



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

HARE KRISHNA NEWS

May / June 2016

A New Generation

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Heavenly Match?

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Ed's Note

I was so moved by Mdu Mbatha's devotion that while editing his interview (on page 8), I felt impelled to chant Hare Krishna. I pushed back my keyboard, grabbed my bead bag and chanted two rounds, praying to imbibe his conviction in the holy name. The process of *bhakti* is such that it does not matter how long or short a time you have been practicing, but how you practice. Mdu practices with integrity. He is a student at UKZN and attends our Bhakti Yoga Society meetings. In this issue we bring you a six-page spread of how we give back to our community through student outreach and we do so not in our words, but in theirs.

His Holiness Devamrita Swami explains that we can be chanting or rendering any devotion for a long time but unless we "make a dynamic heart investment" we will not truly enter into *bhakti*. And our devotion will become dry. Yet even in times of struggle, the path is beautiful as Saunaka Muni elucidates on page 12.

Enthusiasm is an integral part of *bhakti* that counters those dry spells. Our Temple President, Vibhu Chaitanya, touches on enthusiasm in our spiritual practice in 'Fake It Till You Make It'. Not only are we responsible for finding joy in our devotional acts but we also strive to ensure that others do, especially our children, teens and young adults. On page 4, Nikunja Vilasini reviews Bhakti Theatre, our bimonthly, two-hour amateur theatre production that keeps our youth addicted to Krishna. I also thank Nikunja for helping with the editing of this edition of Hare Krishna News.

You can look forward to another installment on marriage from Visakha Dasi on page 13 and Nashvin shows us how handles a hot potato on page 5.

Happy reading!

Warmest wishes

Rasa-sthali Dasi

PS. I would love to hear from you.

Write to me at rasasthali@iskcondurban.net



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

Quoted purports from Srimad Bhagavatam, Caitanya-caritamrita, Srila Prabhupada Letters and pictures on pages 5, 12 and 16 are
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Design and Layout by Lashika Ravjee - 082 309 2396

Fake It till You Make It

Message fro the Temple President

We usually feel that there will be another day but what if there is no other day? What if this is our last day on this planet, the last day in this body? Did we accumulate sufficient blessings in this life to make it our last? Spiritual life is about accruing blessings throughout one's devotional life; blessings from the Supreme Lord and His devotees. These blessings are the building blocks in our spiritual life, through them we develop saintly qualities.

Blessings help us become humble, tolerant, to feel compassion and to act on it and ultimately teaches us to surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Srila Prabhupada explains that these qualities in their full potential, are not gained through academic education but through the process of devotional service.

The gift of devotional service is the life and the ultimate blessing of a devotee. A sincere devotee is praying at every moment for and is happy to perform any service to please the Supreme Lord and His devotees.

Enthusiasm is needed to perform devotional service. Why is it that enthusiasm in spiritual life sometimes diminishes? Why is it that spiritual life sometimes becomes challenging? When these doubts arise they leave us with choices. Do I really want spiritual life? There are numerous other things I could do. Our minds may take us far away from devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But when we lack enthusiasm, we should simply fake it. Fake it? Yes! Others will see this and think, "Oh! He is so enthusiastic, let me also try to serve in a more pleasing and inspired way." And in this way, observing

how someone becomes enthused by our own "fake" enthusiasm, our real enthusiasm returns. Enthusiasm is infectious.

With the association of the Lord's devotees we can help each other reach our ultimate destination. It is not possible to walk on this path alone. The great poet, Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Gosvami once said, "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." *Caitanya-caritamrita Antya-lila 1.2*

*It is my hope that we
can rekindle and nurture
this family spirit.*

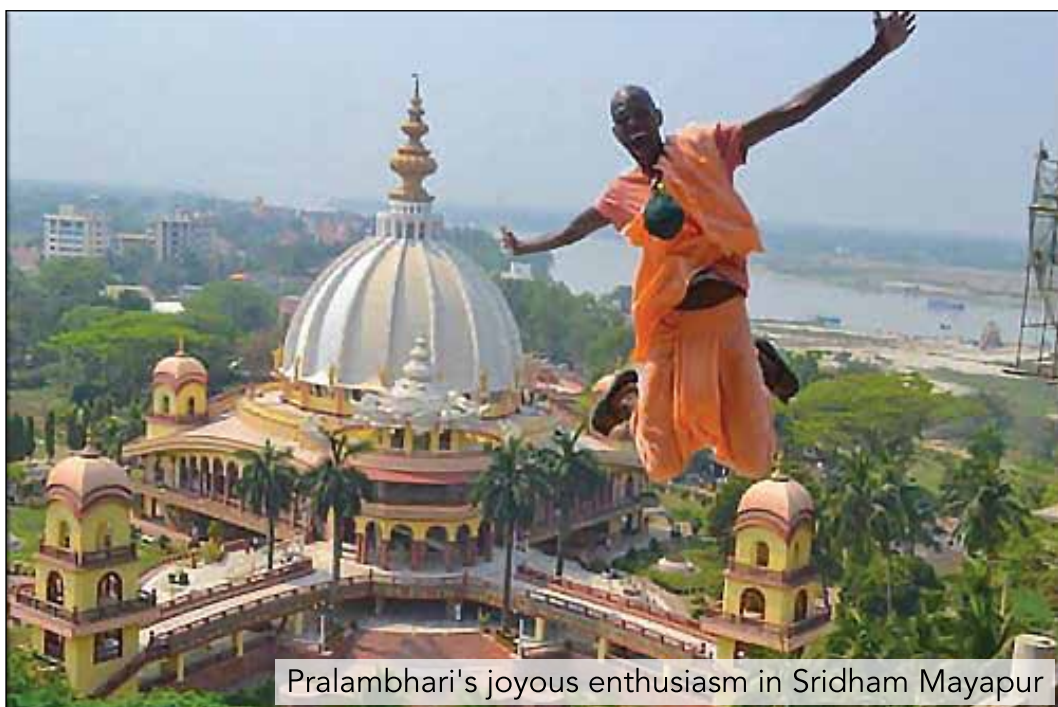
We need to develop stronger spiritual relationships with each other. ISKCON is not a corporate society. We are a spiritual society

