



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

HARE KRISHNA NEWS

September / October 2016

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Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Ram

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What's All The Fuss

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Kartik 101

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For Better Or Worse

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Temple Directory

Communications - Krishangi Radhe 083 254 8339
Facilities Manager - Akrura 072 463 8119
Festival Manager - Balaram 082 881 4521
Finance - Ramvijay 084 550 4101
Youth Development - Sudhir 079 144 0003
General Queries - 031 403 3328 o/h 9am - 5pm
Contact the Temple directly for the following departments:
Back to Godhead Queries (Wednesdays only 9am -2pm)
Book Table (10am - 8pm)
Devotee Breakfast/Lunch Sponsorships - Rasalika 031 403 4600
Radhanath's Gifts (10am - 6pm)
Govinda's Restaurant -
(10:30am - 7pm. Direct line 031 403 4600)
Take Care of Krishna -
Kamala Sundari (Tues - Fri 9:30am - 1pm)

Departments

University Programme/Girls Programme -
Rukmini 084 579 1080
Street Chanting - Virabhadra 071 870 0588
House Programmes -
Radha Giridhari 076 190 8485
Shyam Ghat 0793829410
Funerals - Shyam Ghat 0793829410
Weekend Boys Programme/Smart Box Queries -
Ananta Gauranga 082 783 3599
Guest Accommodation - Nadiya Godruma - 062 366 3068
Deity Department - Deva Deva 076 178 6850
Outreach Programmes - Alanath 083 775 2760
Book Distribution - Krishna Caitanya Das 081 088 2493
Temple Room Co-ordinator - Arjuna Acharya 031 403 3328

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Editor's Note

"This is my son, Jamie," the health store owner's eyes sparkled with joy.
Jamie's voice rang out, "Do you know the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple?"
"Yes," I smiled.

Srila Prabhupada prayed to Lord Krishna to be a puppet in His hands dancing to His will. He wrote this prayer (*Markine Bhagavata-dharma*) on board the Jaladutta on arrival at Boston Harbour in 1965. It is a heartbreaking prayer of surrender, dependence, and faith.

I don't like to be anyone's puppet. In fact, I'm pretty sure nobody likes that. But when Krishna uses us, it is different. It feels like a mixture of humility, joy and, faith; it is euphoric. I know because I was used by Him recently.

Just before coming to fetch his mom, Jamie decided he would meditate for 20 minutes. When he chanted the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*, he prayed to Krishna to help him in his next step, to show him the way. Heleen (Jamie's mom) said that is was a 0,0001% chance he would ever come to the shop. But he did that day, at that precise moment when I was there. Krishna chose me. The hairs on my body stood on end under my many layers of clothes. Krishna, the sentient Lord, listens and responds. He is not an abstract principle.

It made me realise that Krishna has been accepting my little devotions all this while too. In one swift action, He accomplishes numerous things: brings a beautiful soul closer to Him, soothes a loving mother's heart and helps an editor share a heartwarming story.

Krishna using me to help Jamie has transformed my devotion. It feels alive. I cannot decide who is more joyful about our meeting, Jamie or I. But between you and me, I think I am.

May you too be touched by the hand of the Lord.

Warmest wishes

Rasa-sthali Dasi

P.S. I would love to hear from you.

Write to me at rasasthali@iskcondurban.net

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Mind Mastery

By Saunaka Muni Das

We all have deadlines, exams just around the corner, and friends and family that require our time. So much to do and so little time and anxiety fills us, throwing our minds all over the place. It becomes difficult to plan and execute our duties with a sane consciousness.

When has anyone achieved anything pleasant from panicking or stressing about a looming matter? It's interesting how the mind dwells on the future while in the present. For example, when I was a student, an exam would be coming up while I was still busy with assessments. I would start to fret over the exam when I should have been focusing on the task at hand. This overwhelmed me and led to procrastination and poor performance.

Time is a precious commodity and how we deal with it determines our accomplishments. We can learn how to deal with it wisely from persons who have mastered the art of time management or fruitful prioritisation and thus enjoy a peaceful and co-operative mind. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, a devout spiritualist, was a magistrate in the British Government and father to ten children. Not only was he able to resolve more cases than any other magistrate in the district but he also dedicated 4.5 hours to personal spiritual practice. His spiritual practice was a handy faculty that assisted in 'ironing' out the many aspects of his life. He spent 8.5 hours on reading and composing literature and wrote volumes of books that are globally recognised. Dedicated to his duties, he slept only 3 hours.

Looking at Bhaktivinoda Thakur's life we can see how important spiritual practice was to him and from this, he was able to manage every aspect of his life with a lucid mind-set and a sober investment of energy for each aspect.

