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HARE KRISHNA NEWS

May / June 2017



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Can You Handle the Truth?

Editor's Note

Twenty years ago, I lived in a small and simple ashram with fellow *bhakti-yoga* practitioners. I used to talk for hours with a friend, a deep and soft person, about philosophy, life, spiritual practice, and the fine tuning of our thoughts, words, and actions. I recall a discussion about the difference between being right and being true. To be right is like ringing the victory bell while being true is a call to the higher self, a calling to the Divine. Krishna explains that we lose when we act on our whims, which are based on ego. While being right indulges the ego, being true cuts it. Therefore, it is more difficult to be true. Trueness comes from God. He is the Absolute Truth, and the discovery of this Absolute Truth is the way to enlightenment.

"Make no mistake about it — enlightenment is a destructive process. It has nothing to do with becoming better or being happier. Enlightenment is the crumbling away of untruth. It's seeing through the facade of pretense. It's the complete eradication of everything we imagined to be true." Adyashanti from *The End of Your World*.

Even though the blanket of lies keeps us warm in this world, it is an illusion. And that is the painful truth. The blanket is soft and snug and comfortable, making the quest for enlightenment the path less travelled. The true practitioner of *bhakti-yoga* — the yoga of love and devotion — becomes a happy and a better person as a natural result of following the enlightened path. Krishna encourages us in this quest by assuring us that in the beginning, it is like poison, but in the end, that same poison becomes nectar. His truth shall set us free!

Warm Regards

Rasa-sthali Dasi

P.S. I would love to hear from you. Write to me at rasasthali@iskcondurban.net

On the Cover

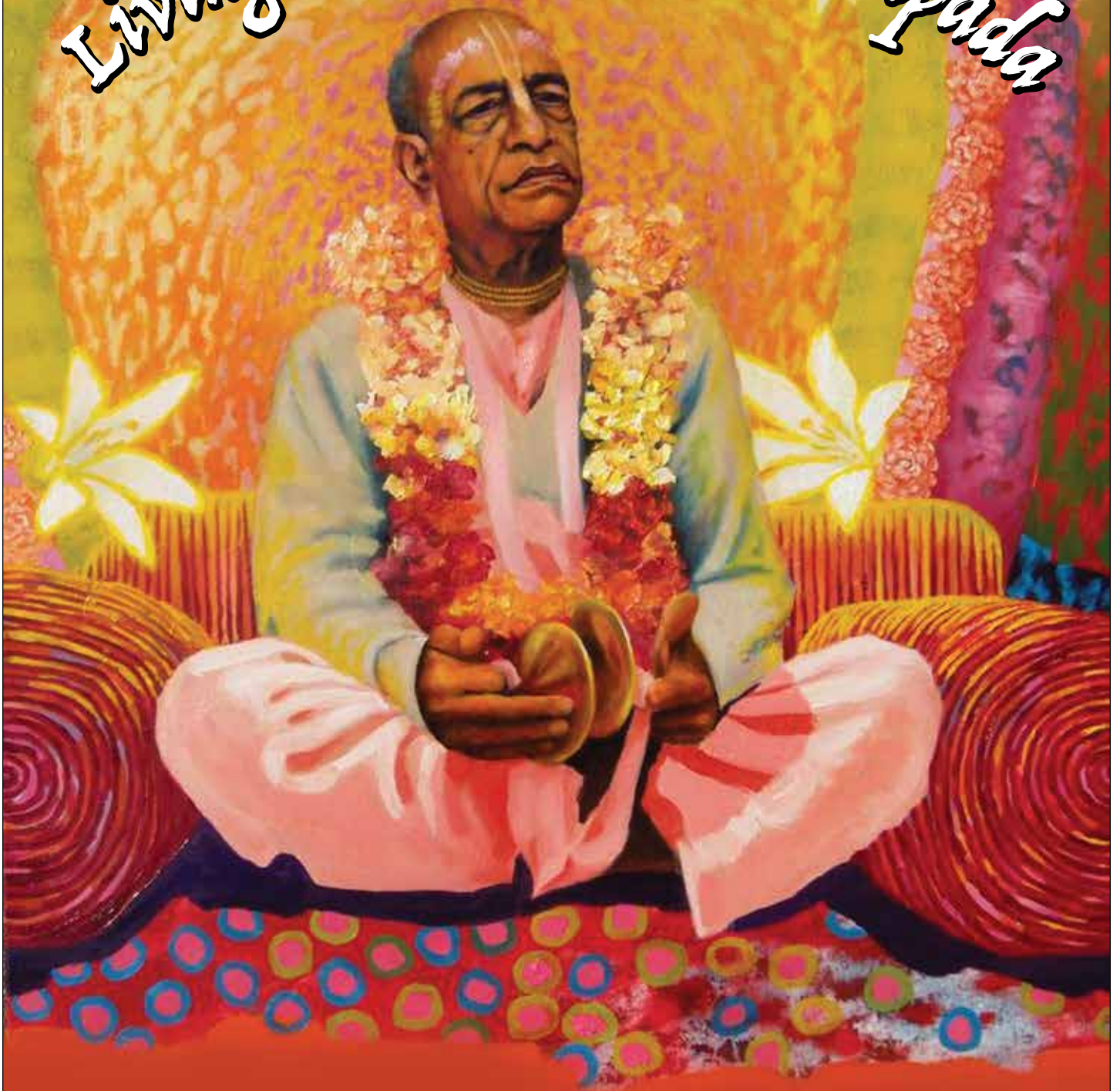
Painting by Nalayne Carpede

Krishna is known as Govinda – one who gives pleasure to the cows and the senses. "My dear friends, the cows are also charmed as soon as they hear the transcendental sound of the flute of Krishna. It sounds to them like the pouring of nectar, and they immediately spread their long ears just to catch the liquid nectar of the flute." *Krishna Book, Chapter 21*.

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Living with Srila Prabhupada



Innocent enquirers are known as *jijnasu*, "those who are inquisitive." These innocent enquirers are society's hope for the future. Most intelligent and innocent young children are inquisitive: they question their parents about many things and remember the answers. When these bright young boys and girls receive proper guidance from parents and teachers who can lucidly answer their queries, they easily understand each point and gradually develop fine brains. From among these intelligent souls, those who are especially pious begin to keenly enquire about God and other spiritual topics. Others, who pursue ignoble material knowledge, cannot become successful in life and end up beating the chaff. Those who are inquisitive about the self and the Absolute Truth, Brahman, quickly surrender to Lord Krishna and His devotees. — *Renunciation Through Wisdom, Chapter 2*



Chosen for a Purpose

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

Nick Vujcic was born without arms and legs. "Why me?" he always asked until he discovered that God had chosen him for a purpose. Because of his disability, he was able to reach out to people and give them courage. Nick's zest for life and faith in God's will drove him to learn to swim, surf, travel the world, and do things that even able-bodied people fail to do. He touched people with his conviction that God loves us unconditionally and that whatever He does is for our highest good. He exemplified that faith in God should not depend on what He dishes out for us; rather we should see His higher plan at work. Sometimes adversities make us question God's love and His presence in our lives. We become weak to face the storms in a positive spirit. But Nick took strength from God. The more he took shelter of Him, the more he could see God's purpose unfold.

More than five thousand years ago Lord Krishna was present with His pure devotees who lived to enable His purpose. Krishna, together with His dear cousins the five Pandava brothers, watched Bhishma, their

paternal grandfather, lying on a bed of arrows ready to leave the world. Although fatally wounded, he could choose the moment to leave. Even so, how was it that the wise and righteous Bhishma, who was a lion among men, an invincible warrior, and a dear most devotee of the Lord, could have met fate in this way? But Bhishma knew that it was not fate.

As Bhishma gazed at his grieving grandsons, his voice choked with tears, he said, "Oh, what terrible sufferings and injustices you good souls suffer for being the sons of religion personified. Ordinarily, you could not survive those tribulations but you were protected by the brahmins, God, and your virtuous conduct." The import of Bhishma's words was evident in the ghastly scene around them. Thousands of warrior bodies lay strewn in a bloodbath, some beheaded,

others pierced with arrows, and many torn apart beneath broken chariots and bloody carcasses of horses and elephants. The wails of these warriors' wives penetrated

the battlefield like a cacophony of wild animals at night. Yudhisthira, the eldest Pandava, felt that witnessing this distress was worse than the atrocities that had been inflicted upon him and his brothers.

The Lord wanted to show that even powerful persons like Bhishma could not win if on the wrong side.

These atrocities, caused by his own cousins, the Kauravas, resulted in this horrendous war. They had usurped the Pandavas of their rightful inheritance, exiled them to the forest as beggars, tortured and disgraced their wife in public, endangered their mother, and plotted their murder. Still, before the war, Yudhishthira's brother Arjuna could not bear to vanquish his cousins and elders, including Bhishma who had taken the side of the Kauravas. Krishna had reminded Arjuna about his duty, to rid the world of miscreants, and to fulfill the purpose of His descent. Now Yudhishthira stood in front of Bhishma, seeking his advice. What should he do now that he had won the war? All he felt was an inner defeat, a throbbing ache in his chest.

Bhishma was glad that the Pandavas had won. He was, after all, one of the twelve most saintly persons in the world. But how then had he chosen the wrong side?

Bhishma exclaimed, "Accept the inconceivable plan of the Lord and follow it. You are now the appointed administrative head, so take care of your helpless subjects. O King, no one can know the plan of the Lord. Even great philosophers are bewildered after exhaustive enquiry."

But Bhishma had a deeper understanding. He knew that the Pandavas had not suffered from their past misdeeds like ordinary persons do. He understood that the Lord had put his devotees in temporary distress to establish the conquest of virtue. He realized that his choosing the side of the Kauravas was also the will of the Lord. The Lord wanted to show that even powerful persons like Bhishma could not win if on the wrong side.

Bhishma continued, "O King, that personality whom, out of ignorance only, you thought to be your maternal cousin, your very dear friend, well-wisher, counselor, messenger, benefactor, etc., is that very Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna." (SB.1.9.20)

Bhishma turned his gaze to Lord Krishna, his eyes bright with tears. He understood that the Lord had chosen him to teach the world courage, faith, virtue, and sacrifice. His life too had been set with thorns. These tribulations had disentangled him from mundane affairs and attachments. Now Bhishma's path was clear. Fixing his mind on Krishna's beauty, glory, and wondrous qualities, he was ready to enter the spiritual kingdom.

"Sri Krishna is present in everyone's heart," Bhishma murmured, taking his last breaths, "He is equally kind to everyone. Whatever He does is free from material inebriety. Yet, He has graciously come before me while I am ending my life, for I am His unflinching servitor."

Yudhishthira, his brothers, and the renowned sages and saints, who had assembled on the battlefield, continued to hear the godly advice of Grandfather Bhishma. When, at last, the sun sank into the horizon, Bhishma left the world meditating on Sri Krishna. The dawn of a new era emerged. Lord Krishna had chosen His devotees to fulfill His purpose.

Most of us are not like Bhishma, the Pandavas, or even Nick Vujicic, neither are we free from the reactions of our past misdeeds. But God has a purpose for us too. If we turn to Him, we will gain the strength to tolerate negative reactions of hardship and strife. Most of all, Lord Krishna's loving hands will uncover our divine lustre as His spotless servants.

A poignant allegory illustrates this point. Once the marble floor complained to the marble deity on the altar, "How is it that people decorate and worship you with great reverence, yet they stamp upon me, not giving me any attention? After all, aren't we made of the same material?"

The deity replied, "That's true, but when our master had asked you whether you wanted to be sculpted and moulded into a deity, you refused. You thought only of the chisel hammering into you and the enduring pain. You didn't think of our master's expert skill, his way of carving something wonderful out of something plain. You didn't trust his judgment or that he would make you more beautiful than you could ever imagine. That's the difference between you and me."

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Sri Sri Radha Radhanatha



The Path of A Devotee

By Byron Kyle

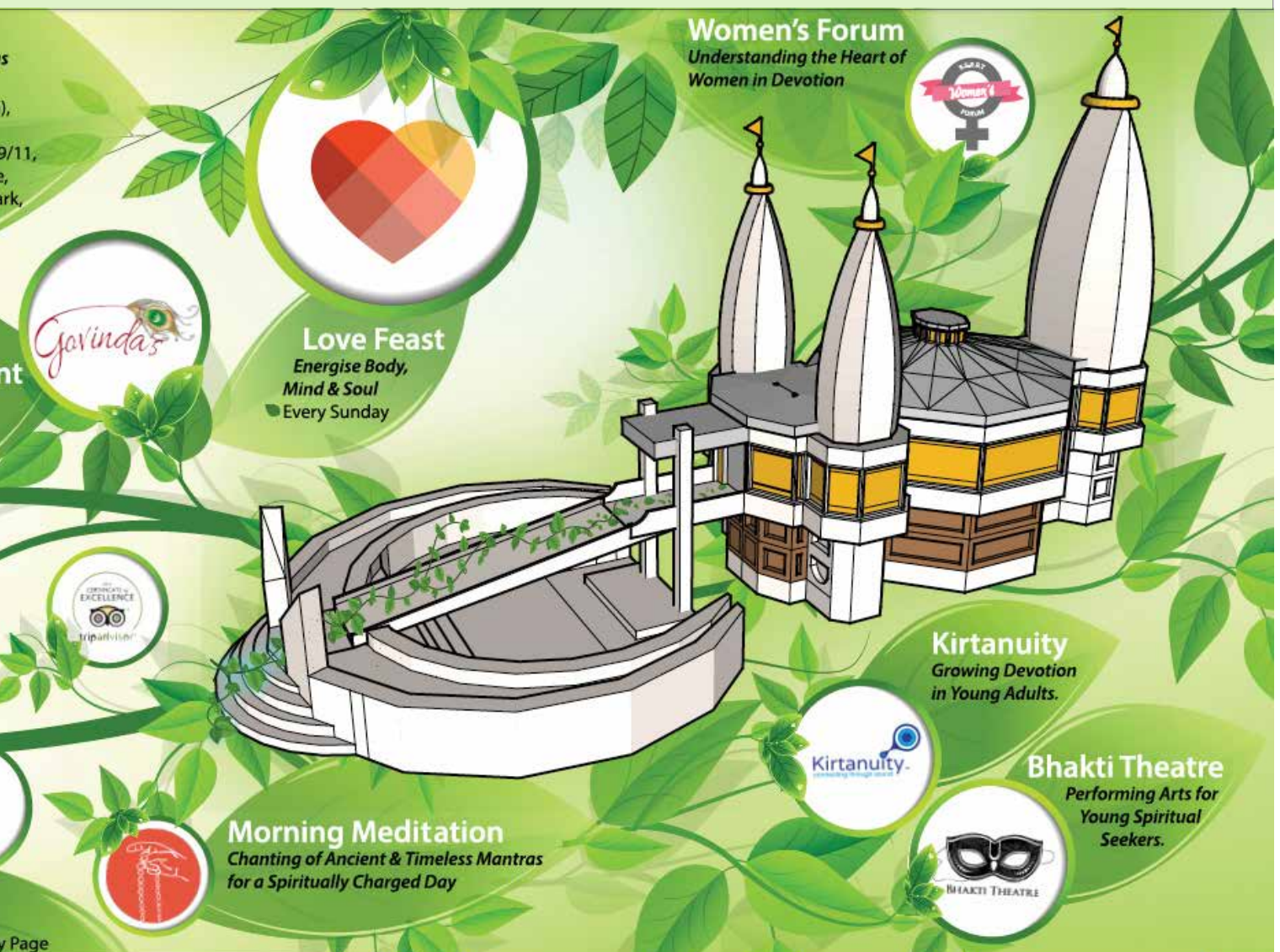
I grew up being taught a few core values, of those, faith and hope were of great importance. For me, faith is believing in what you cannot see. Hope is having faith that you will one day see what you believe. Realisation is having your faith confirmed, that is, actually witnessing what you believe. It is problematic that faith is used to describe hope but the two support each other. Explained differently faith is an affirmation or declaration while hope is the doing. You must have heard people say, "Don't give up! Have hope!" Hope is the will to carry on and this is why I write to all of you.

Joining this community of faith, I heard many grand stories of transformation. You hear them within every faith. Tales of triumph that sound like the basis for a Hollywood blockbuster or best-selling biography. Usually, you'll find that these stories take place over

just a few weeks to a few months. The intentions of these stories are good. They are meant to encourage and excite, and on most occasions they do, but I am here to tell you differently. For many, including myself, these stories are just stories. These stories are just puffed up tales of grandeur with no solid basis or traceable line of evidence. At least, these are my feelings and I am sure the feelings of many others.

A life in pursuit of perfection is undoubtedly going to be a life of struggle. Not all of us get it right the first time or the thousandth time! I am here to offer encouragement to all those who experience the path as arduous; who no longer feel ecstasy in *kirtan*; or who harbour difficult and compulsive behaviours in secret. I am here to encourage devotees who have been at this lifestyle for a while and are thinking they are not making much progress while novices seem to overtake them. And I am speaking as a young person and a university student facing the greatest social pressures he'll probably experience in his life.

a Temple Growing Bhakti



I encourage all of you to look back. It is only in retrospect that you will see all the footholds that have carried you across the fast flowing river of challenges that we call life. And moving forward, I encourage you to be more discerning in choosing where you'll place your feet and which direction you'll take. Life is certainly a marathon, not a sprint. Real, lasting change is often deep and gradual rather than quick and dramatic. Real change is usually quiet and an almost unnoticeable affair. Real change requires consistency and not just an intense burst of energy. This model for change applies not only to our devotional life but to all our endeavours.

So I say to all of you, my friends, to look back on your effort and to applaud yourself for it. Applaud the faith you have even if it comes and goes in fits and starts. And I say to you, in the words of Bhakti Tirtha Swami to "...resist the temptation to be normal,

because those who are considered normal accept the values and practices of an insane world."

Don't give up. Have hope. The victory you are looking for may be just around the corner. You may lose many a battle but you have a choice on the outcome of the war. Jay Sri Krishna!



Filling the Heart

By Lila Shukha Dasi

We begin life with large, empty hearts and along our journeys it is those people who sincerely help us, who fill us—little by little.

I used to be a lot of things: naïve, overworked, underpaid, afraid, restless, and an attorney in Durban's cutthroat legal world. My husband, Venu Gopal, and I then moved to Japan where I entered the arena of teaching English as a second language to the Japanese. Now I'm a housewife and for the first time, everything on my schedule is something I've put there myself. This has made me a more relaxed and happy person, and it's allowed some time for contemplation. Of late, I've been reflecting upon how exactly I arrived at this point in my life since the years seem to have flown by, without my noticing it.

The answer came one sunny afternoon at the appropriately named café, Essence. I was "swami stepping" with a circle of ten or so hippie-come-spiritualists, who were into the *kirtan* Venu Gopal was singing. It may sound cheesy but I swear the scene was set just for my light bulb moment. Picture this: tropical island, gorgeous little building on a hilltop overlooking the East China Sea, greenery hanging from the ceiling, winter sun filtering through, soothing *kirtan*, and surrounded by sincere people who were chanting and being happy.

The whispers came flooding into my mind. I could hear Vamsi-Gita's voice, "Step in, step out, and turn at just the right moment." She taught me how to "swami step" in *kirtan*. I looked over at one of our friends who wanted to wear a sari that day. I draped it on her. Rasa-sthali taught me how to do that at a university student retreat in Durban in the winter of 2008. In broken Japanese, I handed out a flyer to some curious on-lookers, and I could hear Rukmini say, "Create a Vaikuntha bubble when you're handing out pamphlets." She basically meant that I should be brave even when I was as nervous as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs. I sang the *maha-mantra* loudly when my mike died. Yadurani taught me to sing. I never knew that I could, until the day she told me, "Sing every day, whenever you get the chance, sing."

Later I was busy with preparations for an upcoming festival, and the whispers became louder. The flower arranging learned from Rupanuga and the garland making from Vasudha. