

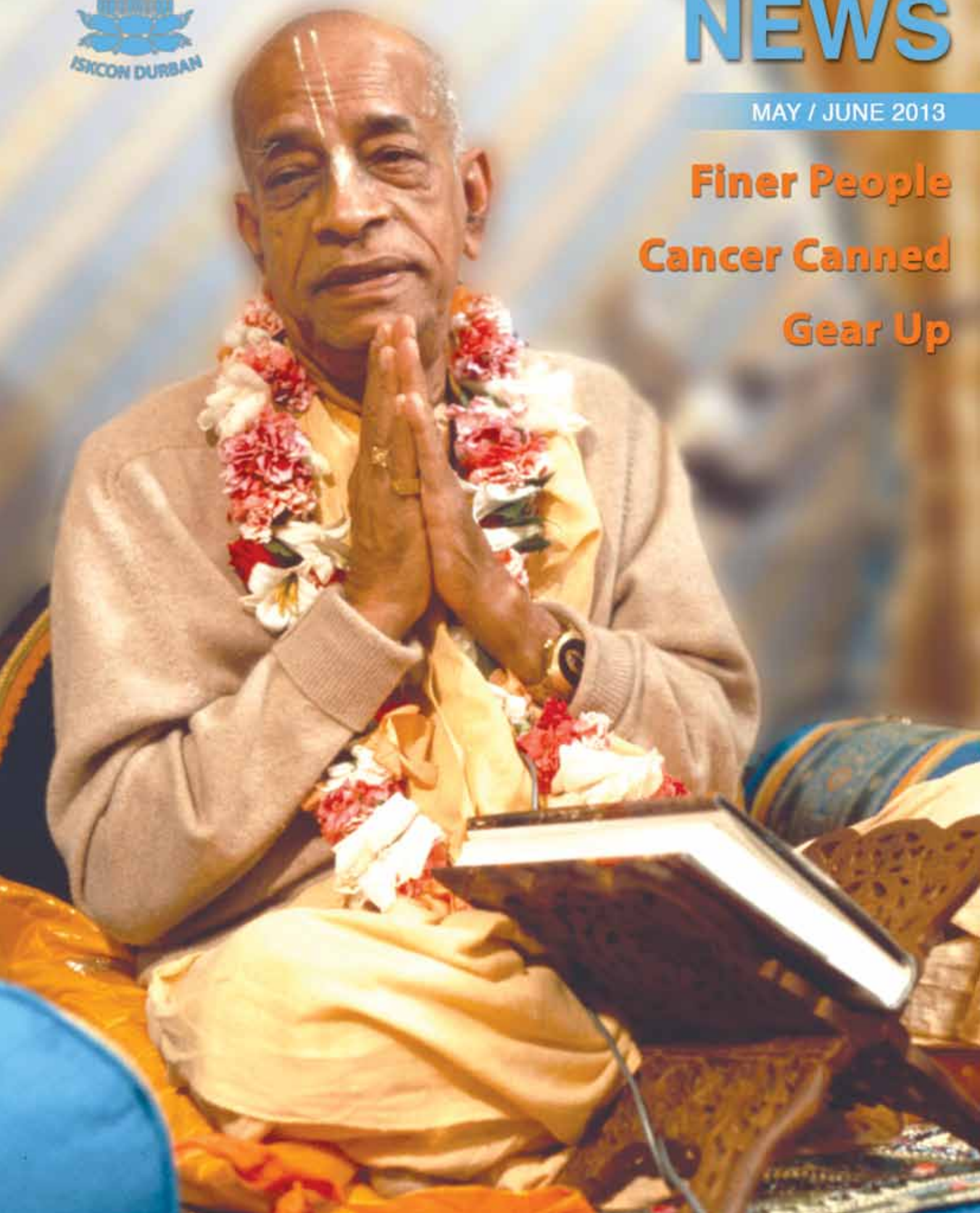


International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Founder Acharya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

HARE KRISHNA NEWS

MAY / JUNE 2013

Finer People
Cancer Canned
Gear Up



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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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Leaders and Lessons

Editor's Note

Who has influenced you the most as a child? Generally the answer to this question is a teacher or a parent or, if you are lucky, a spiritual leader. My answer is all three. My high school Afrikaans teacher Ms. Isaacs taught me how to re-program my mind to like something I didn't. For example, using her unique skill, Afrikaans became my favourite subject, and contributed to a 20% increase in my marks. This unusual skill has helped me face difficulties and challenges throughout my life. My father is one of my greatest teachers. He taught by example how to be gentle, compassionate and witty. His courage, humility and firm faith in Srila Prabhupada's teachings is what I aspire to cultivate.

I was fortunate to have met His Holiness Partha Sarathi Das Goswami when I was six years old. He showed me how to hold my chanting beads, taught me the *maha-mantra*, but most especially, he showed me respect and affection. Feeling both spiritually and emotionally nurtured as a child, has given me the tools to boldly face life's obstacles.

We start learning lessons from our first breath and only end when we take our last. Many of the articles in this issue reflect on teachers and lessons in our lives. Not necessarily the ones who taught us Math and Science, but every person who has shared invaluable lessons with us. Our responsibility to them is to pass on these life skills. Let us nurture and help each other grow.

"I shall the effect of this good lesson keeps as watchman to my heart," Shakespeare.

Haripriya Devi Dasi

On the Cover

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



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Chain of Succession

Srila Prabhupada

By Nashvin Gangaram

The word “guru” is often used to refer to an expert in a particular field, like a “computer guru,” for example. In traditional Indian society, teachers are also often referred to as gurus. However, the most important type of guru is the spiritual guru—the spiritual master—because he guides his disciple in spiritual growth, which does not end with the death of the material body. In general, a spiritual master is a representative of God and helps the disciple to re-establish his loving relationship with God. Srila Prabhupada explains that, although he is not God, he is respected as much as God, because he is a dear servant of the Lord. There are various categories of spiritual masters: the *chaitya guru* (guru situated within the heart), *shiksha guru* (instructing spiritual master), and *diksha guru* (initiating spiritual master).

The *chaitya guru* is the expansion of God that is situated in the hearts of all the living entities. He is the witness of the living entity’s activities, and inspires from within when the soul becomes inclined to re-establish his relationship with God. In *Bhagavad-gita* 10.10, Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, tells Arjuna, his disciple, “To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.” It is comforting to know that we can always receive guidance from God, if we endeavour sincerely.

