

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS  
Founder Acharya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



# HARE KRISHNA NEWS

May / June 2015



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### On the Cover

The Raj-bhoga (main food) offering to Sri Sri Radha Radhanath. This midday offering is one of six daily food offerings.

## Ed's Note

I was not born a vegetarian. But I am so glad that I became one. Being vegetarian is a big part of Hare Krishna though it is not the defining principle—chanting Krishna's holy name is. Rarely will you find a meat-eating Hare Krishna. Like all spiritual paths there are guidelines, like a good recipe, but practitioners always have choice. I have met a variety of serious spiritual practitioners from various faiths - Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity and even in traditional African religion - who are vegetarians. When I was little I met my Dad's friend, the vegetarian Mulana - I was not vegetarian at the time - and asked him why. He was a gentle soul and had a peaceful and respectful demeanor. He smiled, "kindness." I think we could all do with a bit more kindness and compassion, and this Hare Krishna News offers you a reasoning, which will in turn give you the conviction to introduce kindness; to yourself first. We also speak about cows, the beloved and celebrated mother in Krishna conscious culture.

I will never forget my first visit to the ISKCON Mayapur Goshala (cow sanctuary). It was a cool afternoon just after the calves drank milk from their mothers. Calves are playful and naughty creatures. Given a chance they will eat your sari. I was observing the older calves; they were equivalent to pre-teens and quite boisterous. Initially, it seemed to me that they were randomly frolicking, but then I noticed them line up on one end of the courtyard and when they were all in position, took off in a race. Now that may seem like a stretch, even for someone who worships the cow, but they did it; several times. Calves racing against each other. And it was not as though the cowherders were commanding them; the calves were at their own leisure.

Our spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, had a specific plan to live in harmony with the Earth, practice harmony with one another, and realize harmony within ourselves. He knew greed, hankering, and lamenting bound us in a way that turned us into unconscious slaves, but he also gave the tools to set us free. Hare Krishna News offers a chance to that freedom.

Here's to conscious living and conscious loving.

Warmest wishes

Rasa-sthali Dasi

PS. I would love to hear from you.

Write to me at [rasasthali@iskcondurban.net](mailto:rasasthali@iskcondurban.net)

Quoted verse translations and excerpts from purports to Bhagavad-gita and Srimad Bhagavatam, and the picture on page 4 are © The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, Inc. [www.Krishna.com](http://www.Krishna.com). Used with permission.



# Hello Darkness My Old Friend

## Temple President's Message

Power cuts, xenophobia and earthquakes are the world's trending topics. Thousands of lives have been lost and thousands have been displaced. My prayers go out to all who have experienced loss recently. In times like these we are reminded to depend more on the mercy of the Supreme Lord, Krishna. During times of calamity, we are naturally attracted to worship the Lord as we realize there is no other real shelter.

During the xenophobic attacks in Chatsworth, the devotees living at the temple were given a reality check. Late one night we heard the cries of people fearing for their lives as they ran past the temple to the nearby police station. We hear of such calamities in the news but when it happens so close to us or to someone we know, we pay more attention. We cannot seem to escape discrimination. Because people still recognize themselves as their bodies only. 'He is Zulu' and 'she is Mozambican' is not far from 'he is black' and 'she is white.' We are not any of those things but spiritual beings with an eternal relationship with God.

In this world, as we have seen in recent events, sometimes others will harm us, sometimes nature has its way to be aggressive towards us and sometimes our mind will frustrate us. We can see calamities as

opportunities to become God conscious. *Srimad Bhagavatam* describes that as the age progresses the situation will worsen to serve as constant reminders that this world is not our home. Our real home is in the spiritual world serving the Supreme Lord. By understanding that we are souls, and are eternally connected to God in love and devotion, we will be better equipped to deal with these troubles.

While we all complain about load shedding, maybe it's not such a bad thing. Yes, it affects business and has financial implications, but it is good for spiritual practice. It gives us a chance to slow down. We have become so dependent on living with electricity. Load shedding gives us the chance to put our cell phones away, to be forced off the internet, and to turn off the television. How about dedicating this time in the dark to the Supreme Lord by chanting His name and glorifying Him without any distractions?

One of our goals this year is to give out the jewel of Krishna consciousness to as many people as possible. So I invite you every Sunday, to please take a break from the troubles of this world and join us at the temple for some chanting, dancing, hearing and relishing the Lord's mercy in the form of a vegetarian feast.

I hope this finds you in better spirits,  
Vibhu Caitanya Das

### CATCH ONE OF OUR WEEKLY PROGRAMS AT YOUR CAMPUS:

#### Howard College (UKZN)

- Mondays, Students Union, 1st Floor, 6pm
- Wednesdays, Shepstone 16, 12:20pm
- Fridays, Students Union, 12:20pm

#### Edgewood College (UKZN)

- Thursdays, LT2, 12:10pm

#### Westville campus (UKZN)

- Mondays, Hindu Center Seminar Room, 1pm
- Wednesdays, G2, 12:20pm
- Fridays, Hindu Center Seminar Room, 12:20pm

#### Mangosuthu University of Technology

- Tuesdays, OLT, 11:30am

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# The High Thinking Formula

Srila Prabhupada Speaks

By Nashvin Gangaram

Load Shedding. Just the mention of these two words instantly results in complaints and people frantically checking schedules and adjusting plans. Imagine if it lasted more than two hours at a time. What if electricity was not available for weeks or months? Coupled with looming water shortages, this may seem worse than a dystopian horror movie. Despite all our technology, have we really advanced? Or have we become dependent on things that are limited? If we were to bring someone from a previous century to current day, would they fare better than us?

