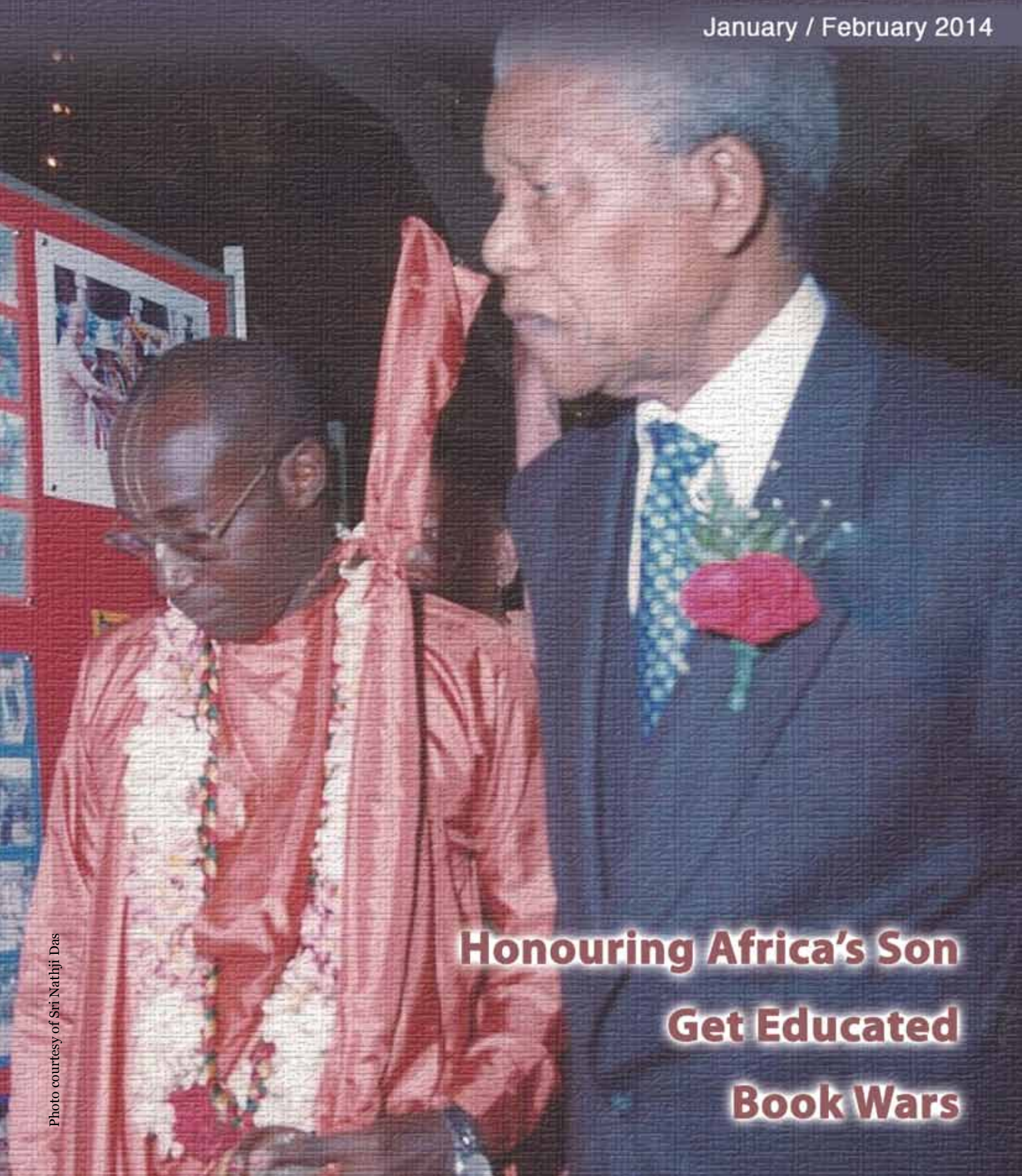




International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Founder Acharya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

HARE KRISHNA NEWS

January / February 2014



Honouring Africa's Son
Get Educated
Book Wars

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

On the Cover

His Holiness Bhakti Tirtha Swami shows Nelson Mandela a photo display of ISKCON's global feeding programme, Food for Life at the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple in Chatsworth.

Quoted verse translations and excerpts from purports to *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita*, and letters and photographs and art on pages 5 and 8 are © The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, Inc. www.Krishna.com. Used with permission.

In this issue...

Editor's Note

When I was growing up, my father used to say that his primary duty as a parent was to provide me with the best available education. He was a humble and simple man, but firmly believed that a decent education would form the backbone to a promising future of independence. After we joined ISKCON, his education policy became two pronged to include helping me acquire spiritual knowledge about “who I am?” and “why am I here?” After acquiring a few degrees, I find that the material knowledge I've gained has been beneficial in helping me fulfil my spiritual goal of performing devotional service. Nelson Mandela said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Our parent column takes an indepth look at the spiritual benefits of a material education. Our Vedic observer explores both sides of the education coin; a higher quality of life or exploitation of society's working class.

As the world wept for Nelson Mandela, fellow South Africans of all races and religions joined together to create one united family, mourning the loss of our nations father. The Hare Krishna News pays tribute to one of the world's greatest leaders. On Sunday 5 January, we also bade farewell to one of ISKCON South Africa's brilliant leaders, His Grace Shyamlal Prabhu. He was instrumental in the building of the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple and in actualising the annual Festival of Chariots. We share a few farewell messages from friends of Shyamlal Prabhu from around the globe.

Srila Prabhupada's Book Marathon 2013 was a resounding success. Many of the participants talk about their experiences and realisations from selling a combined total of over thirty thousand books. Well done to the almost one hundred participants.

Our “Once Upon A Time” column starts the year with a new series of stories on the glories of Lord Chaitanya, the golden incarnation.

For those avid bakers out there, look out for our delicious Madeira cake recipe.

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



Yadi shyamlal na hoite tabe ki hoite?

Message from the Co-President

Swarup Damodar Das

Srila Prabhupada gave us many gifts—the holy name of Krishna, transcendental literatures, temples, engagement in devotional service, and loving devotees to care for us. In South Africa Srila Prabhupada blessed us by placing us all under the care of His Grace Shyamlal Prabhu. Shyamlal Prabhu was a leader in the department of care. Now that he is no longer physically present there is much to do to continue the unique care he provided.

Shyamlal Prabhu used to often quote to me the beautiful Bengali song of Basu Ghosh: *yadi gaura na hoite tabe ki hoite* – what would have come of us had Lord Chaitanya not appeared? And in great relief, he would also appreciate Srila Prabhupada: *yadi prabhupada na hoite, tabe ki hoite* – what if Srila Prabhupada had not descended? In the last year, during Shyamlal Prabhu's protracted illness, I often thought of him similarly: *yadi shyamlal na hoite tabe ki hoite*? The South African *yatra*, the world over, is so indebted to Shyamlal Prabhu for introducing many, many of people to Srila Prabhupada, for engaging them in Srila Prabhupada's divine service, and for caring for all of us.