I fearlessly say that when things get a little crazy, we are guaranteed to find good counsel in spiritual practice.

By spiritual practice I mean the euphoric meditation called *japa* or the personal chanting of God's sacred names composed of Sanskrit syllables. *Japa* is an ancient form of meditation, which frees the mind of anxiety and fear. Students and professionals have shared with me that this meditation effortlessly relieved them of tension and stress and brought

out a natural euphoria. Spiritual practice awards us the energy and the sharpness for a full day of exceptional performance. These practitioners are able to perform better because they have made the conscious effort to link with the Supreme Being. Such a practice, which is known as *bhakti* or the yoga of devoted service to God, confers freedom from distress. When we are free from distress, we become even-minded, and from even-mindedness we become peaceful. Peace awards clarity and when we can think clearly, we can perceive what is pertinent. This state of mind is especially conducive for study or a stressful situation. We are able to absorb enough information for our educational

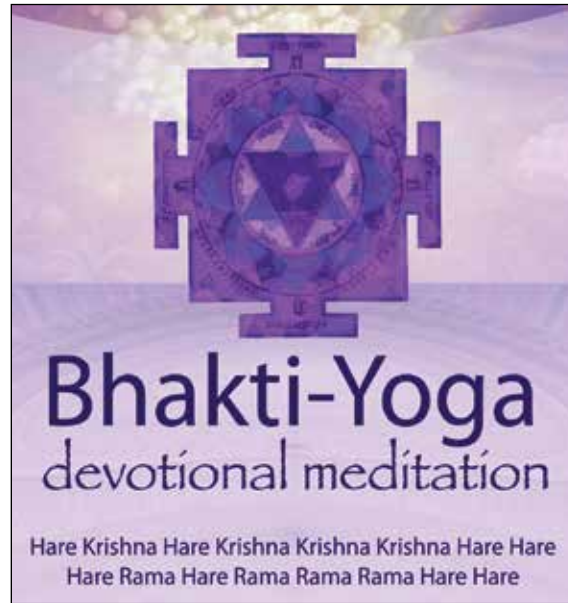
advancement, to meet work deadlines, or to take proper care of our families.

A person can only deliver himself with the help of his mind. The mind is the friend of the individual when it is nicely trained. Therefore we use this process to cordial our relationship with the mind. At the end of the day, real mastery is experiencing God with every thought and deed. That can only be possible through spiritual practice.

And now, for some practical tips:

1. Chant. You can chant the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* with or without beads. When chanting is done properly, one of the side benefits is that it regulates our breathing, transferring more oxygen to the brain and therefore the mind becomes more alert. Definitely a better option than slouching on the sofa and vegging out.
2. Eat Complete Proteins. *Dhal* is a higher quality protein than any animal derivative. It also doesn't require too much attention when cooking, so you can use that time to accomplish other things. When the *dhal* is offered to Krishna, it is transformed into spiritual energy. What can be better than a boost of spiritual energy?
3. Visit the Temple. Now this one may be a surprise but hear me out. We cannot be chained to our desks. Taking a break in the right sort of environment can do wonders for our state of being. So how about trying a quick visit to the temple? I know a group of students who, during their exams, would come to the temple just to offer a lamp to Lord Damodar and leave. It was a 15-minute power visit.
4. Read a verse of *Bhagavad-gita*. Learn why and how on pages 11-12.

I wish you happy study, work or play...all powered by spiritual practice.



What's All the Fuss?

ISKCON50

By Nashvin Gangaram

ISKCON was once considered a cult accused of brainwashing the youth of America. However, today it is widely respected in society. In fifty years, we have stood the test of time. Anniversary celebrations have been hosted by most of the 665 ISKCON establishments across the world. They will continue for the rest of the year. At Sri Sri Radha Radhanath

Temple, we have hosted a Gala Dinner, a special display at the Durban Festival of Chariots, our Bhakti Theatre staged an ISKCON50-themed drama, and the temple has an informative display allowing visitors to view ISKCON's 50-year history. But, what is all the fuss about?

Although ISKCON may be just fifty years old, the teachings propagated are

Genuine spiritual practice is beyond any kind of sectarian idea, and applicable to all traditions.

eternal and therefore relevant. Genuine spiritual practice is beyond any kind of sectarian idea, and applicable to all traditions. The first idea ISKCON propagates is to understand that you are not the body but a spirit soul. This can be easily perceived at death. Consider the difference between a living body and a dead body. When a loved one passes away, their body remains but the "person" is gone. Also, observe how our own bodies change during our lifetime. Our bodies in the infant stage are different from the ones we have now. This truth cuts through discrimination, be it gender, racial, sexual, intellectual, or social. Therefore ISKCON promotes true equality.

