

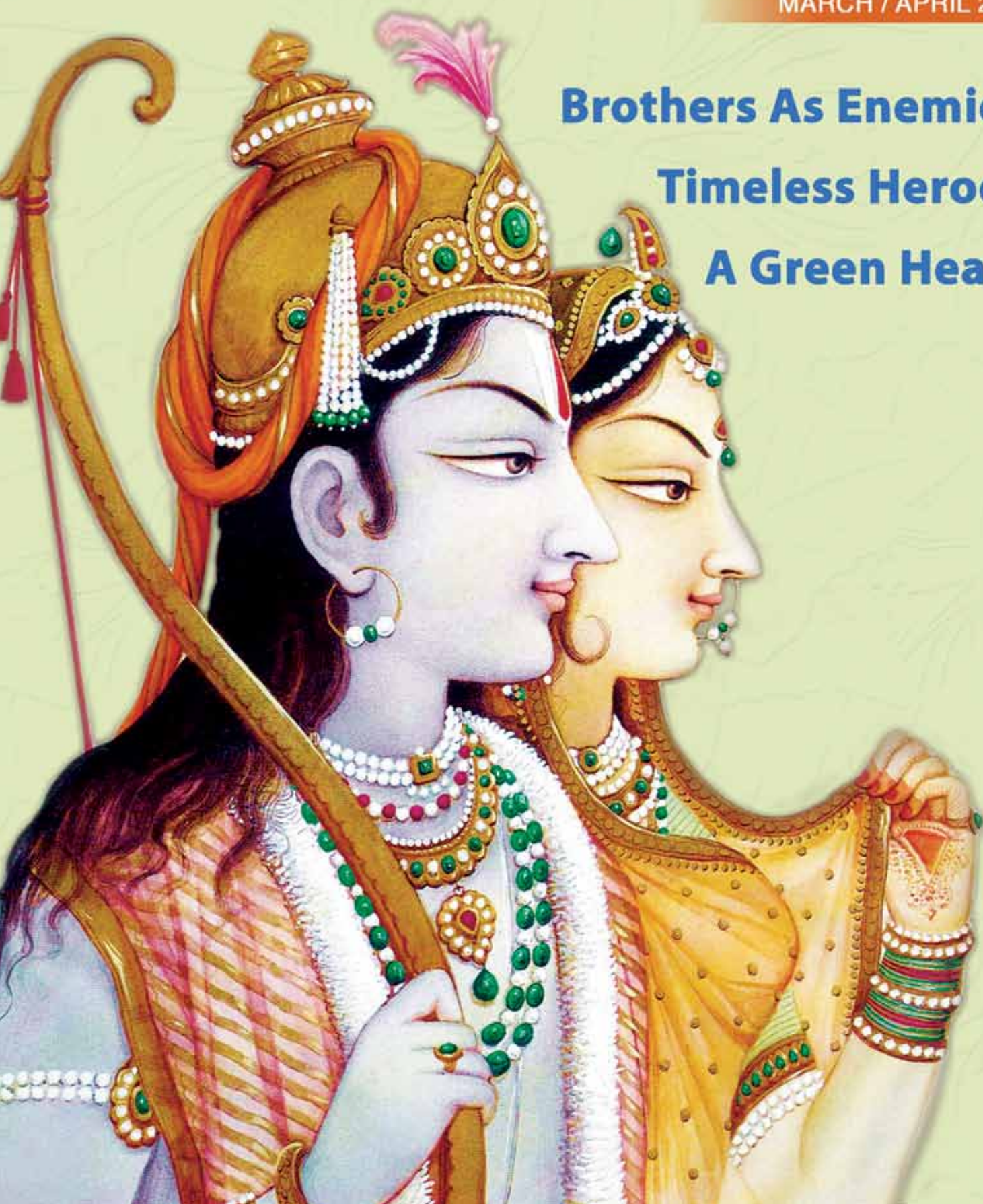


International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Founder Acharya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

HARE KRISHNA NEWS

MARCH / APRIL 2013

Brothers As Enemies
Timeless Heroes
A Green Heart



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Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple

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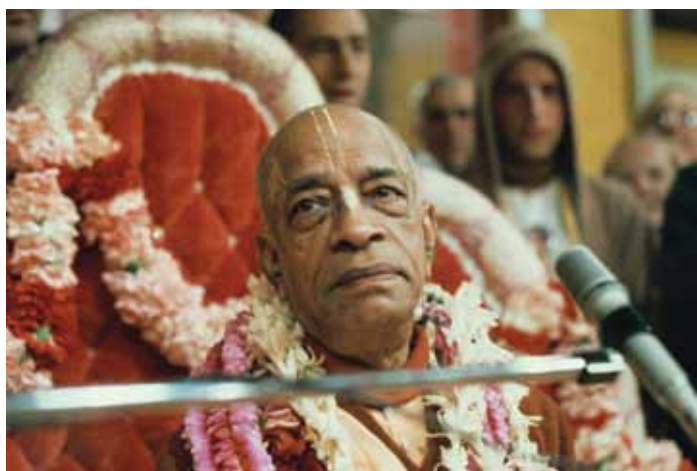
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On the Cover

Sita Ram Painting by B.G. Sharma



Founder Acharya: His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Time and Tide...

Editor's Note

When I retired from work a few years ago, I predicted leisure mornings walking my dog, Lullie, coffee with friends, and long afternoon naps. Almost eight years later, these predictions seem more like a dream.

The luxury of time is not afforded to many, yet those who have it, allow it to waste away. What if we could expand time? Be able to do thirty hours of tasks in just twenty four? During a Sunday lecture at the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple, the speaker, H.H. Brihad Bhagavat Swami spoke about two common factors contributing to today's stress: lack of time, and the "fuzzy brain" or "blurry mind" syndrome. His solution was simple: rise early and chant the Lord's holy names a fixed number of times. The result will be two-fold: expanded time and a clear, focussed mind. Can you imagine how efficient we would be? Our Holy Name series elaborates on this and other aspects of chanting.

With the resigning of the Pope Benedict XVI, the world is looking for good leadership. Our Vedic Observer takes us on a journey of gaining perspective.

"Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues," Bg. 3.21. Vedic scriptures describe Lord Rama as the foremost leader due to His high moral principles. In celebration of Ramnaumi, Lord Rama's birth anniversary, the Festival Focus and Once Upon a Time series narrates some of His pastimes.

If you missed our 25th Durban Festival of Chariots, catch a glimpse of the highlights on page 8 and 9.

Until next time, happy reading!

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 or Rasasthali Dasi: rasasthali@nitai.co.za

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Likes and Tweets

Message from the Co-President of Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple

By Vibhu Caitanya Das

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, the all attractive Lord, is always situated within our hearts and is with us at every breath and every step. Yet we seldom think or speak about Him.

In the modern age of the internet, studies show that an average person spends half their time on their smart phone, computer, and now in recent times, on a tablet. Everywhere we go we notice people clicking away whether

at a wedding, a funeral, a festival, or at a temple programme. It's addictive and we all seem to need this “drug”. We need to know what is happening all the time—whether it is good or bad news. We like, we share, and we spread the word.

