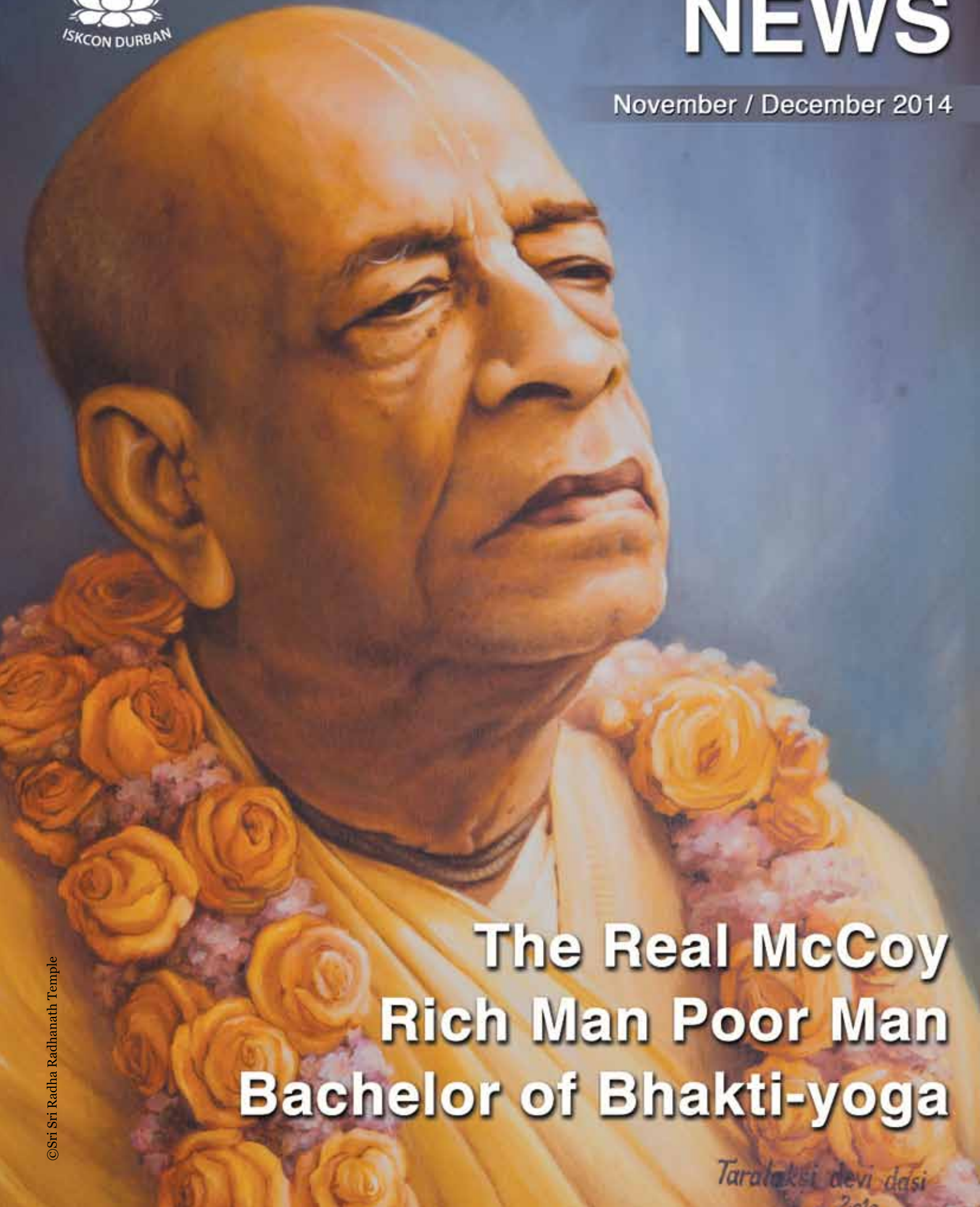




International Society for Krishna Consciousness  
Founder Acharya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

# HARE KRISHNA NEWS

November / December 2014



**The Real McCoy  
Rich Man Poor Man  
Bachelor of Bhakti-yoga**

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His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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## Editor's Note

Hare Krishna Dear Readers,

Can you believe we have reached the end of another year? When I first joined the temple as a full-time devotee, high school and university students packed the ashram in the holidays. December at the temple used to be a busy time with emphasis on book distribution and street chanting. I vividly recall the temple abuzz with youthful laughter. You see, we have a devotional competition in December—who can sell the most number of Srila Prabhupada's books—a tradition that began in the 70's and continues till today.

Nowadays people's lives are busier, and some believe they do not have the time to read. But in order to better ourselves we have to gain knowledge, which comes from reading—be it over the internet, a Kindle or good old-fashioned books—so a lot of this issue of Hare Krishna News discusses books, *Bhagavad-gita* in particular, reading, and young people's spiritual choices. With information (often not trustworthy) so readily available, our Vedic Observer gives insight on why Srila Prabhupada's books are unique. Of course a newsletter is light reading, and we have something for everyone, for the sceptical to the devotional and for the eight- to eighty-year-olds.

November 25th marks the beginning of “16 Days of Activism Against Women and Child Abuse,” and our parenting column shares the Vaishnava perspective on the protection of women and children. We also give you the last instalment of stories about Lord Chaitanya and this is a sweet one—of when God brings joy, and that joy fills one beyond all bodily comfort.

2015 is a big year for Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple, as it marks our 30th anniversary. You may be aware that we are not only restoring the temple, but improving certain aspects and introducing green energy. Vibhu Chaitanya Prabhu shares his passion for going green.

Remember Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple is your temple, our temple, and Srila Prabhupada's family. So, during your holiday come visit us, learn about your temple and how you can serve your temple.

Here's to good holiday choices.

I trust this finds you in good spirits,  
Rasa-sthali Dasi

Letters to the Editor

Share your temple experience, spiritual or service related realisations then write to

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## Appreciating the Goal of Service

### Message from the Co-President

Being requested to write a message for this issue of *Hare Krishna News* as 2014 comes to a close, prompted me to deeply reflect on the year that has passed. It has been quite a consequential year for me personally and for the development of Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON in KwaZulu Natal. After fourteen years of serving as the Temple President at the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple and fifteen years of overseeing the Durban Festival of Chariots amongst other provincial responsibilities, I am inspired to pursue other service avenues in Srila Prabhupada's mission. Srila Prabhupada was not a supporter of careless change; he wanted his managers to be fixed in their responsibilities. However, when there is scope to offer more needed service to Srila Prabhupada, then relinquishing certain responsibilities to accept other urgent ones is encouraged.

While we have many competent devotees to administrate and manage the institution, we have identified that much work is required in training our community in the spiritual culture Srila Prabhupada brought to us. As Srila Prabhupada wrote, "Better to boil the milk very vigorously and make it thick and sweet. That is the best process. So let us concentrate on training our devotees very thoroughly in the knowledge of Krishna consciousness..." (Letter to Hansadutta, June 22, 1972) In my service as a co-National Secretary for ISKCON in South Africa, I will try to serve the devotees here by offering training in various aspects of Vaisnava culture, management, and deity worship, etc.

Although I used to relatively identify myself with my management services, moving on from this service helped me understand and better appreciate the goal behind my service — to purify myself by assisting Srila Prabhupada and his representatives, and to ultimately realize my personal relationship with Krishna and to please Him. It's not that I am a Temple President, rather I am primarily a servant. A servant's position is to please the master (Krishna) in whatever way the master desires. By Krishna's desire and Srila Prabhupada's arrangement, we are adorned with a variety of designations or outfits of service, but the principle is that we are servants. This is an important and edifying principle — we must become fixed, connected, and surrendered to the goal of the service and not the designation that goes with the service. This mood of spiritual detachment helps us be more open to guidance, correction, and improvement in all our

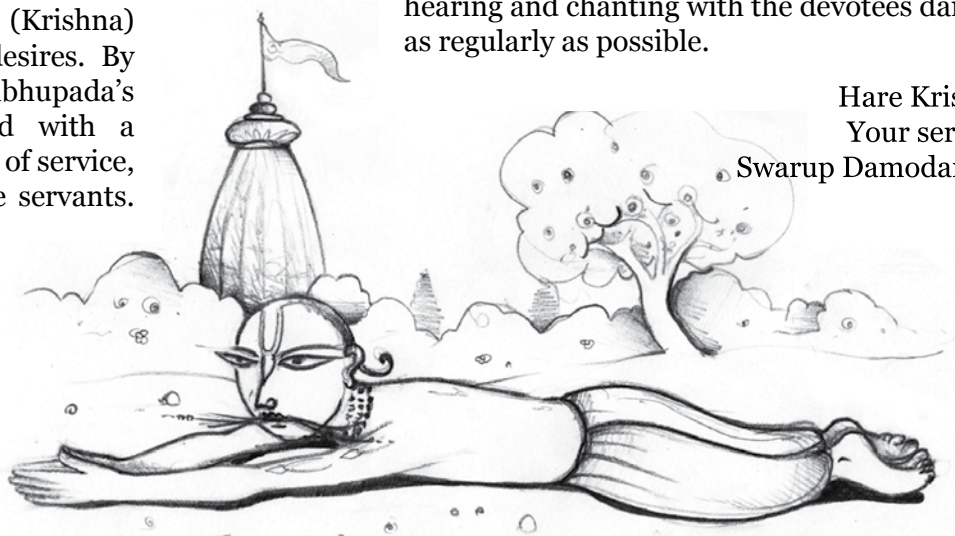
services. It also enables us to readily accept when Srila Prabhupada and his representatives asks us to engage in some other service, which can sometimes become difficult if we develop attachments to services based on external considerations like authority and influence, fame, security, and comfort, etc.

Another crucial aspect of service is the indispensable mercy of the senior Vaishnavas. In a sincere and humble expression of this principle, Srila Krishna Das Kaviraj Gosvami writes: "My path is very difficult. I am blind, and my feet are slipping again and again. Therefore, may the saints help me by granting me the stick of their mercy as my support." (Cc. Antya 1.2) When I was appointed as Temple President at a young age, my qualifications were inadequate and the service was beyond my capacity, but the mercy and blessings of the saintly Vaishnavas enabled me to do the needful. The grace of the devotees and depending on their grace is essential to be successful in any spiritual endeavour. It is their grace that really attracts Krishna's attention, and when Krishna is involved then anything is possible.

By the mercy of these saints, much has developed in KZN, and by their grace so much more that is yet to be done is being revealed. With the blessings of Srila Prabhupada's representatives, Vibhu Chaitanya Prabhu, a gentle and soft-hearted devotee, has committed himself to serve at Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple in the demanding service as a Temple President with many projects to progress.

We have been handed a colossal mandate from Lord Chaitanya and Srila Prabhupada — give everyone in KZN, everyone in the world an opportunity to serve Sri Sri Radha Radhanath and become Krishna conscious and thus peaceful and happy. It is my humble entreaty to all our readers to apply your efforts, qualifications, finances, time, and other resources behind the sacrifices of these leading devotees. Please also diligently practice the process of Krishna consciousness and take advantage of the temples and centres we have by coming and hearing and chanting with the devotees daily or as regularly as possible.

Hare Krishna.  
Your servant,  
Swarup Damodar Das



## If Compassion Were a Person

**Srila Prabhupada**

By Yamuna Devi Dasi

“At 1:00 A.M., when no one else was up and it was very quiet, Bhaktivedanta Swami would wake and begin writing...That was his real purpose in coming here: to prepare the books he could distribute to the people of the West. Although as yet he had no means for travelling even as far as Japan, and no means for printing books, these were the goals for which he worked.” (*Srila Prabhupada-lilamrita*, Volume 1, Chapter 10)

As I read these lines I perceived Srila Prabhupada’s ardent desire and determination for his mission of spreading Krishna consciousness in the West. Rising at that early hour of the morning when most of us are sound asleep, he would begin translating *Srimad Bhagavatam* on his typewriter in his tiny

room at Radha Damodar Temple in Vrindavan. Srila Prabhupada’s writings are filled with in-depth conclusions, including both scientific and devotional elements. His writings are relished worldwide by devotees, scholars, scientists, philosophers, and world leaders. His authentic writings are a tremendous act of compassion to mankind and has transformed many thousands of lives, giving hope to a second Golden Age, a spiritual era. Today his books are in thousands of libraries, universities, schools, businesses, religious institutions, and homes.

One may ask why Prabhupada placed such focus on writing, printing and distributing books. Srila Prabhupada’s spiritual master Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, instructed him, “If you ever get money, print books.” Srila Bhaktisiddhanta wanted him to take the philosophy and the chanting of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* to the Western world, and he knew that Prabhupada would fulfil this order.

After that, Prabhupada made these instructions his life’s purpose and the result was phenomenal.

“Many revere Prabhupada as India’s greatest scholar, philosopher, prophet, and cultural ambassador. According to the 1976 Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year, he ‘astonished academic and literary communities worldwide by writing and publishing fifty-two books on the ancient Vedic culture ... in the period from October 1968 to November 1975.’ His *Back to Godhead* magazine continues a bi-monthly circulation after almost sixty years of publication.” (*The Hidden Glory of India*)

Prabhupada had written books not to win the Nobel Prize, he had written these books to save the world from the disease of suffering and give permanent happiness in the form of a higher spiritual understanding and love of God. My gardener, who has been struggling with HIV for many years, after reading *Bhagavad-gita* astounded me: “Missus., I have read your *Gita* book and I am not afraid to die anymore. I know my body will die and I will live as the soul.” His words brought tears to my eyes. The real success of the Hare Krishna Movement is its books and it will be the shining torch that lights the golden era.

*Tis the season to be giving...*

*The gift of life  
The gift of devotion  
The gift of God*

*Krishna Book Set  
R100*

*The gift of knowledge  
The gift of truth  
The gift of freedom*

*Bhagavad-gita  
Book Set  
R150*



## The Real McCoy

### Vedic Observer

By Venu Gopal Das

We are living in an age where 1's and 0's can be rapidly transferred across various mediums and displayed on our innovative smart devices. In an age when information is abundant, how many of us ever stop to verify or establish how reliable these sources of information are. Who wrote it? What credentials do they have? Where did the information come from and so forth? I am one of these people and most of what I find is just conjecture, hearsay and sentimental opinions — opinions directed towards advertising or revenue. Unfortunately these distortions have long existed and are prevalent in all sectors of contemporary civilization including religious scriptures and teachings.

In Vedic tradition, knowledge was preserved and distributed with the strictest standards of integrity. *Brahmans* spent years, even lifetimes, mastering their senses and selflessly devoting themselves to the Supreme Lord. In this way they ensured no personal desire or ambition would infiltrate the purity of the Lord's divine message.

The Vedic system of time is divided into four *yugas* (ages), and presently we are living in the Kali-yuga. In this age, a human being's memory and ability to understand will decrease and be at its lowest (SB 1.1.10). For this reason, Sri Vyasadeva appeared and compiled the Vedas. Prior to this incarnation, the knowledge of the Vedas was passed down through oral tradition. But because of the failing memory and other negative elements of Kali-yuga, Sri Vyasadeva divided and recorded the entire contents of the Vedic wisdom into the scriptural Vedas that exist today (SB 1.4.17-20).

Before accepting *sannyasa*, the renounced order of life, Srila Prabhupada studied extensively and graduated from the exalted Scottish Church College in Calcutta and he later entered the pharmaceutical industry with great success. He had experience in writing academically and was not naive about international quality standards and emerging trends.