ISKCON is also a facility for people who have similar spiritual interests. Desires and ambitions develop according to the company we keep. In the association of like-minded transcendentalists, our spiritual progress becomes easier and almost automatic.

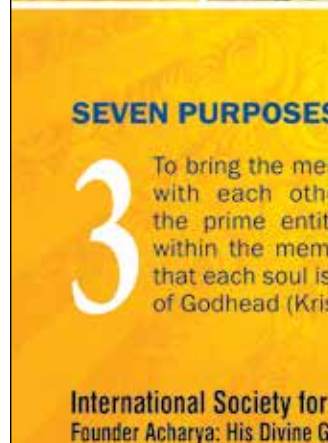
ISKCON is the ultimate welfare organisation. This is a bold claim but I'll explain. Suppose you came across a lost child, crying for her parents. It would certainly be noble to feed the child, and take care of her. However, a higher consideration would be to reunite the child with her parents. Similarly, all our altruistic and humanitarian endeavours are wonderful, but they find perfection when they are accompanied by reuniting the soul with the Supreme Lord.

ISKCON is led by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. He is the Founder and Acharya of ISKCON and is predicted in scripture. "Lord Krishna: 'After 5,000 years of this age have passed, the great sage and worshipper of my holy names will appear and spread the chanting of my names throughout the world.'" (Brahma-vaivarta Purana)

Srila Prabhupada did not seem to perform superhuman feats. However, his miracle was that he gave people a higher taste and a chance at real happiness, which can allow us to overcome our struggles. The happiness experienced in *bhakti*, or devotional service to the Supreme Lord, is of a different kind altogether. It far surpasses anything else, which includes temporary pleasures and the state of *nirvana* or the bliss of merging into the effulgence of the Supreme Lord. Therefore the affluent, the simple, the serious seeker, and the party animal, are all attracted to this path. They experience joy that is not found elsewhere.

Something of a subtler nature is that ISKCON exposes us to rare information like the names, nature, qualities, activities, and form of God, and about His residence in the topmost part of the spiritual world. Here, His devotees do not worship Him in a mood of awe and reverence. They do not even consider His Godly status because they are so overwhelmed with loving feelings for Him.

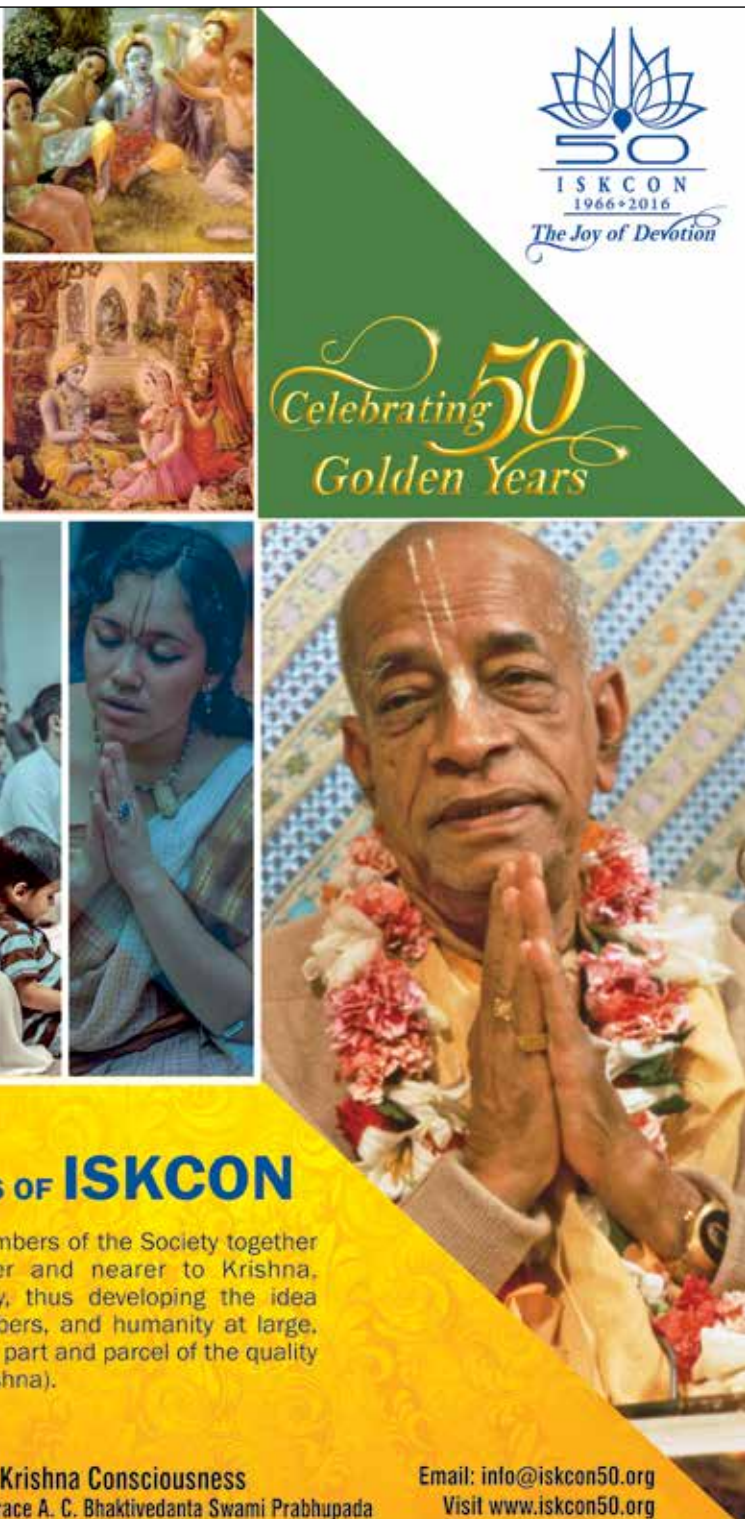
This is a just a partial listing of the uniqueness of ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada felt fully confident that ISKCON will solve all the problems of the world. From the inception of ISKCON in 1966, we see that vegetarianism, meditation, karma and reincarnation, and chanting are commonly accepted thoughts. ISKCON has certainly contributed to this.