Amongst the multitudes of examples Shyamlal Prabhu set as a Vaishnava, I just want to point out three: He was so encouraging; he was so expert at 'catching' devotees doing something right and making a big thing about their contribution by appreciating them for their service and by pointing it out to others. He was so good at this. Another was how good a friend he was. Although so senior, being a

disciple of Srila Prabhupada and taking birth in the holy land of Navadvip, we were able to count him as our close friend — he would laugh with us and crack the funniest jokes; we would love honouring *prasada* with him, he would chastise us when necessary, and encourage and comfort us when we were facing challenges. And above all, his most striking quality

was his commitment to Srila Prabhupada; his love for Srila Prabhupada. This was clearly shown how, despite his memory being wiped out, he was always remembering Srila Prabhupada and the sweet interactions they had. The Srila Prabhupada Vyasa-puja and Disappearance Day festivals here will never be the same—he brought such a spirit to it that carried us all closer to Srila Prabhupada.

I pray that in Shyamlal Prabhu's passing, we all will be blessed with at least some development of these qualities. I know it will make a world of difference in our lives.

Making Durban Proud

By Yamuna Devi Dasi

As the world grieved the passing away of legendary icon Nelson Mandela, I remembered his visits to our Durban temple in the 90s. His humility and compassionate smile had touched the hearts of thousands, and his visits had been monumental moments in the history of the temple. This year when another such moment arrived, I felt that his footprints had certainly left behind a historic mark that had contributed for many years to the attraction and wonder of our temple.

The years of priceless contributions that the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple has made to the society and Durban as a city culminated in 2013 when the temple received the Landmark Category Award from the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry Tourism Awards just before the news of Mandela's death. I somehow felt that the connection with the



award and Mandela's visit was certainly by the grace of both God and this phenomenal human being. When the temple received the invitation as a finalist to grace the awards on 4 December by chief executive Mr. Andrew Layman, Swarup Damodar Das, the Temple Co-President, was surprised at the unexpected win on that day, "Our prestigious temple was listed as Durban's landmark attraction in the People's Choice of the globally renowned travel website Trip Advisor. We have become Durban's favourite tourist establishment."

Reading the article in the Mercury which covered the inaugural awards, I remember how Srila Prabhupada had specifically established temples across the world to attract people of all races and creeds to visit and partake in temple worship and festivities. By the blessings of Srila Prabhupada, great persons such as Nelson Mandela were given the opportunity to receive the love and auspiciousness of real Vedic life in such a temple. Mandela's visit had impacted and added to the magnificence of the temple that will surely increase for generations to come.

6th Annual Festival of Chariots in Cape Town

Festival Focus

By Gokulesh Das

The amazing chariot carrying the deities of Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra returned to the streets of Cape Town on Sunday, 15 December 2013 for the 6th annual Festival of Chariots. The festival site at the Greenpoint Urban Park was a riot of colour and sounds with festival goers treated to sumptuous vegetarian meals, a line-up of cultural entertainment featuring international artists and the opportunity to learn about the Hare Krishna devotees and Krishna consciousness.

To Be or Not To Be

Remarkably, the Ratha Yatra festival as it is traditionally known almost didn't happen. A few days before the festival, the ISKCON devotees at the Cape Town temple were in a quandary. The father of the nation, Nelson Mandela had just passed away and his funeral was scheduled for the same day as the planned event. Leaders were concerned that the festival would be seen as a sign of disrespect to the world-renowned former president and the people of South Africa. After due consideration the festival organisers decided to go ahead and appropriately celebrate the statesman's life.

Festival Dedicated to Nelson Mandela

Prayer and celebration in tribute to Nelson Mandela became the themes for the day long event. The festival site was decorated with posters bearing his smiling face and a special sanctuary was set up in the meditation tent where festival goers could write condolence messages and offer 108 Hare Krishna *maha-mantras* in a prayer circle for his and their own spiritual benefit. The chariot itself was decked with banners and South African flags in addition to the traditional ornamentation.

Special Guests Impress Capetonians

Undoubtedly the highlights on the festival stage were the performances of two international guests, Sri Radha Govinda Dasi (Sri) and Parividha Das. Sri was uniquely placed to help the people of Cape Town deal with their grief at the passing of Tata Madiba. Trained as a psychotherapist, counsellor, Vedic astrologer and palm analyst, she spoke about the eternality of the soul and the karma or destiny of the



living entities. She also distributed *Bhagavad-gita*'s to audience members who were eager to hear more about these subjects. Parividha, an accomplished playwright and singer from the Netherlands, captivated the audience with the drama, "Transylvania Transcended" - a story of Count Dracula transformed by a devotee he tried to attack. The play introduced the philosophy of Krishna consciousness in a relatable way that was easily understood; even by the children.

Procession Down the Boulevard

The chariot procession in Cape Town takes place down the scenic beach road flanked by the ocean and Seapoint hotels. Cool ocean breezes made a very hot day bearable as the devotees danced and chanted attracting holidaymakers to join the parade. The thick ropes were fully unravelled to allow as many people as possible to benefit from pulling the Lord's chariot. Escorted by local law enforcement, Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe, and His divine brother and sister blessed the people of Cape Town with a vision of their smiling faces.

A Multicultural and Successful Festival

It was satisfying to see people of all cultures joining the procession and chanting the holy names, offering the people of Cape Town a spiritual experience that transcended all bodily and mental conceptions. We look forward to a better and bigger festival in 2014.



Nelson Mandela's Time with ISKCON

By Champakalata Dasi

Devotees of ISKCON South African cherish the wonderful memories of Dr. Nelson R. Mandela's visits to the Sri Sri Radha Radhanatha Temple and a Food For Life event.

In 1992, in his capacity as the Chairman of the ANC, Mandela visited the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple. He and other ANC leaders toured the temple and joined ISKCON leaders for a sumptuous luncheon at Govinda's restaurant where they spoke about the teachings of *Bhagavad-gita* and the various ISKCON humanitarian activities.

Six months after Dr. Mandela became the State President, he and a large entourage of government ministers and ambassadors spent three hours at the temple on 6th November 1994 (on Diwali). However, this time it was a public event hosted by ISKCON and thousands of locals thronged to hear the President's official Diwali address to the community. President Mandela was introduced to His Holiness Bhakti Tirtha Swami and was most impressed by him to the extent that he led the crowd in a standing ovation after Maharaja delivered his speech.

Thereafter President Mandela together with his entourage, which included Members of Parliament and the American Consul General Pamela Bridgewater, joined ISKCON leaders at Govinda's Restaurant for a meal. The devotees presented copies of the book "Science of Self-Realization" to the President and everyone in his group. This was the first official visit by a South African President to a Hare Krishna Temple.