These behavioural patterns are gradually changing the face of society. There is no more a need to physically meet people and create personal relationships as we can just send a message in one of so many ways....Is technology bringing the world so much closer?

Vedic scriptures talk about using everything in Krishna's service. Srila Prabhupada once commented that there is no need to use the microphone that he was speaking from, but because of his using it, the owner of the microphone company was making spiritual benefit.

Our life's goal is to always think of Krishna and never forget Him. We should be looking at ways to always be reminded about Krishna so why not use our handsets or computers in Krishna's service also. Since the average person spends about 7 hours a month on social media following a friend or their role model, why not follow Krishna and speak more about Krishna's glories. Krishna is absolute in that God is the same in His name, form, quality and pastimes.

At the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath temple we are trying to bring Krishna to the palm of your hand. We recently developed an application for the I-store and Google Play store. Here one can find daily *darshan*

of the Deities and live news and updates of all the activities of the temple.

We also recently activated our temple social sites like Facebook and Twitter (look for Durban Krishna), where we post regular programme information, pictures of our Deities and some “drops of nectar” to take us through our day. At the moment we have over 9 000 friends on Facebook and a few hundred on Twitter.

Sometimes our page or post goes viral and we reach over 15 000 page views in just under an hour, which we are sure is pleasing to Sri Sri Radha Radhanath.

This is the age of technology where any news spreads fast. Why not help us spread the glories of Sri Sri Radha Radhanath and Srila Prabhupada. You can help bring a special soul closer to Krishna by simply speaking of Krishna and spreading His glories, by liking a page or sharing a post. Let's always remember Krishna and never forget Him and help others to do the same.



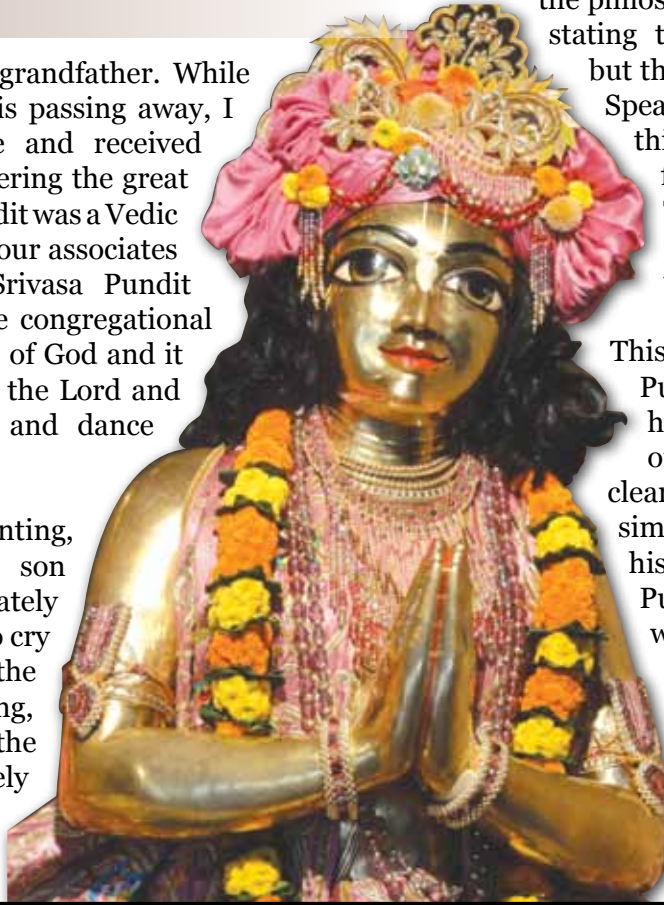
Open Hearts

Past Spiritual Teacher

By Yamuna Devi Dasi

A few days ago I lost my grandfather. While dealing with the grief of his passing away, I began writing this article and received much solace from remembering the great Srivasa Pundit. Srivasa Pundit was a Vedic *brahmana* and one of the four associates of Lord Sri Chaitanya. Srivasa Pundit joined Sri Chaitanya in the congregational chanting of the holy names of God and it was at Srivasa's home that the Lord and His devotees would sing and dance daily.

One day during the chanting, Srivasa Pundit's only son passed away. He immediately requested the women not to cry as he didn't want to disturb the chanting. Later that evening, the Lord became aware of the son's death, and immediately went to see the body. Placing His hand upon the dead child's chest,



the Lord asked him why he had left the house of his father. Miraculously the son awoke and explained the philosophy of *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* stating that the body simply perishes but the soul is eternal and never dies. Speaking to his distraught family in this way helped everyone become free of anxiety and suffering. They understood that their child, the soul, had not died but the body had simply perished.

This story of the passing of Srivasa Pundit's son and the philosophy he spoke relieved my heavy heart of all distress. I now understand clearly that my grandfather had simply changed bodies and that his soul existed eternally. Srivasa Pundit taught that by giving love we will receive love. When we open our hearts to the pure names of God, as he opened the doors of his home, then we will certainly receive the blessings of the Supreme.

Pictured Deity of Srivasa Pundit in Mayapur, India.

Universal Name

The Holy Name

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

Surya, son, ilanga, sol, soleil, sonne....No matter what language we call the sun, it still rises and sets every day, giving life equally to every part of the world. In the same way, God is one, and distributes His love and mercy to every living being irrespective of external designations. Although He is one, we call Him by different names according to our culture, religion, traditions, and language. In all scriptures and faiths, the holy name is glorified and recommended as the means to connect with God and His energy.

The Bible says, "From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised." (Psalm 11.3)

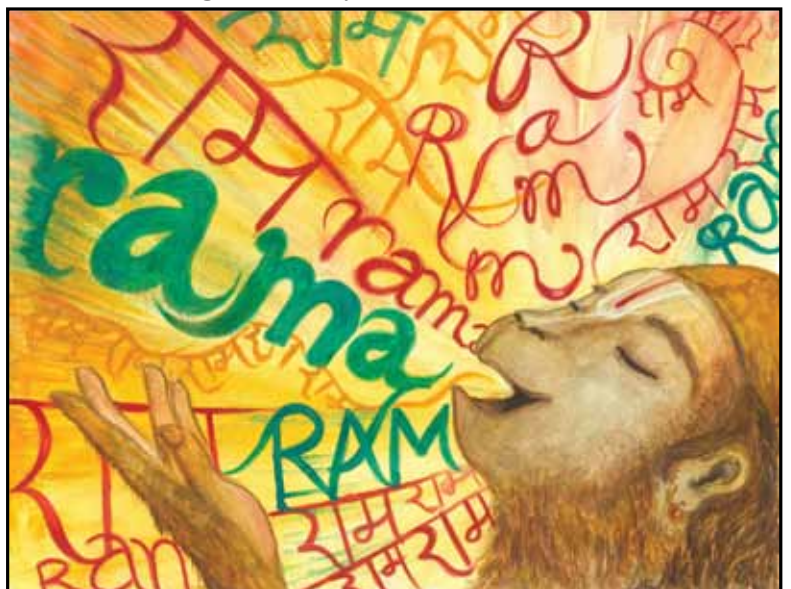
The Quran states, "Recite in the name of thy Lord Who creates." (96:1)

The Jewish scriptures elaborate, "Magnified and sanctified be the great name of God throughout the world. Exalted and honoured be the name of the Holy One." ("The Rabbi's Kaddish," Siddur, HH 33)

The Vedic scriptures conclude, "One should chant the holy names, chant the holy names, chant the holy names of God. There is no other way, no other

way, no other way for success in the age of Kali [the present age]." (*Brhan-naradiya Purana* 38.126)

What is the success in Kali-yuga that the Vedic scriptures elucidate? Is it sense enjoyment, comfortable living, the glory of fame and position, or the fulfilment of the myriad material desires that never truly satisfy us? Real success is the fulfilment of the soul's spiritual nature, which is full of knowledge, eternity, and bliss. The uncovering of our spiritual nature starts with glorifying and chanting God's holy names. There is a Latin prayer, "May the Lord be in my heart and on my lips." What better way than by chanting God's holy names.