Srila Prabhupada's guru, Srila Bhaktisiddhantha Sarasvati Thakur, saw these qualities in Srila Prabhupada and left him with a single instruction... to preach unaltered Krishna consciousness outside of India.

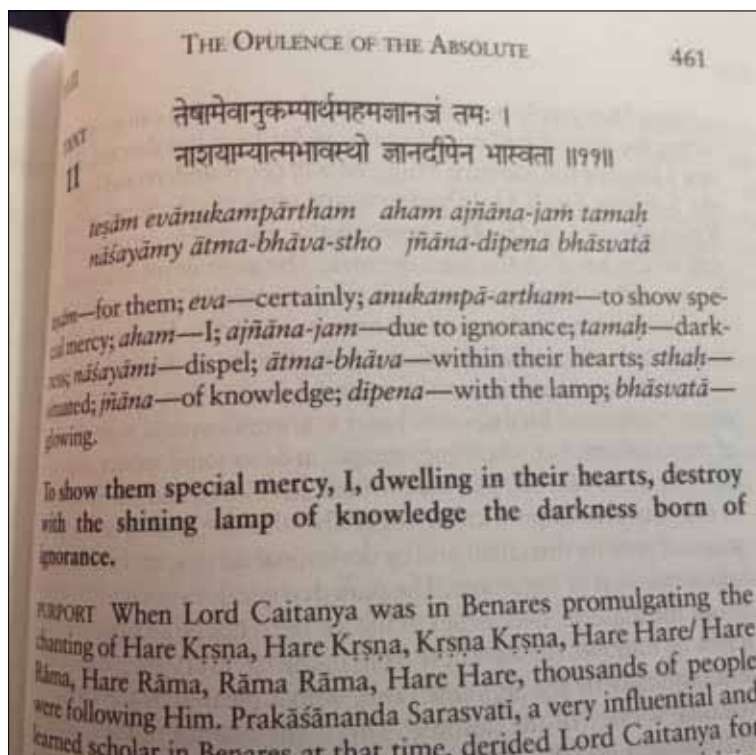
The first known English translation of *Bhagavad-gita* is credited to Charles Wilkins and was published in 1785. In the centuries that followed, hundreds more emerged, the most recent published in May 2014. Most editions are published by academics or new-age gurus, some even by agnostics and atheists.

However, till this day Srila Prabhupada's *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, remains the only edition that contains Vyasadeva's original Devanagari script, transliterations (conversion characters from one written language to another), word-for-word and

verse translations, as well as a Sanskrit pronunciation guide. Srila Prabhupada's *Bhagavad-gita* is acclaimed by Sanskrit scholars, academics, theologians and numerous other authorities that have no direct affiliation with ISKCON. With nothing to hide, he gave us everything. It is no surprise that only his *Bhagavad-gita* has been translated into over eighty languages and used extensively as a point of reference in academia. We find that most editions are done by people with some

qualification, but Srila Prabhupada was qualified on all levels, materially and spiritually. On February 12th 2014, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust announced that they sold just over half a billion books since 1965. The purity of this message can be shown in the results — not just how many books were sold but that people transformed their lives by reading it. No other *Bhagavad-gita* was able to change people's hearts or change their lives in a dramatic way.

A copy of any of Srila Prabhupada's books is more than just words on paper. It is spiritual and contains eternal knowledge. His work will continue to be used as a point of reference for centuries to come. It is the preservation of Vyasadeva's texts and Vedic tradition. In the Kali-yuga, where spirituality has become tarnished, Srila Prabhupada by the contribution of these books, has given us an opportunity to shine.



## Working Soul

By Nashvin Gangaram

Wake up, rush to work - eight to ten hours evaporate, rush home, family responsibilities, sleep – this is my life. Does this sound familiar? Most of us find ourselves in this routine. Some may enquire, “Is this what life is about? Isn't there more to life than this?” Personally, I would like to understand what life is about and act according to that understanding. But, with my fast-paced modern lifestyle, I wondered if and how I could include any spiritual pursuits. Won't this be difficult and time-consuming? Actually, I found spiritual activity can be as easy as ABCD...

A = Association of devotees. *Bhagavad-gita*

(2.62) states “*sangat sanjayate kamah*”: one's desires and ambitions develop according to the company one keeps. For example, in a support group, like Alcoholics Anonymous, it is easier to combat a problem with others who are interested in the same objective. Therefore, I find keeping the company of the Lord's devotees extremely important, as it fosters the development of my spiritual desires, and decreases my attraction to material life. The Sunday Love Feast programme at the Hare Krishna Temples is an excellent opportunity to associate with and hear from devotees, apart from the mouth-watering feast served. In South Africa, we are especially fortunate that there are continuous visits from an array of senior devotees from around the world, in addition to many experienced local devotees. Another way I like

**Even a slight performance of these five awakens love for Krishna.**

C = Chanting. The recommended spiritual process for the current age

is chanting of the holy names of God. This is most often observed during *kirtan*, where the holy names are chanted aloud in congregation, in public places, as well as in the temple. It is also important to chant individually (*japa*). *Japa* is a private expression of love between the chanter and the holy name. The holy name is non-different from God Himself. It is best to dedicate time in the morning to chant a fixed amount of *japa* every day. Even with my busy schedule, I can afford to sacrifice for Krishna, because time is one of Krishna's energies, and He can expand it as necessary when He sees our devotion.

D = Diet. When we lovingly offer Krishna what He likes to eat, He accepts our offering, transforming the material into spiritual. By using the tongue to taste this *prasada* (mercy), our senses are then purified. This is my favourite spiritual practice. Actually, tasting sanctified food cannot be described or theoretically understood, it must be personally experienced.

These activities don't seem that difficult, do they? But are they effective? Lord Chaitanya confirms that these are actually among the most potent forms of devotional service: “One should associate with devotees, chant the holy name of the Lord, hear *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, reside at Mathura and worship the Deity with faith and veneration. These five limbs of devotional service are the best of all. Even a slight performance of these five awakens love for Krishna.” (Cc. *Madhya* 22.128-129) Therefore, despite all our inadequacies, we should enthusiastically practice spiritual life daily, particularly when it is made so easy for us.

Nashvin Gangaram is 26 years old and works as a computer engineer in Durban. He started practicing *bhakti-yoga* just over four years ago.





## Bachelor of Bhakti-yoga

By Ananta Gauranga Das

“It’s not you Darling, it’s me. The only constant in this life is change,” she said, as the blade of her words ravaged my amorous heart asunder. I am eternally indebted to my ex-girlfriend for she was the spark who ignited my spiritual flame and endowed me with the eyes to gaze at a world fraught with fleeting shadowy happiness. I hankered for reprieve from the onslaught of the incessant waves of misery and distress which plagued my temporary existence in this world. That traumatic day six years ago led me to answer the whisper of my heart, which subsequently manifested into a wailing I was helpless to ignore — a longing for an eternal relationship. Heeding the urge of my heart, I ventured into numerous places and finally discovered the Hare Krishna Temple coupled with *bhakti-yoga* (the yoga of love and devotion to God and a process to eternal elation).

The Vedas explain that when you water the root of a tree, the tree in its entirety is nourished. It thus became apparent to me that Krishna is the all-attractive Absolute Truth, the root cause of all existence. In accordance to scripture I came to understand that all other incarnations, angels, demigods, ancestors, and spiritual teachers I’ve had in the past would be fully satiated by my desire to pledge this life in the service of Krishna and His devotees. It is for this reason that on the 28th of February this year I officially took shelter of His Holiness Radhanath Swami (my beloved spiritual guide), and on 13 May 2014 with the blessing of the Vaishnavas and at the request of my spiritual

### *Brahmacharya is the celibate stage of life...*

authorities, I took to the *brahmachari ashram* by accepting saffron robes (the flag of renunciation).