Then on 23rd April 1997, a most momentous event in the history of ISKCON worldwide took place at the Kings Park Soccer Stadium in Durban. Hosted by Food For Life, "The Festival for the Children of the



Bhakti Chaitanya Swami greets Nelson Mandela

Photo courtesy of Sri Nathji Das

Rainbow Nation," drew 50 000 learners, educators, Members of Parliament, King Goodwill Zwelethini and President Mandela, as well as a huge contingency of international and national media.

Devotees worked tirelessly. The event required extensive organising as meal packs of *breyani*, *dhal* and juice were provided for the children who were entertained with a line-up of cultural entertainment featuring various genres of music, dance and activities performed by famous local performers, television personalities and the children themselves. President Mandela enjoyed himself so much so that he cancelled the rest of his day's engagements and instead extended his stay at the festival which lasted more than five hours. He received a raucous welcome led by a praise singer and school children, which in true Madiba style, he jived to. The Mercury had a huge spread on the front page the next morning quoting the President as saying, "...it was the happiest day of my life".

The memories of Mandela's association with ISKCON shall forever remain etched in the history of ISKCON. We are indebted to him for laying the foundations of democracy where we can truly enjoy religious freedom and tolerance. May the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna bless this great soul.

Madiba's Appreciation of Srila Prabhupada

His Holiness Bhakti Chaitanya Swami, our co-GBC for South Africa, recounts that on his first visit to the temple, Dr. Mandela bowed before Srila Prabhupada with humility and dignity. When he got up he asked Maharaja, "How did he do it?" Meaning how did Srila Prabhupada spread Krishna consciousness all over the world. They discussed how Srila Prabhupada gave Krishna consciousness to everyone, irrespective of their nationality, race or sex. This deeply struck Dr. Mandela and he became even more appreciative of Srila Prabhupada.



Honouring Africa's Son

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

The world focussed on South Africa, flags flew at half-mast, and international media converged on South African soil. Political leaders, celebrities, and civilians alike mourned the passing of former President Nelson Mandela. On Sunday, 8 December 2013, the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple dedicated the Love Feast in honour of the political, social, and international icon. Mr. Mandela (affectionately known as Madiba) captured the hearts of the world with his charismatic personality, humble disposition, wit, humour, intellect but most importantly, his ability to forgive and lead by example.

Over five hundred guests attended the function at the temple. Programme Director, Champakalata Dasi spoke fondly of Madiba's visits to the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple as well as his presence at the Festival for the Children of the Rainbow Nation. She presented a narrative slide-show of images of Madiba's association with ISKCON. As Madiba visited the temple on two occasions, Champakalata described his appreciation for its beauty. He engaged with ISKCON leaders, and honoured *prasada* (sanctified food offered to Lord Krishna).

Vibhu Chaitanya Das read ISKCON'S official message of condolence which was recorded in a book of condolences. As initial signatories to the condolence book, both temple co-Presidents, Vibhu Chaitanya and Swarup Damodar offered their words of prayer and strength to the Mandela family. The devotees present were then invited to place their signatures and messages in the book which has been forwarded to the Mandela family.

Raghunatha Bhatta Das read a message from His Holiness Bhakti Chaitanya Swami who serves as the Governing Body Commissioner for South Africa. Guest speaker, Mr. Yusuf Bhamjee, a member of the Provincial Executive Committee of the African National Congress and Mayor of the Umgungundlulu



Jahnvi garlands Nelson Mandela

Photo courtesy of Sri Nathji Das

Municipality, encouraged ISKCON to continue their efforts to unite the nation's diverse culture. Mr. Bhamjee said, "Madiba did not fall from the sky, he is a human being like you and I, but he was blessed to walk the extra mile." Mr. Bhamjee went on to describe Madiba, "As the jewel of South Africa who showed exemplary leadership, wherein if the wrong choice was made that moment when Madiba was released from prison, we would not have the South Africa we have today." Bhamjee saluted ISKCON for leading through example, by honouring Madiba's desire to unite the nation across racial and ethnic divide.

In his talk, Swarup Damodar Das encouraged everyone to imbibe the mood of forgiveness and humility as displayed by Madiba. These qualities are imperative for true leadership and also form a corner-stone of Vaishnava culture. The programme concluded with the reading of a posthumous letter written by His Holiness Indradyumna Swami. The entire temple resonated with the soft chanting of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* in prayer for the onward journey of Madiba's soul.

On Sunday, 15 December just a few hours after Madiba's body was buried in his hometown of Qunu, the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple continued with their appreciation for Madiba's contribution to society by screening a DVD presentation of original video footage, dating back to over a decade ago of Madiba's participation with ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada wrote in a letter (27/12/1972), "That is the business of leader: He must be himself always enthusiastic and inspire others to be always enthusiastic. Then he is real leader." Madiba was the embodiment of this description of a true leader.

As the world continues to hail South Africa's hero, let us work together in the mood of Krishna consciousness to fulfil the need for peace and love amongst all of society. Through this vision we can overcome the ills of society.



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His Holiness Indradyumna Swami says Goodbye to Nelson Mandela

Dearest Madiba,

It was with profound sadness that I learned of your departure from this world yesterday. Though all of us were aware that your demise was imminent, somehow we find it difficult to accept that you are no longer with us. In more ways than one, you were the leader of this great nation of South Africa, a profound statesman, a courageous freedom fighter, the veritable father of this nation, the most resilient prisoner ever born. At the same time, you were humble, tolerant and wise, and possessed a seemingly bottomless capacity to forgive. The list of your good qualities goes on and on.

But Madiba, tonight I would like to address what I feel was your greatest quality: your ability to make everyone - regardless of their race, religion or creed - feel welcome under your leadership. I experienced this personally when you graciously accepted the Hare Krishna Movement's invitation to be our special guest at the "Festival for The Children of the Rainbow Nation" in 1997. The long programme was attended by 50,000 boisterous children, and, after it was over, I was walking you back to your car, surrounded by many security men.

I was anxious about whether you had enjoyed and appreciated the event, so I turned to you and asked, "Mr. President, did you like the festival?" You stopped and taking both of my hands in yours said, "Maharaja, this was the very best day of my life!" Suddenly all the anxiety and fatigue I was experiencing, all the worries and woes associated with organizing a programme of such magnitude vanished. You kept holding my hand until we reached your car and as you got in you smiled at me as if to say, "Well done." I realized your greatness came not only from your ability to accomplish great political feats, but also in your kindness and compassion to reach out and touch the hearts of the private citizen, even a foreigner like me who was trying through spiritual ideology to propagate your desire for social cohesion.

Madiba, you had a unique ability to rise above all political, ethnic, tribal and religious barriers to help the citizens of this country identify as one people, as South Africans. Historians have discussed - and will continue to discuss - your ability not only to forgive

and exonerate your enemies but also to engage them in rebuilding this great nation. Where is such an example in the recent history of the world? I do not think it exists apart from your selfless efforts.

Nevertheless, men like you must be at helm of every country and nation in the world, for Lord Krishna says in His *Bhagavad-gita* 3.21:

"Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues."

Madiba, thank you for taking a moment of your precious time to encourage a simple soul like me. And thank you for affirming your care and concern when we met on a flight from Johannesburg to Mauritius years later. I was sitting in business class waiting for the flight to take off when a team of security men boarded and began barking orders to everyone to move back to the economy section. Most passengers jumped up and moved, but I was slower because I had

a number of possessions to gather. The head of the security was screaming at me to move on, when you entered the cabin.

"Maharaja, what a pleasure to see you on this flight," you said. "Please sit next to me and we will converse on the flight to Mauritius."

The security man's jaw dropped as I moved over and sat in the aisle seat

across from yours. We chatted for some time and I answered your questions about how the Hare Krishna Movement could help the people of South Africa. You showed special interest in the idea that peace would come to the country when everyone realized they were part of the greater family of God.

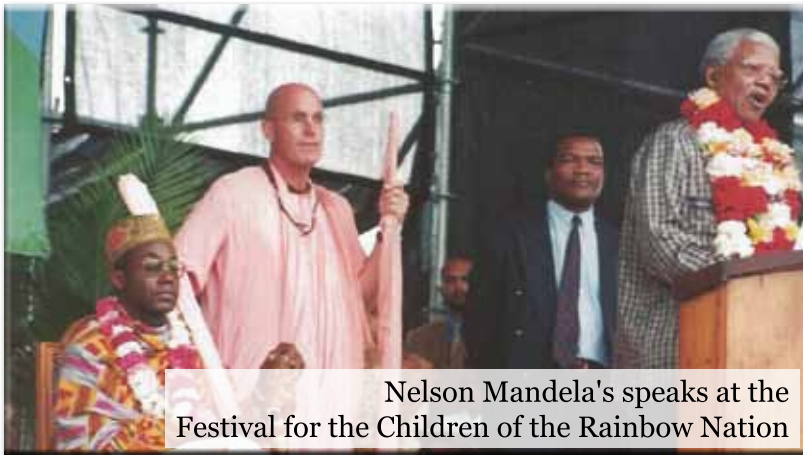
As we approached our destination, you said, "So Maharaja, the event your movement organized years ago was really great. I can still see the smiling faces of all those thousands of children."

"Yes, Madiba" I said. "It was historic."

Madiba, those of us present tonight join with the people of this nation and pledge to carry on the great work you started: the preservation and unification of all the people of this land.

In closing, I want to say it was an honour to be a small part of your historic life. It was an honour to be a part of the history of this great nation of South Africa.

With deep gratitude,
Indradyumna Swami



Nelson Mandela's speaks at the Festival for the Children of the Rainbow Nation

Photo courtesy of Sri Nathji Das

Civil Disobedience for Religious Freedom

Once Upon a Time

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

Chand Kazi trembled in fear. A thunderous sound accompanied by a blaring light was approaching. Peeking through his window, he saw a sight so extraordinary that it made him want to run away and at the same time glued him to the spot. He touched his chest, feeling the scars that burned beneath his shirt. They seemed like nothing now compared to the burning fear that engulfed him. Who would believe that a person of his stature—the city magistrate of Bengal, a dominant figure of the Muslim regime responsible for punishing his subordinates—would be facing such a predicament? He looked again. Thousands of flaming torches lined the night sky. The Kazi noticed that more brilliant than the torch-lit sky was a golden light emerging from the dense crowd. Looking closer, he almost lost his balance. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the source of that light, captivated him, and for a few moments his fear vanished. Lord Chaitanya seemed to be in a trance, with his slender arms upraised and tears streaming down his golden face. His black curly hair was adorned with a garland of jasmines while another longer garland swayed from his neck almost touching his feet. He cried out the names of God, “Hari! Hari!” while dancing in a maddened state. Millions of Bengali devotees joined him in the chanting, bearing

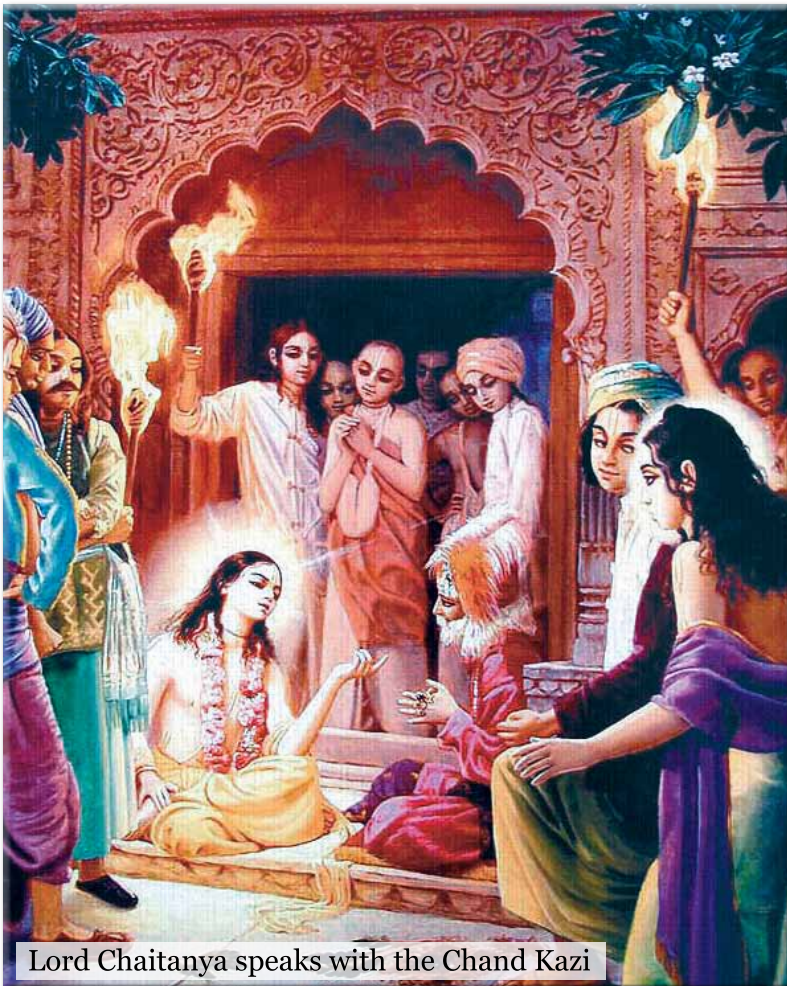
torches, dancing, and playing musical instruments, creating a deafening sound. Now they stood at Chand Kazi’s doorstep demanding to see him.

Chand Kazi shuddered at the thought of what he had done. Not long before, he had received complaints from residents that the holy names of Krishna were being loudly chanted in the homes of Chaitanya’s followers. This *sankirtana*—the congregational chanting of God’s names accompanied by musical instruments—was causing a ruckus in the once quiet streets of Navadvipa and fuelling the hatred of the atheists and the envious. Chand Kazi, trying to uphold the laws of the Muslim government to suppress Hindu religious beliefs and customs, had arrived in the midst of a *kirtana* seething with anger. To the horror of the devotees, he had banned any *sankirtana* performance and had broken a *mridanga* drum.

He gifted people vision, uniting them of the same Supreme

For a long time Hindus were not free to demonstrate their religious beliefs, but also many had abandoned or neglected their practices. Curiously, the Kazi had asked his offenders by whose strength they had started performing them with such great enthusiasm. Now looking at the golden effulgent figure in the midst of the enraged mob of devotees, Chand Kazi knew the answer. Certainly, this personality was not ordinary; his mere presence invoked a kind of happiness that could not be explained. The Kazi realised that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had orchestrated a massive civil disobedience protest when Chaitanya had heard of his impudence and injustice. Lord Chaitanya had become even more furious when his followers had told him that if they did not obey the law, the Kazi would confiscate their property and convert them to Muslims. Being the cause of Chaitanya’s wrath, what would be the Kazi’s fate now? The chant of the *maha-mantra* became louder, reaching a crescendo that seemed to devour the universe. Some devotees were destroying his garden and uprooting the trees. His opposition was much stronger than he had fathomed.

The Muslim magistrate anxiously watched Chaitanya Mahaprabhu sitting at his doorstep, waiting for him. Reluctantly, the Kazi stumbled out, bowing down his head. To his surprise, Lord Chaitanya’s mood had changed. He asked, “Sir, I have come to your house as your guest, but upon seeing me you hid yourself in your room. What



Lord Chaitanya speaks with the Chand Kazi

kind of etiquette is this?" Seeing Chaitanya pacified, the Kazi addressed him as his nephew. He explained that in their village, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's grandfather had been like an uncle to him. How friendly the relationship between Muslims and Hindus had been before foreign influence? And the influence of bodily designations that divided them now was even more deep-rooted.

After speaking to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu about several fundamental religious principles, the Kazi's ignorance was removed. Eventually, he understood that Chaitanya's movement was beyond sectarianism; his mission was to deliver the universal message of God, teach people to follow God's instructions, and to reconnect them to their original father by

**e with equal
them as children
reme Father.**

the chanting of His holy names. The *sankirtana* movement would cut through borders and unite people as God's loving children.

Chaitanya then asked the Kazi why he had not forbidden their outrageous performance and arrested them. Addressing him as Gaurahari, the Kazi revealed the real cause of his reluctance and fear. He touched his chest, feeling his wounds once again, and said, "I had a terrifying dream, the night I forbade the *sankirtana* and broke the *mridanga* drum. A fearful roaring lion with the body of a man jumped onto my chest, laughing fiercely and gnashing his teeth. Piercing His nails on my chest, He threatened that just as I had broken the *mridanga*, He would split open my chest. But seeing me so afraid, He was merciful and warned me that if I ever offended His devotees or forbid the chanting of His holy name again, then He would not be so tolerant." Unbuttoning his shirt, he exclaimed, "Look at the marks of His sharp claws on my chest." He winced at the thought of that horrific dream and wondered if it was a dream at all. The Kazi continued, "After I awoke, one of my orderlies came to me with his beard burned and blisters on his cheeks. He told me that when he tried to stop the congregational chanting, flames had struck his face. Terrified, I allowed your followers to continue. But when the Muslim residents heard about the unrestricted chanting in the city, they complained that against their will their tongues could not stop chanting the holy names. Baffled and stunned, they pleaded with me to forbid the chanting. Even the Hindus came to me and derided your behaviour using religious arguments. They appealed to me to make you leave the town. To pacify them, I told them that I would prohibit you from continuing your *sankirtana* movement."

The Kazi looked at Gaurahari's smiling face. He asserted, "I know that Narayana is the Supreme God

of the Hindus, and now I think that you are the same Narayana." Sri Gaurahari touched him and disclosed the Kazi's good fortune. He declared that the Kazi had become supremely pure from just mentioning the name of God, and thus the reactions of all his sinful activities had become nullified. Touched by Lord Chaitanya's benevolence, the Kazi wept. He pleaded, "By your kindness all my bad intentions have vanished. Kindly favour me so that my devotion may always be fixed upon you." Lord Chaitanya then asked him for a favour in return; that the activities of the *sankirtana* movement should never be restrained, at least in the district of Nadia. The Kazi agreed and solemnly promised that he would even give this order to all that would take birth in his dynasty.

Hearing this, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and his devotees began to chant and dance with joy. Lord Chaitanya had won over the Muslim leader through kindness, forgiveness, and compassion. The Kazi understood that the Lord's struggle was much more than a political one. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was addressing the core of human conflict by giving a practical cure. His vision transcended the material nuances of society and peaceful reconciliation. He gifted people with equal vision, uniting them as children of the same Supreme Father. And more than that, he showed a way how they can all return to Him, beyond the boundaries that divide them.

Notice Board

To receive SMS or email notifications and updates, subscribe to temple@iskcondurban.net.

For general queries call the temple at 031-4033328 between 9.30 a.m.-5 p.m.

For programme updates, Daily Darshan, and general information: www.iskcondurban.net

His Grace Giri Govardhan Dhari Prabhu, a disciple of His Holiness Giriraj Swami, passed away on 14 January 2014. He served Sri Sri Radha Radhanath for over twenty years and many will remember him serving *caranamrita* on Sundays. His Grace Gopinath Prabhu, a disciple of His Holiness Partha Sarathi Das Goswami, passed away on 15 January 2014. He was the head *pujari* (priest) at the New Jagannath Puri Temple in Phoenix for many years. The Vaishnava community will miss them dearly and offer our deepest condolences to their families.

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Durban Krishna



Tribute to His Grace Shyamlal Prabhu

On January 5th 2014 at 6:50 p.m. His Grace Shyamlal Prabhu left this material world. As a *yatra* we place our heads at the dust of his lotus feet in gratitude. He leaves behind a wonderful family and multitudes of devotees who will honour his passing with deep sadness.

Shyamlal Prabhu was born in Navadvip on October 12th 1953. He was just 17 years old when he left home and joined ISKCON in Calcutta as one of the first Bengali devotees to be initiated by Srila Prabhupada. Accepting the devotees as his family and Srila Prabhupada as his eternal father, he never looked back. Throughout his life his main services were fundraising and cultivating life members. It was what Srila Prabhupada asked him to do, and he never stopped. Initially he served in India and later Srila Prabhupada asked him to go to Africa and assist Brahmananda Prabhu in ISKCON projects there.