A *shiksha guru* is anyone who guides and instructs someone in Krishna consciousness, or spiritual life, on the basis of the revealed scriptures. When one develops faith in a particular *shiksha guru* with whom they have a relationship, and is inspired to vow to follow his instructions and render service to him, he may accept that person as a *diksha guru*, by the process of initiation. According to Srila Prabhupada, this process is one of the preliminary requirements to advance on the path of God realization.

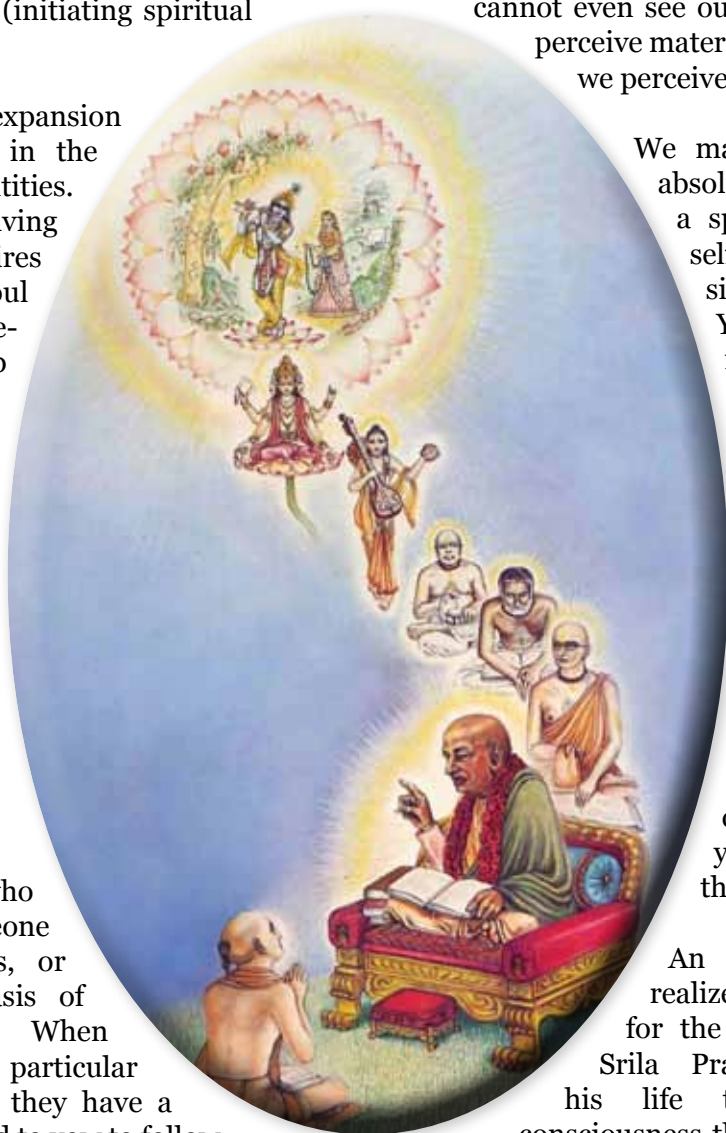
It is important to understand that Krishna is the original spiritual master, and His knowledge is perfect and complete. He instructed some disciples in transcendental knowledge, and then they instructed their disciples, and so on, forming a disciplic

It is comforting to know that we can always receive guidance from God, if we endeavour sincerely.

succession. Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gita* 4.2, “This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way.” This is the method approved by God for acquiring perfect knowledge. In the Vedic system of knowledge, there is no need for acquiring knowledge by independent research. Indeed, this is discouraged, because of our imperfect senses. For example, without sufficient lighting, we cannot even see our own hands. If we cannot perceive material things perfectly, how can we perceive subtle things?

We may question whether it is absolutely necessary to approach a spiritual master to become self-realized. Can we not simply study the scriptures? Yes, studying scripture is certainly important. Actually, those very scriptures recommend that one should approach a spiritual master. In *Bhagavad-gita* 4.34, Krishna tells Arjuna: “Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth.”

An example of a fully self-realized soul and *shiksha guru* for the entire world to follow is Srila Prabhupada. He dedicated his life to distributing Krishna consciousness throughout the world, along the way opening 108 temples, initiating over 4000 disciples, and translating and presenting over 80 volumes of Vedic texts. You can also accept Srila Prabhupada as a *shiksha guru*, by following his instructions, associating with him through his books and recordings, and by becoming part of his mission.



Finer People

Excerpts from Jayadvaita Swami's Lecture

The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust Africa recently decided to profile the work and mission of Srila Prabhupada by introducing The Bhaktivedanta Swami Lecture. It was held at Wits University earlier this year:

“Let me begin by saying something about the person in whose honour it is named—and how what he taught is relevant to our topic today. His name is a long one: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Scholars most often refer to him more briefly as 'Bhaktivedanta Swami' or, increasingly these days, by the respectful title by which his followers most often refer to him: Srila Prabhupada.

“I first met Srila Prabhupada in New York City in 1968. He had come to America with little more in his possession than a few rupees and some trunk loads of the first three volumes of his translation, with commentary, of a Sanskrit epic known as *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, a book revered in India but little known in the West—a book of philosophy, culture, practical knowledge, and above all, spiritual understanding.

That which lasts is unchanging, and that which changes never lasts.

The earliest of these writings, all in Sanskrit, are known as the Vedas, and so the tradition of wisdom they represent is known as the Vedic tradition. The word Veda, which literally means “knowledge,” comes from the Sanskrit root word vit—to know—which is related to our English words “wit” and “wisdom.” So what was this “Vedic wisdom” that Srila Prabhupada had come to teach? Why should we care about it? And what does it have to do with education?

“According to the Vedic tradition, education should aim at enabling us to achieve success in four objectives: religion, economic development, the satisfaction of our needs and wants, and finally

liberation. When we speak of the first objective—of religion—this does not refer to a sectarian dogma or creed. The Sanskrit word here is *dharma*, and it refers to something broader and deeper. Dharma refers to an essential intrinsic quality, what something or someone is naturally meant to do. The *dharma* of water is to flow. The *dharma* of sugar is to be sweet, and ultimately, our *dharma* is to serve God. Every one of us is a part of God and therefore meant to serve God.



“We all serve in some particular occupation, and that is another meaning of *dharma*. Some of us serve as teachers, some as military or political leaders, some as business people or farmers, some as workers and technicians. The particular service we do is another aspect of our *dharma*. While serving, we are meant to follow some basic moral principles: truthfulness, cleanliness, austerity, mercy. This too is an aspect of *dharma*—a multifaceted term.

“And by serving in whatever our occupation, we should naturally achieve the second objective: economic development. We should have a roof over our head, clothes on our back, food on our table, money in our pocket. And so we can achieve the third objective: to satisfy our needs and desires. And finally we come to the fourth objective: liberation. Liberation of the soul from material entanglement is something our modern education wants nothing to do with.

“When the Vedic sages speak of the soul, they're not merely talking about religion. They're speaking of something fundamental, of the most essential object of all inquiry. The Sanskrit word is *atma*, another word rich in meaning. It can also be translated as “spirit,” or simply as “one's self.” To know our *atma* is to know who we ultimately are. And how can one be an educated person if one doesn't know who one is, or doesn't even ask? And so the ancient Greek aphorism: 'Know thyself.'

“What is this 'self'? For the Vedic view we can turn to the *Bhagavad-gita*, the celebrated book of wisdom spoken by Sri Krishna: 'That which lasts is unchanging, and that which changes never lasts. Those who are seers of the truth have ascertained this by studying the ultimate nature of both.'

“But the conscious self within the body is none of these. And therefore when I think of myself—and others—only in terms of the outward body, not considering the inner self, I am in illusion, in ignorance. We study nature, we study the world, but we don’t study the conscious force that moves the world. We don’t study the self. Instead, we just take it for granted that the self and the body are the same. We misidentify the self with the body—‘I am American,’ ‘I am South African’—and on top of that illusion we build our education, our science, our lives, our societies.

“And so we focus on that which is changing, and we lose sight of that which lasts. According to the *Isopanisd* everything within the universe, whether animate or inanimate, belongs to the person who ultimately controls them—the Supreme Lord. We should therefore accept only what we need for ourselves, what is set aside as our quota, and we should not grasp for other things, knowing well to whom they belong.

“Education should make a person finer, not more foolish or more vicious. The person who is factually in knowledge, Krishna tells us, sees every human being—in fact, all beings that live—with an equal eye. When we see that the body is but an outward covering of the self and we see that the true self is the spark of consciousness within, then we can come to this true equality of vision. And this is the vision of the truly educated person.

“The *Isopanisd* says that one should gain both material knowledge and spiritual knowledge side by side. In this way, one can go beyond material existence and enjoy what the *Isopanisd* calls ‘the nectar of immortality.’ For the body there is no question of immortality, and for the conscious self within the body there is no possibility of death.

“Vedic education endeavours not to stuff a child with knowledge but, above all, to build character, to instil the values of cleanliness, truthfulness, austerity, and mercy. It promotes economic development especially through a simpler way of life, in which we make proper use of nature’s gifts and live in harmony with nature. In this way it enables us to meet our needs, and it teaches us the art of being satisfied with what nature gives us, and not trying to scheme and exploit and bully our way into trying to get more, at the expense of the lives and happiness of others. And it keeps always in view that our present life is temporary and that its true purpose lies in spiritual realization.

Education should make a person finer, not more foolish or more vicious.

“But education as we know it today is quite a different story. Morality and personal character are of little concern. And liberation is out of the picture. The focus is squarely on economic development—on making money. And for this our education trains leaders to build an over-industrialized world where millions of people can toil so that a few can live in luxury with a middle class in between to serve as emerging target markets. With such an education, we focus on meeting our needs and wants, and not only meeting them but expanding them, in the expectation that the more we get, the happier we will be.

“We need an education that enables us to see that whatever exists in this world is not our property, to be fought over or cleverly divided and exploited, but the property of God, the ultimate controller and owner of all. We need an education that teaches us how to work in harmony with nature, not against it, by living a simpler life, meeting our basic needs by depending on nature’s gifts. And we need an education that enables us to keep in view the ultimate goal of human life: to rise above what is illusory to what is real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality.

It was to promote this sort of education that Srila Prabhupada journeyed on that freighter to New York, that he came here to South Africa, and that he wrote so many books.

The knowledge found in these books is like gold.

And I dare say it’s more valuable than all the gold ever found in South

Africa. And this gold needs

no mines, no exploited workers, no ruinous environmental impact, no international competition.

It’s pure and beneficial, and it’s yours for the taking. This doesn’t

involve switching from one religion to another. Whatever our religion, whatever our culture, whatever our

race, whatever our nationality, we can take advantage of this knowledge and benefit. Its value is universal, crossing all

lines.

To download the full audio recording and transcribed version of *The Bhaktivedanta Swami Lecture 2013* please visit www.bbtafrica.co.za/bhaktivedanta-swami-lecture/



Ahead of His Time Past Spiritual Teacher

By Rasa-sthali Dasi

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, a mid-nineteenth century Vaishnava, wrote over one hundred works of literature in Sanskrit, Bengali, and English. He wanted to preserve the Vaishnava literatures, which were becoming lost and less regarded in both spiritual and academic circles due to the British influence in India. His writings cover practical hints for devotional action to descriptions of the matchless joy of a fully realised devotee of Krishna. He wrote Vaishnava *siddhanta* (conclusions), comparative studies with both Christianity and Islam, and pioneered bringing devotion to Krishna to every soul scorched by the disappointing encounter with the material world.

In his book *Harinam Chintamani* (the wish-fulfilling gem of the holy name) he gives the aspirant devotee simple techniques to better chanting: “The devotee should make it a regular practice to spend a little time alone in a quiet place and concentrate

deeply on the holy name. He should utter and hear the name distinctively.”

He wrote *Jaya Radha-Madhava*, a beautiful song describing Krishna and His devotees in Vrindavan.

This song is sung daily at all ISKCON centres across the world before the morning *Srimad Bhagavatam* class. Srila Prabhupada, our founder and *acharya*, said that this song, which is only four lines, is “A picture of Vrindavan [the spiritual world]. Everything is there—Srimati Radharani, Govardhana, Yasoda, and all the cowherd boys.”

In 1999 Shukavak Das wrote a biography on Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, *Hindu Encounter with Modernity*. Today many of us struggle with the balance of a modern lifestyle with our spiritual traditions. The publishers commented that Bhaktivinoda Thakur “created a unique synthesis of tradition and modernity. Instead of relinquishing modernity, he utilized it in his writings and instead of rejecting Hindu tradition in the presence of rational thought, he strengthened it.” We can all take a leaf out of his book.



How to Mess Up Your Life with Astrology

Book Review

By Saras Naidoo

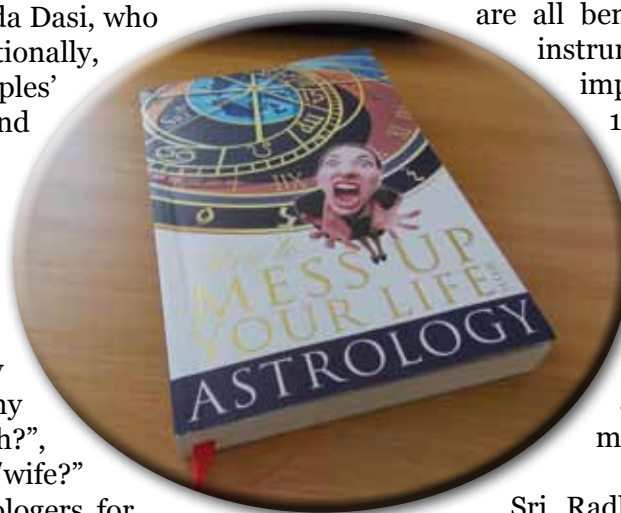
If your only knowledge, like mine, about astrology is that Saturn’s influence is always blamed for misfortune, then reading *How to Mess Up Your Life with Astrology* will release us from the fear of Saturn and the influence of other stars and planets in our lives. Author Sri Radha Govinda Dasi, who travels and consults internationally, writes candidly about peoples’ experiences, expectations and attitudes on astrology.

“Vedic Astrology (Jyotish) is an ancient Indian science of karmic analysis to change ourselves for the better.” (p. 24) However, the most commonly asked questions are, “Is my chart good?”, “Will I be rich?”, “Will I find a good husband/wife?”

While some people visit astrologers for tacit assurances, others are gripped by paranoia, exposing themselves to unscrupulous practitioners, whose predictions, laced with half-truths and innuendo has led to ruin. In contrast to the title, the

book shows us how not to mess up our lives with astrology. Sri Radha empowers us with techniques to help strengthen mental resolve, understand our true identity and generate positive energy.

My favourite chapter, “Meet the Protagonists,” portray the nine influences (*grahas*). Significantly Saturn’s (Shani) position need not be feared but could be accepted as challenges that provide the opportunity to develop perseverance. “...the planets are all benefice because all of them are instrumental in helping you fulfil an important aspect of your life.” (p. 167)



Interestingly, the book was completed on 14 December 2011, the anniversary of the disappearance day of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, a great astrologer, astronomer, and the spiritual master of Srila Prabhupada.

Sri Radha Govinda Dasi, who is the president of the Mayapur Astrologic and Psychosomatic Sacred Sciences, manages to steer us through the complexities of astrology, and yes, you may reach for your shades – after reading this book your future is going to look that much brighter.

A Piece of Heaven

By Yamuna Devi Dasi

As the shimmering sun sets on the banks of the mighty Ganges, the golden domes of a majestic temple rises. This is Sridhama Mayapur, the land and birth place of Lord Sri Chaitanya. It is here, in this precious land in West Bengal that Srila Prabhupada's vision manifests.

Srila Prabhupada wanted to give Krishna consciousness to the world on a grand scale, one of which was a detailed vision for a Vedic Planetarium:

“Now you all together make this Vedic Planetarium very nice, so that people will come and see. From the description of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* you prepare this Vedic Planetarium.”

He turned to Ambarish Prabhu. “How do you like this idea, Vedic Planetarium?”

“It seems like a very nice idea.”

Prabhupada laughed. “You also like? So finance this project, Vedic Planetarium.”

“Where will this be?” Ambarish asked him.

“Mayapur. My idea is to attract people of the whole world to Mayapur.”

In order to fulfil his desire, Alfred Ford also known as Ambarish Das, the great grandson of legendary Henry Ford of the Ford Motor Company took the lead in completing this extraordinary project.

One may ask why build the largest Vedic temple in such a remote part of the world?

I remember my visits to Mayapur and its simple and serene lifestyle. Secluded from the harsh modern society and bombardment of increasing irreligiosity, it was the perfect unspoiled place that I could call ‘My time with God.’ Srila Prabhupada wanted such a structure in this part of the world not only because it would bring millions but the vibrations that would surge from this holy land would empower mankind

with the much needed spiritual understanding it requires.

Ambarish Das also explains about sacred space and the necessity to create a place of worship and understanding for all people—a place to gain knowledge of how Vedic astrophysics and ancient tradition coexist in harmony. As a true exposition of Vedic cosmology it is being built according to Vedic geometry. The 35 storey structure evokes Vedic architecture and the cosmos through various depictions from scripture. The design reflects a Vedic village and contains a temple, *kirtan* hall, and an exhibition hall to name a few.

This spiritual oasis will contribute to a new age of spiritual dimension in a decaying society. When I look at the world engulfed by disease, war, and distortion I think that for the spiritual upliftment and benefit of all humanity what greater miracle could such a place of enlightenment be.

Now we can all be part of such a monumental offering to the world. Recently the Planetarium committee proposed a brilliant opportunity. Since the temple is to be opened by 2016, which also marks the 50th anniversary of ISKCON, urgent funds to complete the temple are needed. “One Square Foot of Legacy” allows anyone to sponsor one square foot of the temple for just \$150/R1450. In this way hundreds of thousands of people could own a piece of the temple. Thus we can be a part of the phenomenal architecture and structure which will be a vital contribution for many in propagating God consciousness to the entire world.

When I close my eyes and envision the Vedic Planetarium; I see the domes glistening in the sunlight and hear the voices of millions chanting the glories of God with true understanding and insight. My breath is taken away by Prabhupada's vision and love. I can really be a part of a piece of heaven on earth.



Recent photo of the construction of the Vedic Planetarium.

Voracious Bhima

Once Upon a Time Series

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

Bhima trudged through the dense forest in the dead of night. The cart that he dragged along was filled with sumptuous delicacies. Looking at them, Bhima's mouth watered. His enormous physique and muscular frame demanded great amounts of food. It was difficult to appease his voracious appetite and since it had been deprived during the last few months, he was even hungrier.

Who would have thought that Bhima, the mightiest of the Pandava brothers, would be in such a predicament? He and his brothers had relished the comforts of royal life and had been famous for their chivalry and power. But now cheated out of their kingdom and exiled by their rival cousins, they were forced to hide in disguise as poor brahman mendicants. Bhima remembered how he had carried his mother and four brothers to escape the fire that was started by their enemies to kill them.

They had finally sought shelter in this simple village of Ekachakra where they lived in the house of a kind-hearted brahman. Every day the five brothers would beg for food and would subsist on whatever was given to them. Although Bhima suffered from these harsh austerities, his courage did not diminish. The spirit of a *kshatriya* warrior ran through his veins, and his duty to uphold righteousness and protect the innocent was foremost on his mind.

The people of Ekachakra were fearful of a Rakshasa dwelling in this forest. For a long time, the demon had terrorized them and would kill them for his food

whenever he pleased. The villagers finally approached him and proposed that if he stopped attacking them at will, each week one of them would be sent to him with a large cartload of food. In turn, the demon should protect them from their outside enemies. The cannibal agreed but demanded that he also eat the person who delivered the food. So it happened that when the Pandavas were living with the brahman's family, it was the brahman's turn to deliver the goods. When the Pandavas' mother, Kuntidevi, heard about their host's distress, she requested Bhima to take the brahman's place that night. She knew that he was the strongest opponent for such a vicious demon.

Bhima glanced at the food again. His hunger was too much to bear. He began to eat ravenously as if he had been starving for months. The fire of hunger that normally burned in his stomach was not easily vanquished. While his mother and brothers could easily fast on auspicious holy days like Ekadasi, he had failed to do so. Once he had asked the sage Vyasadeva for his advice about this, disclosing that it was impossible for him to fast on the Ekadasi days twice every month.

How could he reap the glorious benefits of fasting on Ekadasi, which relieves one from sinful reactions and bestows devotion to God? After some thought, Vyasa suggested that Bhima fast only once a year on the Nirjala

Ekadasi day, but as the name implied, he had to fast even from water. By observing this Ekadasi, Bhima learnt that all one's sinful reactions are burnt to ashes and one achieves the piety of visiting all holy places. More than that, one derives the benefits of fasting for all Ekadasis of the year. Knowing that the goal of all fasting days was to increase one's remembrance of the Lord by worshiping Him and chanting His holy names, Bhima had maintained his



Nirjala Ekadasi fast once a year, and his brothers had followed his example.

But today was not such a day. As Bhima gulped down the delicious food, he shouted the demon's name, "Baka! Baka!" The earth trembled with gigantic footsteps. Baka emerged from among the trees, his deafening cries echoing through the forest. "Who is this fool who is eating the food that was intended for me?" he thought. His massive body, red eyes, red beard, and red hair complemented the fury that gushed through them.

Bhima spared their lives warning them that they should give up eating human flesh

Bhima continued eating and smiled at the Rakshasa. Seeing that Bhima was ignoring his challenge, he rushed towards Bhima with upraised arms. Still, the Pandava continued to eat. Baka pounded Bhima's back with his fists but still the mighty Bhima went on eating. Baka roared and tore up a huge tree. He whirled it towards Bhima who caught it with his left hand and threw it back. His appetite to fight was ignited. Bhima leapt out of the cart and caught tree after tree which was hurled towards him. Baka finally threw himself over Bhima and seized him. They both dragged and pounded each other violently, rolling on the ground, making it shake. Bhima tightened his grip and smashed the demon's head with his own forehead. Gradually, Baka grew tired. Bhima struck blows on Baka's chest and broke his back in two, eventually killing him. Hearing the pitiful screams of the demon, Baka's friends and relatives rushed to the scene staring at Baka's mountainous form lying in a pool of blood. Bhima spared their lives warning them that they should give up eating human flesh. Heeding his warning, they ran from that place.

Bhima lifted Baka's corpse and placed it on the cart. He would deposit it at the village entrance for all to see. He felt relieved that these innocent villagers would not be tortured any longer and that he had paid his debt to his brahman host. His appetite was fully appeased. Lord Krishna, the intimate friend and cousin of the Pandavas, would surely be pleased to know of his victory and attempts to rid the world of miscreants. However, Bhima did not know that this was just the beginning of the many trials and obstacles he and his brothers would have to face and the sorrow and heartache they would have to endure in their efforts of maintaining righteousness. But luckily because of their determination, faith, adherence to religious principles, and love for Krishna, they passed all tests and till today are celebrated as the most glorious men that walked the earth.

Vaishnava Calendar

2 July Tu	Sri Srivasa Pandita—Disappearance
4 July Th	Ekadasi
5 July Fr	Break fast 06:51 - 10:17
7 July Su	Sri Gadadhara Pandita—Disappearance Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura—Disappearance (Fast till noon)
9 July Tu	Gundica Marjana
10 July We	Sri Svarupa Damodara Gosvami—Disappearance Sri Sivananda Sena—Disappearance
14 July Su	Sri Vakresvara Pandita—Disappearance
19 July Fr	Ekadasi
20 July Sa	Break fast 06:48 - 07:20
22 July Mo	Guru (Vyasa) Purnima Srila Sanatana Gosvami—Disappearance First month of Caturmasya begins (green leafy vegetable fast for one month)
27 July Sa	Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami—Disappearance
30 July Tu	Srila Lokanatha Gosvami—Disappearance
31 July We	The incorporation of ISKCON in New York
2 Aug Fr	Ekadasi
3 Aug Sa	Break fast 06:39 - 10:14



***17 August, Saturday
Ekadasi
Radha Govinda
Jhulana Yatra
Begins***

18 Aug Su Break fast 06:26 - 10:08

***21 August, Wednesday
Jhulana Yatra ends
Lord Balarama
Appearance
(Fast till noon)
Second month of Caturmasya
(yoghurt fast for one month)***



***28 August, Wednesday
Sri Krsna Janmastami
(Fast till midnight)***

***29 August, Thursday
Srila Prabhupada Vyasa
Puja
(Fast till noon)***



Spiritual Amnesia

The Holy Name

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

When a patient suffers from amnesia, he is taken to familiar surroundings, family, friends, and other triggers that may jolt his memory and eventually cure him. Similarly, we are all suffering from spiritual amnesia where we have forgotten our eternal relationship with God. Just like ordinary amnesia, it is best cured when we are taken to our original environment. The sound of God's holy names, which are from the spiritual realm—our eternal home—awakens us from our amnesia and reminds us of our spiritual identity and our connection to God.

Generally we are accustomed to hearing of God's names relating to his impersonal, abstract, or secondary nature that describe Him as He relates to us. His secondary names refer to him as the Creator, the Maintainer, the Supreme Powerful, the Omniscient, the Universal Father, the Saviour of our Sins, etc. The word "God" itself, which is of Germanic origin, means "the Good One". These names, although glorious, are descriptions of God from our perspective, and because we have spiritual amnesia, they are limited. The Vedic literature gives us detailed information of God's self-existent nature relating to His form, qualities, and pastimes with His loving devotees in His spiritual kingdom. His

primary names describing these aspects are not connected with His interactions with the material world. Bhaktivinoda Thakur, a great propagator of the holy names in the Vedic tradition, asserts in his book, *Harinama Chintamani*, that one should chant the primary names of God to achieve unalloyed love for Him. Why is this? Because the secondary names of God generally relate to God fulfilling our material desires. One cannot go deeper into a personal relationship with Him free from an expectation of return. A spiritually mature devotee wants to render service, not take it. So he calls upon God by His primary names.



Krishna (the All Attractive One), Rama (the Reservoir of All Pleasure), Gopal (the Cowherd Boy), and Damodar (the one who is bound at the waist) are a few of the countless names that describe God's personal attributes and intimate qualities.

Just as our given names or pet names are more confidential than our title or position, God's primary names, relating to his confidential dealings and pastimes, are more intimate and therefore more effective in curing us of spiritual amnesia. Hearing His names is like a scream that arouses us up from our deep sleep. Although initially it feels uncomfortable to wake up, it wakes us up to a new day. We then lament how much time we have spent under the covers when we could have been spending our time curing ourselves from our forgetfulness.

Social Freedom

By Krishna Kripa Das

Social cohesion is the uniting of cultures and is one of the current trends in South Africa. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness were invited to represent the movement in Pretoria at the opening of one of the //hapo Museum of Freedom in Unity—documenting the history of Africans in South Africa from the time of their creation. Vibhu Caitanya Das opened the ceremony with a prayer lit a torch that signified the joining of the nation in its diverse cultures. Subsequently, the devotees also lead the opening of all the cultural performances with a vibrant *kirtan* led by Akanda Kirtan Das. Everyone chanted the holy names of Krishna



enthusiastically. The organizers invited 17 devotees to this history-making event and accommodated us in a 5 star hotel with all our needs provided for. They also transported us in a luxury vehicle. Being invited to this historical event was only made possible because His Holiness Indradyumna Swami, who with his team, put together the Durban Festival of Chariots celebrating social cohesion. Based on that festival, we were able to represent Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON at the opening of //hapo Museum of Freedom in Unity at Freedom Park. The name //hapo means 'dream', which has been drawn from a Khoi proverb, "//hapo ge //hapo tama /haohasib dis tamas ka i bo," which translates to, "A dream is not a dream until it is shared by the entire community."

Cancer Canned

By Lalita Kund Devi Dasi

I am a breast cancer survivor and I invite you on my journey of appreciation and self discovery. With an empty nest in 2011, my husband and I sold our house in Durban to settle in Vrindavan, India. This was our life-long dream. I decided to go for my yearly tests before we moved. A routine mammogram revealed a small malignant tumour measuring less than 7mm.

I clearly remember my doctor say, "Mrs. Nandkishore, you have breast cancer." There were maybe five to ten seconds of calm before the storm—thoughts and feelings hit me like a "tsunami," crashing wave after wave. The surgeon's suggestion to the nurse to contact the "Reach for Recovery" team and to give me the book "Dealing with Breast Cancer" jolted me into acceptance.

It was not a good feeling. I remember hiding the book from other patients. I was running away from reality. As a practicing devotee of Krishna, I realised there will always be hardships and miseries. It was important to look past this and accept that birth, disease, old age and death will come irrespective of one's social status. I desperately needed to put into practice my years of studying scripture.

My healing period was a bearable one with a sprinkling of turbulence. The result of the tumour came in—stage 1a, but grade 3, meaning that the cancer was a galloping one. I was then scheduled to start chemotherapy soon after radio therapy.

I remember walking into the chemotherapy suite feeling apprehensive. I wondered about the after effects. I looked at my drip and saw liquid gold pass through the tube. I was armed with prune juice, a water bottle and a bowl of salad vegetables. I preferred raw vegetables and fruit during my treatment. I think it really helped, as I was able to go through most of the days without or with minimum side effects.

A lady's vanity is her hair. My hair fell off during chemotherapy. This is a humbling reminder that death can come knocking at any time. I thought long and deep. I had tremendous support from my family, but I knew that only I could decide how I am going to make this journey. I woke up every morning with a vengeance to kick out bad habits, to make peace

with myself and learn to accept. I prayed with deep humility and thanked Krishna for the purification as my suffering is the result of my past life activity.

One day my husband insisted that I accompany him to the mall. I had no hair, I hated the wig, and I preferred to let the wind catch my scalp. In the mall a lady looked at me, looked again, and stepped back. Have you ever seen a bald lady, with no eyebrows or eyelashes, and yellow sunken eyes? It is a sight.

That incident made me realise that the body is temporary. We spend hours beautifying it, but we forget to beautify and glorify the ultimate within—the Supersoul. We can find a beautiful face but it is difficult to find a beautiful heart. It's important to endeavour to beautify the heart by growing flowers of love, acceptance, appreciation and gratitude; flowers of deep faith and respect; and to become the gardener of the creeper of love for God. If we have positive thoughts, then we exude positivity. My spiritual master used to send me quotes and that helped me dive deeper into the chanting of the holy name of God.

It's eighteen months now since my last treatment. Here I am with hair, eyebrows, and all. Life is a challenge. How you handle it makes a difference. I chose to accept my challenge with both hands and throw it back to the world again, by affirming that "Yes! Cancer can be beaten." All you need is a positive attitude and deep faith in God.

Lalita Kund Devi Dasi and her husband, Mukunda Das, are now in the process of relocating to Vrindavan, India, to spend their retirement rendering devotion in the land of Krishna.



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Saxon, The Devoted Dog

By Yvonne Hastings

Over the years Saxon, a crossbred Alsatian, had become practically one of the regular visitors at the Bhaktivedanta Manor. The children especially loved him. He had a natural inclination for *prasada*, *kirtan* and worship of Tulasi. There was no doubt about it, Saxon was no ordinary dog, blessed by many Vaishnavas and he was my friend.

He had a natural inclination for prasada, kirtan and worship of Tulasi.

He came to me in 1991 from the Battersea Dog's Home. He had some unusual traits – he sat on a chair just like a human being. Once whilst walking in Watford market with me, a butcher offered Saxon some meat. I said, “He won't eat that, he is vegetarian.” “Of course he will,” replied the butcher, again offering him the meat. Saxon turned his nose in the air and looked away. “You see,” I said, “Saxon doesn't eat dead animals.”

Practically every Sunday, Sax would be at the Manor. He liked to circumambulate the building and especially Tulasi's greenhouse. For seven years, he never missed the London Ratha-yatra, walking the whole way with great relish. At home he would bow down to the Gaura-Nitai Deities and just lie in front of Them. His favourite *prasada* was sweet rice and *puris*.

In 1999 Saxon became very ill. On his last trip to the

Manor, he managed to walk around the Tulasi house and accepted *prasada* from the many young children coming to see him and senior devotees offered their blessings. As he lay in the garden, many devotees gathered holding *kirtan*. Saxon was given the Deities garland, *gangajal*, Tulasi leaves and *charanamrita*. He had four sets of Tulasi beads around his neck, together with large pendant of Lord Nrsimhadeva and a badge of Lord Chaitanya.

He was admitted into the Putney RSPCA centre for treatment. There he left the world, listening to a recording of Srila Prabhupada singing the Hare Krishna mantra – his favourite. The room was adorned with pictures of the Lord. Garry, my close friend then drove Saxon to be cremated, after a devotional ceremony.

The next day I sponsored a feast at the Manor on behalf of Saxon. On the notice board, in front of the *prasada* room, a sign read, “Today's Sunday feast is sponsored by Saxon,” and his picture was placed at Srila Prabhupada's lotus feet, below the Vyasasana, the whole day. In his honour, a tree was planted at the Manor.

Parasurama Das and his wife, Moksalakshmi Dasi, took Saxon's ashes to Vrindavan and scattered them ceremoniously in the Yamuna River. He also organised a feast at Radha-kund. The Lord works in unusual ways and sometimes inspires us on the path through the most unexpected living entities.

Story from “Animals in Krishna Consciousness” by Janananda Das of Malaysia.

Savoury Muffins

Vaishnava Kitchen

By Citra Devi Dasi

Ingredients

4 cups self raising flour	1 tsp jeera powder
2 tsp baking powder	1 tsp dhania powder
1 cup water	1 tsp salt
1 cup milk	Handful of chopped fresh coriander
¾ cup oil	½ cup diced carrots
155g tin creamed sweetcorn	½ cup peas
4 Tbls lemon juice	1 cup chopped spinach or any other herb
2 green chillies chopped	
1 Tbls ginger	

Method

Mix together the water, milk and oil. Sift in flour and add all other ingredients except baking powder and lemon juice. Once the mixture is ready, sprinkle baking powder on top and then lemon juice. Mix to make soft dough. Spoon the mixture into a muffin pan and sprinkle desiccated coconut and sesame seeds on top before baking. Bake at 180 degrees for 25 – 30 minutes.



Gear Up

Vedic Observer

By Venu Gopal Das

Car enthusiasts across the country will descend to Durban for the Top Gear festival. People from assorted backgrounds will unite to celebrate the automobile. Many will come for the speed, some for the design and others for the exhibition. Primarily a mode of transport, the automobile now serves as a fundamental tool in various sectors which keep our modern society moving. However what many of us don't realize is that a spiritually awakened individual was solely accountable for introducing this paradigm. Although Henry Ford did not invent the first automobile, he was single-handedly responsible for delivering it to the masses.

2013 marks the 150th anniversary of Henry's birth; as a youth Henry was captivated by mechanics and engineering. This interest led him to work under Thomas Edison as a lead engineer. Although the horseless carriage was already designed, it was a novelty for the rich. Henry wanted to change this and produce a vehicle that was available for everyone. He felt this was an opportunity to improve the quality of life for future generations. He said "An idealist is a person who helps other people to be prosperous." In his autobiography, 'My Life and Work', he goes on to say, "I will build a car of great multitude...no man earning a good salary will be unable to own one and enjoy with his family the blessing of hours of pleasure in God's great open spaces." With this notion, the revolutionary Model-T was produced.

Henry was a deeply spiritual person; this inclination was the inspiration towards his actions. He devoted his energy and resources for the upliftment of humanity. He once said "A business absolutely devoted to service will have only one worry about profits—they will be embarrassingly large." When asked about the future of his business, he replied "I

believe God is managing affairs and that He doesn't need any advice from me. With God in charge, I believe everything will work out for the best in the end. So what is there to worry about?"

His understanding of God resonates closely with two consecutive verses recited by Krishna in the Bhagavad-gita 4.10 and 4.11:

"Being freed from attachment, fear and anger, being fully absorbed in Me and taking refuge in Me, many, many persons in the past became purified by knowledge of Me..."

"As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly..."



Henry surrendered his life's work to the Lord and was rewarded accordingly. He also believed in reincarnation, which wasn't widely accepted in that era, this belief was later inherited by his great-grandson, Alfred Ford, who is currently a senior member of the Hare Krishna Movement.

In an interview with the Associated Press in New York in 1976, Srila Prabhupada gives an interesting analogy using the example of a car and a driver resembling the body and soul. He said what is the use of maintaining the car without considering the wellbeing of the driver? We may decorate the vehicle and have sufficient petrol, but the driver cannot survive on petrol...similarly if we spend too much time in anxiety over the comfort of our bodies, we neglect the soul. In order to perfect our activities we must pay attention to both.

The Top Gear festival is a celebration of cars, but these cars cannot make us or shape us more than we can help ourselves. It is the ingenuity of people who are creative and have a strong desire to please others that create these marvelous machines. Let us remember that behind all the bling, glamour, speed, sound and swagger was a deeper spiritual impetus.

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Set the Path to Krishna

God Conscious Parenting

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

We often wish for more than 24 hours in a day. The to-do-list never ends, from chauffeuring our children to and from school and extra-curricular activities; taking care of the home; tending to the nutritional, physical and emotional needs of the family; keeping abreast with the latest trends in our profession; and, most importantly, time for japa, meditation, and devotion. The conundrum revolves around being an expert juggler of time. This often affects our personal meditation and devotional service.

It is a mistake to think that raising children is an impediment on the path of devotion. There is no reason to feel disheartened if routines and other practicalities of parenting do not allow one to be actively involved in temple programmes or devotional service outside the home.

Srila Prabhupada explains that our children are gifts from the Lord. Children are delicate and we should take care of them with love and devotion, by giving them Krishna. We should therefore not distinguish between parenting and our service to God when, in fact, being parents is our service to God.

An integral part of this service is training our children in service to God. The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* lists nine principal types of devotion beginning with hearing about, praising, and remembering God; progressing to deeper levels of devotion. In all of the nine processes we can find creative ways of engaging our children in devotion.

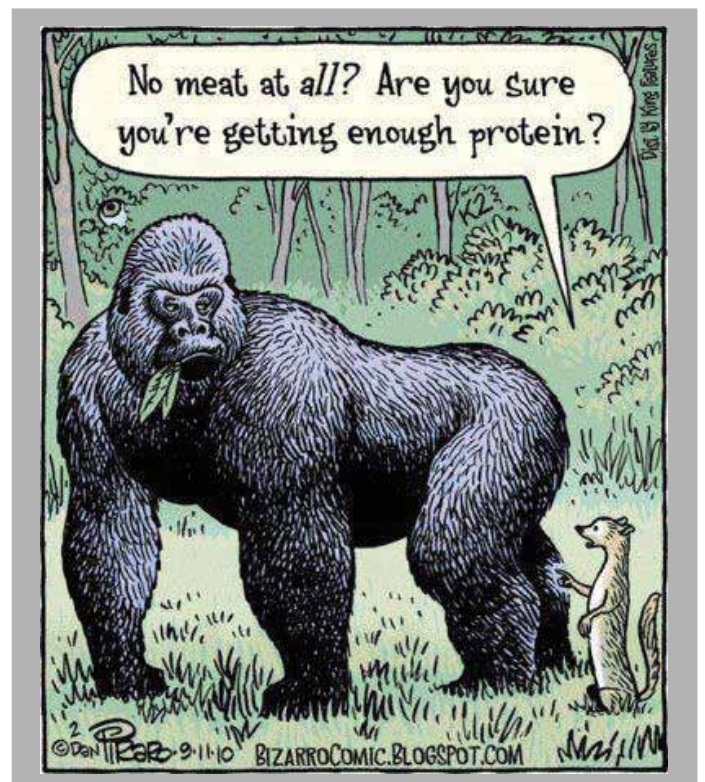
Whilst meeting the everyday needs of the family remains difficult, raising God conscious children requires an even greater endeavour and commitment. If there is a strong desire to evoke the dormant love for Krishna in our children and to be their parental captains in this lifetime, we will find a higher inner energy that will guide us in this process.

In the *Bhagavad-gita* (9.27), Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, “All that you do, all that you eat, all that you offer and give away, as well as all austerities that you may perform, should be done as an offering unto Me.” Parents who imbibe this mindset in raising

their children, as in other devotional practices, will certainly be rewarded.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur and his wife, Srimati Bhagavati Devi, raised ten children in the ideal Krishna conscious way. He was a great spiritualist, government official, husband and parent and struck a wonderful balance between all roles. The lyrics to a song he wrote, “My life, my wife, my family – all belong to you my Lord,” acknowledges that he placed Krishna as the central focus of his life, and all his material possessions belonged to Krishna.

The irony of life is its unpredictability. Who knows what tomorrow may bring? Our diaries fill up so quickly, time devoted to so many pressing issues. Upon closer inspection on what we weigh to be important, those pressing issues often fall upon the wayside. Schedule an exclusive 30 minutes a day to be a parent who strives to perform devotional service with your children and teenagers. Chant, dance, play musical instruments, bake, sew, read, and discuss – do it together as an offering to Krishna. This quality time spent together will not only bring joy to you as a parent but also your child and the Supreme Lord. Let us offer our children time, use that time in the best way possible—in serving Krishna. You will be rendering the greatest service to God by lovingly steering your child to the path of devotional service.



Young Vaishnavas Column

Nrsimha-Lila Word Search

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

Use the clues below to complete the word search below. Words can be found vertically, diagonally, backwards, and horizontally.



1. Half man, half lion incarnation of Lord Krishna
2. Young boy servant of Lord Krishna
3. Demon who terrorised the three worlds
4. Lord who granted the demon a boon
5. Demon who performed many of this to receive the boon
6. Lord Nrsimhadeva appeared through it
7. Used to kill the demon
8. Time of day the demon was killed
9. Place demon was killed
10. Special prayer to Lord Nrsimhadeva

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Sri Sri Radha Radhanath

Solutions: 1. Nrsimhadeva; 2. Prahlada; 3. Hiranyakasipu; 4. Brahma; 5. Austerities; 6. Pillar; 7. Nails; 8. Dusk; 9. Doorway; 10. Kavaca

Coming Soon...

The Nandagram Eco-Village project is the brainchild of Mayapur Candra Das. The Eco-Village is a pilot for our much bigger dream of a self-sustaining farm community in KwaZulu-Natal. Mayapur is currently an Agricultural Consultant for Ethekewini Municipality and deals specifically with sustainability. He also is a natural builder, i.e. he builds using cob, a mixture of clay, straw, and sand. Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple management recently agreed to start a "mini eco-village" at the bottom end of the temple property, near the main robot intersection. This project is to raise funds and awareness for the future self sustainable farm.

The Nandagram Eco-Village Nursery will also have a tea garden, arts and crafts, veggie gardens, and small farm animals. We hope to create a living and learning space where adults and children can share the gifts of nature. Our nursery will stock a wide variety of indigenous and exotic ground covers, ferns, palms, herbs, shrubs, creepers, grasses, succulents, roses, fruit trees, and flowering trees. Prices will compete with the cheapest in KZN.

Srila Prabhupada considered establishing Krishna conscious farm communities to be an important part of his mission and saw it as an ideal environment for families. When we live simply and don't get caught up in the demands of the modern lifestyle, there is more time for the things that really matter like deep and meaningful relationships with God and those around us, and re-connecting with ourselves.

One misconception people have is that farm communities are backwards. There is no turning back the clock, and it would be silly to ignore what man has learned over hundreds of years, rather Prabhupada suggested that we keep the good without compromising our true values. So, we are looking towards ways of living which will promote health, harmony and spirituality.

The Nandagram Eco-Village will be a vibrant and wholesome community living with the natural gifts of God and training others in various aspects of holistic living like farming, cow protection, water harvesting, natural health, natural buildings, meditation, and much more.

For now we are starting with our Nandagram Eco-Village Nursery and we look forward to your participation. We will be opening in June/July and from there we will host various courses and events to raise awareness. You can learn how to start your own veggie garden, recycle your vegetable waste and reduce your carbon footprint. We hope to have the tea garden and animals ready soon afterwards to add to the experience. You will be able to come and bask in the sun with a picnic basket, while your children play with the animals. Entrance is through the side security gate with ample safe parking. So keep your eyes on that patch of grass, because soon it will turn into a little eco-village wonderland.

Look out for more updates on the temple website, Facebook page and Twitter. If you would like to get involved or for more information please contact Mayapur Chandra Das 072 605 7165 or nandagram.ecovillage@gmail.com