*Brahmacharya* is the celibate stage of life, which cultivates detachment by placing Krishna at the centre of daily existence. A *brahmachari* does not vow to not get married, rather he wears saffron as a confirmation of his conviction

to dedicate his life solely in the service of God. During this period of his life, he learns from the *Sri Isopanishad* that everything animate and inanimate is owned and controlled by the Lord. As a result, the only item he has to renounce is the false conception of proprietorship over his body and possessions. If he eventually decides to enter married life, he understands that his family, home, car, and other so-called possessions belongs to God and should be used in His service.

A *brahmachari* does not frivolously associate with woman. It is said that a woman is like fire, and a man is like butter, and in the presence of fire butter melts. Thus when endeavouring for spiritual advancement, he keeps these dealings at a minimal. In Vedic culture women are seen as mothers and should be given utmost respect. When I first joined the *ashram*, I learnt that a *mataji* (mother) is mercy personified and without her blessings it will be difficult to make spiritual progress.

*Ashram* means a place of shelter, and all *ashrams* be it monistic or householder are a means of connecting with God. However, the *brahmachari ashram* affords one the opportunity to expedite his spiritual connection. A monk need not worry about paying electricity bills, dropping kids off at school, or having the mother-in-law pestering you to mow the lawn. A *brahmachari* is free of these obligations; his sole focus is on serving the orders of his spiritual master and scrutinisingly studying holy scriptures.

A *brahmachari* is taught that by giving he receives; when he gives himself fully to God’s service without expectation for remuneration and adoration, the wealth of tolerance, forbearance, and humility will spring in his heart. Thus, renunciation is not the colour of one’s dress, it is a cultivation of God centred consciousness.

Ananta Gauranga Das is 31 years old, has a Bachelorz of Social Science Degree majoring in Psychology and Sociology and Honours Degree in Clinical Psychology (specialising in trauma psychology). He has been living in the temple from October 2012.





# GO GREEN

An Interview with Vibhu Caitanya Das  
By Rasa-sthali Dasi

We have reported on the temple restoration in our previous issues, and you may have seen the scaffolding around the temple towers... painting has begun. If you do not know, the temple is undergoing major restoration for the 30th anniversary next October. Not only are we restoring the temple to its original beauty, some might argue that we are making marked improvements. One in particular—that is both admirable and intimidating—is our Go Green campaign. This campaign is the brainchild of Vibhu Caitanya Das, our Temple President, who

readily agreed to my interview—an indication that he feels passionately about it.

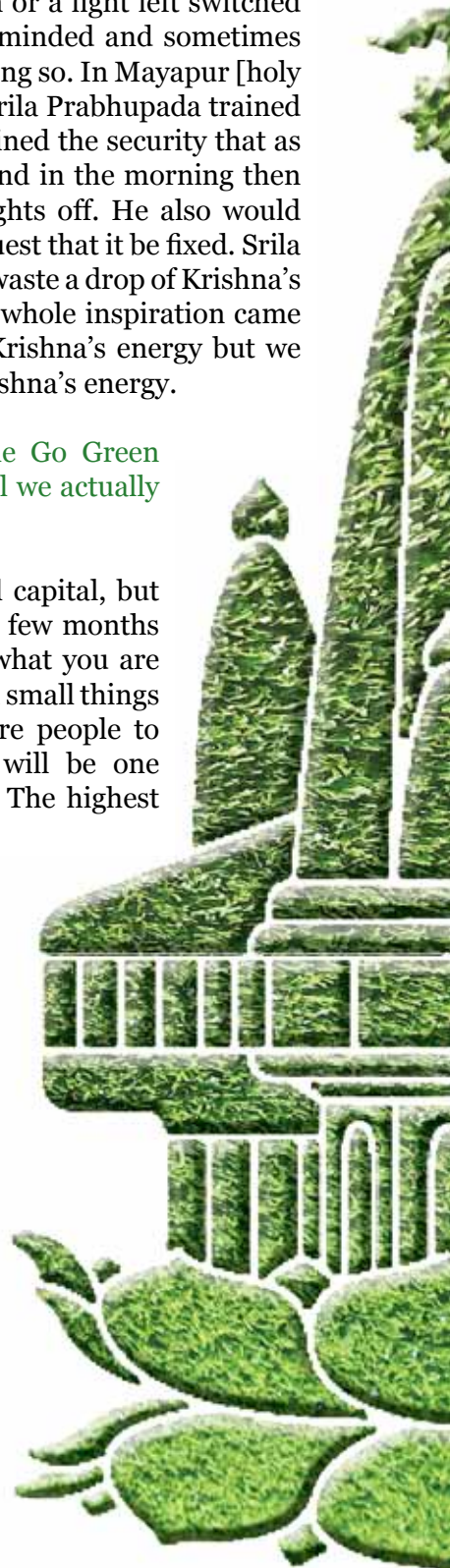
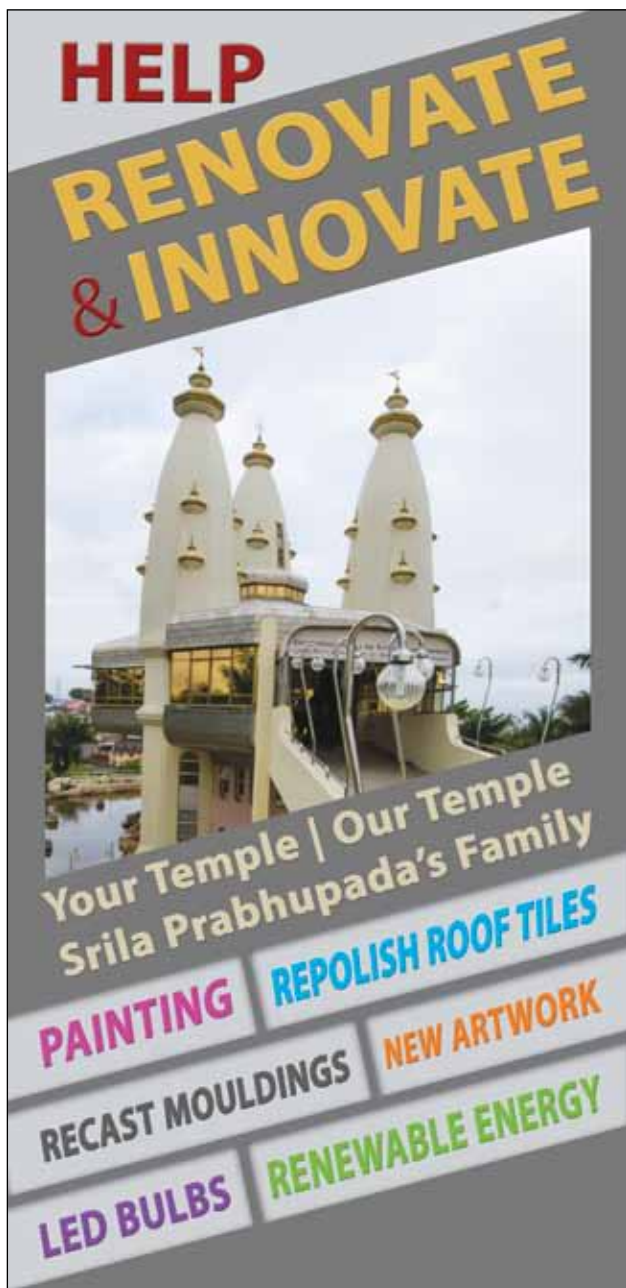
**Q: What is the inspiration behind the Go Green campaign?**

Srila Prabhupada was careful about saving Krishna's energy. Whether it was a fan or a light left switched on in an empty room, he reminded and sometimes chastised his disciples for doing so. In Mayapur [holy place in India] specifically, Srila Prabhupada trained the devotees who in turn trained the security that as soon as you can see your hand in the morning then it was time to switch the lights off. He also would notice dripping taps and request that it be fixed. Srila Prabhupada did not want to waste a drop of Krishna's energy. So that is where the whole inspiration came from; not only do we save Krishna's energy but we save money which is also Krishna's energy.