Righteous Rama

Festival Focus

By Venu Gopal Das

As a child I remember watching the series, *Ramayana*, every Sunday. I am fairly certain it was the only spiritual activity I engaged in at the time and on account of the subtitles, probably the only reading too. But when it came close to Ramanaumi celebrations, I embrace the notion that behind all the violence, repetitive sound-effects and gruesome make-up, I learnt innumerable valuable lessons from the series. Such is the potency of Lord Rama's example.

On numerous occasions Srila Prabhupada mentioned that Lord Rama was "ideal"; an aspect of this incarnation was to teach us to be ideal, therefore He depicted the qualities of a perfect citizen, husband, king, and son. A deeper understanding of His purpose was to punish those who practiced atheistic lifestyles or engaged in activities that were ignorant of the Lord. That personification was the demonic Ravana, whose name meant 'he who causes others to cry.' Ravana was completely unfazed by other people and did not once think that he would suffer any reaction for his sinful acts. He also had become proud of his nation's mechanical progress and wealth, both of which gave him further reason to not acknowledge the existence of God.

Lord Rama was the opposite and exhibited qualities that showed the highest principles of moral conduct. To honour the word of his father, He gave up his birthright which included His kingdom, wealth, friends, and home. Even when His wife, Sitadevi, was abducted by Ravana, He could have easily gone back to Ayodhya and gathered its armies, but He adhered to His instruction, to never return under any circumstance until His fourteen years in exile were served.

Jatayu, the vulture king, fought heroically trying to save Sitadevi from Ravana but failed. The injuries sustained in the battle later resulted in his death. In Vedic custom, it is compulsory that proper funeral and last rites are performed for the deceased. Lord Rama personally conducted the funeral and accepted these duties before continuing His search for His wife.

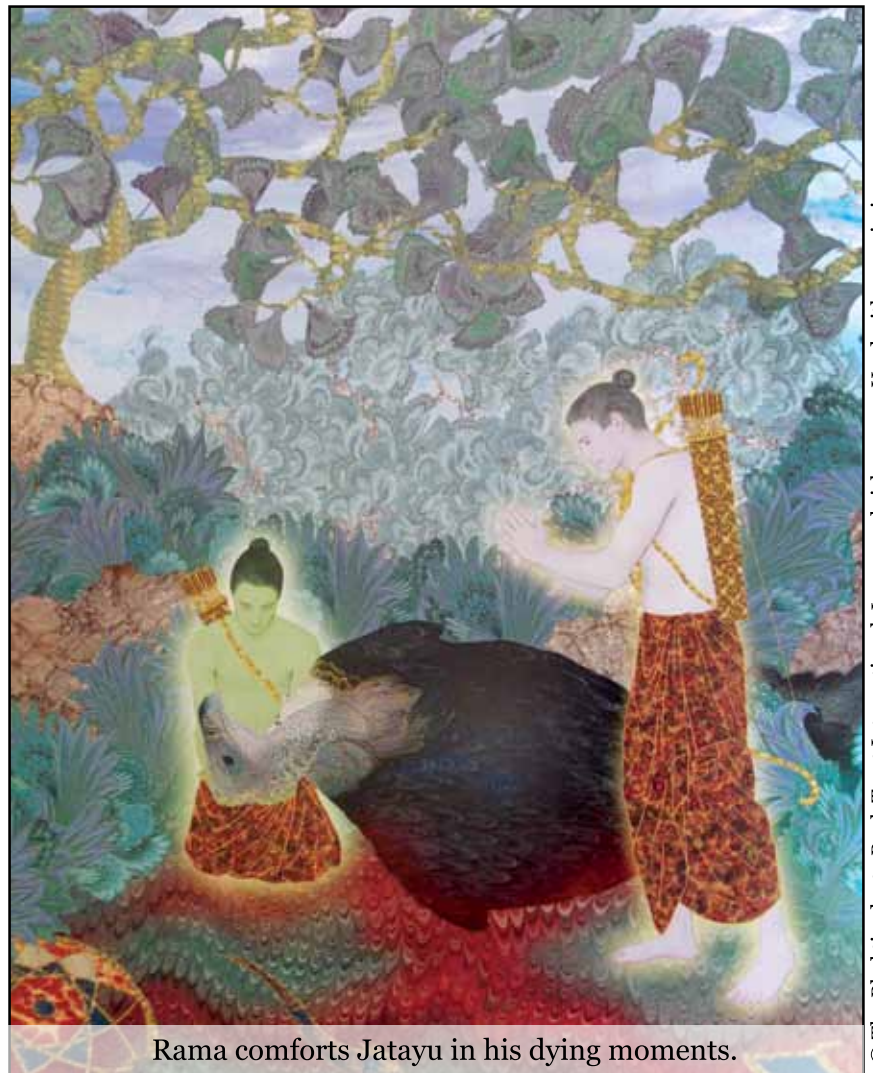
Srila Prabhupada mentions in the purport to *Bhagavad-gita* 1.36 that Lord Rama was so saintly that even today people wish to live in the kingdom of Lord Rama. I experienced this first hand when I visited Janakpur, the

area where Sitadevi was raised; all of the locals still refer to the area as a kingdom of Lord Rama. All the places that Lord Rama visited are still maintained and daily worship continues. We should note that Lord Rama appeared in the Treta-yuga, an era which took place eons ago. This year, our President's 'state of the nation address,' was overshadowed by the media's interest in the murder of a supermodel. Of recent times I cannot think of any national leader who has dramatically left any positive impression on his people.

Jatayu, the vulture king, fought heroically...

But the reality is that we are living in the Kali-yuga, an age of quarrel and turmoil, that being noted, where is

the sense of complaining about how bad things are getting. Instead why not try to better our lives by aspiring to be ideal individuals. Krishna once said to Arjuna, "Whatever action a great man performs, common man will follow; and whatever standard he sets by example, the world pursues." (Bg. 3.21) We may never be able to reach the standards of Lord Rama, but we can try to improve ourselves. Let us endeavour to be better individuals and in turn live in a better society. *Srimad Bhagavatam* 9.11.23 states that anybody who listens to the pastimes or activities of Lord Rama will ultimately be freed from the disease of envy.



Rama comforts Jatayu in his dying moments.

