reliefs. Looking around the temple I saw the spiritual realm: in front of me were beautiful lion sculptures guarding the stairway leading to the temple. As I reached the top of the arch-decorated stairway, there stood two magnificent sculptures of Jaya and Vijay protecting the entrance to the temple room. *Shrimad Bhagavatam* describes that Jaya and Vijay are the gatekeepers in the Vaikuntha planets (the abode of Lord Vishnu). Being there truly felt nothing short of a dream.

The three-day opening of the ISKCON Botswana Temple was incredible, with guests from all over the world participating in the wonderful programmes. Special guests included His Holiness Jayadvaita Swami, His Holiness Bhakti Caitanya Swami, His Holiness Lokanath Swami, His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami, His Holiness Rama Govinda Swami,

His Holiness Bhakti Nrsimha Swami and we were honoured by the presence of the esteemed Ponatshego Kedikilwe, the Vice-President of Botswana.

On day one, the festivities started with *mangal-arati* to Their Lordships Shri Shri Krishna Balaram in Their old home. In 1994, His Grace Devakinandana Das and Her Grace Rama Priya Devi Dasi turned their home into the ISKCON Botswana Temple and Shri Shri Krishna Balaram had stayed there since. So it was an emotional day for these devotees. At 6am the moving of the Deities to Their amazing new home began. Joy filled the hearts of the devotees and their faces lit up with bright smiles as they danced and chanted accompanying Shri Shri Krishna Balaram to Their new beautiful home. This was followed by an elaborate *abhishek* of the deity of Shrila Prabhupada accompanied by sweet *kirtan*. The swamis took turns in bathing Shrila Prabhupada. At the blowing of the conch it was finally time to get the first *darshan* (view) of their Lordships on the exquisite golden altar. The altar looked perfect with Shri Shri Krishna Balaram, Shri Shri Gaura Nitai, Shri Jagannatha Baladeva and Subhadra Devi, and the ever adorable Shri Ladoo Gopal, placed between Shri Shri Krishna Balaram. The temple is beautiful from the floor to the ceiling. The walls are encrusted with three dimensional sculptures of the Dasavatar, the ten incarnations of Lord Krishna. These are: Shri Matsya, the fish incarnation; Shri Kurma, the tortoise incarnation; Shri Varaha, the boar incarnation; Shri Nrsimha, the half-man-half-lion incarnation; Shri Vamana, the dwarf incarnation; Shri Parashurama, the Lord's warrior incarnation; Shri Ramachandra, the Lord's



Photos courtesy of Saci Kumar Das

lila incarnation; Shri Balaram; Lord Buddha; and Shri Kalki. On larger walls there were depictions of Lord Krishna's pastimes—Lord Balaram massaging His younger brother, Lord Krishna; Baby Krishna bartering with the fruit seller and filling her basket with jewels; Krishna and Balaram, the famous butter thieves; the *gopis* greeting Krishna and Balaram on Their return from the forest and Mother Yashoda binding Krishna; to name a few.



Shri Shri Krishna Balaram's new altar in the background

In the mornings we felt as if we were touching the spiritual sky as we danced with our hands raised and leaped in the air to the melodious *kirtan* of Lokanath Swami. And in the evenings we were drowning in the ecstatic *kirtan* with devotees such as Bhakti Charu Swami, Bhakti Caitanya Swami and Lokanath Swami. We felt as if we were transported to the spiritual realm.

On the third and final day we witnessed the Deity installation ceremony, a memory, I pray, will never leave me. As the *brahmanas* chanted auspicious hymns and the air was filled with smoke from the *yajna*, we sat mesmerised watching the Deities being bathed. We were especially privileged when we were allowed to go to the rooftop to see Their Lordships resting in Their beautiful room.

Beginning with the sweet, warm greetings of Rama Govinda Swami, to the *darshan* of Their handsome



The swamis gracing the ceremony

Lordships, Shri Shri Krishna Balaram, the three-day opening celebration of the ISKCON Botswana Temple was like nothing I ever expected. Apart from the superb programmes and the never-before-experienced *kirtans*, the temple building was astonishing, from the temple yard with a stunning Tulasi garden, to the main dome of the temple with its striking *chakra*. The eighty kilogram *chakra* is made from eight types of metals (iron, copper, zinc, mercury, lead, brass, silver, and gold) and the design resembles the Neela Chakra mounted on top of the famous Jagannatha Puri Temple in Orissa.

I feel spiritually uplifted and enthusiastic from this experience. The endeavour and sacrifice of the devotees in Botswana to please the Lord is inspiring and I am certain that we can look forward to a bright future for the temple. The ISKCON Botswana Temple with its gorgeous guest accommodation is a MUST visit. I suggest taking a “sho’t left” to Botswana...