and we need learn to appreciate each other's devotional successes. This mood will bring real satisfaction and enthusiasm into our lives and is also most pleasing to Krishna.

In the infant stage of ISKCON, a family spirit prevailed. It is my hope that we can rekindle and nurture this family spirit. With the teachings and example of the Founder Acharya, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, and by all of us coming together, we can help each other remain enthusiastic.

Praying for your blessings,

Vibhu Chaitanya Das



Pralambhari's joyous enthusiasm in Sridham Mayapur

A New Generation

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

For teenagers everything is boring except boredom. Their boredom leads them to experiment with all kinds of “cool stuff” to stimulate their minds and senses. But not Sukie. Even though he looks like an ordinary teenager with cutting-edge hair and dress and has the smooth talk of a fifteen-year-old, he is different.

I’ve known Sukadeva (Sukie) since he was four years old. He’s been a Krishna devotee all his life. I watch with bated breath as he makes his way to the stage, guitar in hand. It’s his first musical performance at the temple. The cheers of his family and friends relieve the tension on his face. There’s a small crowd and a warm intimate mood here at the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple’s Bhakti Theatre, the soft afternoon breeze wafting in the smell of food. Sukie plays a catchy tune on his guitar while Krishna Rupa, a young girl, accompanies him with the violin. His voice suddenly rings over the microphone, “We’re made for a purpose that’s transcendental, far beyond physical and mental...” I am captivated, feeling proud of his performance but more proud of what he has become. He has found his purpose in Srila Prabhupada’s movement—to use his abilities, talents, and nature in uplifting others but with a modern twist.

Soon the stage is abuzz with university students and other enthusiastic youth from different backgrounds, colours, and designations, expressing their views and realizations of God in an entertaining way. Their enthusiasm is contagious, and soon I am jiving to rhythms that I would never have dreamed of. Through drama, song, poetry, rap, and a variety of innovative dance moves, they make the audience wild. But laughter, fun, and time with friends is not all that I receive today—it is a sense of joy that the message of Lord Krishna and Srila Prabhupada is being carried forth to a new generation—young devotees who may not present the philosophy or culture in the traditional way that we are used to, but who have the eagerness to participate and share the joy of their spiritual awakening. Surely, this is a positive way to use their boredom.

I recognize a young African boy, who has captured the crowd with his charming smile and singing. He

gets us up to sway to the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* sung in an unusual hip hop beat. His jeans, takkies, and cap have disguised his appearance but not his mood of blissful chanting. I then remember that he is one of the temple resident devotees, Pralambari Das, who has fully imbibed devotional life. How wonderful it is to see him engaging his other qualities in Krishna’s service. He also shows me that Krishna’s name and message are absolute, that in whatever way it is expressed, it enhances one’s remembrance of Him and brings spiritual bliss.

My fourteen-year-old son exclaims, “We have to get his CD!” Clearly, he has enjoyed the music and now doesn’t feel alone in his journey towards Krishna. As I gaze at the vibrant young people on the stage and in the audience, it suddenly hits me: What we give them determines the future of our world.

Sukie and his friend, MC Pralamz (Pralambari’s stage persona), sing a soul-stirring rap: “Krishna is for everyone, by Him the truth is seen as bright as the sun.” I am struck by their words. I wonder about the youth who were pioneers of this movement—who were plagued by the hippie era of the 60’s, who did not know anything about Vedic culture but who sacrificed everything to carry out Srila Prabhupada’s mission. Srila Prabhupada had expressed in a letter to Satsvarupa Das Goswami (Aug, 1968): “...we are especially interested in the younger generation



because they can accept this philosophy very quickly.” Those earlier, young devotees had followed Prabhupada’s instructions, kept his philosophy and teachings intact, and handed it to the next generation. Yes, Krishna is for everyone, for every generation.

As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of ISKCON, we can foresee its future in the capable hands of devotees of a new generation, whose trends may not resemble the authentic Vedic tradition, but who carry the essence of God consciousness in their hearts.

The Unbroken Chain

ISKCON 50

By Nashvin Gangaram

What is the point of happiness if it doesn't last forever? What is the key to everlasting happiness? *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the ripened fruit of Vedic knowledge, offers us a solution: "Any person who seriously desires real happiness must seek a bona fide spiritual master and take shelter of him by initiation." The guru gives knowledge of real happiness. Since the founding of ISKCON fifty years ago, over 75 000 disciples have been initiated within ISKCON, beginning their spiritual journey to eternal, ever-increasing happiness. Srila Prabhupada initiated over five thousand disciples from 1966 until he left this world in 1977. Since then, in keeping with the Vaishnava tradition and Srila Prabhupada's teachings, his disciples began to accept disciples of their own, continuing the disciplic succession: "One who is now the disciple is the next spiritual master." (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 2.9.43, purport)