Brothers as Enemies

Once Upon a Time Series

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

For centuries, the *Ramayana* has been famous for its awe-inspiring tales of adventure and love but more for disclosing the fundamental truths of human existence—the trials and triumphs of human nature and experience. How else would it have deep impact if it were not filled with true stories infused with the presence of God? The *Ramayana* relates the pastimes of Lord Rama, an incarnation of God, who appeared as a mortal to teach many truths through his words, deeds, behaviour, and devotees. He also came to establish religious principles and protect His devotees, and at times it seemed that He was dependent on others to do the task. Although the Lord can conquer the demons by the blink of an eye, He sometimes chooses to use His devotees as instruments so they may participate in His pastimes. Ultimately, by exhibiting human-like qualities and activities, he wants to attract us to Him. Thus, the attractive stories in *Ramayana* continue to purify our minds and draw our hearts. One such story reveals the challenge we even nowadays face with sibling rivalry.

Lord Rama was grief-stricken. While in exile, His beloved wife, Sita, had been kidnapped by

demon Ravana.

The Vanaras were ape-like men with mystic powers and immeasurable strength. Sugriva agreed to use his Vanara army to look for Sita and bring her back to Rama. But first, Sugriva needed Rama's help to vanquish his elder brother, Vali. Vali, the Vanara king, had banished Sugriva from his kingdom, had stolen his wife and continued to harass him. Rama, accepting Sugriva as a friend, assured him that Vali would soon be killed by His infallible arrows. Sugriva was delighted and vowed unwavering loyalty and service to his new friend.

Rama wanted to know how this rivalry between the two royal brothers had begun. Sugriva explained that after the death of their father, Vali had become the king and Sugriva had remained subservient to him.

One day, the demon Mayavi had come to Kishkinda, the monkey city, challenging Vali to a duel. Seeing the two powerful brothers fuming as they approached him, the demon ran into a cave, fearing his imminent death. Vali told Sugriva to wait at the cave's entrance while he pursued the demon. Time went by, but Vali did not return. Although Sugriva had insisted to accompany his brother, Vali made him promise to stay there until he returned. A year passed and Sugriva still waited. Then, to his horror, he saw a large volume of blood seeping out of the cave. Assuming that his brother had been killed and not wanting the demon to escape, he placed a boulder over the hole of the cave and returned to Kishkinda heartbroken.

Although he was reluctant, Sugriva was installed on the throne. However, it was Vali who had killed the demon, and when he finally returned to his kingdom, he thought that his brother had betrayed him and usurped the throne.

Although Sugriva implored for forgiveness, the enraged Vali exiled him and took his wife.

Sugriva fled, taking shelter in a mountain he knew that his brother could not enter. Some time before, Vali had defeated

Dundubhi, a powerful celestial demon

appearing in the form of a buffalo, and

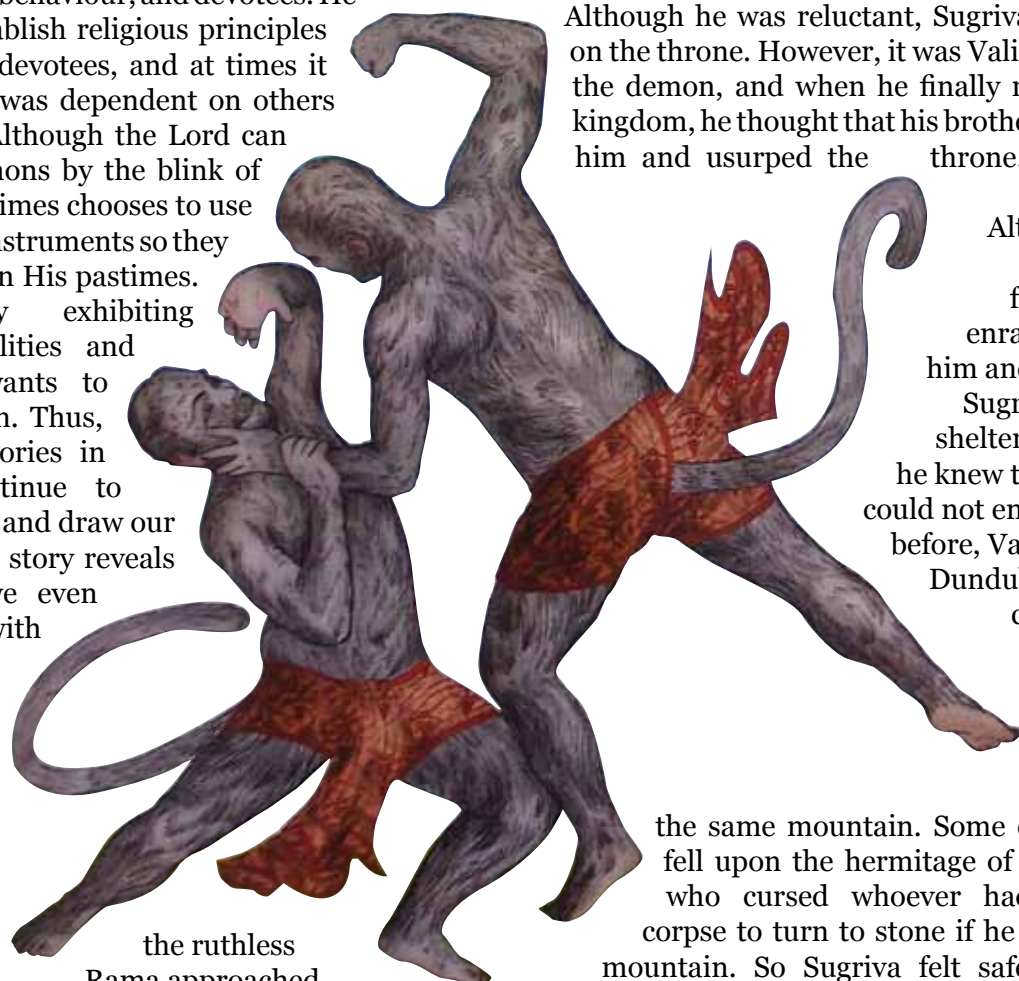
had tossed his body to

the same mountain. Some drops of blood fell upon the hermitage of sage Matanga, who cursed whoever had thrown the

corpse to turn to stone if he came near the

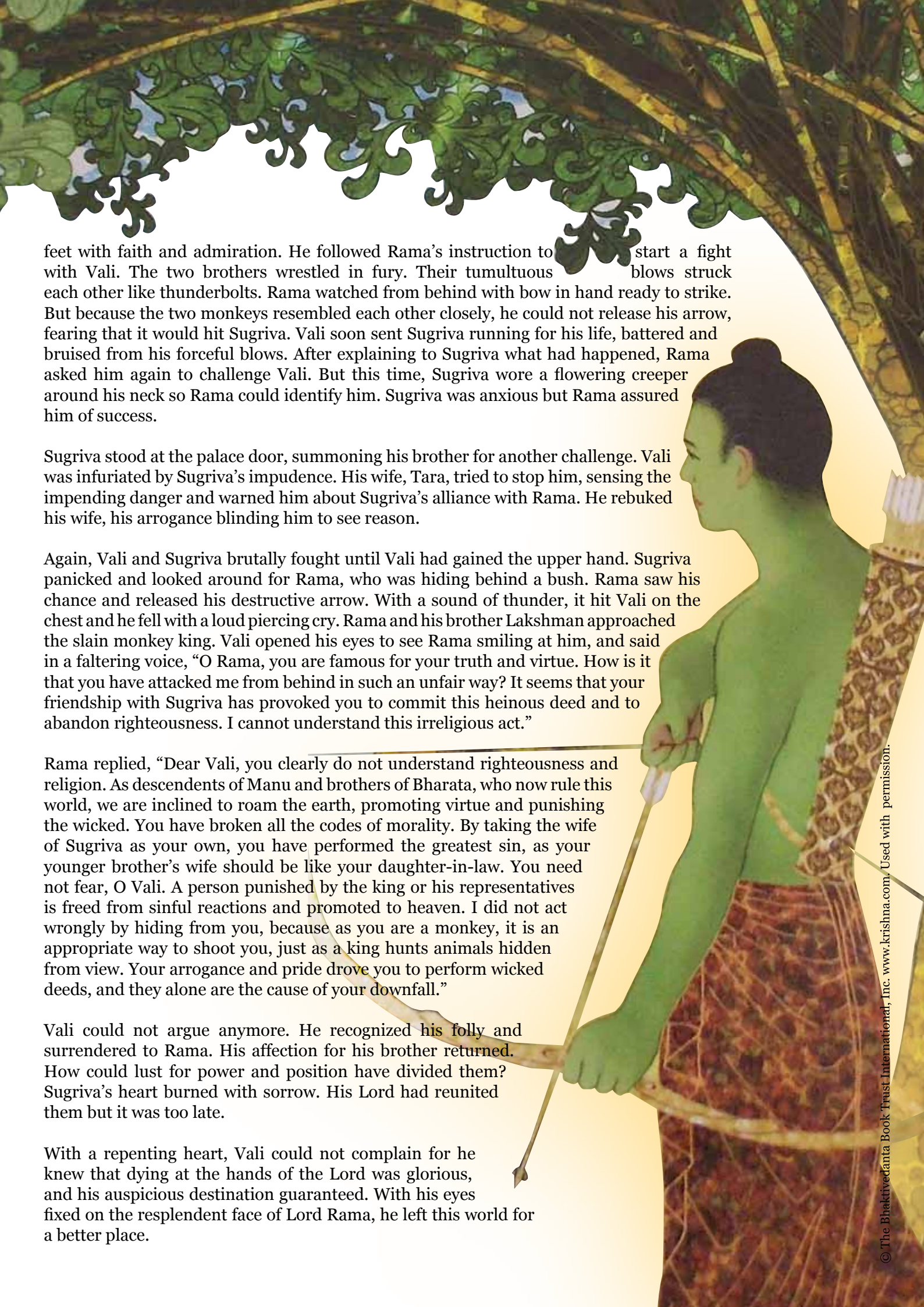
mountain. So Sugriva felt safe there in his mountain residence.

Now in front of Sugriva, Rama looked unconquerable with his mighty build and huge bow. Still, Sugriva knew that Vali was no ordinary opponent. He could climb to the top of mountains and hurl down their huge peaks with his hands. He would snap numerous trees as if they were small sticks. Sugriva wanted to see Rama's prowess. Taking him to the place where Dundubhi's bones lay scattered on the rocks, he told Rama that those heavy bones were immovable. Rama laughed, playfully lifted the bones and flicked them eighty miles away. Although impressed, Sugriva was still not convinced. He showed Rama seven enormous trees and challenged him to pierce one of them with his arrow. Rama took aim and his arrow passed through all seven trees. Sugriva fell at Rama's



the ruthless

Rama approached



feet with faith and admiration. He followed Rama's instruction to start a fight with Vali. The two brothers wrestled in fury. Their tumultuous blows struck each other like thunderbolts. Rama watched from behind with bow in hand ready to strike. But because the two monkeys resembled each other closely, he could not release his arrow, fearing that it would hit Sugriva. Vali soon sent Sugriva running for his life, battered and bruised from his forceful blows. After explaining to Sugriva what had happened, Rama asked him again to challenge Vali. But this time, Sugriva wore a flowering creeper around his neck so Rama could identify him. Sugriva was anxious but Rama assured him of success.

Sugriva stood at the palace door, summoning his brother for another challenge. Vali was infuriated by Sugriva's impudence. His wife, Tara, tried to stop him, sensing the impending danger and warned him about Sugriva's alliance with Rama. He rebuked his wife, his arrogance blinding him to see reason.

Again, Vali and Sugriva brutally fought until Vali had gained the upper hand. Sugriva panicked and looked around for Rama, who was hiding behind a bush. Rama saw his chance and released his destructive arrow. With a sound of thunder, it hit Vali on the chest and he fell with a loud piercing cry. Rama and his brother Lakshman approached the slain monkey king. Vali opened his eyes to see Rama smiling at him, and said in a faltering voice, "O Rama, you are famous for your truth and virtue. How is it that you have attacked me from behind in such an unfair way? It seems that your friendship with Sugriva has provoked you to commit this heinous deed and to abandon righteousness. I cannot understand this irreligious act."

Rama replied, "Dear Vali, you clearly do not understand righteousness and religion. As descendents of Manu and brothers of Bharata, who now rule this world, we are inclined to roam the earth, promoting virtue and punishing the wicked. You have broken all the codes of morality. By taking the wife of Sugriva as your own, you have performed the greatest sin, as your younger brother's wife should be like your daughter-in-law. You need not fear, O Vali. A person punished by the king or his representatives is freed from sinful reactions and promoted to heaven. I did not act wrongly by hiding from you, because as you are a monkey, it is an appropriate way to shoot you, just as a king hunts animals hidden from view. Your arrogance and pride drove you to perform wicked deeds, and they alone are the cause of your downfall."

Vali could not argue anymore. He recognized his folly and surrendered to Rama. His affection for his brother returned. How could lust for power and position have divided them? Sugriva's heart burned with sorrow. His Lord had reunited them but it was too late.

With a repenting heart, Vali could not complain for he knew that dying at the hands of the Lord was glorious, and his auspicious destination guaranteed. With his eyes fixed on the resplendent face of Lord Rama, he left this world for a better place.



A Lifetime Achievement

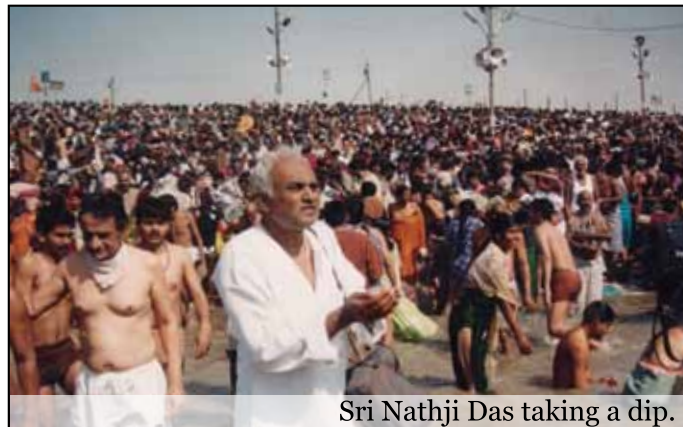
By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

Twelve years ago I had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attend the Maha Kumbha Mela. I was a third-year university student at the time and remember the excitement as well as trepidation I felt when I boarded an overnight train from New Delhi to Allahabad.

Maha Kumbha Mela, "the great festival of the urn", occurs every twelve years. The exact date is determined by astrological calculations and the festival dates back to the beginning of creation. The Puranas state that during a scuffle between the *devas* (demigods) and the *asuras* (demons) over a pot of immortal nectar, four drops of the nectar spilled in different parts of northern India. Since that time pilgrims have gathered to bathe in the holy waters at these places, including the confluence of the rivers Ganges, Yamuna, and subterranean Saraswati.

In preparation for the festival, a "tent town" springs up at the banks of the rivers. This temporary 6,000 acre town is known as Kumbhnagar. On 10th February this year, the day of Mauni Amavasya (the most auspicious of the 55 day festival), my parents, Sri Nathji Das and Pancali Devi Dasi were fortunate to bathe in the holy waters. This 2013 visit concluded my Dad's third pilgrimage to the Mela. His first was in 1989 when he accompanied His Holiness Indradyumna Swami.

Sri Nathji explains, "In 1989 I did not know what to expect. When I took my first dip in the icy waters of *sangam* (confluence), I desired to return for the next Mela. Braving the crowds, weather and austere conditions, I returned in 2001. This visit to the Mela (2013) has been most rewarding as I have now achieved my lifetime goal."



Sri Nathji Das taking a dip.

My mother described her experience at the Mela as an adventure, "We walked amongst great *sadh*us, *naga babas* (naked men covered in ash), politicians and their supporters, and millions of ordinary pilgrims. Reaching the *sangam* to bathe on the main day was difficult as we were amongst 10 million people. Men, women, and children bathed in a common area. Due to the massive crowds and chilly weather, we could only bathe for a few minutes thereafter returning to the sandy river banks to warm up and return to the ISKCON camp."

The ISKCON camp provided warm meals for both camp residents and passers-by. On the main bathing day devotees broke the camp record by distributing over 10 000 plates of *prasada*. A continuous cultural stage programme of Vedic discourses and entertainment, over thirty motorised dioramas, as well as the beautiful deities of Gaura Nitai on the *padayatra* bullock cart made the ISKCON camp the most attractive site. Srila Prabhupada attended the Mela in 1977 and used the opportunity to spread the names of Krishna. This year more than 300 000 of Srila Prabhupada's books including 100 000 *Bhagavad-gita*'s were distributed.

We can all aspire to delve into the sights, sounds and holy waters of the Mela in 2025.

Strawberry Jam Squares

Vaishnava Kitchen

- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup soft butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon maas/yoghurt
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla essence
- 6 tablespoons strawberry jam



Method

Preheat the oven to 180 degrees. Combine the flour, baking powder and salt in a small bowl.

Cream the butter and sugar together until smooth. Stir in the maas and vanilla. Add in the flour mixture to make a soft dough. Divide the mixture in half. Place one half of the mixture in an even layer across the bottom of a 20 cm square, greased pan. Spread the jam on top of the dough. Grate the remaining dough evenly over the jam.

Bake for approximately 25 minutes or until golden brown. Allow it to cool, sprinkle icing sugar on top and cut into squares.

Moments of Prayer

By Smangele Magudulela

I've been told that there is a world where every word is a song, every step a dance, and every day a festival. Having lived the life of a civil engineering student for the past four years, this place of continual singing and dancing is a place I need to visit (perhaps even emigrate). Where is this place of sheer ecstasy? It's beyond the ozone layer, further than the furthest star, planet or ball of gas that our telescopes perceive, and light years away from the topmost heavenly planet. But simultaneously only a few seconds away... The spiritual world, where every step is a dance, and every word a song.

The Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple is a spiritual oasis floating in the heart of Chatsworth. A single drop of water from the ocean gives the qualities of the ocean; similarly my two week stay at temple has shown to me what eternity in the spiritual world can be like.



It wasn't all yellow daisies, pink unicorns, and flowing saris though, I'd be lying if I said that. Material conditioning always come into play, but still it was more smiles than frowns. I made sure to wake for *mangal-arati*, at 4.30 am every morning, and for the first few days it was great. "I'm alive, I'm awake, I'm enthusiastic" was my motto. Come day 6, however, the motto had melted into "I'm alive, half-awake, with a dash of enthusiasm". But still I pressed on. At what most would consider an insanely early hour, I was ready and waiting in the temple room. And it was all worth it. There's nothing quite like chanting *japa* in the early hours with other devotees. If your mind starts to wonder then all you have to do is look up and there you'll see the painting of Krishna beckoning you to play with Him and His friends. For me there exists no greater incentive to chant attentively than His

sweet, inviting, and playful smile. I'll never forget my first *padayatra*, a 9km walk up and down the hills of Chatsworth. We distributed books, chanted, crawled, danced, laughed, and gave out *prasada* while inching our way back to temple. At the end I was physically exhausted yet spiritually enthused. Every muscle in my body throbbed as we made our way down that last hillside. Eventually we caught sight of the *chakra* on the temple tower. Joy (and relief) vibrated with every syllable of the *maha-mantra*. I didn't want that moment to end. The pain in my legs was a quick

reminder of my physical fatigue. In that last stretch I mustered every ounce of energy I had and danced and sang like never before.

I've had so many experiences these past two weeks; eating bread and soup and popcorn for breakfast, writing prayers to Krishna, singing for Their Lordships, going on street chanting, listening to classes on *Srimad Bhagavatam*, and distributing books are but some of them. From these experiences I've taken the mood of prayer. When living at the temple your entire day is structured

around Krishna. He is your centre and this naturally leads you to constantly think of Him.

Hearing, chanting, and remembering the Lord are the first 3 of the 9 processes of *sadhana-bhakti*. During my stay at the temple, I was able to immerse myself precisely in these 3 processes. If only I can perfect hearing, chanting, and remembering Krishna, then every moment can be a moment of prayer.

Smangele Magudulela has just qualified as a civil engineer from Wits University. In the December vacation she was singing in a Krishna Lila theatrical performance that toured major cities of India including Vrindavana Dhama. She began her career in a reputable engineering company in Pretoria early this year.

A Square Foot of Eternity

Be part of a once in a lifetime privilege.
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Mayapur, India
ISKCON's largest temple in the world

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Only 200 000 square feet remaining

only \$150

A Green Heart

By Anisha Gangaram

The earth and all her gifts are what sustain us, yet she is constantly ravaged. Our exploitative mentality has turned lush forests into barren wastelands, or even worse, chemical deposit sites. To create awareness about the impact of our actions on the environment, children from the local communities and schools were invited to the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple for a Kids Eco Awareness Morning.

The programme began and ended with vibrant dancing and melodious songs to the Deities in the temple, in the hope that the Supreme Lord will instil a genuine love for the earth in the hearts of the children.