The magnificent temple domes at dawn

Saraswati – The Goddess of Learning

God and Demigods

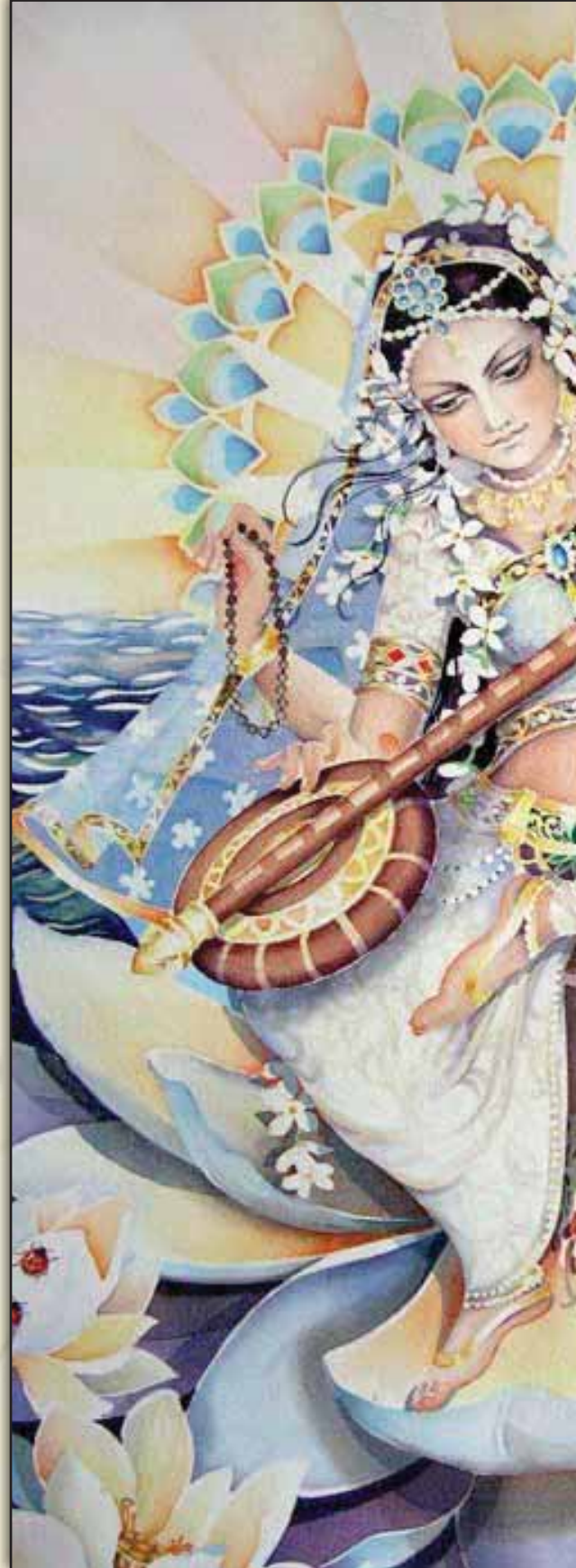
By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

The study of the human brain has left researchers and scientists in awe of the brain's complexity and diverse processing and creative abilities. Yet, despite studies of the brain's physical components, many aspects of human intelligence remain a mystery. The ability to learn and apply facts and skills is a sign of intelligence. The Vedic scriptures reveal more; the intelligence is part of the subtle body that accompanies the physical body. The soul, which is our real identity, is distinct from the physical and subtle bodies and is the controller of the mind and intelligence. We have the free will to use our intelligence as we please, which directs our minds and thoughts, and which ultimately gives rise to our actions. So our intelligence plays a vital role in our lives. Without it, we would be useless.

From where does the intelligence originate? Is it merely from a combination of neurons and sophisticated synapses in the brain? People from different race groups and cultures throughout the world honour and worship "gods of wisdom", who award knowledge and success in learning. Therefore, many believe that learning and intelligence come from a higher source. Keshava Kashmiri, was one such person, who worshiped Saraswati, the goddess of learning, with deep faith and veneration. The *Caitanya Caritamrita*, the biography of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, tells the true story of this great scholar, who won the favour of the Goddess. As a result, he became "a champion of learning" and no one could match him in argument or debate.

Once, when Keshava Kashmiri met Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the Lord asked him to compose poetry to glorify the Ganges. Filled with pride and looking down upon the Lord as an ordinary grammar student, he quickly composed one hundred Sanskrit verses describing mother Ganges. Lord Caitanya praised him saying that there was no greater poet in the entire world and that it was so difficult that only the scholar himself and mother Saraswati could understand it. Then, Caitanya Mahaprabhu chose one of the verses, and picked out many literary faults, although it was seemingly perfect. To Keshava Kashmiri's embarrassment and astonishment, Lord Caitanya had defeated him. Later that night, the scholar offered prayers and meditation to mother Saraswati asking her why she had insulted him through a young boy. In a dream, the Goddess appeared to him, sitting on a white lotus. With four arms, a dazzling fair complexion and spotless white sari, she embodied purity and grace. The Goddess revealed to him Caitanya Mahaprabhu's position as the Supreme Lord. As a surrendered devotee of the Lord, her priority was to serve Him by making His opponent's words defective. She was dependent on Him for her remarkable powers. Lord Krishna explains that all intelligence emanates from Him, "I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me comes remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the Vedas, I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of Vedanta, and I am the knower of the Vedas." (*Bhagavad-gita* 15.15) Krishna grants us greater intelligence to that of animals, allowing us to discriminate and seek understanding to the higher aspects of life.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the name "Saraswati" means "one who gives the essential knowledge of the self" or "one who flows," which can be applied to the flow of knowledge, thoughts and words. One may wonder that although man has advanced in material knowledge through the ages, how is it that there is a proportional increase in suffering? The reason is that knowledge of the self in relation to God is lacking in man's pursuit for happiness. Saraswati, as her name implies, gives both material and spiritual knowledge.



Painting by Anapurna Dasi

She shows that spiritual knowledge is superior by holding the Vedas, the book of spiritual knowledge, and the *japa mala* (chanting beads) in her hands. Because our intelligence is imperfect and impure, we have to receive knowledge from the “Supreme Intelligence” which is God Himself. Spiritual knowledge received from a bona fide representative of God frees one from the false perception of enjoying separately from the Lord and situates us in our constitutional position as servants of Him. Thus the name “Saraswati” is also a title for great souls who are enlightened by supreme knowledge and who enlightens others.

Shrila Prabhupada, an embodiment of pure love and knowledge, explains that everyone has intelligence but one has to know how to utilize it. “So one who is fortunate, he becomes trained up in intelligence how to go home,



back to Godhead. And one who is not fortunate, his intelligence is used how to go to hell. That's all. To become a member of the hellish condition of life, that also requires intelligence. How to become first-class thief, how to become first-class cheater, first-class drunkard, first-class smuggler—does it not require intelligence?” (Shrila Prabhupada, Room Conversation)

Saraswati shows us how to use our intelligence properly by becoming first-class devotees of God. She holds the chanting beads in her right hand and the book on her left, showing that the execution of devotional service by chanting God’s holy names is higher than *jnana* or the assimilation of knowledge. “The power of speaking is called Saraswati, or the goddess of learning, and the birthplace of the goddess of learning is the mouth of Brahma. Even if a man is endowed with the favour of the goddess of learning, it is quite possible for his heart to be full of lust and material desire.... One may be very learned in the mundane estimation, but that does not mean that he is free from all low activities of lust and anger.” (SB 3.12.26, purport) By studying the scriptures and chanting the names of God as Mother Saraswati does, our hearts are purified from these undesirable qualities and our eternal love for Krishna is awakened.

Saraswati awards us material knowledge and as the goddess of arts and music she holds a *veena* (musical stringed instrument) in her hands which she plays for the pleasure of Krishna. By her example, she teaches us not to abandon our material intelligence, studies, talents, and natures but to use them in the service of the Lord. Like her husband Lord Brahma, Saraswati rides on a celestial white swan. The swan is expert in extracting milk from a mixture of milk and water and can even extract nectar from a dirty place. So even while living in the material world in unpleasant conditions, we can use whatever we have to advance on the spiritual path and taste the nectar of devotional service.

The *Shrimad Bhagavatam* proclaims that one should offer one’s respects to the Lord, to mother Saraswati and other great souls before reciting from it. Saraswati is honoured as Krishna’s dear devotee and we seek her blessings. She fulfils our desires by the grace of Lord Krishna and therefore Shrila Prabhupada emphasizes that just as there is an immeasurable difference between a well and an ocean, it is wiser to directly approach Krishna, who can bestow every kind of benediction. Besides, Saraswati’s objective is to direct us to her Lord, as she did with Keshava Kashmiri.

After Keshava Kashmiri heard goddess Saraswati glorify the Lord, he surrendered to Shri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and accepted Him as his only worshipful Lord and master. With clear intelligence, he understood that direct worship to Lord Krishna satisfies all the demigods and that Krishna’s devotee naturally becomes a recipient of all wonderful benedictions.

Modern Day Heroes

By Yamuna Devi Dasi

I was filtering through my news feed one morning when I saw an alarming message. Krishna Prasad Das, a long-standing ISKCON devotee had suddenly taken ill. Remembering his smiling face and humble demeanour, I reflected on his years of selfless service. News of the hospital inundated with devotees and their support to his family was overwhelming. Here was a man who had dedicated his life to the spreading of God's love and when he faced the ultimate test—death, he was embraced in the arms of the Supreme Lord via His devotees. This was proof that Krishna Prasad's service, who is not with us anymore, had not been in vain; as devotees became his heroes in assisting him achieve his desired goal.



His Holiness Jayapataka Swami's and His Holiness Radhanath Swami's brotherly love.

Touched by this, when I was invited to the Devotee Care Conference held in Durban in September, I eagerly accepted. It was a tear jerking and life changing experience. Here was a team that was serious about care and selfless service. Goals, resolutions and sub-committees were formed to structurally attend to the needs of devotees within ISKCON more efficiently

and on a larger scale. Care on an emotional, physical, spiritual and personal level was strategized.

Committees that expanded were: Bereavement; Marriage counselling; Child and family welfare; Health care and a Hotline to name a few. Haridev Das, Director of the programme emphasized,

“ISKCON is not merely a religious organization, but a relationship between the Lord and His devotee. It is a spiritual responsibility to all living entities.” Thus this conference convinced me to become a part of this programme in helping to enrich the lives and services of those assisting in spreading God consciousness. What can be more important?

Swarup Damodar Das, the Co-President of the Shri Shri Radha Radhanath Temple elaborated

that true devotee care is not just fulfilling the needs of the body but the spiritual nourishment of the soul in assisting devotees like Krishna Prasad Das on their spiritual journey till the end. Hence, the Devotee Care Programme is real love, real compassion, and real welfare to the soul.

For more info visit www.devoteecare.org

Gurukul Excursion

By Vilasa Manjari Dasi

We studied *Animals in the Vedas* over one *gurukul* (education based on Vedic scripture) semester. With that in mind we decided to take our 35 learners on an exciting trip to the Ingogo Fun Farm. 29 September 2012 was an exciting day for the children and their parents from ISKCON Newcastle.