Srila Prabhupada promoted local, self-sustaining, agrarian economies, that meet basic needs without excessive effort to acquire unnecessary things. When ISKCON was legally incorporated in 1966, Srila Prabhupada listed seven purposes of the institution, one being: "To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler and more natural way of life." As a true visionary he provided spiritual solutions to the problems that face society today. He promoted the model for ideal simple living given in *Bhagavad-gita* as *varnashrama-dharma*. In this system, everyone works harmoniously according to their nature for the good of the society and makes gradual spiritual advancement with the consciousness that everything belongs to God and should be engaged in His service. The needs of the citizens are met by agriculture, while any surplus yields can be traded. This way of life is favorable because God Himself adopts it. Krishna and His dear devotees live an unsophisticated village life in the topmost regions of the spiritual world.

While we should certainly strive for the ideal standard of living, it may not be immediately possible to

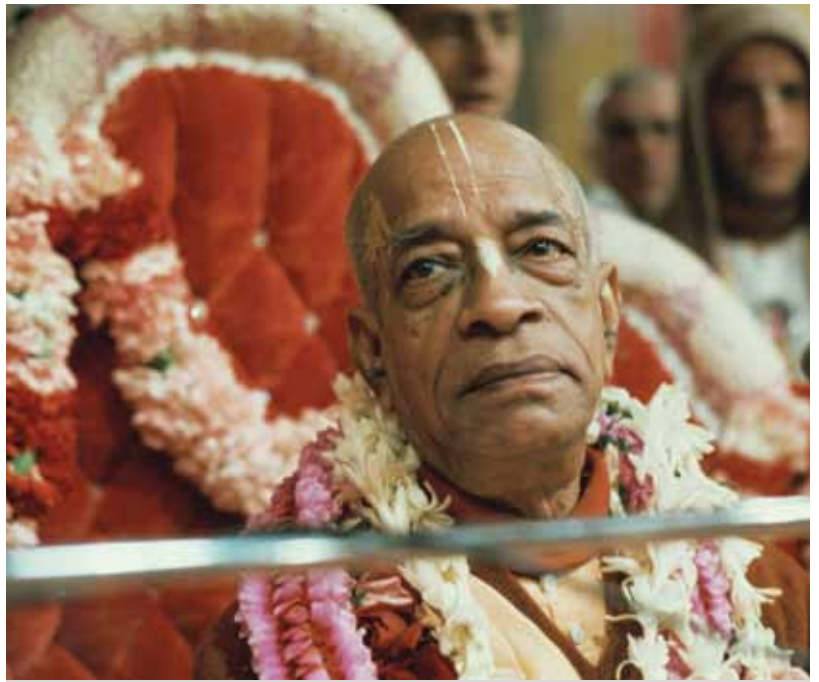
*...teaching a simpler and more natural way of life.*

implement. What should we do then? Should we give up on it altogether? Srila Prabhupada emphasised "simple living and high thinking." But, does simple living necessarily imply poverty? Monkeys live minimally but they are not engaged in high thinking. A simplified lifestyle is meant to support high thinking, or elevating our consciousness, by giving us more time, energy and focus.

When our minds are not burdened with numerous desires, we can focus our thoughts and energy into trying to serve God, and develop our relationship with Him to the best of our ability. If we spend most of our time taking care of our bodily demands, we will not have any time for spiritual pursuits — something that may sound familiar to many?

How do we decrease our unnecessary demands? It is difficult to renounce something that we are attached to but it is not impossible. Even in sense control, "the taste for sense objects remains" (Bg. 2.59). But, if we increase our devotional service, we will experience a greater pleasure, and therefore become attached to that instead and ultimately be "fixed in consciousness" (Bg. 2.59).

Srila Prabhupada, a man ahead of his time on many levels, knew that the exploitation of Earth's natural resources would lead to suffering — for the planet, for its inhabitants and for the future. He understood the principle described in *Sri Isopanishad* that one should only accept what is necessary for oneself and not over accumulate. By choosing this type of lifestyle together with devotional practice we can become absorbed in serving God in a pleasurable way, which will also be natural and enjoyable for us.



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



SRILA PRABHUPADA'S VISIT TO SA



# The Might of the Vegetable

Myth Buster

By Ananta Gauranga Das

Molly is six years old and it's her first trip to the petting zoo. She's really excited. Her hair blows in the breeze as she tenderly feeds warm milk to a four-month-old lamb. Their eyes lock in a loving gaze as their bodies intertwine in a comforting embrace. It's noon and the family's hungry. They pry Molly, kicking and screaming, off her new best friend to take her home. Today is Sunday. Sunday is when dad makes his favourite dish. As Molly tucks into her lamb kebab she asks, "Mum, where do kebabs come from?" Silence. The silence is deafening. All you can hear is dad choking on his meat ball.

Some food for thought. Individuals sensitive to energy are aware of the impact diet has upon mental and physical wellbeing. The *Bhagavad-gita* classifies food according to three innate qualities, that is, goodness, passion and ignorance. Foods in the mode of goodness enhance one's duration of life and elevate our consciousness. Take for instance an apple. Daily, it basks in the soothing, warm lazy rays of the sun, imbibes the nights cooling moon beams and is gently caressed and kissed by mother nature's tranquil breezes. Occasionally, it bathes in nourishing rains as rivulets gently drip down its red wholesome skin. Thus, when you sink your teeth into an apple these serene qualities are inherently acquired during digestion.

Edibles in the mode of ignorance or darkness lead to degradation of the body and mind. Take for instance a chicken drum stick; before it was deep-fried and accompanied with mash and gravy, it could have had a name and family. Let's name it little Roxy. In the factory hen houses, Roxy would be incarcerated by a thirty centimetre by forty-six centimetre cage with other hens of a similar age. Packed closer than canned sardines causes them to go crazy. To rectify this, Roxy and her friends are de-beaked with hot knife machines to prevent them from pecking one another to death. All in the name of a "happy meal." Yum. Luckily for us slaughter houses don't have glass windows.

The research of Dr. Irwin H. Putzkoff (professor of nutritional physiology) indicates that the fear, anxiety and stress an animal feels just before it is slaughtered, or whilst witnessing other animals being killed, serves as a catalyst for diseases (cardiac problems, fatigue and impotency) in whomever consumes

its flesh. Stress experienced before the time of death creates a copious release of hormones and adrenaline that is absorbed by the animal's muscles and later inherited by humans who dine on them. It adds meaning to the phrase you are what you eat.

At this juncture I think it appropriate to clear some misconceptions about Hare Krishnas and their diet. If you were looking for the meat in the photograph on the front cover, don't bother—there isn't any. That is God's lunch. God, Krishna is a person. There are things He likes and things He dislikes, which He openly tells us - He accepts a leaf, flower, fruit or water offered with love (Bg 10.10). We don't

generally offer our loved ones things they don't like. Cooking and eating food is not just taking care of the body for Hare Krishna's, it is a form of yoga that links the soul to the Supreme Soul in devotion. So preparing food, offering that food, which in turn becomes prasada (mercy of the Lord) and then eating the prasada are all

acts of devotion. Therefore Hare Krishnas are not only vegetarian but Krishnatarians. Our diet is lacto-vegetarians (a vegetarian diet inclusive of dairy products). I am not clear why eggs are commonly accepted as vegetarian as it is the embryo of a chick - we don't eat embryos. And yes we do consume salt. We do not however eat mushrooms, onions or garlic as they are vegetables associated with the modes of ignorance and passion, which is not conducive for elevation of consciousness.

Please chew on this over dinner tonight. One of the hallmarks of humanity is compassion. Does your heart not bleed to know sentient beings are tormented and tortured simply for the satisfaction of the tongue?"As long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other. Indeed, he who sows the seeds of murder and pain cannot reap joy and love" (Pythagoras). My humble plea is to live and let live. Please consider a vegetarian diet, for life.

*One of the hallmarks of humanity is compassion.*



# Guns and Lotuses

Temple Focus

By Rukmini Devi Dasi

"Smiling laughter, good friends, mellow *kirtan* and tasty snacks; the perfect ingredients for a student picnic," I think as I sit under the shade of a large tree at the Gandhi Memorial Park in Chatsworth. Yet my eyes occasionally glance backward to the security guard who accompanied us. The irony hits me. Yes, it's South Africa. Remember to lock your doors, hide your handbag in the boot and bring a guard along when visiting your local park. Yet the park is named after Mahatma Gandhi, a man whom the world heralds as an icon of non violence or *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* is the spirit of compassion that behooves one to not harm another living being. A concept is so alien to the world we know. Where is there truly an a living, breathing example of *Ahimsa*?

Then, as I sit there the gorgeous vista of Sri Sri Radha Radhanatha Temple captures my eyes like a raised hand answering my question. From this vantage point it is easy to see the mind of the architect. The towers rise like the pistil of a giant lotus from the green gardens. How apt. The lotus has since ancient times been a symbol of a spiritual voyage. The roots of a lotus flower are buried deep in mud. Its stem grows through murky water. Its leaves sit on the surface but the flower petals never touch the water. In a world muddled by vicious cruelty, flooded with fear and hatred, this temple stands aloof as an active symbol of *ahimsa*. It is in this world but not touched

by it. In the thirty years since its opening, the Temple of Understanding has evoked a sense of compassion on different levels from the humane to the sublime. *Ahimsa* is a concept often partially misinterpreted. It is true that being "non-violent" implies that you respect the life of another human being, but it certainly does not begin nor end there.

*Ahimsa* begins with respecting the earth we walk on. In Vedic culture the earth is personified as feminine as she is capable of providing sustenance for all people just as a mother breast feeds her child. Yet we respond to that maternal affection with callous disregard, polluting all her resources, raping her core of minerals and exploiting her land to grow tobacco instead of wholesome grains. It is also an individual responsibility which we can live up to by merely switching off the light when not in use or learning to recycle. The Hare Krishna temple continues to make strides in being conscious of how we use Krishna's energy by reducing the use of polystyrene and implementing biodegradable packaging. We attempt to harness solar power and reuse water, aiming to be the first "green" temple in South Africa. Maybe we won't save the whole ecosystem by our endeavour, but by taking such a stance the temple promotes a change in our violent attitude towards Mother Earth.

Not only is the earth described as feminine but also personified in the form of a cow. As a teenager I could never really grasp what the big deal about cows were. It made sense to me that one animal was

equivalent to the other. When I walked into the inner sanctum of the temple for the first time, I caught sight of the full length painting of Krishna looking lovingly at a cow. Now, if I was God and I could choose any pet then maybe I'd opt for a dolphin, but a cow? I soon learned that cows epitomize the principle of *ahimsa*. Milk is considered a miracle food that is all nutritious and is in essence



a product of affection. The cow is a rare animal that naturally produces more milk than her needs and thus compassionately bestows human kind with this elixir. This is one of reasons why Krishna views her as sacred. Yet currently all around the world cows are brutally slaughtered, even milked till they bleed, skinned for leather and subject to violence in the extreme. Millions of creatures, be they icons of *ahimsa* or not, suffer the fate of ending up on someone's plate. The Hare Krishna Temple has since inception promoted the ideal of a vegetarian diet. Govinda's restaurant has been the sumptuous alternative for the lazy cook. In addition, over the last thirty years, both at the temple and through outreach programs the temple has served an approximate of ... free vegetarian meals. The temple emphasizes a healthier, holier, and mind you, even tastier, option.

When we act violently against the earth and its creatures, is it surprising that we treat each other in the same way and become subject to violent abuse? *Ahimsa* essentially means that we should not put any living being in distress. A criminal acts out of distress arising either from his financial or relational predicaments or by the pressures of his own mind. His distress becomes the distress of the victim resulting in material loss, emotional trauma and even death. Every living being experiences distress but failing to see that such distress is meant to wake us up and ignite a quest for deeper meaning in life, we selfishly

pass this distress on to each other. Therefore each individual who delays this search is a most violent criminal, their victim being themselves. The Temple of Understanding is a shelter for seekers of truth. It is impossible to trace the millions of feet that have walked through its doors nor the variety of places they have come from. From Nelson Mandela to tourist groups, school visits, campus retreats, senior citizens, travellers, and the anonymous wanderer who walks in attracted by the sense of serenity. To all these people the temple offers an understanding of our journey in this world, its purpose and how and why to achieve it. It offers guides and friends that help along the way.

## *The Temple of Understanding has evoked a sense of compassion on different levels from the humane to the sublime.*

Yet as the fragrance of a lotus is carried by the wind to distant places, the effects of the this temple are far reaching. Each day a shopper gets a spiritual book from teams of travelling distributors. Each day university students are given invites to a spiritual experience right there at their campus. Each day Facebook users can have a virtual *darshan* of Krishna from their office chair. And the true spirit of *ahimsa* penetrates their lives.

Like the whorl of a lotus that remains untouched by water, the Temple of Understanding royally stands out as an emblem of *ahimsa* in the most profound sense.

## Divine Networking

SSRRT Connect

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

Social media has transformed the way we communicate. We can share everything and anything in an instant, wherever we are in the world. At Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple (SSRRT) we decided to use these platforms to connect and invite you to temple events, festivals and news updates, thus making Sri Sri Radha Radhanath more available. You can find us on Facebook and Twitter and now also on Instagram. Our social media name is Durban Krishna. On Facebook, you can view the Daily Darshan album of Deity photos. Instagram and Twitter share photos of captivating events, like the university programmes, interesting visitors or what our resident devotees are up to. We invite you to help spread the divine network by liking, following and sharing our social media pages/posts with your friends and families. And remember hashtag us (#DurbanKrishna) every time you mention us.

Every week we also send out a comprehensive event guide in the form of the Week Ahead email. This email is also posted on our blog ([durbankrishna.blogspot.com](http://durbankrishna.blogspot.com)) and our website: [www.iskcondurban.net](http://www.iskcondurban.net). Not only that but if you missed an event and want to listen to the talk then go to [soundcloud.com/durbankrishna](http://soundcloud.com/durbankrishna)

For those of you who love to read the newspaper, ISKCON Durban recently featured in the POST newspaper. This was an achievement as it is the first time our temple goals were showcased in a national newspaper. This created a buzz and once again communicates that our temple offers so much to the community. Of course, the Rising Sun and other community newspapers often feature our special events and many new people have started attending temple events.

Some really great news is that we now have live streaming at the temple: [http://iskcondurban.net/?page\\_id=3018](http://iskcondurban.net/?page_id=3018). So if you need a break, simply zoom in on Sri Sri Radha Radhanath for an instant pick-me-up.



# From Callous to Compassionate

Soul Stories

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

The deer's shrieks slice the air as it collapses on the forest floor pierced by an arrow. Nearby a boar and a rabbit writhe in pain, their legs broken and struck by more arrows. Narada Muni watches them, his heart as if split in two. He surveys the area looking for the culprit and catches two fiery eyes penetrate him from behind a tree. Narada moves towards the attacker causing other animals to flee. Good. Cruel death would miss them.

The hunter emerges from his hiding place ready to insult Narada for causing his prey to escape. But Narada's effulgence and saintly demeanour quietens his agitated mind. His blackish body with bows and arrows in hand looks like death. Narada is unafraid. He asks the hunter whether the boar and the other half-killed animals belong to him. When the hunter assents, Narada asks, "Why did you not kill the animals completely and be done with it? Why did you leave them half-killed and dying in agony?" The hunter's reddish eyes widen and glow with malice. He says, "O saintly person, my name is Mrigari, enemy of animals. My father taught me to kill in this way." He chuckles, "Nothing gives me more pleasure than

when I see half-killed animals suffer."

Mrigari tries to avoid Narada's soft eyes, which make him feel uneasy. Narada says, "I just have one thing to beg of you, O hunter." Mrigari feels a surge of kindness spring within him. "Of course," he replies, "you may take any of these animals or anything else you like. How about a deerskin or tiger skin?" Narada smiles. "No. Just promise me one thing," he says, "From this day on when you kill animals, please kill them completely instead of leaving them to a torturous death."

Mrigari frowns. "What is wrong with the animals lying here half-killed?"

Narada explains, "You are purposely giving them pain. And by the laws of God and nature, whatever pain you give to others you must suffer in return. My dear Mrigari, I understand that you kill animals for your living. But when you kill animals you commit horrible sins, and when you half-kill them, your sins are multiplied. The pain you have caused to all of the animals you have tortured and killed will return to you—in your next life and in life after life."

Narada's pure words and intention cut through Mrigari's ignorance. The hunter shudders in fear. "I've been taught to do this sin from my childhood.

It is difficult to give up. And even if I do, how is it possible to become freed from the reactions of my sinful life? Dear Sir, is there a way? Whatever you say, I shall do."

"Break your bow!" Narada orders, "Then I will tell you what to do."

Mrigari is confused and thinks of how he will maintain himself and his family? Narada assures him that he will provide his food every day. Mrigari's heart melts. How is it that this person whom he just met, is ready to make sacrifices and save him from a terrible fate? Mrigari is starting to learn what compassion can do. Narada restores the half-dying animals and they flee. Mrigari is astounded and doesn't hesitate to surrender his life to Narada Muni. He breaks his bow and is ready to do as Narada commands.

Following Narada's instructions, Mrigari goes home and distributes whatever little wealth he has to pure *brahmins*. With a repentant heart and determined to set things right, he leaves home with his wife and constructs a simple cottage on the banks of the river. He grows a Tulasi plant, which is dear to Lord Krishna, and worships Tulasi every day. With tears, he calls out the names of God that would wash away his sins. Narada sends food for him every day. In the meantime, the villagers, astonished to hear about Mrigari's change of heart,





also take food to him every day. The food is sufficient for many people, but Mrigari only accepts his share. After some time, Narada with his friend Parvata Muni pass by Mrigari's cottage. Narada is eager to see his disciple again. Mrigari, seeing them from a distance, runs towards them in a zig-zag fashion. When he eventually reaches them, he lifts the end of his dhoti and sweeps the sand at their feet before bowing down. Parvata wonders who this strange person is and why he is behaving in this peculiar manner. But Narada understands everything. He understands that Mrigari has become gentle and non-violent. He understands that Mrigari's repentance and spiritual practices has removed his callousness and pride. He understands that compassion has taken root in Mrigari's heart, so much so that he was running to avoid trampling the ants on the ground and moving them aside before bowing down.

Parvata Muni, eventually understanding Mrigari's

*"Why did you not kill the animals completely and be done with it?"*

behaviour, addresses Narada Muni, "O great sage among the demigods, certainly you are a touchstone. By your association you transform iron-like hearts into gold; by your compassion you have touched this hunter's life and given him a life of bliss in God's service. From God's love all wonderful things manifest. All glories to you."

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As I finish the story, Priya's green eyes are half-closed. She is curled at my feet and yawns widely. Okay. She's clearly not interested. At least my kids are gawking at me—has Mrigari's story instilled a sense of compassion as I had hoped? Priya leaps onto their laps, startling them. My daughter cuddles her while Priya purrs and licks her face. How much pleasure a pet cat can give to a child, I wonder. Certainly, Mrigari's story would have reinforced the importance of valuing every life, and showing them that one compassionate person can bring out compassion in another.

## Govinda The Lover of the Cows

by Yamuna Devi Dasi

As the first rays of the sun cast a golden brilliance over the grazing hills of Vraja, the smiling milky cows wait to hear the tinkling sound of Lord Krishna's ankle bells. Adorned in a yellow dhoti and peacock feather, Krishna grabs His herding stick, buffalo horn, and rope and races into the forest to spend His day herding His father's 900 000 cows. There are detailed descriptions of Lord Krishna and His cows in Krishna Book — how little Krishna grabbed on the tails of the calves, who in turn took off with Him still holding on; how He protected the cows from a forest fire; how He saved the cows from poisoned waters; how He became the cows' calves just to reciprocate with their maternal affection for Him.

Krishna refused to wear the shoes His mother offered Him unless all the cows got shoes too. When Krishna played His flute, the cows used their upraised ears like giant cups to drink in that sweet sound. And at sunset, Krishna called the name of each of His cows, accounting for them on His crystal *japa mala*.

Past spiritual masters composed poetry honouring the love between Krishna and His cows: *Govinda jaya jaya*, *Gopala jaya jaya*, for example, glorifies the name of Krishna in association with the cow. Govinda means "one who gives pleasure to the cows" and Gopala is "the protector of the cows." The famous hill on which Lord Krishna grazes his cows is called Govardhan or "the mountain of the cows" and the



spiritual planet in which Krishna resides, is called Goloka which means "the abode of the cows." From this, we can realise that the cows are inseparable from Krishna.

Meditating on this song, let us live in peace and love under the shelter of Govinda and His beloved cows.

# Holy Cow!

By Govinda-mohini Dasi

I recently came across an article on social media entitled "Holy Cow!" It was more the title rather than the article that caught my attention. "Holy cow" is a phrase I commonly heard growing up — well mostly on television in relation to American culture. But I never really took cognizance of the actual term until seeing it written in big and bold. Through some research for its origins and meaning, I found that the most common belief is disbelief. "Holy cow" is used to convey disbelief in something or an exclamation of surprise. So it is said that when the western world was introduced to the idea of cows being holy, their most obvious response would have been disbelief, resulting in the term, "Holy Cow!?"

But are cows holy? A definition of the word "holy" is: connected to a god or a religion, and to be religious and morally good (as per Merriam Webster online dictionary). Are cows connected to God or religion? Cows are considered sacred in various religions of the world, like: Jainism and Zoroastrianism. The worship of cows extends as far back as: Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, Ancient Palestine and Ancient Rome but mostly notably in Vedic culture. In Vedic culture we find the common image of blackish-blue Lord Krishna surrounded by a wide variety of cows, all looking up at Him in loving gaze or even just curled up at His feet. The *surabhi* cows described in *Brahma-samhita* (5.20) are wish fulfilling cows of the spiritual world that ensure no one goes thirsty or hungry. Also, Vedic philosophy teaches us that we have seven mothers, and the cow is one of them because she gives us her milk for nourishment.

Can cows be religious and morally good? Srila Prabhupada explains in his purport to *Srimad Bhagavatam* 1.17.3: "Milking the cow means drawing the

principles of religiosity in liquid form...because it is liquid form of religious principles." And with regard to being morally good, *Bhagavad-gita* explains how we come into contact with and are moulded by the three modes or qualities of material nature. These qualities are goodness, passion, and ignorance. Some elements of the mode of goodness are: purity, peacefulness, and enhanced learning and perception. Now let's look at how the cow fits into these elements, which can be used to define them as morally good.

*...their influence promotes concentration and increases learning.*

influence promotes concentration and increases learning. I would like to add my own experience regarding cows and the quality of generosity which is also symptomatic of the mode of goodness. On my first trip to Vrindavan, Krishna's holy land in India, my husband, father-in-law, and I had the opportunity to bathe the cows at a *goshala* (a shelter or farm for cows). It was the colder part of the year so bathing wasn't common but we were there on just the right day. We heard numerous wonderful stories about almost each and every cow that we got to lay our wash cloths and scrubbing brushes upon. The common

observation is that a cow fills up her udder during feeding time and that first lot of milk is just for her calf and she will not allow anybody to milk her at that time. Once the calf is done she fills up her udder again and then allows herself to be milked. One cow had lost her calf at birth. She would still fill up her udder for her calf and then again on the second time, but on both fills she allowed herself to be milked. Her generosity was heart-warming. There is nothing that touches my heart as much as the peacefulness, protection and simplicity that is found in the nature of a cow. So, holy cow? Yes, most definitely.





# What's Your 'Beef'?

The Vedic View

By Venu Gopal Das (aka Vaish)

Being an Indian in Japan is a lot of fun. People love my small face and big eyes, just watch any Anime show and you will know what I mean. But every once in a while I am asked some complicated questions: "Vaish are you a Hindu? Why don't you eat cows?"

The seventy-six year old gentleman in my English conversation class had just read about the Indian state of Maharashtra banning cow slaughter and imposing prison sentences for the possession of beef. It was an excellent opportunity to introduce the Vedic view to this curious mind.

In Vedic tradition cows are always protected and respected. All prayer, offerings and rituals require auspicious paraphernalia and ingredients, some of which include *ghee*, milk and yoghurt. These products come from the cow or *Go Mata*. Be it a small *havan*, deity installation, marriage ceremony or the deceased last rites...*panca gavya* (cow dung, *ghee*, milk, cow urine and yoghurt), the five sacred ingredients derived from the cow, is used.

*Srimad Bhagavatam* describes how in the beginning of the Kali-yuga (our age), Maharaja Parikshit was going to kill the personification of Kali (quarrel and hypocrisy) for the offence of beating a bull. But after pleading for his life, the King displayed the higher quality of forgiveness and awarded Kali four places to reside: wherever there is liquor, gambling, prostitution and slaughterhouses (SB 1.17.38). Ever since, Kali has expanded his reach and as such the misery and suffering of the planet has surfaced in direct proportion. The *Manu Samhita* (5.51-52) explains a butterfly effect and karmic reaction due to; those who slaughter, those who propagate the slaughter, those who package the meat, those who cook the meat and those who eat it.

Where are these reactions you may wonder? Humanity is engaged in catastrophic wars and still needs to address starvation and malnutrition. Civil wars in Africa, terrorism and violence, disease and mental disorders are steadily increasing. All

of which are reactions to the slaughter of cows as explained by Srila Prabhupada. By profession I'm an Environmental Scientist and study the relationships of mans' interaction with the Earth and ensure there is an Earth for man to survive off. Although science and spirituality are often portrayed as foes, in the case of cattle farming, they are in perfect harmony. In 2006, the United Nations published *Livestock's Long Shadow*, the first extensive report detailing the impacts of animal agriculture. The effects and reaction of cow slaughter are most detrimental.

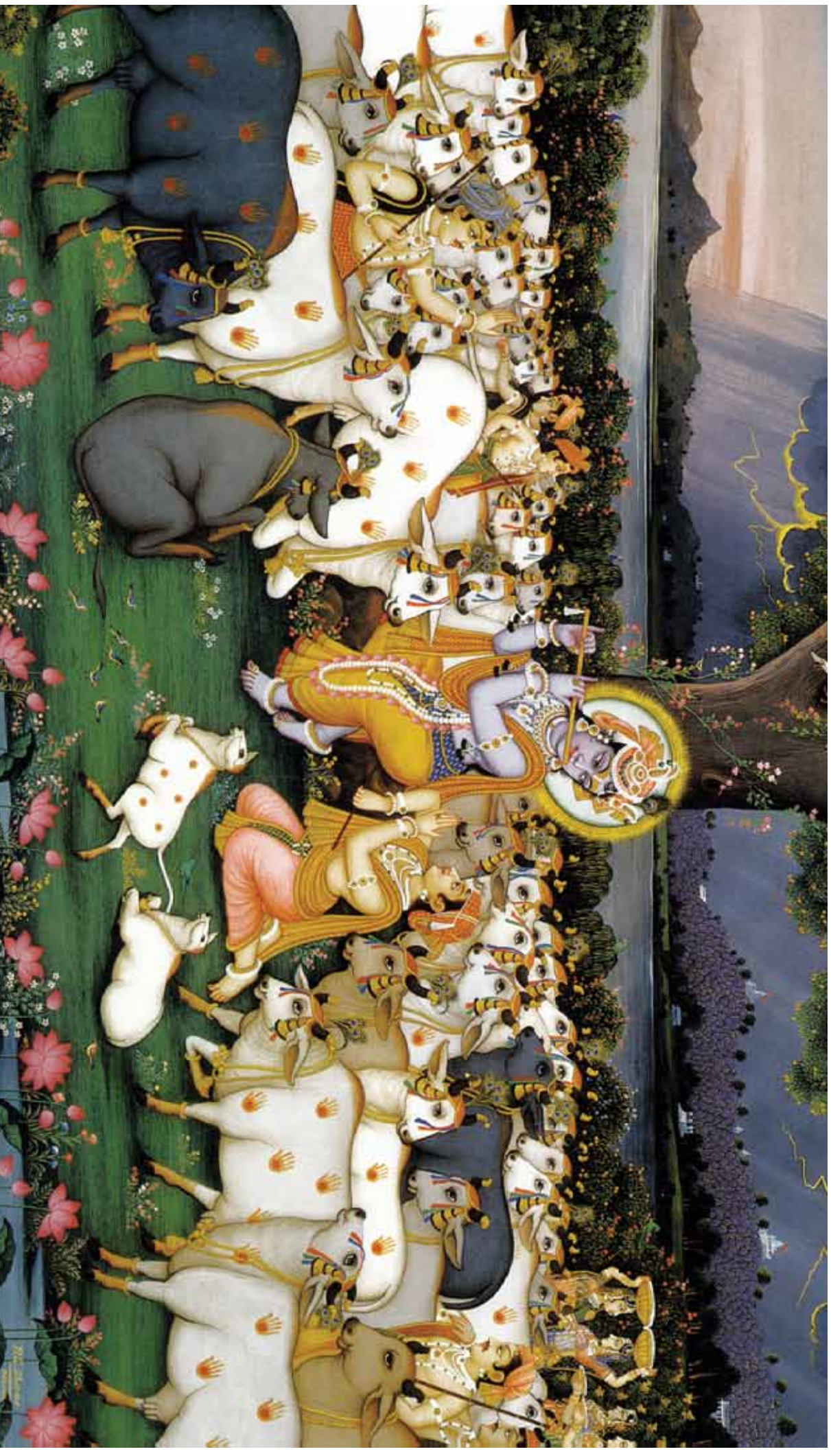


Cattle farming is the main cause of rainforest and habitat destruction and species extinction. Cattle farming is the most water intensive process in existence, this includes water used to cultivate grains to produce feed. The grains produced every year for livestock consumption is enough to feed an estimated twelve billion people. Waste management and water pollution are other key areas impacted by this practice depending on the location. If you find this surprising please go ahead and examine it, extensive scientific research is available.

## *Why don't you eat cows?*

There is nothing more destructive to humanity's future than the practice of raising cows for meat. The great Bhisma states, "Those who have eaten meat but afterwards choose to abstain, win merit that no Vedic sacrifice can ever reward." (*Mahabharata, Anu*, 115.16) Our survival does not depend on killing cows, yet boundless rewards are offered to those who abstain. Be it from an environmental, humanitarian or spiritual perspective, abstaining from beef is a single decision that impacts all.





## Counting Cows

For the Kids

1. How many cows are surrounding Krishna?
2. How many pairs of shoes would Mother Yasoda need to make for all the cows?
3. If each cow has two horns, how many horns are there in total?

4. If each cow gave 3 litres of milk, how much of milk would Mother Yasoda have to milk sweets for Krishna?
5. If half of the cows went to drink water at the River Yamuna, how many will remain with Krishna?

Answers on page 16.



# Choose to Live Simply

Family Matters

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

Just flip through a magazine or walk through a mall, you're engulfed in a blaze of desire to accumulate things — it's an assault on the senses. Is it possible to have a simple life in a world with pressures of trends, style, racing technology and attractive advertising? The answer is YES. Simple choices can enhance simple living. Let me clarify, that simplicity is by no means choosing to be austere or poor or without. Simplicity is not having the 'greed' or need for acquisitions and possessions.

I have been a parent for only eight years and I have been blessed to look at life through my children's eyes. Children are simple. They are happy playing outdoors, rolling in the sand with siblings and friends.

Their laughter is contagious and their thoughts are true. How is it that when these little beings become teenagers, their desire for acquisitions becomes an

all consuming bottomless pit? Once again, it comes down to lifestyle and what is viewed as a need or greed.

Relationships can become strained due to desire for extravagance or obtaining unnecessary things. According to a leading insurance company, South Africans are currently forking out 76% of their income on debt repayment. Living so close to the edge of the income can be troublesome especially if a particular lifestyle is funded through debt. If you add this repayment to the current food and electricity price hikes, what are consumers left with? Financial pressures become the root of arguments and unhappiness. This may then lead to physical, emotional or substance abuse and general unhappiness leading to the disintegration of the relationship. By simplifying our desires, life becomes less stressful.

But what does a simple desire mean? The word simple has deep meaning which includes: humility, modesty, meekness, truthfulness, honesty and frankness. Our pursuit for comfortable and convenient living has ironically complicated our existence. In 1972, Srila Prabhupada had the spiritual insight to advocate a return to an uncomplicated lifestyle in harmony with the earth and fulfilling the real need of the soul. Devotional principles encourage work to maintain our families and to assist in spreading love for God. One of the four regulative principles in devotional practice is no gambling; where money is spent with the desire to obtain more wealth which is the root of greed and envy. The odds are always against you. *Srimad Bhagavatam* explains that a peaceful, progressive culture is based on four pillars: austerity; truthfulness; cleanliness and mercy. Unfortunately, it is the characteristics of this age to do the total opposite and break the pillars of progressive culture, and become attracted to sinful activities that lead to over endeavouring to obtain material possessions.

Srila Prabhupada critiqued the rampant materialistic civilisation as the cause of our entanglement with

desire for pleasure and happiness. The formula he presented is simple – to understand that the material existence is temporary and our purpose on Earth is for a higher reason. The spirit soul will only be peaceful and joyful when reunited with its source of joy and love – the Supreme Lord.

Relationships that are based in divine simplicity relishes love, appreciation and gratitude. The need to obtain more is insignificant – people who are spiritually based have little cause for quarrel, envy or unhappiness. Srila Prabhupada led his life with "simple living and higher thinking," and won the hearts of thousands of followers. His words were true and his actions were heartfelt – it is with this mood of humility and simplicity that Srila Prabhupada nourished relationships all over the world. We aspire to follow Srila Prabhupada's footsteps.





## Pumpkin with Mozzarella, Sage and Pine Nut Pizza

By Candrasekhara Das

Makes one 30cm pizza

This unusual pizza features a combination roasted pumpkin, toasted pine nuts and warming sage over a thin crust...result, one of the best pizzas created.

Classic Pizza Dough

250ml lukewarm water

2 tsp instant yeast

1.25 tsp sugar

1.5 Tbls olive oil, plus extra for greasing

475g white bread flour

1.25 tsp salt

Mix water, yeast and sugar in a bowl and leave in a warm place for 5mins or until frothy. Stir in olive oil. Add flour and salt and knead for 5mins until a smooth elastic dough is formed using 1 to 2 Tbls additional

water if necessary. Let dough rise in a lightly greased bowl for 45 mins or until doubled in size.

Toppings

130g pumpkin, peeled and cut into 1cm cubes

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

3 Tbls olive oil

1 tsp hing

Semolina for dusting

½ large baby marrow, sliced into ribbons

100g mozzarella cheese grated

2 Tbls Parmesan cheese grated (Meze brand is vegetarian and obtainable from PnP/Checkers)

2 tsp pine nuts toasted

1 Tbls flat leaf (Italian) parsley chopped

60ml sunflower oil

12 fresh sage leaves

Preheat oven to 180°C. Place pumpkin on a baking sheet, sprinkle with salt and pepper and drizzle with 1Tbls olive oil. Roast for about 12 mins until tender. Warm the remaining 2Tbls olive oil over low heat and add in the hing. Stir until dissolved and set aside.

Increase oven temperature to 250°C. Lightly dust work surface with semolina flour and then roll out 170g of the dough into a 30cm round incorporating the semolina into the rolled base. Freeze the remaining dough for future use.

Transfer the pizza base onto a baking tray lined with baking paper. Prick base all over with a fork (this helps ensure a thin crust).

Brush base liberally with hing/olive oil mix. Add the ribboned baby marrow, mozzarella and roasted pumpkin, then sprinkle over the pine nuts and season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Bake pizza for 5-10mins until golden and crisp. While pizza is baking, heat the sunflower oil over medium – high heat. Add the sage leaves and fry for about 30 – 60 seconds until crisp. Remove and drain on kitchen towel. Sprinkle over grated Parmesan, crisp sage leaves and chopped parsley. Offer to Krishna with love and devotion and serve.





# A Vegetarian's Guide to Spirituality

Youth Column

By Lameez Karriem

## The Sacrifice

At the tender age of nine they ushered me to the front of the crowd. Gripped with fear, I clinched my tiny fists. It took one clean slice across the throat to end that sacrificial lamb's life. I mourned and bitterly cried and it took me weeks to recover. That bittersweet moment set me firmly on a path not many decide to explore. And so, I stopped eating red meat.

## The Journey

It was hard for me to communicate to my family the reasons for making my choice, which made meal times awkward. When I was around fifteen I read an article about the effects of red meat on our cardiovascular health. It gave me the "informed" reason for cutting out red meat. My dad and I were close and when he passed away from a heart attack at forty-seven, I was devastated. It showed in my body through weight gain. This led me to my naturopath Lameez Peters (yes, can you believe?). She explained the ins and outs of the body's inability to digest animal proteins. That is when I gave up all meat. I started with eating rice and slowly began cooking vegetarian meals for myself. Learning to cook vegetarian meals was fun. I remember eating out with my friends but nothing gave me the same satisfaction as my own home cooked meals. I later found out that Vedic science explains that food absorbs the consciousness of the cook during the cooking process. I am happy to say that in the last three years I've lost over 80kgs being a healthy and conscious vegetarian. Lameez Peters changed my view on everything I ate, introduced me to reiki, capoeira (Brazilian martial arts) and most significantly, Krishna consciousness.

## The Rondebosch Temple

So, off she took me on my first temple visit. I sat down feeling earthed for the first time and in front of me the Sunday Love Feast...a paper plate filled with rice, dhal, panner with vegetables, and the only thing I recognised, halava. I thought: "Wow, there is no meat here," and it was gone in one breath. Lameez turned to me puzzled: "Where is your *prasad*?" Something she still teases me about. The next evening she asked me about my temple experience.

"The food made me feel loved, full and nourished," I said. In fact, I recall feeling nourished for days. It was a type of nourishment that I hadn't experience before and couldn't fully understand. Lameez explained that *prasad* is food that is first offered to God. I felt honoured to feast on food that was offered to God first. With the introduction of Krishna consciousness, my vegetarian journey took on a whole new facet. From then on I kept going back to the temple to relive that same love and nourishment.

## Krishna's Kitchen

After reconnecting with Vraja Krishna Das, I got the opportunity to assist with cooking for Food For Life. I recall feeling nervous when I was tasked to peel the carrots and potatoes — something I had done a thousand times before. I saw entering Krishna's kitchen and helping to cook for Him and the community as a privilege. Once the food was cooked, I was shown how to offer food to Krishna. The realisation that the service was completed came with Vraja offering his final bow — the offering was done and the food was now *prasad*, infused with Krishna's energy. Krishna's energy permeated and expanded through Nyanga township as we chanted and distributed the *prasad*.

This spiritual vegetarian arrived.

My message to all you foodies, is to keep your health in mind, anything is possible when we recondition the eating habits that don't serve us well but know that the choice of becoming a spiritual vegetarian benefits humanity and ultimately feeds the soul.

*Lameez Karriem has an Accounting Degree, is a first degree apprentice Reiki practitioner, and amateur Capoeirista. She is currently spending six months at the temple assisting with the university cultivation programme.*



# EVENT GUIDE



Panihati Cida Dahi Festival  
31 May | Sunday



Sri Srivasa Pandit's  
Disappearance  
11 Jun | Thursday



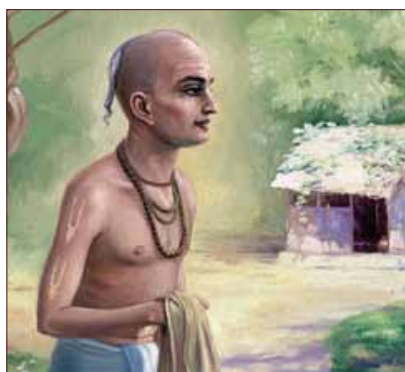
Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's  
Disappearance  
(Fast until noon)  
16 Jun | Tuesday



Sri Gadadhara Pandit's  
Disappearance  
16 Jun | Tuesday



Kalash Maha Abhishek  
Sri Krishna Janamasthami  
5 Sept | Saturday



Srila Sanatana Gosvami's  
Disappearance  
31 Jul | Friday

## Mantra Gigs

Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple | Every Friday night at 7pm  
Victoria Street Market | Saturday mornings at 10am

## EKADASI

Fast from all grains, beans and legumes.

This fast awards spiritual benefits and detoxes the body and mind.

Pandava Nirjala Ekadasi

29 May | Friday

Break fast 06:42 - 10:09

30 May | Saturday

12 Jun | Friday

Break fast 06:48 - 10:13

13 Jun | Saturday

28 Jun | Sunday

Break fast 06:52 - 07:34

29 Jun | Monday

12 Jul | Sunday

Break fast 06:50 - 10:18

13 Jul | Monday

27 Jul | Monday

Break fast 06:44 - 10:16

28 Jul | Tuesday



Purushottama Adhik Maas

17 June - 15 July

First month of Caturmasya

Fast from green leafy vegetables

31 July - 28 August



**BHAKTI THEATRE**

**30 May | Saturday | 6pm**



+27 31 403 3328 | [www.iskcondurban.net](http://www.iskcondurban.net) | [temple@iskcondurban.net](mailto:temple@iskcondurban.net) | WhatsApp +27 81 759 0191 | DurbanKrishna



Counting Cows Answers: 1. 58; 2. 116; 3. 116; 4. 174; 5. 29