Devotees share their memoirs and love for Shyamlal Prabhu:

Bhakti Bhringa Govinda Swami, “Shyamlal Prabhu and I knew each other for many years. Our friendship started in the 70s in India when I was serving in Vrindavan. We never really worked on a project together. We were just friends together and it was always a happy friendship from our very first meeting. He was always so kind. He was always so respectful. He was always so humble. He was the epitome of Vaishnava character. Shyamlal Prabhu was a real devotee in the sense that he was devoted in all respects. He was devoted to Srila Prabhupada. He was devoted to his wife, Sri Murti Mataji, who always stood by him and supported his preaching. I often told Shyamlal Prabhu that if I take birth again in the material world, I want him to be my father. I never saw a father as nice as Shyamlal Prabhu. He loved his children and his children loved him. His kids are brilliant. Jahnvi, Radhe and Abhay have never been a problem. They’ve always been wonderful devotees.



Shyamlal was always devoted to his friends. Shyamlal loved to take peoples heart and place it at the lotus feet of Srila Prabhupada.”

Bhakti Charu Swami, “Shyamlal Prabhu had been very dear to me, he had been very close to me. When I joined the movement Shyamlal Prabhu was already very much involved in the activities of ISKCON. He was a life member maker and he was the best. Gargamuni Prabhu was the GBC of Bengal, Calcutta and Mayapur at that time and Shyamlal Prabhu was his right hand man. Although quite young, he had a fairly significant position in ISKCON. Gargamuni Prabhu and his brother Brahmananda Prabhu loved him very much because of his wonderful service attitude. Although Shyamlal Prabhu was holding an important position at that time, he had a compassionate and loving attitude towards me from the very beginning. From that time we became friends. He very much took care of me. Shyamlal Prabhu had a reassuring attitude and that is how our relationship started. The main drive in the Life Membership programme was Shyamlal Prabhu. Wherever he went he just attracted people and this is the most wonderful quality that Shyamlal Prabhu had. Shyamlal Prabhu brought me to South Africa and I feel extremely indebted to him for creating this good fortune for me. Had Shyamlal Prabhu not brought me to South Africa, I would have missed out a very wonderful opportunity to be involved in one of the most wonderful preaching fields in this world. South Africa is a very special country.”

Devamrita Swami, “My heart aches, feeling the waves of physical separation from such a natural Vaishnava as is Shyamlal Prabhu. We first met at the original temple in Copenhagen, Denmark around 1980, when he and another godbrother had travelled there, seeking to expand an international life membership programme. Immediately his gentility, culture, and humility captivated my attention. For such a dyed-in-the-wool devotee, equipped with all the Vaishnava instincts, talents, and motivations, there is no doubt as to his future. Shyamlal Prabhu will always be with his eternal spiritual father, Srila Prabhupada. May we join him there too.”

Indradyumna Swami, “The first Durban Ratha Yatra. What a grand success it was my friend! Although subsequent Ratha Yatra’s were “bigger and better” so to say: none of them can compare to the glorious victory that you, myself and Yamunacarya Das achieved in successfully putting on that first Festival of Chariots during the apartheid era in South Africa. Surely Srila Prabhupada has taken you to his side just for that one incredible service. You were, in every sense of the word, a “Prabhupada man”. Devotees often note how you would praise him and attempt to do your service for his pleasure. What a

wonderful disciple you were! What a wonderful friend you were! What a wonderful husband and father you were, as well! All of us will miss you dearly. I do not want to focus on your departure. It was but a moment in your glorious life as a devotee. One devotee asked me today, “How did he die?” I turned to him and said, “Don’t ask me how he died. Ask me how he lived.” So we have nothing to lament today; for your birth in Navadvip was glorious, your life was glorious and your death – with your beloved daughter Jahnvi Dasi by your side – was also glorious. I hope to follow in your footsteps my dear godbrother. I wish you well in your continued service to our beloved spiritual master Srila Prabhupada. And I look forward to meeting you again on the transcendental path for more adventures in service to His Divine Grace.”

Jayadvaita Swami, “I offer my respects to my dear godbrother Shyamlal Das, who was always faithful to Srila Prabhupada, always joyful, and always focused on devotional service. Early on, he served as a pioneer in preaching in countries throughout Africa. Later, after he settled in South Africa, among his many services was to help make sure that Durban’s annual Ratha Yatra was amply funded. He had a gift not only for winning funds for Krishna’s service but also for bringing people forward in Krishna consciousness, engaging not just their money but their life. He also engaged me in service, by pressing me, “Why shouldn’t the Vyasa-puja book be open for offerings from Srila Prabhupada’s disciples?” For the book of such offerings now published every year, the original credit is his. Srila Prabhupada wanted a disciple from Navadvip, and he got a splendid one, whom we will remember with fondness and with admiration.”

Kadamba Kanana Swami, “In your final days when due to disease so much of your memory was lost, what remained was the essence of your being. You remained the resident of Navadvip, who with great culture welcomed and respected the Vaishnavas. You remained the dedicated servant of Prabhupada and remembered all your pastimes with him over and over many times a day. I could see how in those final days your consciousness was all auspicious, because you had taken shelter of Prabhupada only throughout your entire life, until the very end. I know you are now with His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada once again. We will miss you Shyamlal, but in the future we will meet again at Prabhupada’s feet. Thank you very much for all your association.”



Kavicandra Swami, “You are a ‘perfect gentleman’. That is how Srila Prabhupada defined a devotee, a ‘gentleman’. What I recall is that you told me that Srila Prabhupada told you to make the life members devotees. You did that beautifully. Therefore, Srila Prabhupada’s movement in South Africa is flourishing. You saw everyone as devotees, and cultivated that knowledge in them. Thank you. I do hope that I can become qualified to meet you somewhere with Srila Prabhupada.”

Lokanath Swami, “If we had to close our eyes and visualise Shyamlal Prabhu, I am sure that you are all seeing what I see – a perpetually brilliant smile that lights up his entire demeanour. There is no doubt that Shyamlal Prabhu was and continues to be a Srila Prabhupada’s man to the core. He was born in Navadvip, Bengal, the homestead of Srila Prabhupada. He trusted and loved Srila Prabhupada implicitly. He portrayed all the qualities

Srila Prabhupada envisaged in his disciples – simplicity, humility, and no envy. He never displayed anger even when he was provoked. One of the twenty six qualities of a devotee is to be “always cheerful” and Shyamlal displayed that quality in even the worst of situations.”

Devarata Das, “I was an atheist. A proud law student. Shyamlal Prabhu taught me humility, tolerance and respect. And finally he taught me practically that I am not this body by using his own body as an example. We cherish the memory of his personal presence and are infinitely blessed to have had him walk among us.”



Education – The Key To Devotional Service

God Conscious Parenting

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

I begin penning this column on New Year's Eve. It is a time for reflection, resolutions and taking stock of our lives. It is also a time for parents to re-evaluate their role in the lives of their children by looking at the support, understanding and time spent with them. For the children, the New Year generally is an indicator that the holidays are almost over and it is time to once again think about the serious business of school or university.

As I look to the year ahead, I feel my daughter's excitement as she anticipates her entrance into 'big school'. On the other hand, as a parent I view the next twelve years as a daunting reality of mixed emotions as my little girl enters the reality of homework, long school hours, pressure of tests and exams, physical and emotional challenges and a host of other unexpected scenarios.

My thoughts go back to a recent conversation with Indradyumna Swami. The topic of education comes up and Maharaja clearly defines the importance of a good education. At that light-bulb moment, I wish that I had my notebook at hand as every word is filled with so much significance, purpose and instruction.

Indradyumna Swami explains that ideally one's youth is meant to acquire knowledge through the school curriculum. This knowledge has two stems, material and spiritual, both of which work in synergy. Spiritual knowledge assists in forming strong values, understanding the true purpose of life in the material world and, importantly offers time for meditation (which forms an integral part of the general well-being of young people).

Maharaja emphasises the importance of also using ones youth to successfully acquire material knowledge.

This component includes scoring good



levels at school and university, participating in extra-curricular activities, as well as forming a balance between the material and spiritual facets of life.

Whilst youth is meant for acquiring knowledge, from approximately twenty-five years old, one is meant to utilise that knowledge. Thereby, acquiring a material qualification, in actual fact is a way of performing devotional service as one can use their professional capacity to assist the temple, the devotees and the rest of the community. In this way, one can also put together a monetary savings to go on pilgrimage to the holy places in India. Old age is meant for spreading knowledge.

Maharaja spoke clearly of the need for education within society. As parents, it is our duty to offer our children both spiritual and material knowledge. The stress of a child entering school or university can be calmed through a focused parent. Maharaja emphasised the importance of finding time to chant the *maha-mantra*. Although being a scholar fills up a great portion of the day, one has to dedicate time to focus on chanting and reading from scripture. This escape from the material influence will provide the strength to move forward with renewed vigour. Very sweetly, Maharaja explained that someday Krishna will look at the person who is calling out His name with devotion.

As parents, we need to assist our children in achieving the perfect spiritual and material balance which will also promote their spiritual propensity. It is from a young age that chanting, reading and good association should be encouraged.

As we tread through the days of 2014 with laughter, tears, heartache, proud parent-moments, exhausted parent-moments, and so many other wonderful feelings, let us take heed that material education, when engaged as Krishna desires forms an integral part of devotional service. As we assist our children in striving for material and spiritual success, in the greater picture of spiritual life, as parents we are also performing devotional service to Krishna.

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Get Educated

Vedic Observer

By Venu Gopal Das

Education is considered the most valuable asset one could have to subscribe for a higher quality of life. It brings with it opportunities for economic development, security and stability...but before you offer your dreams, hopes and wallets to this cause, be prepared for exploitation, long hours, horrible bosses, spiteful co-workers, and zero independence.

Born into a family of academics it was hard for me to fall far from the tree. A lecture theatre and library are like a second home to me, quite evident since I fall asleep so effortlessly in such places... However if there is anything I have learnt from my decade of academic endeavours, it is that the current education system is not structured to meet the needs of society, but rather the needs of corporate institutions. Srila Prabhupada was highly determined to expose this shortcoming, in 1972 he wrote:

“Modern university education practically prepares one to acquire a doggish mentality with which to accept the service of a greater master. After finishing a so-called education, the so-called educated persons move like dogs from door to door with applications for some service, and mostly they are driven away, informed of no vacancy. As dogs are negligible animals and serve the master faithfully for bits of bread, a man serves a master faithfully without sufficient rewards.” *Srimad Bhagavatam* 2.3.19

Almost a half-century later, we see this statement still holds true—if anything the situation has deteriorated—yet still academic institutions proudly proclaim their programmes will put you above the rest. These institutions are meant to deliver the most up-to-date knowledge to overcome the obstacles humanity encounters. But their curriculums have long been manipulated by external profit driven forces.

In the medical field, this came in the form of the Flexnor Report of 1910. Abraham Flexnor reviewed all the medical schools in North America to establish a sense of unity across the discipline. In this report he suggested that schools which focused on nutrition and holistic medicine are primitive. He said only schools that met his complex laboratory requirements should remain open. The results of this report were later brought into legislation. Before his report 650 medical schools existed in USA and Canada, by 1944 only 69 schools remained. The rest of the international medical community shortly followed suit. It is interesting to note that Abraham

Flexnor was not a doctor or even a scientist. He and his brother however, worked closely with a German corporation called I. G. Farben, which at the time was the worlds' largest producer of pharmaceutical grade chemicals. As a result, America has become a pill-popping society and there is a health care crisis across the globe. Upon further investigation a similar pattern will surface amongst all disciplines, accreditations and certified programmes. Most people are led to believe that this is an acceptable standard, but it leaves no room for independence, entrepreneurship or creativity.



Although opposed to this system, Srila Prabhupada was never naïve and always practical; when one of his disciples wanted to quit university he advised him against it and said, “We have to take advantage of such institutions in absence of any other good organisation.” Srila Prabhupada never said he wanted us to abandon society, but instead urged us to introduce spirituality into our lives. This notion is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gita* 8.7, when Krishna instructs Arjuna to carry out his duties as a soldier, but to simultaneously remain conscious of his spiritual identity, and in this way attain perfection of life. By exposing the flaws of contemporary civilization, Srila Prabhupada trained us to identify illusion from reality and how to maintain balance between matter and spirit.

Book Wars

By Rukmini Devi Dasi



“What book would you recommend for a person who is suicidal?” asked the young, white man. His tear streaked face and dishevelled hair revealed his distress. Seventeen year old Thashnee Naicker, fresh out of matric, wondered if this guy was for real. “I’m serious”, he said. She pulled out the ‘Chant and be Happy’ that a pious Christian

person had sponsored. She explained how the holy names of God could change his life just as it had hers. His parting words were, “This must be a divine intervention.”

Srila Prabhupada’s Book Marathon 2013 had raised the dust of causeless mercy into a raging storm. I doubt we broke any world records. Yet this book marathon stands out in my memory for the influx of young devotees who sacrificed substantial energy on the streets.

The small but powerful group of resident temple devotees was reinforced by a wave of local youth. They also attracted students from Pietermaritzburg, Ladysmith, Newcastle, Johannesburg, Soweto and Pretoria. Gathering the “army”, the commanders divided the map of Durban into different sectors and arranged travelling routes from Port Elizabeth

to Johannesburg – and everywhere in between. Local and travelling teams, named *Gauranga* and *Nityananda*, rotated on a weekly basis. They were supplemented by a team of special agents, the *Yuga Dharma Warriors*, who capitalised on the weekends with *harinam* (street chanting) as their secret weapon. The girls were not willing to be left out of the fight and joined the war as *The Jahnava Dasis*. Ready and equipped, the battle to distribute the most books began.

First torrents of rain poured down, and then the harsh sun scorched over us. When the weather softened up there were still the tide of “zombie” shoppers who were seemingly unable to hear the voices of the eager distributors. Inevitably we would meet a person who



At The Ridge

thought we were doing the work of Satan and was going to hell for it. And there were usual opponents; security guards, some car guards and the vicious, seemingly rabid Rottweiler. Needless to say, when distributing books you become street smart. One would wonder why an army of young adults would want to sacrifice their precious freedom to do such a thing. My answer; you can sit at home and read the *Bhagavad-gita* and that’s wonderful but put it into someone else’s hand and you live the *Bhagavad-gita*.

“Book distribution is about surrender, to depend on Krishna at every moment,” said Krishna Caitanya Das who entered the marathon after spending four months studying the *Gita* in Vrindavan, India.

“The marathon taught me to be non-judgemental,” said Marlini Pillay, “You can’t judge a person just by the way he looks or the car he owns. You just have to see every being as a soul.”

“The first reason to go out on the streets is to purify our own hearts,” said Veshal Indeerrjith, head of the *Yuga Dharma Warriors*, “if you do so, then distributing books become that much sweeter.”



At Essenwood Market

“Book distribution took my tolerance, humility and patience to another level,” said Salona Gangaram, (Computer science graduate, UKZN)

“When I distribute a book I become very happy because I helped one soul go back to Krishna,” said eleven year old Jenny Jafta.

Jamuna Singh (Chiropractor (MSc), DUT) put it succinctly, “Prabhupada’s books changes lives.”

On the Road

For me the marathon went into overdrive the day *The Jahnava Dasis* embarked on their two week road trip through Ladysmith, Newcastle, Dundee, and Johannesburg. With only as much luggage as could fit on their laps, the girls climbed into the fully loaded vehicle knowing that either the books get distributed or we risk acute claustrophobia. Our most prized possession was the irreplaceable GPS. Thank God for technology. By day we battled hard as anonymous faces on unfamiliar streets. By night we were treated like royalty in the homes of warm and loving devotees. Together we designed a poetic drama on the *Bhagavad-gita* – freestyle. It helped us reach people and convince them that the *Gita* is prime property.

Upon reaching Johannesburg the girls were feeling the strain of travelling, distributing books for long hours, and waking up every day in a different room.

“The concrete jungle of Jozi was definitely the ‘deep



In a Chastworth Business Area

end’. Pulled out of our comfort zone into a land where traffic rules seemed obsolete...we had nothing but the holy name to depend on.” (Priyanka Veerasamy, 2nd yr Pharmacy, UKZN).

At this crossroads we witnessed the power of team work. We turned to Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurahari, the presiding Deities of ISKCON Lenasia, and begged Their mercy. Sure enough, we came home with an empty car boot and hearts fortified by the deep bonds of friendship.

The boys travelling teams also nurtured the gem of association. “Book distribution is not a solo effort,” said Bhakta Tashveer (3rd yr Environmental Science, UKZN). Pyari Mohan Das, heading the boys teams, commented, “(It was) intense but enlivening. When you know this is what is pleasing to Srila Prabhupada, it spurs you on...”

“The seed of *bhakti* is sown far and wide,” said Maithili Devi Dasi, “It was amazing, and I can’t wait to do it again.”

As Priyanka eloquently put it, “Alone we are insignificant little stars in a dark sky. If we make an effort to spread Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s glorious mission, then collectively we can illuminate the path back home for many lost souls. Never forget that there is an empowered spiritual warrior inside you. Realise it. Live it.”

Due to that collective effort of many devotees, thirty thousand books have been distributed in the festive season. They now lie unsuspectingly on bookshelves, carelessly on coffee tables, or in forgotten car cubbies. They lie in anticipation for that moment when their superlative power will be unbridled. And the memories that each distributor has claimed as their true wealth will be cherished always. In the words of my favourite girls in the universe, “Man, that was epic.”



In a Chatsworth Residential Area

Vaishnava Calendar

20 Feb Th	Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's Appearance (Fast till noon)
25 Feb Tu	Ekadasi
26 Feb We	Break fast 05:44 - 10:00
28 Feb Fr	Siva Ratri
2 Mar Su	Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji's Disappearance
12 Mar We	Ekadasi
13 Mar Th	Break fast 05:54 - 10:01 Sri Madhavendra Puri's Disappearance
16 Mar Su	Gaura Purnima: Appearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu (Fast till moonrise)
17 Mar Mo	Festival of Jagannatha Misra
24 Mar Mo	Sri Srivasa Pandita's Appearance
27 Mar Th	Ekadasi
28 Mar Fr	Break fast 06:04 - 10:01
4 Apr Fr	Sri Ramanujacarya's Appearance
8 Apr Tu	Rama Navami: Appearance of Lord Sri Ramacandra (Fast till sunset)

Madeira Cake

Vaishnava Kitchen

By Asha Maharaj

250g butter or margarine
2 cups milk
1 1/2 cups sugar
1/4 tsp salt
3 1/2 cups self raising flour
1/4 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1/4 tsp grated orange rind

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C. Combine butter, milk and sugar in saucepan and heat until butter has melted. Stir until the sugar has dissolved. Allow mixture to cool. Sift in the self raising flour and bicarbonate of soda. Stir in the rind and pour the batter into a medium size foil pan and bake for +/- 35 minutes.

Variation

The orange rind can be sprinkled onto the batter before baking.



Lord Vishnu's Chakra

Young Vaishnavas Column

By Anjinee Rampershad

Maha Sudarsan Homa came about when the ISKCON Mayapur temple was attacked in 1984. Some devotees were injured and the Deity of Srimati Radharani was stolen. It was then decided that the temple needed the protection of Lord Nrsimhadev, the half-man, half-lion incarnation of Lord Krishna, who appeared to save Prahlad Maharaja from his demon father, Hiranyakashipu. This form is especially worshipped as the protector of His devotees.

A huge deity of Lord Nrsimhadev was made and the Sudarsan Chakra was carved on the back of the deity in the form of a disk. The Sudarsan represents the Lord. Ugra Nrsimha, was installed in the courtyard of the temple to ward off thieves. Every year, on the appearance day of Lord Nrsimhadev, as part of the celebration, there is a huge fire sacrifice (yajna) in front of the Deity in the courtyard. A colourful Mandala is prepared by the priests and their students. This beautifully decorated Mandala is called the Maha Sudarsana Homa on which the yajna takes place.



Activity

You will need:

1 paper plate

Coloured pencils, crayons or paint

A short piece of string

Here's how

Copy the picture or trace onto your paper plate. Make sure you follow the colours and shape as it has significance. The six triangles must be in red and the circle around the triangle signifies the place of the Lord's pastimes. Surrounding that circle are eight lotus petals which represents the eight principle gopis. Punch two holes and thread the string. Make a knot at the end. It is now ready to hang up in your home. The Lord's Sudarsana Chakra will protect your home and family.