**Q: How cost effective is the Go Green campaign and how long until we actually reap the financial benefit?**

It does require lots of initial capital, but you will see the savings in a few months or few years depending on what you are doing. We are beginning with small things and we want more and more people to get involved. One day we will be one hundred percent compliant. The highest goal is to be completely off the grid. For now we have smaller goals and have begun implementing some. But yes, to be off the grid. We will have our own solar energy farm on our property. Though that will only be possible in a few years. Also *Srimad-bhagavatam* explains that electricity and water will not last forever...we can see it now with the load shedding and water shortages and as this is the Age of Kali, the age of deterioration, we have to be self-sustainable.

**Q: What have you done thus far in terms of going green?**





Our first step was that we had an energy audit by Eskom and Renu, a renewable energy company. We already have energy saver bulbs but we have taken it one step further. The temple itself has 521 bulbs. As of 1st November ALL temple bulbs are either energy savers or LED bulbs, including the florescent tubes. From a 60W bulb we are now using a 5-6W bulb. Sometimes energy savers can be dimmer, but after research we purchased energy-saving bulbs that are actually brighter. We used “cool white” bulbs for the outside and in keeping with the ambience of the temple inside, we went with “warm white.”

Over the past few months we have been composting waste from all our kitchens: devotee, deity, restaurant, and Food for Life. We have demarcated compost areas and will be able to use the compost in our gardens and lawns.

We will be receiving our biodegradable packaging in two or three week's time, so “Goodbye polystyrene!” Govinda's Restaurant and the Deity Department will use only biodegradable packaging, but we are still going to use paper plates for now. Biodegradable packaging costs almost double, so we are making changes in increments. The new packaging will not affect the prices in Govinda's; it is our service to the environment and to the customer.

I am particularly happy to announce that soon we will be introducing cow based biodegradable detergents. Cow based means cow urine and cow dung. This range includes detergents, washing powder, body soap, etc. The full range will also be on sale at our gift shop.

The second part of electricity saving is our geyser usage. Renu recommended a wonderful water filtration process where we can save our grey water. For example, the water used in our kitchens can be recycled and used in the garden and toilets, etc. but the process is too costly and requires

quite a bit of restructuring, and therefore impractical at this point in time. So we came up with the simple solution of geyser heat pumps, which will be implemented soon.

### Q: What are the challenges?

Well, the most obvious one is financial, but also when it comes to change people go on high alert, they are not so comfortable with change. It is not easy to change peoples' mindset, so we are trying to educate and remind people that one day it is all going to run out unless we start living more consciously now. Srila Prabhupada built temples to attract people to Krishna consciousness, and with our Go Green campaign we will attract people who are warriors of sustainable living.

### Q: Other inspirations for the Go Green campaign?

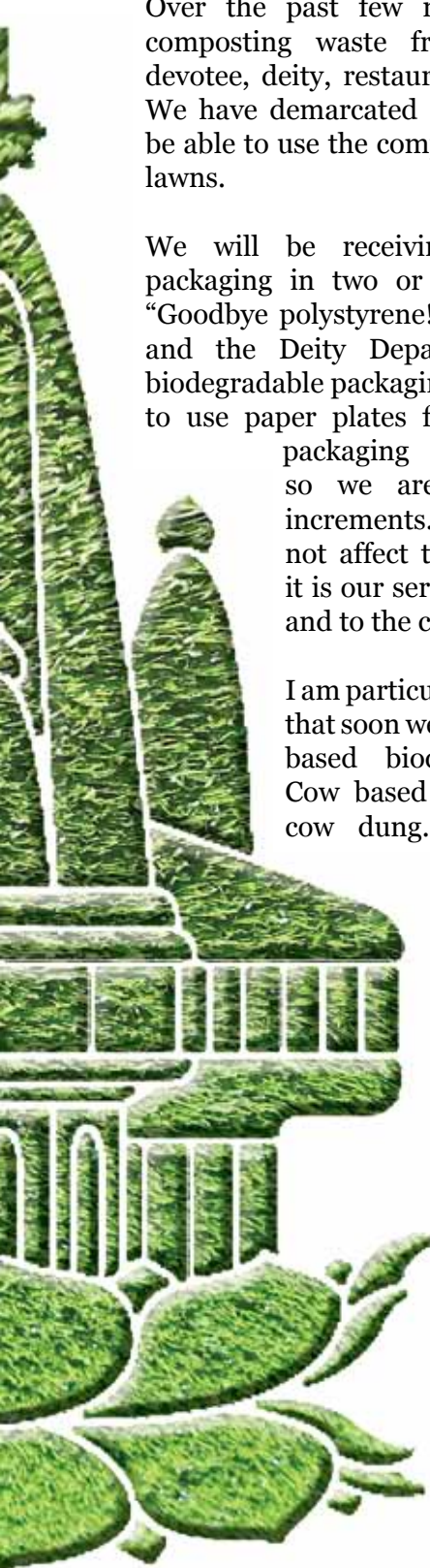
We won the Tourism Landmark award last year at the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry. So in order to attract more people to the temple and to up our game in what we do and how we present ourselves, this is a sure way to attract people.

### Q: By when do you want to implement the above?

We are going to implement by Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple's 30th anniversary next year. These are small steps but we have big plans, like we want to have a solar farm on the property where we can generate our own electricity. We also have lots of underground water and we are researching on how to get our borehole operational. Again, it will cost a bit in the beginning but in the long run it will be exceptionally feasible.

## Planning for the Future

We have approved the first draft of a *prasada* feeding area, conference facility, and restaurant. This will be built where the current *prasada* marquee is. The *prasada* feeding area will be able to seat four hundred and fifty people and it will be designed following the Vaishnava tradition of serving— where servers will serve out the different preparations to people who are seated. Above the *prasada* hall will be a conference facility that will house up to three hundred and sixty people with partitions to facilitate bigger or smaller groups. And finally, a new Govinda's Restaurant with the capacity of seating a hundred patrons, built with access from the road. This is the initial step towards our Master Plan. With this facility we will be able to generate the income required to build a function hall, with the capacity of one thousand, on the other side of the property with gardens and parking. Also on the cards are college classrooms, devotee care and storage facilities.



## Rich Man Poor Man

### Happily Ever After

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

Kholavecha Sridhar was a humble soul. As he sat in his old thatched hut, he heard people say, “Sridhar is such a poor man. He wears old tattered clothes covered with holes and patches. What to speak of clothes, he doesn’t even have food to eat. He is so thin that he is simply a bag of skin and bones. God must have forsaken him!” Sridhar simply smiled to himself and continued chanting the names of God. Their words did not disturb his mind just like the drops of rain that dripped through the holes of his roof did not heed his attention. He was happy to be home after a hard day’s work at the marketplace selling bananas, banana leaves, and banana tree bark, which were used to make cups. Being home meant that he would be able to chant Krishna’s names throughout the night without disturbance. But not for long. His neighbours, annoyed by his loud chanting, remarked, “Stop this noise! What’s the use of your chanting? We are worshipping Chandi, Kali, and we have everything; proper home, clothes, good food, and palanquins, but you don’t have anything. What do you get by chanting Krishna’s names? In fact, your Krishna gives you so little food that you are crying out His names from the pain of hunger.”

But Sridhar did not mind their insults. He continued to chant. He was satisfied by making an honest living of selling his bananas at the market, not overcharging anyone, and using half of his income to worship the holy Ganges. By worshipping Lord Krishna’s dear devotee, Gangadevi, he knew he was pleasing the Lord. And now his worshipable Lord was living in the same town of Navadvipa. What more could he want?

Lord Krishna had descended on Earth in the mood of a devotee as Gauranga (Chaitanya) Mahaprabhu. He had been kind to Sridhar, and Sridhar could not think of anyone else. But was this enough to appease Sridhar’s hunger, to sustain his and his family’s lives in conditions of abject poverty? Were his neighbours right in their conviction that material life could make them happy? Was Sridhar just a fool to ignore the reality of his situation and simply follow his heart?

The answers came on another night after Lord Gauranga had flooded the streets with Krishna’s holy names. Along with his devotees, he enraptured the townspeople with his jubilant singing and dancing. To conclude his wonderful display of love for God, he stopped at the house of Sridhar. He saw another luscious pumpkin growing on Sridhar’s damaged roof which Sridhar would give to Gauranga’s mother to prepare a pumpkin milk delicacy for the Lord’s

pleasure. How much the Lord relished the love of his devotee Sridhar. Sridhar had even forgotten his own hunger for the service of his master.

Arriving at the door of Sridhar’s hut, Lord Chaitanya caught sight of an old, dented, bent, iron pot. Sridhar had used his only pot for everything, for all his personal needs including cooking, cleaning, drinking, and bathing. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu immediately clasped the iron pot and began drinking the water from it. The Supreme Lord had put aside all the fortunes of the spiritual world to drink the water of His pure devotee. Sridhar stood spellbound. He could not believe that the Lord of all the worlds, the husband of the goddess of fortune, and the proprietor of all riches, was drinking water from his old battered iron pot. But to the Lord, the water tasted sweeter than nectar. When the devotees realized what was happening, they wept uncontrollably. Never before had they seen such a display of love.

### *How much the Lord relished the love of his devotee Sridhar*

But Sridhar was alarmed. He said, “O my Lord, how can you drink from the water that I have

drunk from? You have come to this world to save the conditioned souls, but today you have come to destroy me.” With tears flowing down his golden cheeks, Lord Chaitanya exclaimed, “I have come to this world just to drink the nectar of pure devotion.” Sridhar fell to his knees overwhelmed with bliss. The devotees, watching in awe, could understand the deep meaning of the Lord’s actions. He had shown them that there is no greater worship than the worship of His devotees, and how careful they should be not to judge Krishna’s devotees by external qualifications. The Lord had demonstrated that His devotees are non-different from Him as far as His heart is concerned; how they treated His devotees was a reflection of how they treated Him. The devotees realized that although others saw Sridhar as a simple, poor, useless fool, he was the most exalted of souls. His wealth of humility and devotion had attracted the attention of Lord Chaitanya.





Thus Sridhar's hunger was appeased; his mind was absorbed in the Lord which eased his material suffering and satisfied the soul's hunger for spiritual fulfilment and happiness. The hunger that gnawed in his belly was a reminder that he could not be free from the sufferings of this world. Even though his neighbours enjoyed the comforts of life, they were rampaged by material desire, lust, and greed, always wanting more and not being content with what they had. Their happiness was like the fleeting changing breeze on a summer day. They could never be truly happy from starving the real self, the soul, from its eternal relationship with God.

***...rich or poor—everyone was a victim of birth, death, old age, and disease.***

Sridhar was convinced that the Lord had never abandoned him but wanted him to claim eternal happiness derived from an eternal relationship with God. Just as a rich man's palace decays in time, he knew that his condition was also temporary. The Lord had also protected him from the illusion that this world is peaceful and joyful. He understood that suffering was a reality in any man's world—rich or poor—everyone was a victim of birth, death, old age, and disease. Thus Sridhar was truly wise not to succumb to material desire which never satisfies the soul, but to surrender to the Lord's will and be happy remembering Him.

When Chaitanya Mahaprabhu noticed Sridhar's poverty-stricken condition and that he had not even a proper house to live in, he offered to grant Sridhar any benediction he would ask for. But Sridhar said, "I

have a nice house because it is better than the bird's nest. Birds have no roof and live on trees. I have got shelter. What is the difficulty? But if you want to benedict me, please give me pure devotion to you."

Again, the nature of Sridhar's heart was revealed when Lord Chaitanya called to see him on another day. At the house of his intimate associate, Srivasa Thakur, Chaitanya exhibited his Maha-prakash form of Lord Vishnu and all His incarnations. Only

his confidential devotees were fortunate to see his supreme identity. The Lord then invited Sridhar and displayed this opulent form to him. Sridhar fainted in bliss. Lord Gauranga

remembered his childhood days when he would steal Sridhar's bananas at the marketplace and quarrel with him. Now the Lord wanted to award Sridhar with the eightfold mystic perfections and with anything he desired. But when Sridhar heard this he refused and asked that He who had regularly quarrelled with him over banana leaves and flowers may remain his Lord, birth after birth.

Mahaprabhu was pleased. Although he could have given Sridhar all the opulence in the world, he wanted to demonstrate that one may be rich or poor, it doesn't matter—in every condition one can serve Him and be happy. After all, Sridhar was the cowherd boy known as Kusumasava in Lord Krishna's pastimes. His real wealth was the special relationship he shared with the Lord.



Lord Chaitanya and his sankirtan party.

## Bhagavad-gita Beyond Motivation

By Sharadiya Rasa Dasi

The word “timeless” reaches its full potential only when pertaining to the *Bhagavad-gita*. When Lord Krishna spoke *Bhagavad-gita* on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra, He explained in detail the position of the living entity, the workings of this world, the Supreme Controller, time, and action. He also explained to Arjuna that this science was spoken before to the sun god, Vivasvan in a previous age.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, an American philosopher and poet, described *Bhagavad-gita*: “...It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us.” The problems or enquiries faced today essentially traversed over the centuries.

The current trend is to turn to motivational or New Age literature in search of answers to those age old questions. Elizabeth Gilbert for example, went on a journey of “self-discovery” travelling to Italy, India,

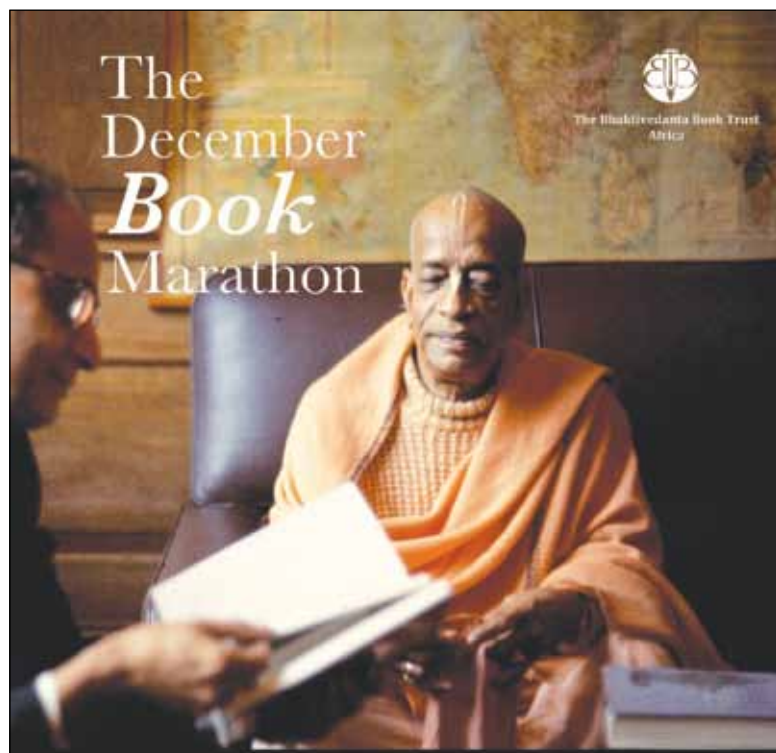
and Indonesia. When she returned, her memoirs were published as the book, “Eat Pray Love.” The book sold millions and readers were embarking on the same trip with the hope of some “self-discovery.” But such literature invariably loses its lustre...just eight years later other books have taken its place. These books remain incomplete or subject to change as the authors themselves undergo various other experiences. Readers follow the fallible author unable to recognize what is bona-fide literature or guru. The *Bhagavad-gita* is not subject to change.

Five thousand years ago Krishna “disposed” of eat, pray, love in *Bhagavad-gita*. He said, “Whatever you do, whatever you EAT, whatever you offer or give away, and whatever austerities you perform—do that, O son of Kunti, as an offering to Me.” (Bg. 9.27) “Always chanting [PRAY] My glories, endeavouring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me.” (Bg. 9.14) And, “If one offers Me with LOVE and devotion a leaf, flower, fruit or water, I will accept it.” (Bg. 9.26)

*Bhagavad-gita* reveals this and other timeless truths to the reader. It is sometimes read out of curiosity or reverence but it is recommended that this knowledge be received through a guru in a chain of master and disciple. The traditional concept of guru remains an uncomfortable notion in the West where being independent is highly prized. However, it is easy to see that we are all dependent: first on our parents for nurturing, on our teachers for knowledge, and on nature for sustenance. In the same way, we need an authentic guru to guide us on our spiritual path - how to love God, how to journey to holy places, and how to perform our sacred duty (*dharma*).

The *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, presented by *jagat guru* (guru of the world) Srila Prabhupada, is highly respected by scholars for its authority, succinct purports and clarity. They are accessed in schools, libraries, and universities globally. It has been translated into over eighty different languages and it has been a catalyst to social cohesion based on the understanding that we are spiritual by nature and we all have an eternal relationship with the one Supreme Father.

The concluding verse of the *Bhagavad-gita* promises that wherever there is Krishna, the master of all mystics, and wherever there is Arjuna there will be opulence, victory, extraordinary power, and morality. Embrace the opportunity to attend the *Bhagavad-gita* recitals at the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple and the various ISKCON Centres on Gita Jayanti, Monday 2nd December, and in so doing go beyond motivational to the Divine. Victory to the Gita!



The  
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“Every word is for the good of human society. Every word, each and every word. Therefore we stress so much in the **book distribution**. Somehow or other, if the book goes in one hand, he will be benefitted.”

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda  
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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# Taming Tornadoes

## Youth Column

By Rukmini Devi Dasi

Ever had a day when everything goes wrong? You sleep through your alarm clock and stub your toe on the edge of the bed. The water supply cuts off just as you lather shampoo into your hair. The cereal burns your tongue, you get stuck in peak traffic and arrive on campus in time to fail that major test. The thought of your parents' expressions makes your blood curdle. Seeking solace, you call your "temporarily significant other" only to have the answer the phone...and you get the sinking feeling that the whole world is against you.

It really sucks when things don't go according to our plan. Our responses include frustration, anger, fear, hopelessness and even physical pain. Inevitably we think, "Why me? Couldn't God pick on the seven billion other people on the planet?"

Our response has a lot to do with our world view. Most people have this fixation that life is meant to be comfortable. It's meant to give me what I want and if it doesn't, then something is wrong. On what do we base this premise? No one really knows. It's like a default setting. The Vedas however, describe life as a classroom. Its lessons help us mould our character and reach our full spiritual potential. We make a mistake when we think that this world is designed for 'happily ever afters'. By understanding this one crucial point, that our existence is a learning curve, our whole perspective of the world shifts and with it our expectations.

When we face challenges it helps to look for the purpose behind them. For example in nature we can observe that a butterfly struggles to get out of a cocoon. Yet it is that physical struggle that strengthens its wings and enables it to fly. Often we try to bypass difficult situations without learning the intended lessons. This can be compared to a passerby who tries to help the butterfly by cutting the cocoon. The butterfly is released but with feeble wings it will not be able to fly. Each of us have our own cocoon-like struggles that smother us, but their purpose is to teach us the lessons that help us fly.

What would happen if suffering

was eliminated from the equation of life? A recent study suggests that children who used antibacterial products from infancy develop weak immune systems because their bodies don't know how to fight certain bacteria. If we never have to deal with suffering we too may end up fragile and vulnerable. Sometimes a mild breeze turns into a tornado. Yet our resistance to experiencing suffering is indicative of us belonging to the spiritual realm where suffering is absent. By learning life's lessons we qualify to return there.

***Yet it is that physical struggle that strengthens its wings and enables it to fly.***

Sometimes we may in fact be facing a serious tornado. What do you do when in the eye of the storm? It is a not sin to look for some

comfort food, scream your lungs out or call a friend. But we can't stay in that zone forever. Here are some steps to keep in mind:

**Release:** I'm not God (thankfully) and I cannot control everything.

**Trust:** Krishna designs the cocoon and He does so only for my benefit.

**Lesson:** What am I meant to learn right now?

Developing gratitude also helps. It's summer in India and I'm melting on my bed in 48°C, watching the blades of the ceiling fan slowly grind to a halt after yet another electricity cut. I can freak out or I can think, "Thank you Krishna, at least I have enough water and rehydration salts." It doesn't change the temperature but it changes my mentality. It is impossible to go through all of the glitches that life dumps upon us without succumbing to bitterness, selfishness or depression at some point. Yet a firm spiritual connection awakens gratitude and a deeper perspective of life. It empowers us not just to tame the tornadoes that whirl through our lives but to do so with a genuine smile.



## Quesadillas

### A Mexican Crowd Pleaser

#### Vaishnava Kitchen

By Krishna-chandra Das

Everyone loves a grilled cheese sandwich, comfort food we can tuck into morning, noon and night. I love Mexican food and I think the folk up in Mexico have seriously improved on the humble grilled cheese with artistic flavour. This simple-to-prepare recipe can work as a starter, side or main dish. Serve it up with a salad, nachos or sweet potato wedges and you will have some wonderfully satisfied guests. This recipe is a single serving.

#### Ingredients

2 rotis/tortillas  
 Little olive oil/butter for pan toasting  
 3 or 4 chopped rosa tomatoes  
 1 teaspoon chopped fresh coriander  
 50ml grated good quality cheddar cheese  
 50ml grated good quality mozzarella cheese  
 50ml sweet yellow peppers  
 50ml crumbed paneer/chopped halloumi  
 Hint of smoked paprika  
 Hint of cracked pepper and salt  
 Combine 3 tablespoons melted butter and 3 tablespoons egg free reduced oil mayonnaise

#### Method

Add the olive oil/butter in a pan/skillet on medium heat.

Toast the roti on one side until it is golden brown then remove, brush with half the butter and mayonnaise mix and set aside.

Brush the second roti with the remaining butter & mayo mix and toss onto pan.

Quickly sprinkle the cheddar cheese over the roti, then scatter the tomatoes, peppers and paneer/halloumi evenly and then add the mozzarella.

Sprinkle some pepper and salt over it, then garnish with coriander.

Lower your heat, then place the previously toasted roti, browned side down over the other roti.

Press them together with a spatula and toast the quesadilla until the cheese is melted.

Flip over and let it toast for a minute or two.

Remove from the pan, cut into wedges and serve with a side of Fresh Guacamole, Creme Fraise or Sambals. Ola!



## Vaishnava Calendar

2 Dec	Tu	Ekadasi Advent of Srimad Bhagavad-gita
3 Dec	We	Break fast 04:47 - 09:26
6 Dec	Sa	Katyayani vrata ends
10 Dec	We	Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur — Disappearance (Fast until midday)
18 Dec	Th	Ekadasi
19 Dec	Fr	Break fast 04:50 - 08:18
24 Dec	We	Srila Jiva Gosvami — Disappearance
1 Jan	Th	Ekadasi
2 Jan	Fr	Break fast 04:59 - 05:04
10 Jan	Sa	Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami — Appearance
16 Jan	Fr	Ekadasi
17 Jan	Sa	Break fast 06:48 - 09:47
24 Jan	Sa	Vasanta Pancami Sarasvati Puja

24 Jan	Sa	Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakur — Disappearance Srila Raghunatha Das Gosvami — Appearance
26 Jan	Mo	Sri Advaita Acharya — Appearance (Fast until midday)
28 Jan	We	Sri Madhvacharya — Disappearance
29 Jan	Th	Sri Ramanujacharya — Disappearance
30 Jan	Fr	Ekadasi (Fast today for Varahadeva)
31 Jan	Sa	Break fast 05:23 - 09:53 Appearance of Lord Varahadeva (Fasting was done yesterday)
1 Feb	Su	Appearance of Sri Nityananda Prabhu (Fast until midday)
3 Feb	Tu	Srila Narottam Das Thakur — Appearance
9 Feb	Mo	Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur — Appearance (Fast until midday)

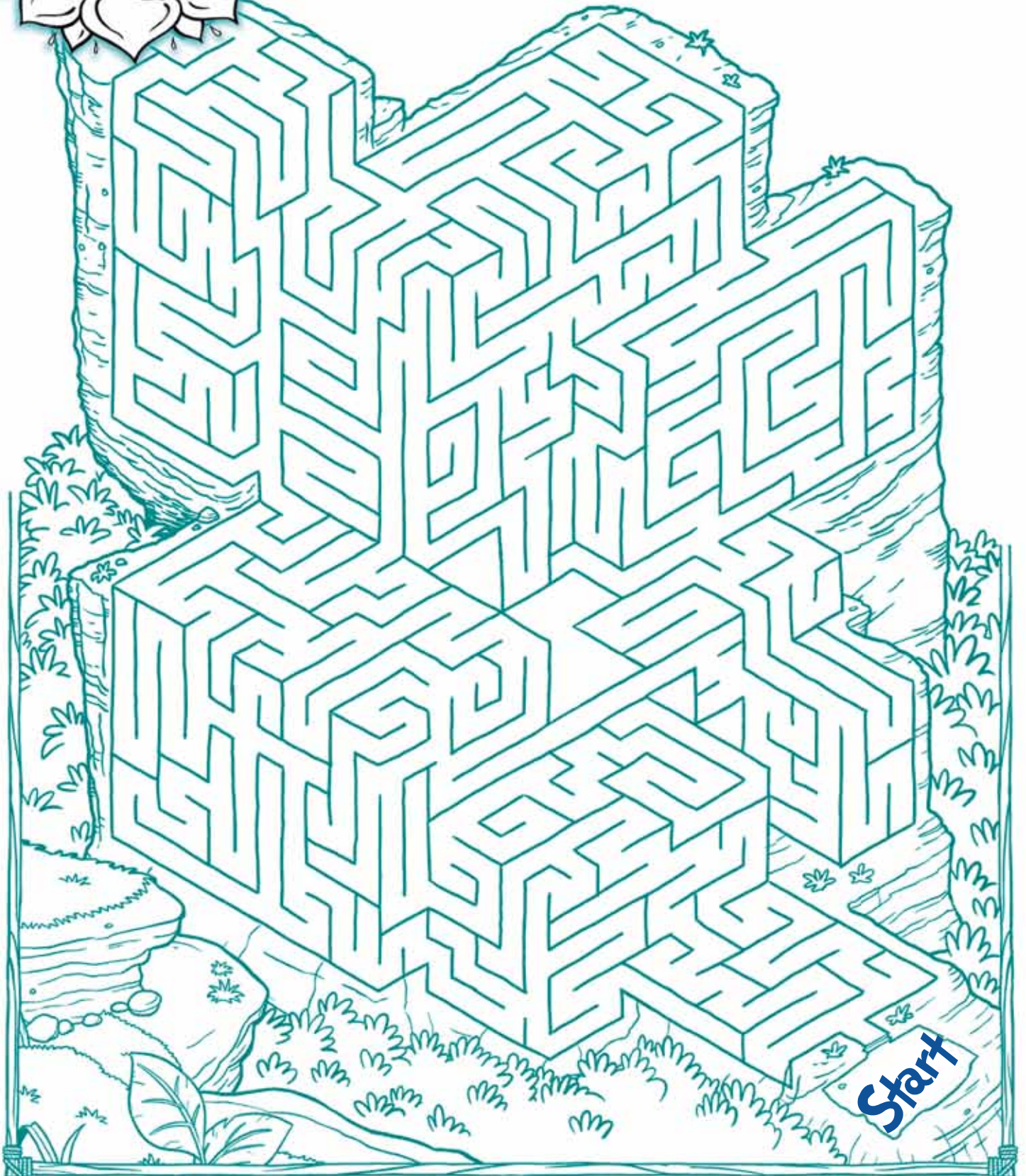




# Krishna Maze

## Young Vaishnava Column

(And for the young at heart.)





## Conscious Protection

### God Conscious Parenting

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

I have been invited to present a talk on parenting skills at an Educator's Council forum. Whilst thinking about this vast topic, I approached the Chairperson to enquire what exactly she would like covered in the presentation. The list went on, but one topic she felt imperative to discuss is women and child abuse within society. My thoughts immediately went to Srila Prabhupada's instructions on how important child care really is. In Vedic literature we have the answers to all questions, with practical solutions to practical problems.

As a part of the United Nations initiative, the South African government, for the past thirteen years to-date has supported the 16 Days of Activism Against Women and Child Abuse. This global campaign runs from the 25 November (International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women) through to 10 December (International Human Rights Day). Women and child abuse statistics are rising daily. An integral part of Srila Prabhupada's instructions were that children should be protected and it is the duty of the parent to never neglect this important duty.

"These children are given to us by Krishna, they are Vaishnavas and we must be very careful to protect them. These are not ordinary children, they are Vaikuntha

children, and we are very fortunate that we can give them a chance to advance further in Krishna consciousness. That is a very great responsibility, do not neglect it or be confused. Your duty is very clear." (Srila Prabhupada Letter, July 1972). ISKCON's Governing Body Commission has therefore placed importance on child protection by forming the International Office of Child Protection. This office has been formed to proactively and reactively deal with child abuse. Interestingly, a part of the GBC law is that each ISKCON Centre has a compulsory Child Protection Team. This team of devotees have been trained in child protection and have experience in educating parents, teachers, children and care-givers on these matters.

Many parents shy away from this topic as it can be quite painful to consider. Abuse is rife within society and statistics show that abuse is prevalent within family circles. We need to listen to our children, believe them, and observe physical or emotional changes. Do you know that being neglectful of your child forms part of child abuse? Neglect comprises of lack of appropriate clothing (like on a cold day dressing your child in a summer outfit), withholding the right to education or medical care. Emotional abuse can be billed as the most painful form of abuse for a child, the scars are invisible but have far reaching effects.

The African proverb: "It takes a village to raise a child," teaches the eternal truth. Tap into support structures around you to assist in your daily parenting pressures. The elders within the family circle provide a wealth of wisdom; engage with them to help you through difficult times.

South Africa is billed as having a dynamic Constitution. We applaud the government in taking steps to cater for citizens from all walks of life, including children. However, with rights come responsibilities. As parents we have a great responsibility to raise well-rounded and balanced individuals. Srila Prabhupada emphasised this, "Now you husband and wife must work together combined[ly] with great responsibility for raising your new child in ideal Krishna consciousness. Children learn by imitation of their parents, so if you both set Krishna conscious example the child will very naturally and easily become advanced in Krishna consciousness by following." (Srila Prabhupada Letter, July 1970)

During this festive period of laughter and happiness, let us pledge, as a service to God and to fellow human beings – to stand together to prevent abuse.

**2015 CALENDARS**

**12 page desk top**  
R25

**1 page wall**  
R12

**6 page wall**  
R25

Vaishnava Holy Days, Hindu Holy Days, Public Holidays & School Terms included.

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