SEVEN PURPOSES

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International Society for Founder Acharya: His Divine G



Seek & Follow

by Nalayne Carpede

A word of truth to my faithless self:

How long will you wander? Back, forth and around in circles, blind but convinced that you can see. You want to walk alone, fancy yourself valiant and unbound, taking the scenic route, as you call it. You go without guidance.

Faithless self, you say that no one else can lead you on your path, as no one but you knows where you've come from nor can anyone be truly invested in your destiny. This is, after all, *your* journey; the discovery of *your* spirit, a recovery of *your* truth. Who could teach it to you? Who else but you would know?

Are you sure that you will find your way? What you fail to see is that you are your own impediment. You deceive yourself and do not realise it.

Faithless self, you think that matters of the spirit are for the individual to resolve, questions are for the individual to answer, answers are theirs to learn, practices are theirs to decide and only in ways that harmonise with them. You think, perhaps, that what we need to learn is simply how to be: be ourselves, be free, living unrestricted and at peace. What do these terms mean? You find and fuse ideas to build your notion of the truth. By accepting segments of truth while denying others, you miss the Truth. You say you value your liberty but it may only be rebelliousness. And unknowingly you subscribe at the price of true freedom.

Oh Faithless self, you imprison yourself and do not know it. You may fight the lies of the world and even unearth the factual, but you remain oppressed by your own misconceptions. The subtler ignorance that is lodged in you, keeps you from real knowledge. And unknowingly you turn from the light to chase shadows, all the while caught up in the impression that those shadows are more beautiful and more worthy than the Source of Beauty. Maintaining these impressions, you dedicate yourself to illusion. Then you wonder why the frustration and the feelings of loss and confusion.

Faithless self, you reject direction. Yet silently, you yearn for a hand to reach out to. And many hands have reached out to you. It was pride that told you that you didn't need help or that no one could save you. But it is up to you to accept the guidance, which is powerful beyond measure, always available and true. It is that wisdom which directs the heart to cultivate real love. Do you not recognise love when it comes to you?

By letting go of your faithless self, you can grab onto what lies beyond. All that we are is in us, but we cannot uncover this on our own. We need those who know it to show it to us, for their help to reawaken us. That is Guru. Guru can show the way for they have seen and gone the way. And they can take us to depths and heights further than what we can achieve or even conceive of on our own.

A word of truth to my faithless self: seek the great sages and follow their path.

*By accepting
segments of truth
while denying others,
you miss the Truth.*

Event Guide



Kartika Begins
16 October | Sunday



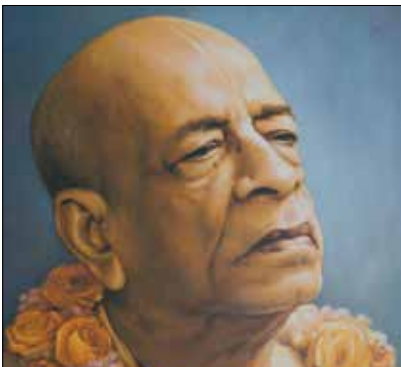
Appearance of Radha Kunda
23 October | Sunday