Everyone gathered at the temple at 7.30 am and we were divided into three teams: Team Jagannatha Puri (blue/black), Team Vrindavan (red) and Team Mayapur (yellow/gold). We had hired a bus and packed delicious *biryani* that some mothers had prepared earlier that morning. After a short temple programme, we boarded the bus and headed to the Ingogo Fun Farm. We had a quiz about the Lord's pastimes on the bus with the children shouting out answers joyfully.

At the farm we enjoyed a tractor ride, camel ride, horse and carriage ride, the bird park, antique museum, and exotic animals and birds. Most of all we enjoyed being together. Finally, we sat down to a picnic lunch and at the end of the day all the devotees received certificates of appreciation.

Peanut Brittle

Vaishnava Kitchen

Contributed by Citra Devi Dasi

Ingredients

75g butter
125ml golden syrup
350ml roasted and salted peanut halves
330ml sugar
250ml boiling water

Method

Combine butter, sugar, golden syrup and boiling water in a saucepan. Stir to dissolve sugar over medium heat. Bring to boil and then continue to boil for a further 30 minutes without stirring. Remove from heat and stir in peanuts. Pour mixture into a greased 20cm by 30cm pan. Allow to set and then cut or break into pieces.

Alternative: replace peanuts with 250ml cashews. This recipe is also a great snack on Ekadasi.



BYS Road to Soweto

By Rukmini Dasi

Lunch packs, first aid kit, charger, lots of bottled water and twenty zealous, animated faces. Check. We were all set and raring to go on the first Bhakti Yoga Society (BYS) road trip. Destination: Soweto.

Students were from the University of Kwazulu-Natal (Howard, Westville and Edgewood campuses) and Durban University of Technology. They had been introduced to BYS during the campus semester and were now ready for a dynamic spiritual experience — a three day tour of temples in Durban and Gauteng, culminating in the Soweto Soul Fest.

“If music be the food of love, play on...” and play on, they most certainly did, exploring their new found love for *kirtan* all the way to Jozi. The *maha-mantra* kept our lips moving, feet tapping and the bus rocking. Suddenly the kilometres had turned to dust, and we were in Soweto. We were lovingly welcomed by Mahaprabhu Das and Malini Dasi, who have maintained the centre there for many years.

The weekend was action packed. Kicking it off was His Holiness Kadamaba Kanana Swami with an evening *nama-hatta* programme in the illustrious Savannah Hills. For the students, *nama-hatta* translated into a

transcendental Hare Krishna house party! The *kirtan* certainly lived up to their expectations. Maharaja’s thoughtful yet colourful presentation evoked many questions.

On Saturday, was the much anticipated “Amazing Race”, kindly hosted by Bhakti Yoga Society at WITS University. The WITS team organised an interactive workshop boasting *kirtan*, *japa*, drama and art. It demonstrated how talent can be an offering to God, losing neither the spiritual substance nor the dramatic flair. It was the perfect way to build friendships.

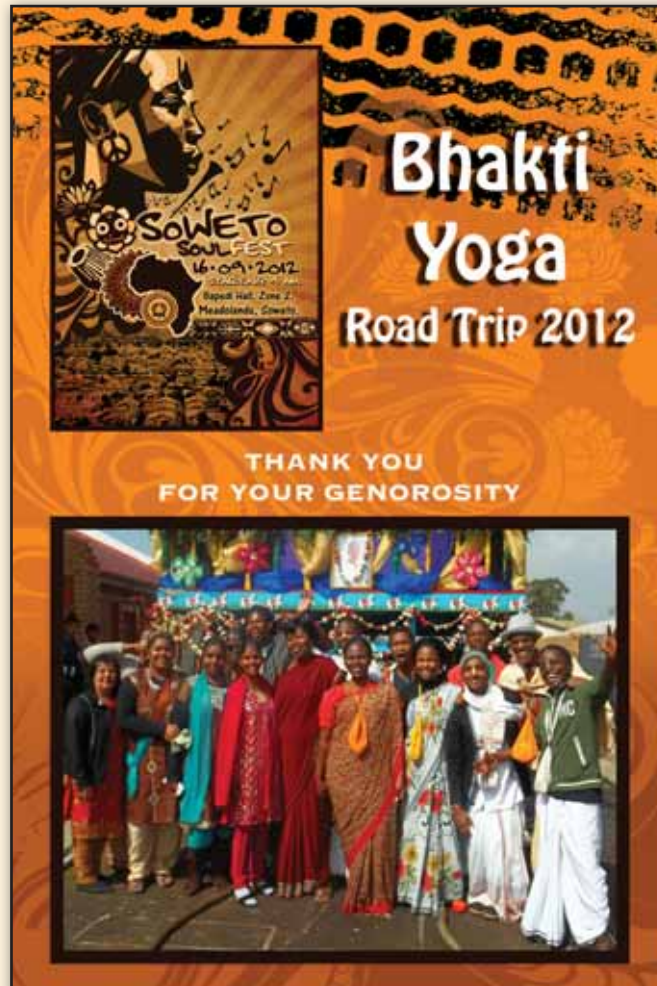
Sunday dawned bright and festive. Spontaneously, the students decided to kit out in vibrant Vaishnava attire and splashed out on the Sowetan streets. The Soweto Soul Fest was the 5th of its kind and consisted of a chariot parade leading to Bapedi Hall. Since music and rhythm is in the bloodline of every Sowetan, it didn’t take long for the locals to move to the drum beats. In the words of the Expresso presenter who showcased the event on morning TV, “In the place where there was once mass devastation, there is now mass celebration!”