We must love our earth – she belongs to Krishna, after all, was the essence of the message by keynote speaker, Her Grace Urmila Devi Dasi, a disciple of Srila Prabhupada and a well-known leader in ISKCON. In a warm and personal interaction, she emphasized that everything in nature belongs to Krishna and must therefore be revered.

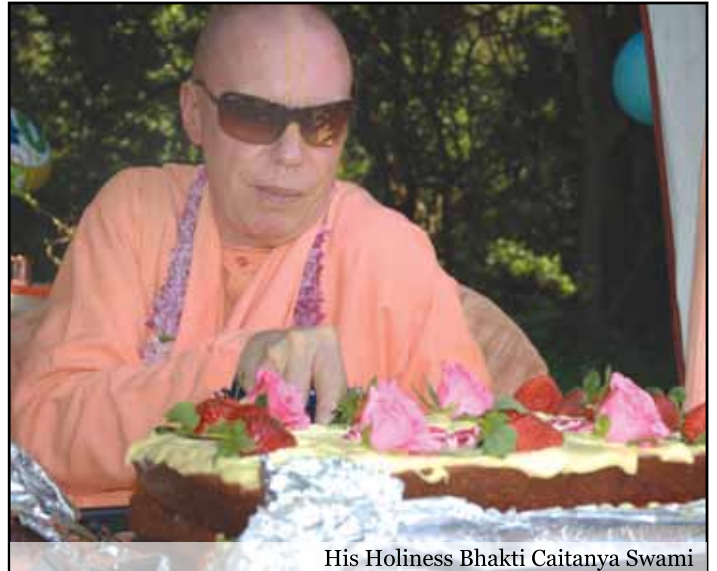
Seated in the amphitheatre, the kids participated in fun and informative presentations by Yashna Maharaj, an Environmental Consultant on Renewable Energy, Bret Thompson of the “Meat-free Monday” programme, and Troy Govender, the Environmental Advisor for Eskom in South Africa. Children clamoured to be the first to answer questions posed by the speakers, and scrambled for the environmental gifts.

The speakers impressed that we all have a responsibility to be guardians of our earth’s resources, and we can live in harmony with nature by taking small but realistic steps to change our habits. The children also relished planting trees and their final treat was a scrumptious lunch. Saharsh Rambaram, a 7 year old learner from Avon Primary in Westville, exclaimed with a delighted grin: “I can! I can make good decisions!”



Zebra, Springbok, and Mantra

By Rasamrita Dasi



His Holiness Bhakti Caitanya Swami

The devotees in Pietermaritzburg planned a “chanting day” picnic with His Holiness Bhakti Caitanya Swami in Queen Elizabeth Park. We wanted to spend time with Maharaja as it was his 40th anniversary of joining ISKCON.

Maharaja joined the Hare Krishna Movement in London but is originally from New Zealand. He came to South Africa in the late 70’s and has been a fountain of inspiration to the devotee community. Today, Maharaja travels all over the world, including Russia. Not only is he a spiritual authority but also a high ranking manager within ISKCON. This small celebration was to honour all that Maharaja has done for us over the years.

The day before the picnic Maharaja read from scripture to create the right atmosphere. Queen Elizabeth Park is situated in the scenic Natal Midlands and on entering we were greeted by zebra and springbok. The natural, luscious setting was the perfect backdrop for our day of chanting.

We paired off and spent time hearing and chanting to our partners for constructive ways to improve our *japa*. This exercise proved helpful to listen attentively to the syllables of the *maha-mantra*.

Maharaja even surprised us with street theatre. He directed a drama depicting the restless mind and how to bring it under control.

At the end some shared their realizations. Kirtida Dasi said, “Even though I have been chanting for 30 years, this experience has given me a boost in my chanting.”

The primary role of the spiritual master is to connect the follower to God and the simplest way is through chanting Krishna’s names.

Pope in Perspective

Vedic Observer

By Dwijamani Dasi

White smoke poured forth from the copper and steel chimney on the roof of the Sistine Chapel. It was greeted with cries of delight and applause from the 150 000 strong crowd below. Soon after, the bells of St. Peter's rang out, confirming that a new Pope had been elected. As Pope Francis stepped onto the balcony of the Basilica, he was greeted by that sight. Through his eyeglasses, he took it all in. The eyes of the world met his and he asked for prayers.

Pope Benedict XVI, the 111th Pope, resigned on February 11th at age 85. He cited a 'lack of strength of mind and body' as the reason for his resignation. He is the first pontiff to leave the job alive in 598 years. On March 14th, his successor was chosen by 115 cardinals. Jorge Mario Bergoglio (76 years), now named Pope Francis, will lead the world's 1.2 billion Roman Catholics. The single-most influential leader



Pope Benedict XVI

of the world has taken his name from St. Francis of Assisi, a servant of the poor and an admirer of nature. Pope Francis faces a host of challenges ahead. Morale among the faithful has been hit by widespread child abuse scandals, corruption, and in-fighting among the Church hierarchy.

In 1968, Prabhupada wrote a letter to the then-Pope, Paul VI, detailing his personal background and mission. His letter defined love of God and explained that human life was meant to learn to love God, yet people were bewildered by sense gratification. Srila Prabhupada remarked, "Because Your Holiness is the Head of a great religious sect, I think we should meet together and chalk out a programme for co-operation."

He tried in the 70's to meet the then-Pope, John Paul II. A meeting was arranged but unfortunately the Pope was ill. So Prabhupada met with Cardinal Pignedoli,

who was in charge of non-Christian liaisons. Pope John Paul did in fact receive several Krishna conscious books from different devotees around the world. It was important to Srila Prabhupada that all people are assisted on their spiritual paths and that they achieve pure love for God. He wanted intelligent spiritual dialogue between people of all cultures. Our recent Durban Festival of Chariots completely embraced this desire—Culturally Many, Spiritually

Everyone needs a strong, powerful, and pure spiritual leader.

One.

Everyone needs a strong, powerful, and pure spiritual leader. In spiritual life we start with faith in our spiritual authority. After faith, comes knowledge. By associating with saintly persons and reading scripture, we develop our spiritual knowledge. That faith and knowledge bring us to actual devotional service. Just as the intrinsic nature of salt is to be salty and the nature of sugar is to be sweet, the nature of human beings is to serve. The greatest and highest form of service is serving Krishna with love.

Srila Prabhupada, an exalted spiritual master, taught us these things.

There are four sinful activities that characterise this present Age of Kali. They are meat-eating, gambling, illicit sex, and intoxication. In some form or other, they have manifested in the House of God. The Catholic Church is not the only organised religion facing such challenges. Over time, all religious bodies have experienced such difficulties and the followers have found their faith tested. In *Bhagavad-gita* we are encouraged to surmount the weaknesses of the heart. Wherever sincere devotional service to the Lord exists, material contamination cannot coexist. Krishna says, "One who works in devotion, who is a pure soul, and who controls his mind and senses is dear to everyone, and everyone is dear to him. Though always working, such a man is never entangled." (Bg. 5.7)

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Timeless Heroes

God Conscious Parenting

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

Seven year old Sam has three heroes: Superman ("because he's strong and he can punch your head off"), Lionel Messi ("because he's a great footballer"), and his mom ("because she works hard at work and home"). On dress-up day at school, Sam is adorned with his blue and red Superman suit. Unleashing his infinite strength, Sam runs through the wind releasing his cape in full view. Sam is just one example of the many children who are engulfed by 21st century heroes.