Unfortunately, some people are under the impression that they can take initiation directly from Srila Prabhupada even after his disappearance from this world. However, this idea is unprecedented and not supported in the scriptures nor by Srila Prabhupada himself. This theory disregards Srila Prabhupada's solid philosophical understanding and presentation of the guru-disciple relationship. Srila Prabhupada himself was a humble disciple of his spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati. He took shelter of a living spiritual master, because he recognised that the guru must be able to accept the prospective student as his disciple. We cannot force ourselves onto a spiritual master; we have to possess some kind of eligibility. Only via personal interaction with the guru can we ensure that our attitude, words, and actions are pleasing to our spiritual master, which is the secret of success in spiritual life. In *Bhagavad-gita* 4.34, Krishna says: "Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realised souls can impart knowledge unto you

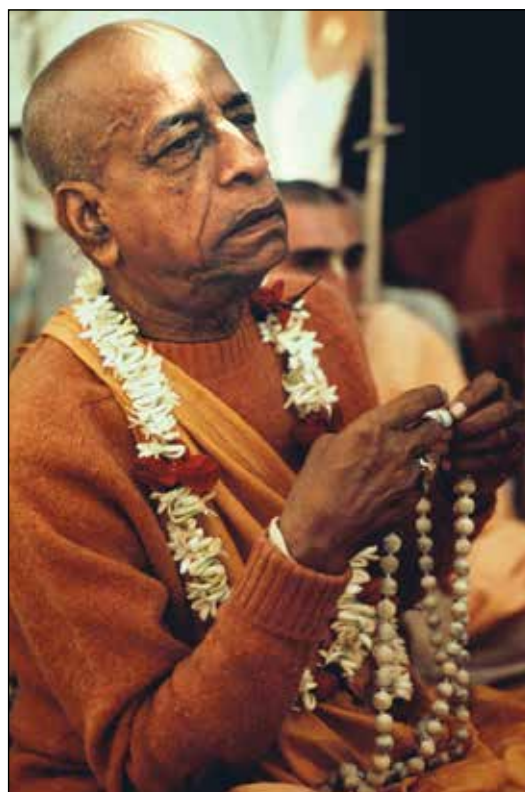
because they have seen the truth." Without a living guru, enquiry is not possible, because our questions cannot be answered, and we will not receive specific instructions according to our natures.

Therefore, Srila Prabhupada wanted all his students to become spiritual masters and assist him in bringing everyone back to the spiritual world: "Every student is expected to become *acharya*. *Acharya* means one who knows the scriptural injunctions and follows them practically in life, and teaches them to his disciples... Keep trained up very rigidly and then you are bona fide guru, and you can accept disciples on the same principle. But as a matter of etiquette, it is the custom that during the lifetime of your spiritual master you bring the prospective disciples to him, and in his absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation. This is the law of disciplic succession. I want to see my disciples become bona fide spiritual master and spread Krishna consciousness very widely, that will make me and Krishna very happy." (Letter to Tusta Krishna, 2 December 1975)

Why even take initiation from Srila Prabhupada? Why not be a direct disciple of Lord Caitanya or even Krishna Himself? Some may think that there's nothing wrong with being a disciple of the Lord Himself as it is a type of surrender. But the scriptures elaborate the *parampara* system: divine knowledge passed down from master to disciple. Srila Prabhupada himself was a surrendered disciple of his guru, and his guru of his guru—an unbroken chain. If someone

sincerely desires to follow Srila Prabhupada, then they will obey his instructions, which include taking shelter of his disciples. If one feels that there are no qualified spiritual masters amongst Srila Prabhupada's disciples, then this is an insult to Srila Prabhupada's potency to elevate his disciples. We should have a thorough understanding of the process of initiation and all of Srila Prabhupada's teachings from authorised sources, like his books and loyal followers, and be discerning regarding speculations from unauthorised sources.

Please consult your local ISKCON authority if you have any queries regarding the process of initiation.



Bhakti Sprouts on Campus

Compiled by Rukmini Devi Dasi & Rasa-sthali Dasi

The Bhakti Yoga Society (BYS) has been around for thirty-eight years, beginning at the Westville Campus in 1978. Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple invests in and cultivates university students through BYS. Every year BYS distributes 8000 meals to all students, across UKZN campuses, who attend the lunchtime gathering.

Rather than telling you how *bhakti-yoga* (the path of devotion) can transform lives, we choose to show you. Our heartfelt hope is that you feel inspired by these young men and women, who we know will someday change the face of our world.

We begin with an interview with our mild-mannered BYS Chairman on UKZN Howard Campus, Mduduzi (Mdu) Mbatha:

How did you come in touch with *bhakti-yoga*, and how does this process appeal to you?

I was initially attracted by the mysticism of yoga and how it turns mere men into meta-humans who can master their senses and perform amazing tricks, so when I came across a poster of the Bhakti Yoga Society (BYS) at Howard campus, I was attracted and took a leap of faith. Feeling cheated after the first programme, I immediately approached Rukmini (The BYS co-ordinator) to tell her that this is not what I signed up for. She enlightened me that *hatha-yoga* or mystic yoga are not the only forms of yoga; yoga in essence means to connect with God, and *bhakti-yoga* is superior because it re-establishes our lost connection with God through mantra meditation. Someone gave me the book *Chant and Be Happy* to compensate for my disappointment, and so I gained a

deeper understanding and never looked back. The BYS showed me how to delve deeper into the science of yoga.

What do you like about your experiences in ISKCON?

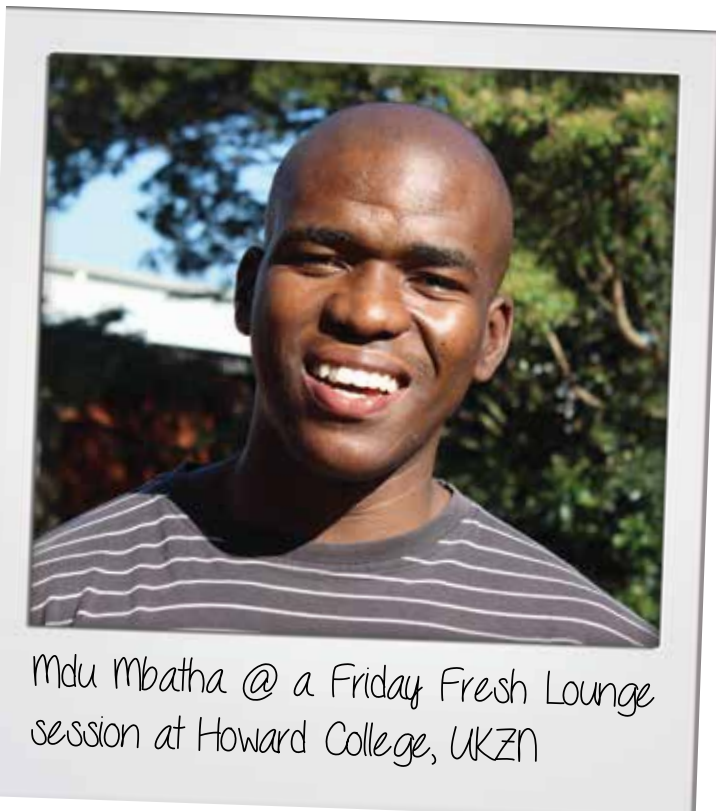
I felt Krishna's presence at my first retreat when I spent a long weekend at the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple without television and other distractions. I was completely absorbed in God's love and realized that there is nothing ordinary about Krishna consciousness. We had a daily

pledge to chant and follow the regulative lifestyle at the temple. That really touched me because it reaffirmed my commitment to Krishna. This was an eye-opener for me because before this, I didn't have the heart to pledge my allegiance to God on a daily basis. What I like about ISKCON is that God is given due respect and reverence, and devotees live by their words by practising *bhakti* on a regular basis, not just by quoting the scriptures on social media.

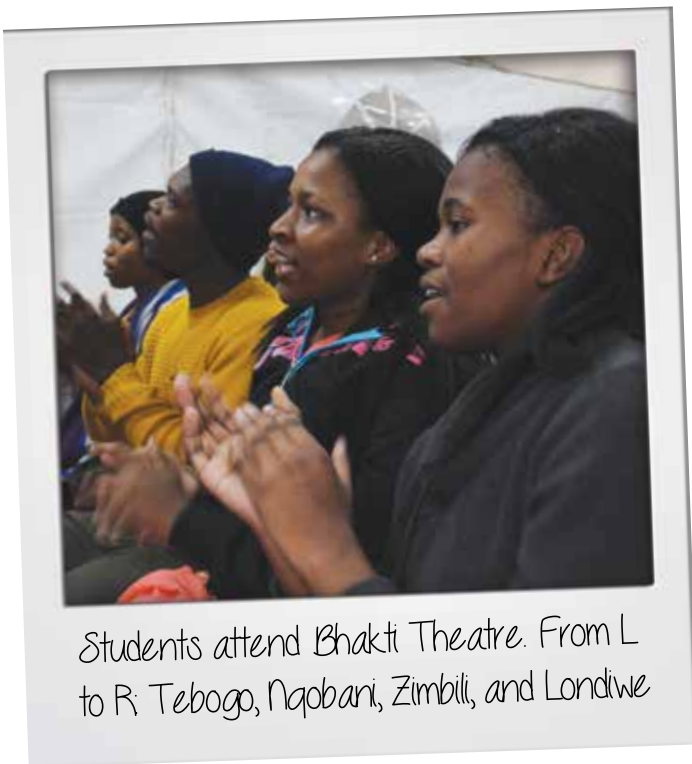
Tell us how *kirtan*, the congregational chanting of the *maha-mantra* has affected you.

What touches me the most is that even if you are not a gifted singer, the devotees would respond politely and encourage you to sing. They assured me that *kirtan* has the same effect on people even if sung by an old sage from the depths of Vrindavan and with perfect pronunciation and melody or by an inexperienced Westerner. On the contrary, from where I come, if you can't sing you just sit down and listen to the professional vocalist.

It is said that Krishna consciousness is the science of happiness. I can attest to this because I heard the mantra, experimented with it, and proved this myself. It is said that a person has two conflicting personalities that are at war all



Mdu Mbatha @ a Friday Fresh Lounge session at Howard College, UKZN



Students attend Bhakti Theatre. From L to R: Tebogo, Ngobani, Zimbili, and Londiwe

the time: the good side and the evil side. So it is better to cultivate our good nature. The *maha-mantra* has made me more tolerant, kind, forgiving, and above all, loving because I now take delight in giving and in serving others.

What do you love about the Krishna conscious philosophy?

I love the idea that God is a person who can love, laugh, and feel sad and is not just a tyrant living in the sky with a huge white beard and a deep voice, detached from human beings, but who is a Supreme Spiritual Person with whom I can have a personal relationship through my beads when I chant His holy name.

Who are your devotee friends or those who have had some influence on you?

I exchange insights with Pyari Mohan, on WhatsApp on a regular basis, which helps me get through the day. There is one thing he said to me that I will remember for the rest of my life: "No matter the weather or your mistakes, do not let go of your beads, because *bhakti* is a process, and you will not be perfect overnight." I admit that maintaining the four regulative principles is not easy, but through the association of advanced devotees who love and care for us, the road becomes easier in this battlefield of life.

Mduduzi Mbatha is twenty-two years old. He is studying a Bachelor of Community Development, 3rd year.

In May we hosted the Dynamic Emotional Evolution Retreat. This retreat hosted at the Temple was exclusively for university students. We share their experiences:

Hare Krishna Rukmini,

How are you? Thank you very much for the book you gave me. It addresses every thought I've been struggling with thus far. Though it lacks specifics, since we're not all facing exact challenges, it really does bring a whole new perspective of the culture, one that's full of hope. I've only read one chapter but already half of the doubts I had have been flushed out.

I now understand that devotional service to the Lord is not just about principle, it is also general, its life itself too. I now I understand that the joy we experience in BYS retreats can also be experienced each and every day in one's life. I kept asking myself if I was ready to take this seriously and during this retreat I realised that the question has long been answered. It's just a matter of doing.

I am grateful and yes, I'll stay connected to Krishna and yes, I'll never forget.

Your servant

Ngobani

Ngobani Ndlovu is an alumni student from UKZN, Mangosuthu University of Technology.

"Now, I can see clearly how myself and my mind are two entities."

Nthabiseng, student from UKZN, Westville Campus



Ntokozo from Edgewood Campus, UKZN at Bhakti Theatre.

"I've decided that I want to find God but I will not limit myself in just one path. Whatever it takes that will make me find him, I'll do it. Whether through Christianity or Krishna consciousness or both, whatever He leads me to. It is not a coincidence that I found Krishna consciousness, it is not a coincidence, as well, that I grew up in Christianity. It is my journey and I am different and if my path is unique then I may as well embrace it. Maybe I'm not meant to be mud or fire. Maybe I'm meant to be a volcano. Maybe that's ok too. Because maybe God's speaks in a way only you can understand. The relationship between you and God is personal and should not be rigid. It should be flexible, not fixed. Maybe God loves all of us equally but He loves us differently because of the mere fact that we are different. And that should be okay with both me and you. I came to this retreat 'half full' and thought that I was just going to top up but I found that I needed to empty the cup first and refill."

Tebogo Nombika is a student at UKZN, Edgewood Campus. She is studying B.Ed. 3rd year, majoring in English, Natural Science and Life Orientation.

"I am taking some of the points brought up at the Q&A seriously. I have started to assess myself, my association and I am going to look for more positive influences in my life."

Snenhlanhla Mfusi is eighteen year old. She is studying 1st year BSc Biological Sciences on UKZN, Westville Campus.



Ntokozo, Tebogo, Padmalochani Dasi, Londiwe, & Sitembile

The Journey of a Poet

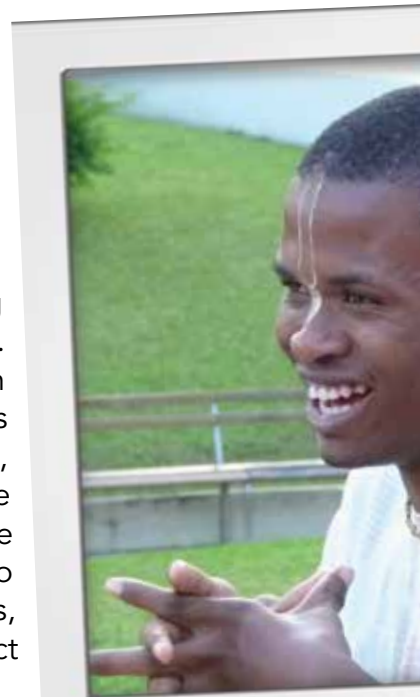
By Bhakta Godide

I have read and heard many stories of how people found their way to Krishna consciousness. All our stories vary but the one common element is mercy, as it is in my story...

I was raised a Roman Catholic and partook in all rituals expected of me until I left the church at the age of twelve. I've never liked being told what to do, what to speak of being told what not to do. And so, I left that path because I had questions about God, the Bible, the clergy, and the paradoxes I saw. The more I was told not to question such things, the more I lost respect and faith.

A decade later my world view would change completely as I would learn the answers to my questions and have my dry speculations defeated. This paradigm shift would occur after a tedious but worthwhile search. I hung out with Rastafarians to the point of becoming an initiated member of the house of BaKeHaSe. I was hoping to learn more about my "African identity," which I had hoped would help provide a better base for my Pan-African ideals. At this point I had the generic understanding of the world, one of an atheist. My atheism was brought about not by a disbelief in God but a refusal to accept the God of the Abrahamic religions.

I was constantly seeking knowledge so I could better challenge the whole socio-religious-economic-political



Bhakta

*...what really
feel at home
I was not born
questioning*



Sitembile is a student at Edgewood Campus

system. But primarily I sought knowledge. I felt that if this wasn't the point of my existence, knowledge would definitely lead me to it. When I discovered my talent for poetry, I used it as a platform to pose important questions that would get the masses thinking and also to share what little knowledge I was acquiring.



a Godide

I kept like-minded folk around me. To my disappointment, mixing with this variegated group of social outcasts, I still found I didn't fit in. Was there more to life than poetry and marijuana-induced, deep conversations about conspiracy theories and whether or not we are gods?

I had heard of Hare Krishna devotees who chanted and danced on the Golden Mile from some of my friends. They would tell me how joyous they felt from joining the street chanting, and I would

often lament about missing it. We shared the few books by Srila Prabhupada we had and I chanted Hare Krishna from the casual

*ly made me
e was that
arred from
g anything.*

reading of those books. It was April 2015 when I finally met devotees. I first met Rukmini Devi Dasi, Bhaktin Lameez, and Nadiya Godrume Das, who were in the audience at a poetry show at the

BAT Centre where I was a resident poet. Little did I know that they had come to raise me from the darkness of our cave into the warm light of Krishna consciousness. They invited our group to perform at the Bhakti Cloud tent at the Durban Festival of Chariots. From that group, I was the only one that responded to successive invitations to a Sunday Love Feast at the temple, as well as a Bhakti Yoga Society (BYS) student retreat shortly afterwards.



student at
mpus, UKZN

I was tremendously affected by the serene atmosphere and the amazing energies that the temple's devotees were exuding. But what really made me feel at home was that I was not barred from questioning anything. I received not only answers to questions that had been burning inside me for almost a decade but answers to questions I had never thought to ask.

Thembelihle (Godide) Nkosinathi Ntuli is twenty-one years old. He is studying journalism and completing his third year at Creative Arts College. Godide has been living in the temple since May 2015.

It's neither black nor white or any colour in fact
It's a fact that it lives while the flesh, although
seemingly fresh, like faecal matter, it's dead

From the bowel of a being the seed is planted
From a bowl of earth life comes into being

Breathe, stop, think, breeeeathe

Oxygen - pranayama, life air
Eternal knowledge and bliss is in here
Down the aorta enters the right ventricle in that
region,

1000 times the tip of a strand of hair. Yes, right there
It sits on a tree as one of the two birds
Enjoying the fruits of sour and sweet tastes
While the other bird, as though aware the fruits were
poisoned for another, sits by and ponders
"What's foul for one is relishable for the other"

Although it's neither black nor blue it's quite
misunderstood and if by any
it is only understood by a few

It's not heavy, heavy like the sun,
for some in fact it's quite light

Breeeeathe

A positive vibe
inconceivable to the point of non-existence than
Like if not, then it must be that colour yellow like the
sunflower, or as brown as the receptacle,
or grey as the seed, it must be

...God's Particle

By Bhakta Godide



Sfundo, Buyi, and Sne chilling around the bonfire during the retreat.

"Attending the retreat has completely changed my perspective of ISKCON and I would love to be a part of it."

Ajit Kumar, Biological Scientist, Westville Campus, UKZN

"This is the first time I found people who don't think I am strange when I question life. I like that I can accept what resonates with me and that I was not forced to accept what didn't."

Mutle Motibe is a Professional Poet in Gauteng.

"I have been to many retreats with many different organisations and they somehow always ended up horrible but this was an amazing experience in that I felt accepted by open hearted people."

Buyi is an Honours student in BA Drama at UKZN, Howard Campus

"I found everyone so warm, friendly and personal. During the retreat I questioned on how to take the mood experienced here into my everyday life."

Sfundo is an Honours student in BA Drama on UKZN, Howard Campus

"BYS has taught us that God is present all around us as well as within. It is our duty to become closer to God and respect all living things as God resides within them. We have learnt morals and values in life, which were not taught to us during school. BYS teaches us to better our lives and to respect our inner being. We learn a lot of life lessons, which is all for the better of our lives as individuals."

Karlan Naicker, Dillon Naidoo, Keri Durjendas, Keegan Pillay, Luvania Naidoo, Kelly Sternberg, Hansika Durjendas, Jerusha Ramadar, Amina Rasool (All students at UKZN, Edgewood Campus)

Is this real? (The question I asked myself.)

Okay, here's this person;

Big smile & weird attire

"Here's a flyer! Please join us at BYS."

"What is BYS?" Is it 'Bring Your Style'?

Guess what ?

There's many of these "weirdos"

Singing and dancing.

What's this strange language?

Wait. Is this for real ?

Surprise!

A fruitful lecture by this monk,

More singing and dancing

Oh...and the FOOD

Guess what? I will come back again!

Dynamic Emotional Evolution Retreat Group





Nanda Kishore, Sfundu, Sbonisile, Mute, Godide, and Saunaka Muni

Wait, am I getting attached to this?
Of course, I mean who wouldn't?
Where would you find such truth?
Who would teach self-realization?
Spiritual knowledge, trust me you

wouldn't find it anywhere.
But wait. Is this for real?

Well, I'm a spirit soul,
The maha-mantra delivers my mind
From all miseries, stress and anxiety.
Where did I get this? (BYS of course)

Love is the motto,
Sharing Krishna consciousness is the mission,
Dancing is the spirit
Food is the charm.

Yes, I am a product of BYS
And guess what?
This is for real

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Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama
Rama Rama Hare Hare



on campus

Durban University of Technology

Tuesdays
Steve Biko Campus, 12:00pm

Edgewood College

Thursdays
LT2, 12:10pm

Howard College

Mondays
Students Union, 1st Floor, 6pm
Wednesdays
Shepstone 17, 12:20pm
Fridays
Students Union, 1st Floor, 12:20pm

Mangosuthu University of Technology

Tuesdays
L12, 11:30am

Westville Campus

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

The Beautiful Struggle

By Shaunaka Muni Das

What would you say if I told you that struggle is a beautiful thing? From a higher perception, do the difficulties in our journey play an integral part in and is crucial for our progression?

We all struggle at some point. Struggle can take us to many places, from the darkness into the light. I don't think that we can escape struggle. It is the nature of the world as in the example of Queen Kunti, the mother of the five Pandavas; She was without a kingdom and her life and those of her sons were under constant threat. Queen Kunti shows us, by her equilibrium and unwavering dependence on Krishna, that struggle is not a cruel joke God plays on us. Struggle can be an opportunity to take us closer to God. I have come to realise that struggle can be the single greatest catalyst in taking us to the next level. And of all the levels, the highest is to connect with Krishna.

Our minds do not even have to be open to the idea of God's existence, regardless we have an eternal relationship with Him; it's our contact with the mundane aspects of life that has caused us to forget Him. Sometimes it takes a setback to help us realise our position in relation to God. When we are helpless in times of struggle, we become aware of our insignificance in the face of

a higher power. In Queen Kunti's struggles, she fixed her mind in transcendence, which resulted in her complete absorption of the Lord. Such a connection to Krishna is of the highest merit. And therefore such a connection guarantees us real triumph over any struggle.

*Struggle can awaken
a powerful facet of
our intelligence...*

Although struggle can sometimes be unbearable, it may jog our remembrance of Krishna. Struggle can awaken a powerful facet of our intelligence by bringing us to question about higher subject matters of life. Suffering lends itself to introspection. Otherwise we would accept life as unfair, brushing it off like it's not meant to be contemplatively studied but simply "going through the motions".

Struggle can push us to wonder why difficulties befall us, to question the meaning of our existence. Most people question why bad things happen to them. It is easy to get misdirected and become angry with God, or think that He is selfish. Srila Prabhupada explained that these uneasy situations, which are prone to take place in our lives, are meant to knock us back to our senses.

Those who take the liberty of going deeper, understand how these struggles strengthen the mind and character. When struggles arise, even on a spiritual path, it simply means that we need to apply our energy by pushing harder, to come to the level we are supposed to be.

Does this mean that struggle brings out certain potential within us? Yes. When I was younger I was fond of gaming. What made my gaming exhilarating was the rise of difficulty levels as I continued to play. At each stage there were new features to unlock. After much determination, failure, and patience, I surpassed the various levels and became an advanced gamer. Similarly, Krishna places us in difficult situations to bring out our natural yet hidden qualities so we can advance on our spiritual journey. The trick is to never give up, but to endure the struggles which can increase our spiritual reawakening. The most harmful thing we could ever do is convince ourselves that we're alone in times of struggle. In corroboration to Queen Kunti's ultimate success, the Lord explains in *Bhagavad-gita* that a devotee who sees Him everywhere is never disconnected from Him.



Queen Kunti offering her prayers to Lord Krishna as He departs.

Heavenly Match?

By Visakha Dasi

Worse than being alone is to be with a person who doesn't like you; too many people have experienced the anguish and chaos caused by an incompatible marriage. Such travesties are systematically avoided in Vaishnava culture because, besides training and restraint in behaviour prior to marriage, all care is taken in matchmaking: "Formerly, boys and girls of similar dispositions were married; the similar natures of the boy and girl were united in order to make them happy." (SB 3.21.15) "The central idea is that if the boy and girl were on an equal level the marriage would be happy, whereas inequality would lead to unhappiness." (SB 9.18.23) We want our life's companion to be a true peer.

Compatibility also includes living with our spouse's faults. It's easy to live with another's good qualities, but can you live with a person's weaknesses? After the initial period of guarded good behaviour, the character flaws we brought with us into the marriage surface, and we face the pain of dealing with both our own and our spouse's shortcomings and the conflicts those create. No two people are completely compatible and not all incompatibilities in marriage can be worked out. Sometimes inevitable differences can be laughed at, sometimes coped with, sometimes negotiated, sometimes accepted, and sometimes are complementary. Sometimes waiting and praying is the answer. It is rewarding when, after thousands of these tribulations have come and gone, you know and honour your spouse despite the differences between you. Focus on closeness and differences become manageable but if the focus is on differences, closeness disappears.

The more we advance in consciousness, the less affected we are by another's shortcomings, and conversely, the less advanced in consciousness we are, the more the other's shortcomings will irritate us. Not everyone can be like Mandodari, the chaste wife of Ravana, who was fully aware of her husband's lowly nature and activities and yet tolerated him to the end.

No two people are completely compatible and not all incompatibilities in marriage can be worked out.

Besides conscientiously matching a suitable young man with a suitable young woman, compatibility also includes the husband having like-minded male friends and the wife like-minded female friends. All our dialogue need not fall on just one pair of ears, but in confidence we reveal

our mind to and have dedicated and loving ties with handpicked friends. Good friends smooth the bumps on this long journey. If at some point our marriage is rocky, qualified friends can help us learn from the difficulties and acquire skills to improve our relationship. Marriage is a process of changing and accepting change, of settling differences and living with differences that will never be settled, of drawing close and pulling apart and drawing close again.

Visakha Dasi is a disciple of Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada bore witness to her wedding to Yadubara Das in Vrindavan. They have two daughters and are based in Sharanagati Village, a rural community in British Columbia, Canada, where Visakha is writing a memoir, *Unexpected Love*.



Chocolate/Carob Brownie

Cheesecake

Vedic Chef

By Chandrashekara Das

This bold dessert pairs a contemporary chocolate ganaché-hidden centred cheesecake with a classic chocolate brownie for a serious taste experience. Note: Carob can be replaced for all chocolate ingredients.

Chocolate Ganaché

160g dark chocolate

½ cup fresh cream

1 Tbls liquid glucose

Method

Chop the dark chocolate into pieces and set aside in a heatproof bowl. Combine the fresh cream and liquid glucose in a thick based pot and heat to a boil. Immediately pour the hot creamy mixture over the chopped chocolate or carob chunks. Leave for 5 minutes and then stir thoroughly to combine. Set aside in the fridge to thicken to a dropping consistency.

Chocolate Brownie

1 cup plain flour

½ cup cocoa powder

¾ cup icing sugar

1 tsp baking soda

½ tsp salt

5 Tbls melted butter

1 cup buttermilk

1 tsp caramel essence

1 Tbls chopped pecan nuts

1 Tbls water

Method

Mix all the dry ingredients together and then add the wet ingredients. Mix thoroughly and transfer to a large greased rectangular baking pan or casserole. Spread the batter thinly and evenly across the pan. The aim is to get a very thin chocolate brownie base for the cheesecake. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the brownie comes out clean.

Set aside until completely cool.

Cheesecake topping

One 400g tin sweetened condensed milk

½ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 tsp pure vanilla extract

250g full fat cream cheese (Note: low fat cream cheese will not set)

Method

Blend the condensed milk, lemon juice, vanilla, and cream cheese in a food processor until smooth.

To Assemble

Pour cream cheese mixture into individual silicone moulds of your choice. Place the filled moulds in freezer for 20 minutes until semi set. Remove moulds, and using a teaspoon, scoop out a portion of the centre of the cheesecake. Fill the cavity with chocolate ganaché and smooth out. Place back in the freezer for at least two hours to completely firm. Un-mould each cheesecake onto the brownie base and trim brownie base to size. To finish off, pipe dollops of chocolate ganaché onto the cheesecake.

Offer to Krishna with love and devotion and serve.





The Story of the Lion Lord

For the Kids
By Rasa-sthali Dasi

This is a true story. It happened in the heavens a very, very long time ago. The universe was under the rule of an unworthy king. This king had a rather odd name: Hiranayakasipu—one who likes gold and a soft bed. Even though Hiranayakasipu was not worthy to rule the universe, he was powerful, and the universal ministers were forced to serve in his government, for fear of their lives. Hiranayakasipu could defeat any opponent. You see, he had done a special penance and was in turn awarded unimaginable power. His power made him so arrogant that he felt he would be able to defeat God in combat. Hiranayakasipu's son Prahlad, however, did not like his father's attitude towards God. From deep within his heart he knew that God is the greatest hero, far outshining any mortal man.

Hiranayakasipu felt that if you cannot see God, then He must not be there. But five-year-old Prahlad, knew better. When Hiranayakasipu was angered by his son's faith that God is everywhere, he asked: "Is your God in this

palace pillar?" "Yes!" Prahlad declared. Enraged, Hiranayakasipu smashed the pillar with his club. Ka Boom! God, in the form of a marvellous gigantic lion-man, Lord Nrsimha, exploded from the pillar. Roar! Hiranayakasipu's heart trembled for a moment, and then he challenged the "strange creature." Hiranayakasipu was a great martial artist and his movements were fluid, but Lord Nrsimha, the source of all martial arts, matched and blocked all his blows with ease. Just to humour Hiranayakasipu, Lord Nrsimha battled him. Lord Nrsimha looked like a golden dancing firework running circles around the exhausted and confused Hiranayakasipu. Finally, when the sky was a brilliant orange pink, Lord Nrsimha grabbed Hiranayakasipu, and placing him on His lap, tore through his abdomen with His razor-sharp claws.

You can read the full story in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Canto 7: <http://www.vedabase.com/en/sb/7>



7.7.2012

Event Guide



Ganga Puja
14 June | Tuesday



Panihati Cida Dahi Utsava
18 June | Saturday



Disappearance of
Sri Srivasa Pandita
29 June | Wednesday



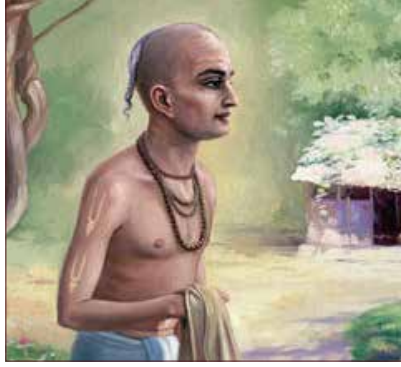
Disappearance of
Sri Gadadhara Pandita
4 July | Monday



Disappearance of
Sri Gadadhara Pandita
4 July | Monday



Disappearance of
Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami
24 July | Sunday



Guru (Vyasa) Purnima
Disappearance of Srila
Sanatana Gosvami
19 July | Tuesday



The incorporation of
ISKCON in New York
28 July | Thursday

EKADASI

Fast from all grains, beans and legumes.

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

Pandava Nirjala Ekadasi

16 June | Thursday

Break fast

17 June | Friday

06:50 - 08:41

Ekadasi

30 June | Thursday

Break fast

1 July | Friday

06:52 - 10:17

Ekadasi

15 July | Friday

Break fast

16 July | Saturday

06:49 - 10:17

Ekadasi

30 July | Saturday

Break fast

31 July | Sunday

06:41 - 10:15



First month of Chaturmasya

19 July - 17 August

(Fast from green leafy vegetables)



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