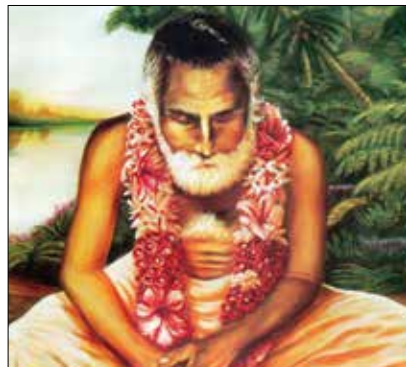
Diwali
30 October | Sunday



Govardhana Puja | Go Puja
31 October | Monday



Srila Prabhupada's
Disappearance
3 November | Sunday



Srila Gaura Kisor Das Babaji's
Disappearance
First day of Bhisma Panchaka
11 November | Friday



Kartika Ends
Tulasi-Saligrama Vivaha
Last day of Bhisma Panchaka
14 November | Monday



Gita Jayanti
10 December | Saturday

EKADASI

Fast from all grains, beans and legumes.

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

Ekadasi

12 October | Wednesday

Break fast

13 October | Thursday | 05:19 - 09:34

Ekadasi

26 October | Wednesday

Break fast

27 October | Thursday | 05:05 - 09:28

Ekadasi

11 November | Friday

Break fast

12 November | Saturday | 04:53 - 09:24

Ekadasi

25 November | Friday

Break fast

26 November | Saturday | 04:48 - 06:43

Ekadasi

10 December | Saturday

Break fast

11 December | Sunday | 04:48 - 09:29



Fourth month of Chaturmasya

Fast from urad dal

16 October - 13 November

Other Dates to Note

Ramacandra Vijayotsava

11 October | Tuesday

Disappearance of:

Srila Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami

Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami

Srila Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami

13 October | Thursday

Srila Narottama Dasa Thakur's

Disappearance

20 October | Thursday

Gopastami

Sri Srinivasa Acharya Disappearance

8 November | Tuesday



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Kartik 101

By Gaura-bhumi Devi Dasi

Does your lunch not go down quite the way it used to? Perhaps it leaves you feeling sluggish and sleepy. Maybe it's time to reach for that bottle of ambrosial-like castor oil or perhaps dare to go on a 7-day juice detox? A detox serves to rid the body of things that are stuck or clogging our system. In the same way, Kartik is that time for us to reboot the spirit and get it to flow. It is a time for spiritual introspection, purification and reflection.

“...there is a specific time in the year when Krishna’s mercy flows in tidal waves.”

The performance of devotional service awards one the richest of blessings in general. The Absolute Truth, Sri Krishna states that there is no loss or diminution in any spiritual endeavour directed unto Him. However, there is a specific time in the year when Krishna’s mercy flows in tidal waves.

This year, Kartik is from Sunday, October 16th until Monday, November 14th. This auspicious time is observed through celebration of festivals, offering lamps daily, singing the *Damodarastakam* prayer, and taking personal vows. All intended to increase our remembrance of the Absolute Truth. This month is also famed for being the time when Mother Yashoda bound baby Krishna by His abdomen (*udara*) with ropes (*dama*) to a wooden grinding mortar; hence it is also known as the month of Damodara. The ancient texts hold great reverence for this period, describing it as the most meritorious and pure of all months. Kartik is extremely dear to the Absolute Truth. During this month, the rewards reaped from devotional service are greater than any other time. It is something akin to a spiritual sale. Even the simplest yet loving act of devotion is multiplied. It is the ultimate “buy-one-get-a-thousand-free.”

In the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (5.6.18), the saint Sukadeva Goswami remarks how Krishna is ever ready and eager to help His devotees. The Absolute Truth is one-of-a-kind. Krishna rarely awards *bhakti* to anyone as it binds Him to the devotee. But during this holy month, He freely gives Himself. For me, during the evening hymns and the musical one-two beat dances from my ears to my soul, and magic crackles to life as candles and lamps are lit. The offering of a clay lamp can be profound. Krishna is purchased

through the heartfelt emotion of His devote. The lamp is a symbol of the devotee's love, devotion and gratitude to the Supreme. It is a whole-hearted offering of whatever we may have in our heart. *Bhakti* cannot be bought, rather it is something earned through genuine and austere practice of devotion unto Krishna.

Through our endeavour and His mercy, the devotee is able to bind Krishna. Busy people can especially take advantage of Kartik. It is the ideal time to reconnect with the Divine because Krishna makes Himself more

accessible. Since any devotion during the month of Kartik is multiplied, you can decide to offer something small or great. We offer a variety of devotions for you during Kartik. Check out the article on reading on pages 10 - 11; preparing and offering food on page 14; meditation on page 3; you can attend the many festivals at the temple; and lastly, and my favourite, offer a lamp at the temple every evening at 7pm. I admit that going the extra mile is not easy but just one month of dedicated endeavour grants an eternity of boundless mercy. May your lamp of love shine bold and bright. Kartik is the time.







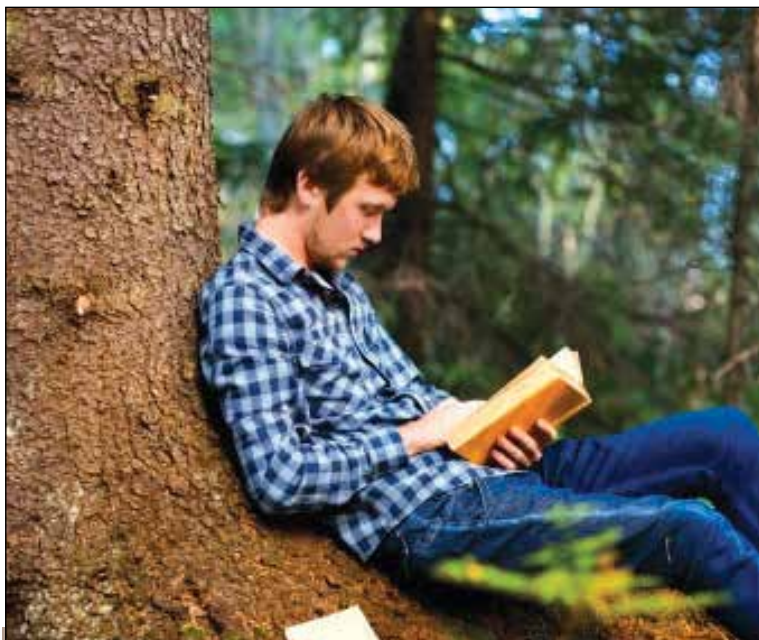
Mind Make-over

Action in Devotion

By Rukmini Devi Dasi

How about a new you? Lose those extra kilos of negativity. Smooth out the wrinkles of regretted choices. Firm and tone your intelligence.

Here is a make-over for your mind that will give you something more than the perfect look — perfect vision. "How?" you ask? Let wisdom be your reflex to whatever life throws at you. The good news is that it doesn't require you to be a PhD nor the class geek. All you need is to be open to learn. An aspiring spiritualist will soon perceive that beyond the "feel good" moment of a high energy experience is the grounded understanding of our selves and our true purpose. The wise see the world differently. Action in Devotion gives you wisdom in bite sizes, tailor made to suit your digestion. Be on the cutting edge of the "sword of knowledge."



Level One: The Minute Meditation

Time: 60 seconds

Do big words scare you? And thick books even more so? No need for hyperventilation. Knowledge is not about how much you cram into your brain but what you do with it. A simple sentence can enter like a pill, dissolve and be assimilated until its one with your every cell. And all it takes is just one minute in your lunch break.

Open the *Bhagavad-gita* to any page and read a verse and commentary for just 60 seconds. Stop. Put it away. That's it! In those 60 seconds you would have made contact with divine wisdom. There is rhythm, pattern, and intelligence in all that we perceive. Nothing is accidental. I like to think that in those 60

seconds Krishna speaks to me, in the now, and not just Arjuna. It becomes the guiding words for my day.



Level Two: The Internal Revolution

Time: Approximately 10 minutes

Life is a spectrum of choices. We are compelled to make a decision at every moment. On what do we base our choices? Some people opt to weigh out the evidence and make an informed decision. Others follow their gut instinct. Often, though, our emotional investment may cloud our judgement and we realise a moment too late, "I shouldn't have..."

The internal revolution is for the spiritual practitioner who is ready to evolve in the way he or she thinks - in ten minutes per day. We tend to look for a quick-fix or winning formula to revamp our true interior decor and being the skeptic that I am, I've never believed that it existed. Until I met CHAD.

It's the Chapter A Day (CHAD) program and it works like this: Select any chapter of the *Bhagavad-gita*. Read all the verses in that chapter in succession. You can choose to manoeuvre through the Sanskrit and/or stick to the English translations. You can choose to read consecutive chapters each day, thus completing the *Gita* in 18 days before restarting, or just zone in on a chapter that strikes a chord. Start in whatever way you find comfortable.

Why is this revolutionary? The secret is that CHAD becomes your pin code to life - your Personal Internal Notification system. You're stuck in a traffic jam in the middle of summer and you're late to pick up the kids or attend a crucial meeting. You are about to loose your cool but you remember:

"O son of Kunti, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O scion of Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed." BG 2.14

"Ok," you grudgingly relent, "I'll deal with the noise, the smoke and the heat, but what about the kids and my boss?"