Whilst paging through the Independent on Saturday (23 February 2013), an article featuring an eight year old girl and her hero, Oscar Pistorious (South Africa's Paralympic gold medallist, who is currently facing charges of murder) caught my attention. The father of this quadruple amputee explains his daughters reaction to seeing her hero in court, "She is aware of what's happened and a bit upset by it all....To try to explain to an eight year old why this man she sees as a hero is in court isn't easy. But she knows he's done something wrong." Surely the contradiction of the child's 'hero' also being a 'possible offender of the law' is confusing.

The Oxford Dictionary defines hero: A person, typically a man, who is admired for courage or noble qualities.

In contrast to this definition, media provides numerous 'heroes' for our children. Are they true heroes? The Vedic scriptures provide an interesting answer: A hero is the perfect servant of God. These heroes strive to use their talents and qualities to serve Krishna.

Before a child is exposed to the world, their first heroes are their parents. Ultimately it is our responsibility to inculcate values in children. The foremost way of expressing this is by example.

In *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Canto 2, Srila Prabhupada explains that there is symmetry between the early lives of all devotees of the Lord. Look at great leaders like Maharaj Parikshit who enacted Krishna's pastimes from the time he was a little boy. This was due to the influence of his parents constantly narrating pastimes of the Lord to him. He also watched his father perform deity worship and mirrored his actions. Other worthy examples of true heroes are Prahlada Maharaja, King Yudhisthira and Druva Maharaja who can be contrasted with today's heroes who cling to power and fame.

During a recent seminar on Sadhana in Parenting, Urmilla Devi Dasi explained the importance of stories in a child's life. The wonderful aspect of these Vedic stories and their heroes is they do not have sell-by dates; there is one for every child no matter the age, gender or current trend. It is left entirely in the hands of parents to bring these heroes to life.

The characters in *Ramayana* are comprehensive and perfect examples, showcasing the role as a parent, child, husband, wife, friend, master, and sibling. Children love to hear stories of the brave Lord Rama who rescued his wife, Sita, with the help of the mighty Hanuman. Remarkable character traits can be seen in Rama's strength as he broke Lord Shiva's bow to win Sita's hand in marriage, his righteousness in following his father's instruction to leave for the forest, Hanuman and other animals being dedicated servants of their master, Sita's devotion to her husband, and Laksman's allegiance to his brother.

Create excitement and anticipation by enacting this pastime with your children. Recreate the Dandaka forest in your home. Together with impromptu dialogue, animal and human sounds and with makeshift props, role-play the *Ramayana*. This will be the ideal platform for discussions on true heroes and will assist your children, even teenagers, to find their moral-centre.

Let us switch off the television, put-away the newspaper....swop the fairytale bed-time story for the Krishna book, to meet our timeless heroes.

Please write to us: parents@iskcondurban.net





Spot 10 Differences



Notice Board

- Congratulations to the recently initiated disciples of His Holiness Bhakti Caitanya Swami, His Holiness Bhaktimarg Swami, and His Holiness Kadamba Kanana Swami
- Congratulations to Mayapur Candra Das and Romashna on their recent nuptials.
- Congratulations to Kavitha and Aman on the arrival of their twin daughters and Nirupama Radhika and Krishna Charan on the arrival of their daughter.
- His Grace Hari Charan Das passed away on Sunday, 10 March 2013 and Myna Devi Dasi passed away on Thursday, 7 March 2013. Both devotees were disciples of H.H. Krishna Das Swami. The

Vaishnava Calendar

5 May Su	Ekadasi
6 May Mo	Break fast 06:27 - 10:04
9 May Th	Sri Gadadhara Pandita—Appearance
14 May Tu	Tulasi Jala Dan ends
19 May Su	Srimati Sita Devi Appearance Srimati Jahnava Devi Appearance
21 May Tu	Ekadasi
22 May We	Break fast 06:37 - 10:07
23 May Th	Sri Jayananda Prabhu Disappearance
24 May Fr	Appearance of Lord Nrsimha (Fast till dusk)
25 May Sa	Sri Madhavendra Puri Appearance Sri Srinivasa Acarya Appearance
29 May We	Sri Ramananda Raya—Disappearance
4 Jun Tu	Ekadasi
5 Jun We	Break fast 06:45 - 10:11 Srila Vrindavana Das Thakura—Appearance
18 Jun Tu	Ganga Puja
20 Jun Th	Fasting for Pandava Nirjala Ekadasi
21 Jun Fr	Break fast 06:51 - 10:15 Panihati Cida Dahi Utsava

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

Vaishnava community miss them and offer our deepest condolences to their families.

- For SMS or email notifications and updates, subscribe to temple@iskcondurban.net
- For general queries call the temple at 031-4033328 between 9.30 am - 5 pm.
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Rare Ugra-Nrsimha

By Bhaktin Saras Naidoo

A rare Ugra-Nrsimha Deity resides at the ISKCON world headquarters in Mayapur, India. His eyes are fierce and feet wide, stepping out of a pillar and encircled in flames. Is this form born out of the imagination of a talented artist? No, the *archa-vigraha* or deity is carved according to *shilpa-sastra* (scripture defining the dimensions and features of the Lord), by *shilpans*, specialised deity sculptors, who follow the ancient techniques of their previous *acharyas*.

The Sankacharaya of Kanchipuram gave a special blessing to his disciple to carve this Ugra-Nrsimha Deity. When a Deity carving is complete, *brahmanas* then appeal to the Lord to invest His unlimited energy into the deity. The deity is therefore non-different from the Lord Himself and should not be considered a statue or even an external representation of the Supreme.

The worship of Ugra-Nrsimha began on 28 July 1986. Hundreds of thousands of people have visited this Deity and His *pujari*, Pankajanghri Das, has documented some of their experiences.



Pankajanghri recounts the time when 8 year old Revati suffered brain damage after a terrible fall. Her mother called and asked him to offer prayers. Three days later, Revati's scans showed a remarkable change that left the neurologist astounded and she made a full recovery.

When Yashoda's 85 year old foster father lapsed into a coma, she had a tape recording of the *maha-mantra* playing constantly at his bedside. He awoke and described to them the smiling face of the Ugra-Nrsimha Deity. He felt peaceful and died a few days later. He was not familiar with this form of the Lord but his experience reaffirms that even if one member of the family is engaged in devotional service, the entire family benefits.

There are consequences of negligence in worshipping Ugra-Nrsimha, hence the rare Deity, but we allay our fears that the recommended form of worship in the age of Kali is the chanting of the holy names. Still, when we offer prayers to Lord Nrsimha we feel His protection, just as a lion-cub feels protection (not fear) when carried in its mother's mouth.

APPEARANCE OF LORD NRSIMHA

Friday, 24 May 2013

Celebration begins at 6 pm