From the glitz and glamour of Durban to the sweet simplicity of Soweto, the students were amazed at how Krishna consciousness can be expressed by so many people of different races and places. ‘Faces’ became family and minds set ablaze with knowledge.

a sense of belonging.” Phylcia Mgwenya, Howard College, UKZN

“We just sang, danced and ate and then sang, danced and ate some more...the whole weekend! I knew that spiritual life would make one peaceful but I didn’t know it could be so much fun!” Raksha Raghubir, Edgewood Campus, UKZN

“Self Realization: knowing where you come from in order to know where you are going. These are the things that I learned from our trip. To combat ignorance and violence in this world these spiritual values should be taught even on primary and secondary levels.” Sanelisiwe Mpungose, Howard College, UKZN



Comments from Students

“The highlight of my trip though was Savannah Hills. We arrived while the *kirtan* was in progress, and to me that was by far the best *kirtan* I have ever experienced, the energy from it was amazing.... he explained all my theories about the world both material and spiritual so accurately and made me understand so much.” Freeman Gcabashe, DUT

“The trip to Jo’burg made me see life in a different perspective. I fell more in love with BYS, especially the people. They were welcoming, kind and made me feel at home. They weren’t pretending they were just down to earth. I realised that we are one person, regardless of skin colour, background or status. I felt

A Young Boy's Dream

By Mahavir Das

I was attracted to Lord Nrsimha as a young boy and regarded Him as one of my heroes. This incredible form of the Supreme Personality grew on me and for years I desired to go on pilgrimage to that place in South India, Andra Pradesh, called Ahobilam—where Lord Nrsimha appeared.

In June this year I went on a three month pilgrimage to India. I was in Jagannatha Puri during the grand Ratha-yatra and had the good fortune to embrace each Deity on their chariot. When I stood in front of Lord Jagannatha, I prayed to Him to allow me into Ahobilam and to please allow me to see Him in the form of Lord Nrsimha.

I then left to South India. Early one morning I took a bus from Tirupati to a rural Muslim village called Allahgadda on a rocky and winding road. In Allahgadda I took a flat bed cycle rickshaw to the place I had dreamt of—Shri Ahobilam. It was an emotional ride as my dream was coming true.

I got off in lower Ahobilam and immediately offered my prostrated obeisance and checked into a temple guest house. I had heard the pilgrimage to Ahobilam (up the mountain) was dangerous due to wild animals, snakes, dangerous insects and thieves. Fortunately the person in charge of the temple, Mr. Badrinarayan, spoke fluent English and put my mind at ease. He nicely explained the nine main temples in upper and lower Ahobilam and had a beautiful painted map. I hardly took rest that night because I was so excited about the adventure.

After the hair-raising morning prayers in lower Ahobilam I met my guide. My guide grew up in the foot hills of Ahobilam and spoke only Telegu. We hiked through the rough terrain for about 18 km to Shri Krodha Nrsimha (Vara-Nrsimha) temple. After seeing the attractive and mystical deity in the dark little temple, we left to Shri Jwala-Nrsimha temple, where the Lord is in the aggressive pose of killing the demon, Hiranyakashipu, on His lap. A short while later we went down a hilly path to the spot where the Lord washed His hands after killing Hiranyakashipu. The edge of this pond is red to this day. We then passed a mountain with a small waterfall. I stood under the waterfall and drank the refreshing, pure mountain water. It helped to cool me as it was a hot day and we were in the middle of a forest.

We then proceeded to Shri Malola Nrsimha and I was enchanted by the Lakshmi-Nrsimha deity there. Not far from there was Prahlada Maharaja's school, which was now a shallow cave. We reached the Shri Ahobila Nrsimha temple, which is embedded in the mountain. The Deity there has silvery, lotus-shaped eyes. I sat in this temple and chanted *japa*, the vibrations resonating around me. While walking to the last

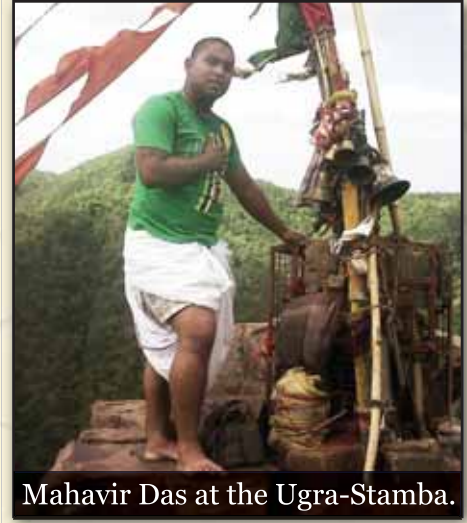
temple for the day we encountered a pack of jackals silently crossing our path. The guide told me to remain still and to not look at them. To my relief and delight they sniffed at us and went on their merry way. Finally, we arrived at Shri Karanja Nrsimha temple. Here I had a well deserved rest, sitting in front of the deity of Lord Nrsimha holding a bow and arrow in His hands.

After supper that night I recounted that we had visited five temples and all the Deities in those temples were self-manifest—no man had carved them. The next morning we visited lower Ahobilam. I was taken aback to see the Shri Yogananda Nrsimha Deity in a difficult yogic position. Next was the Shri Chatravata Nrsimha temple where the Deity was huge, and fierce looking with His shiny ornaments and weapons as if ready for battle. We then left for the Pavana Nrsimha temple located next to the Pavana River 27km away. I thought of Shrila Prabhupada and felt grateful to him as he educated us about the holy places, the Lord, and His pastimes.

We had come to the 9th and final temple, Shri Bhugarba Nrsimha temple. Outside was a beautiful perennial pond where we took a refreshing, well-needed bath and rest.

My 3rd day at Ahobilam was one of the most amazing days of my life. I was going up the mountain where the Ugra-Stamba stands. The Ugra-Stamba is where Lord Nrsimha had broken out from the pillar and attacked Hiranyakashipu. We set off at sunrise and trekked up the mountain. The hike was extraneous and dangerous with rock falls; at anytime a loose rock could tumble down on me or cause me to slip to my death. Thankfully, by my strong determination and tough legs, I could see myself getting closer and closer. I had wanted this from when I was a child. I thought that if my spiritual master was present, he would have pushed me to go faster.

When I eventually reached the top, it was like being on a heavenly planet, the air was light, and there was an unforgettable, cooling and energizing mountain breeze. The Stamba was about twenty feet towards the edge of the mountain. I got there with tears in my eyes and my heart full of emotion. I fell down to the ground offering my obeisance and circumambulated the spot. I prayed that the whole world could come to this powerful place and feel the extraordinary spiritual energy I was feeling—the spot where Lord Nrsimha appeared.



Mahavir Das at the Ugra-Stamba.

Age of Austerity

Vedic Observer

By Dwijamani Dasi

There are three economic powerhouses in the world today – the United States, Europe and China. America is in a recession. Greece and Italy are in a financial crisis. China remains strong. From all the European countries, Germany is an industrial powerhouse and the second largest exporter in the world. Germans work fewer hours than anywhere else in the world. German children spend less time in school than most of their neighbouring countries. Of the world's 500 largest stock-market-listed companies measured by revenue in 2010, the Fortune Global 500, 37 are headquartered in Germany.

Well known global brands in Germany include Mercedes Benz, BMW, Audi, Porsche, Siemens, Adidas and Nivea. Why is Germany thriving? They have implemented a very basic Vedic principle. Austerity. And have gained great material success. That government uses austerity policies. The Wikipedia describes that in economics, austerity refers to a policy of deficit-cutting by lowering spending via a reduction in the amount of benefits and public services provided. In simple terms, the Germans are practicing austerities and benefiting tremendously.

Merriam-Webster's dictionary named the word "austerity" as their "Word of the Year" for 2010 because of the number of searches this word generated that year. Austerity or *tapasya* means voluntary acceptance of bodily pains for achieving some higher end. In human life, austerity is absolutely necessary. In ordinary life, every nice thing in the world requires austerity, from writing an artistic song to making a scientific discovery. But, it is all temporary. In spiritual life, austerity leads to self-realization and

ultimately Krishna. Life that is eternal.

Dhruva Maharaj was a five-year-old boy and underwent severe austerities by eating simply dry foliage and drinking only water. In this way, after six months, he was able to see the Supreme Lord face to face. When he saw the Lord, he said, *svamin krtartho'smi*: "My Dear Lord, I am pleased." The Pracetas observed severe austerities for ten thousand years. As a reward, Krishna appeared before them in His very pleasing form. This appealed to the Pracetas and satisfied the labour of their austerities.

In the 17th chapter of *Bhagavad-gita*, Krishna describes austerity as being three-fold—the austerity of the body, tongue and mind:

1. Austerity of body means using the body to worship God, the spiritual master, devotees and wise and experienced teachers. Also, one should practice cleanliness, celibacy and non-violence.
2. Austerity of speech means speaking truthfully, beneficially and avoiding speech that offends. One should also recite the Vedic literature regularly.
3. "And serenity, gentleness, silence, self-control and purity of thought are the austerities of the mind." (Bg. 17.16) One should detach the mind from the objects of the senses through devotional service.

Devotees perform daily austerities in their practice of devotional service. In worshiping the Deity in the temple there are certain seemingly laborious activities. *Sri-vigraharadhana-nitya-nana srngara-tan-mandira-marjanadau*. One must decorate the Deity, cleanse the temple, perform *arati* many times, prepare first-class food for the Deity, sew outfits, etc. Similarly, hard labour is involved in preaching, printing literature, distributing books and arranging programmes. By such austerity in devotional service, one is purified of material existence.

In the previous ages, austerities were performed as a means in itself, of attaining Krishna. In Kali-yuga, one can achieve the same results simply by chanting the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*. The people of this age are so fallen that the Lord has kindly given us the easiest method for self-realization. Chanting has become the austerity. But remember, by accepting this austerity in life, one regains his spiritual life and enjoys unlimited bliss. "In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy the only means of deliverance is chanting the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way." (Cc. Adi 17.21)



Teaching for Krishna

Devotee Focus

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

My thoughts go back to a pilgrimage to Vrindavan in the 1990's. With delight I recall meeting Manjari Dasi (affectionately known as Mother Manjari), a stalwart from the Durban Temple. In Vrindavan, she lived in a humble room equipped with a kitchenette that stocked bare necessities, yet she graciously prepared a sumptuous South African meal. After weeks of travelling around India, such a meal and familiar face were most welcome.

Her relationship with ISKCON began in 1978 when she supported her sons who were residents at the Cato Ridge *ashram*. She was a teacher and began her career at the age of sixteen. Despite being a young female in a male-dominated society, she worked her way up the school system to achieve the status of Principal. In 1984 Mother Manjari joined the Shri Shri Radha Radhanath Temple full-time and soon after received initiation from His Holiness Giriraj Swami. Being passionate about education, she used her professional background to teach at several international *gurukuls* (schools that use Vedic scripture as the foundation for teaching and learning). Mother Manjari was also a culinary expert and used these skills to prepare delicacies for the Deities. Together with her organisational abilities and forte in the kitchen, Manjari assisted in the opening of Govinda's Restaurant.

In an interview with Palika Devi Dasi (Manjari's daughter-in-law), she explained that although Mother Manjari devoted her life to the Temple, she maintained close family ties. Mother Manjari had four sons and six grandchildren but due to her natural ability to spread love to all those around her, she was viewed as a mother and friend in the community. In the 1980's she took on the important role as the ladies mentor at the Durban Temple. This great responsibility saw her as being a friend, confidant, mother and well-wisher to the devotees residing at the Temple. She also spent many days on the streets of Durban distributing Shrila Prabhupada's books. Having spent some time with Mother Manjari in India, Palika emphasised



Mother Manjari

Mother Manjari's close bond with two elderly women: Mother Archa Vighraha (SA) and Mother Kirtida (USA), both of whom have passed away from cancer. Mother Manjari spread her nature of deep care and compassion to her friends when she assisted them during their illness. She provided great spiritual and emotional strength

to both these devotees. Clad in a white cotton *sari*, her pleasant and warm disposition was evident in her effulgent smile. Her demeanour and character can be noted as the epitome of a Vaishnavi (servant of Lord Vishnu).

Residing in Vrindavan and Mumbai for some years, Manjari had the opportunity to cook for Shrila Giriraj Swami and Shrila Tamal Krishna Goswami. Her travels also took her to Dallas, USA, where she also served in the Deity department.

Although widely travelled, Mother Manjari had a special place in her heart for the Shri Shri Radha Radhanatha Temple, which she considered her home. One of her last engagements in Durban was the distribution of *maha-prasada* (food offered to the Deities) which she generously offered to those around her. Her versatility, intellect and impeccable character attracted her to many services which she selflessly performed.

In a recent letter, Giriraj Swami acknowledged Mother Manjari's service to Shrila Prabhupada, "Mother Manjari is very dear to me. She came from a respectable position, at a relatively late age, yet she gave herself fully to the process of Krishna consciousness and the service of the devotees. I can never forget her service, her dedication, and her preaching spirit. She has helped many, many souls in Krishna consciousness."

Mother Manjari passed away on 17th September. Her service and dedication to Shrila Prabhupada will forever be remembered.

NEW JAGANNATH PURI

Ratha Yatra

14-17 December

Rydalvale Sports Grounds

Procession on Saturday,

15 December leaving

New Jagannath Puri Temple at 11am

031-5076559 • iskcon.phoenix@pamho.net



CAPE TOWN

Ratha Yatra

Saturday, 29 December at 11am

Greenpoint Urban Park

(Opp Virgin Active)

021-6891060 or 021-6861179

iskcon.cape@pamho.net



Festival of Chariots Cape Town

Book Basics

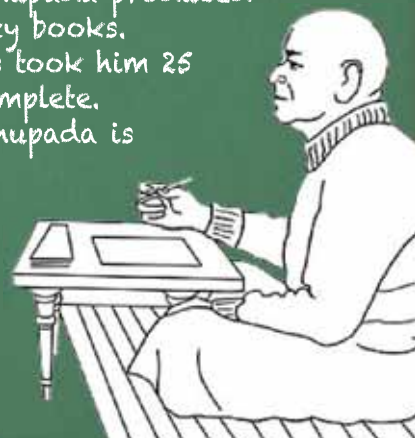
Young Vaishnavas Column

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

Shrila Prabhupada made a great contribution to the world by spreading the Hare Krishna maha-mantra. However, he considered his most valuable work to be the translation and commentaries of scripture. In 1972 Shrila Prabhupada established the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) and explained Vedic knowledge in more than sixty volumes of books. He translated texts that were originally written in Bengali and Sanskrit into English. He worked on the Shrimad Bhagavatam, Bhagavad Gita As It Is, Caitanya Caritamrita and other shorter books in a period of twelve years. In 1944, Shrila Prabhupada founded the Back to Godhead magazine. The magazine is now translated into fourteen languages. Altogether, Shrila Prabhupada produced over eighty books which have been translated in twenty-five languages and over fifty-five million copies distributed to date. Today, Shrila Prabhupada is valued as the most learned author of Vedic texts and his books are studied at many universities around the globe.

True or False

Shrila Prabhupada felt his greatest contribution was to open temples around the world.
He established the BBT in 1962. Original texts were written in Sanskrit and Bengali. Today the books are translated in ten different languages. Over 70 million copies are distributed.
Shrila Prabhupada was the editor of the Back To Godhead magazines. Back to Godhead magazine is still printed today.
Shrila Prabhupada produced under eighty books. His writings took him 25 years to complete. Shrila Prabhupada is considered the greatest author of Vedic books.



Notice Board

If you would like to receive SMS or e-mail notifications about various happenings and updates, e-mail us at: kzn@pamho.net or temple@iskcondurban.net

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

For programme updates, daily *darshan* and general information:

Temple blog: durbankrishna.blogspot.com

Temple website: www.iskcondurban.net

Facebook: www.facebook.com/DurbanKrishna

Twitter @DurbanKrishna

Ombudsman for ISKCON South Africa:

Tribanga Sundar Das

tribangasundar@gmail.com

SMS 0722715400

P. O. Box 434, Bruma, 2026

Vaishnava Calendar

9 Dec 2012	Ekadasi
10 Dec 2012	Break fast 05:33 - 09:28
23 Dec 2012	Ekadasi
	Advent of Shrimad Bhagavad-gita
24 Dec 2012	Break fast 08:30 - 09:34
28 Dec 2012	Purnima
	Katyayani vrata ends
1 Jan 2013	Disappearance of Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura (Fast till noon)
8 Jan 2013	Ekadasi
9 Jan 2013	Break fast 05:04 - 07:50
14 Jan 2013	Disappearance of Shrila Jiva Gosvami
23 Jan 2013	Ekadasi
24 Jan 2013	Break fast 05:17 - 09:51
26 Jan 2013	Purnima
	Shri Krishna Pusya abhiseka

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

Song of God

The Pandava and Kaurava armies are poised for battle. Arjuna asks Shri Krishna to draw his chariot to the middle of the battlefield. Seeing his elders and relatives on the opposing side, an anguished Arjuna feels his Gandiva bow slip. The Supreme Personality of Godhead then initiated His song, *Bhagavad-gita*. Shrila Prabhupada describes this famed dialogue: "It is the essence of Vedic knowledge and one of the most important Upanishads in Vedic literature." (Bg. Introduction p.3) Gita Jayanti marks the day Lord Krishna spoke *Bhagavad-gita* to Arjuna.

Bhagavad-gita As It Is, has been translated to 55 languages and 19 million have been distributed to date. The knowledge of the soul as marginal energy of the Supreme releases us from linguistic, social, political and national designations and unites us in our collective position of reviving our relationship with God. While there are hundreds of translations of *Bhagavad-gita*, no other translation, with its word-for-word transliteration, has made as many Krishna *bhaktas* as *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*.

When Lord Caitanya visited Shri Rangam He met a *brahmana* who was ridiculed and criticized for his incorrect pronunciation and reading of *Bhagavad-gita*. Lord Caitanya noticed tears in the *brahmana*'s eyes and asked about his state. The *brahmana* said that he only sees the beauty of Lord Krishna sitting on a chariot as Arjuna's charioteer and this fills him with happiness. Lord Caitanya embraced the *brahmana* and announced, "Indeed, you are an authority in the reading of the *Bhagavad-gita*. Whatever you know constitutes the real purport of the *Bhagavad-gita*." (Cc. Madhya 9.102)

According to the *Gita Mahatmya*, "All the sacred places of pilgrimage...dwell in that place where the book the *Gita* is kept and where it is read."

We could celebrate the *Bhagavad-gita*'s philosophical value—detailing the nature of the Supreme Lord, material nature, the living entity, time and karma; or we could celebrate Yogeshvara (Krishna who is the master of all mystics), Who orchestrated the annihilation of the miscreants and established the principles of religion...on a battlefield. Either way there is a lot to celebrate.

Kurukshetra

Bhagavad-gita 1.1, "Dhritarashtra said: O Sanjaya, after my sons and the sons of Pandu assembled in the place of pilgrimage at Kurukshetra, desiring to fight, what did they do?"

Isn't it incredulous that a battlefield can be referred to as a place of pilgrimage? According to the *Mahabharat*, King Kuru settled on that land and chose to embed the eight spiritual virtues: austerity, truthfulness, forgiveness, kindness, purity, charity, sacrifice and celibacy. Indra granted Kuru the boon that he would admit into heaven, anyone who died there while fighting or performing penance. Thus Kurukshetra became both a battlefield and a land of piety.

Writers and philosophers comment that Kurukshetra is a metaphor for the body or mind with reference to the constant battle between the higher and lower selves. Saints on the path of *bhakti* reject such speculation. Impersonalism and mythology leaves one lost to the Lord. Based on scriptural evidence, Kurukshetra is celebrated as a place of pilgrimage where *Bhagavad-gita* was spoken, and where the *gopis* pulled Lord Krishna's chariot to Vrindavan (*ratha-yatra*).

Kurukshetra, lays north east of Haryana, in North India, where Gita Jayanti is honoured as the greatest day in the history of mankind. Pilgrims from all over the world come to bathe in the sacred ponds, Sannihit Sarovara and Brahma Sarovara before entering the temples where *Bhagavad-gita* is recited. At Jyotisar, a marble chariot under a banyan tree marks the spot where Lord Krishna spoke the *Bhagavad-gita*. The festivals are state organised and on this day ministers, governors and pilgrims share the same goal. The immortal position of Kurukshetra is in the hearts of the devotees.

For those of us that are in the unenviable position of being home bound, it's heartening to know that hearing from authorised persons gives one the same benediction as going on pilgrimage, the results of both draws us closer to the Supreme.

Both articles written by Bhaktin Saras Naidoo.

Shri Shri Radha Radhanath Temple will be hosting a special celebration and recitation of Bhagavad-gita on Gita Jayanti, Sunday, 23 December 2012.