"O conqueror of wealth, there is no truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread." BG 7.7

And you remember once again that you're not God, you can't control everything and decide that you might as well use the time constructively instead of freaking out. In that moment, you are living the *Bhagavad-gita*. And suddenly the words of Krishna become your invisible companion.

Not only is CHAD quick but you can download the *Bhagavad-gita* App on your smart phone and make it super easy. You can CHAD between campus lectures, whilst waiting in a queue at the mall or in that traffic jam. The daily adsorption in the *Bhagavad-gita* for just ten minutes sparks a significant change in consciousness. CHAD has got me hooked and I'm not alone. Why not give it a try and see if it works for you?

Check out Bhagavad Gita Gallery on Google Play! <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bhagavadgita.gallery>

I know that that canto of the *Srimad Bhagavatam* lying on my table is joy gift wrapped but sometimes the hardest thing to do, is to open it. Caught in the tide of balancing spiritual practices and everyday living, it can be that the closest you get to picking up the *Bhagavatam* is a woeful glance at night before collapsing into unconsciousness. Because sacred contact with Srila Prabhupada's words in the *Bhagavatam* is not a traditional vow in Hare Krishna culture, it's not surprising that we sometimes let it slip. How unfortunate!

Whereas the *Bhagavad-gita* is popular, available universally, and read by most committed practitioners, the *Srimad Bhagavatam* is the hidden gem in our heritage. All twelve cantos are said to represent Krishna's actual form. The first two are described as His lotus feet and the tenth His smiling face. "Why should I want to go to the spiritual world? What do people do there?" The *Srimad Bhagavatam* gives us both the material and spiritual realms with pristine detail and clarity that is unknown to the world. Now that's knowledge. Here's a moment to remind myself just what I'm missing out on: The *Bhagavatam* is drama, mystery, scifi, comedy, action, and romance in its purest form. For the steady practitioner the *Bhagavatam* is a mirror, revealing our unmasked reflection and a friend guiding our next step. It is the sledgehammer to destroy our stubborn faith in the temporary. The *Bhagavatam* is also our invitation, it's the portal into Krishna's world.

The extreme makeover option shows you how to 'Be a Sage, Page by Page'. It takes the colossal 18 000 verses and gives you a practical program of how you can fit it into your life. You can choose the rate that you are comfortable with:

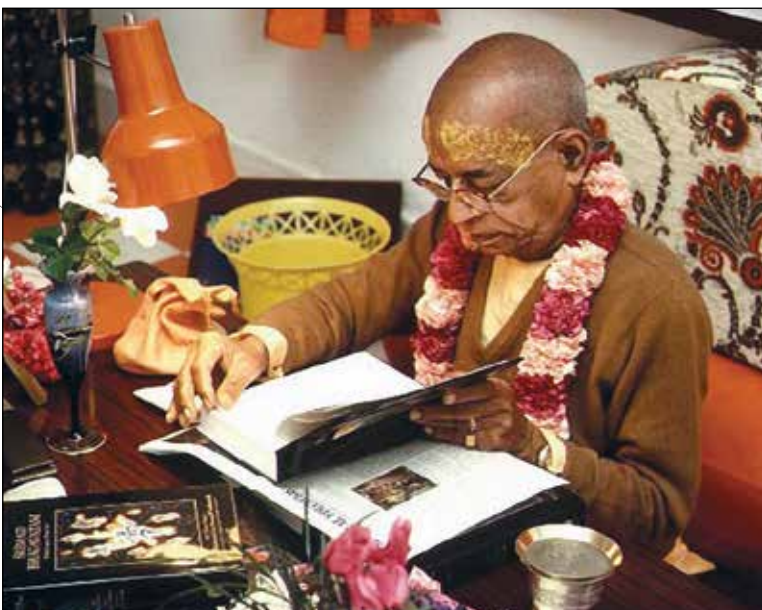
Time	Pages per day
3 months	168
6 months	84
9 months	56
1 year	41
2 years	21
3 years	14
4 years	10.5
5 years	8

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For Better or Worse

Marriage Matters

By Visakha Dasi

Mature practitioners in the Hare Krishna tradition choose to accept vows of purity. Individuals or couples solemnly vow to avoid intoxicants, illicit sex, meat eating and gambling, and to chant 16 rounds of the *maha-mantra* daily. To preserve these holy vows that are taken before the Deity, before the fire and before the Vaishnavas are the most important practices in spiritual life. Caring for one another in a marriage means protecting these principles in each other's lives by our example and by our words.

Yet, if the husband or the wife is not following these principles, we do not have the right to reject that person because we feel superior. The day may come when the roles are reversed, for pride leads to a loss of austerity. Without being condescending and self-righteous, whoever is strict can humbly help the lax one and the lax one must be willing to accept that help. This is teamwork, an exchange of affection in which one person's misfortune of distraction becomes turned around by the other person's gift of focus.

If we have too high an estimation of ourselves, we will turn our *ashrama* into a war zone and this war may not

be over fundamentals, like the regulative principles, but more minor infractions—wasting time, wasting money, inappropriate behaviour, harsh language, and so forth. Whatever the cause of upset, the exchange about it and the mood toward it can still be good-natured and hopeful, instead of angry and accusative. Contempt is a corrosive that over time breaks down the bond between husband and wife.

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Instead of contempt and pride we can try for light-heartedness and submission. When we are honourable ourselves it is natural for us to honour each other.

For those who care about the other, confronting that person is not easy; the act has a great potential for arrogance, for to confront is to assume a position

of moral superiority over the other—we confront because we want to change the course of that person's life. The reality is that at times, we do know better about a certain matter than the other and we are obliged to confront the other with the problem. To do this effectively, we must stringently examine the value of our "wisdom" and our motives behind offering it. This self-scrutiny and self-doubting requires the unusual combination of meekness and strength. To fail to confront when confrontation is required is as detrimental as self-righteous condemnation. When circumstances require it, a partner must, sparingly and carefully, confront the



other, and in turn, submit to being confronted by the other.

Here are some points to consider when thinking of quitting a marriage that is non-abusive. (It should be understood that devotees are not expected to remain committed to a relationship that is physically and/or emotionally abusive. We're not fanatics about commitment; commitment should not be at the expense of one's mental, physical, or emotional well-being.) The Latin root of "com" means "jointly," and "mittere" means, "to send." In marriage, commitment is a journey by two people who have oneness in purpose. When we unearth the taproot of commitment, we come to our commitment to the Supreme Lord Krishna, from Whom the quality of commitment originally emanates, in Whom it eternally reposes, and Who Himself is the perfection of commitment. Sri Krishna says: "To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me. To show them special mercy, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance." (Bg 10.10-11) The Lord is unwaveringly committed to selflessly serve those who serve Him selflessly.

Marriage is difficult and once that fact is accepted, the fact that marriage is difficult no longer matters. Sometimes, due to the nature of false ego, there may be tremendous conflict and disagreement between husband and wife but if, in this darkness, their mutual commitment to their relationship prevails, that commitment can carry their relationship beyond its troubles to greater intimacy. When quitting is not an option and is not justified, the alternative—sooner or later—is overcoming the difficulty. Difficulties are inevitable, but overcoming them—not quitting—is optional and requires our discipline, courage and wisdom. Our reward is to again resonate, to grow in kindness, in trust and in trustworthiness. Problems and conflict are not an opportunity to quit but to move forward, to become unstuck. As Krishna is mystical, so non-negotiable commitment to His service is also mystical because, by His grace, we can deal with a problem when we take responsibility for it. When the Lord sends us a test, He simultaneously gives us the ability to pass that test if we so desire. "The Lord is so kind to His devotee that when severely testing him the Lord gives him the necessary strength to be tolerant and to continue to remain a glorious devotee." (SB 8.22.29-30)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur spoke on

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remaining committed despite obstacles in his last speech to the members of the Gaudiya Math, delivered on December 23, 1936. He said, "Living in this world one has to face many kinds of difficulties. It is not our job to try and remove those difficulties. Nor should they depress us... We have no attachment or hostility towards anyone in this world. All arrangements of this world are temporary. Everyone has an indispensable need for the Absolute Truth. May all of you with one goal and in harmony with each other, attain the right to serve the original asraya-vigraha [Krishna]."

We become a husband or a wife as a service to Krishna. Difficulties are not a reason to stop that service or to become discouraged. They are an opportunity, however painful, to serve with fewer conditions. In the end, that self-sacrifice becomes self-enhancement because, for a devotee, sacrifice is an offering to please the Lord. Sacrifice is the surrender of something desirable for the sake of something having a higher claim. We surrender so that we can please Srila Prabhupada.

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*.



Basic Ekadasi Dough

The Vedic Chef

By Nikunja Seva Dasi

Ekadasi is a fast from all grains, beans and legumes. It is a great one-day detox fast. On Ekadasi people often complain that they don't feel full or, "I just wish I could have a slice of bread..." This grain- and gluten-free recipe will allow you to make pizzas, *kachoris*, wraps, and *rotis* on Ekadasi. Your Ekadasi will never be the same!

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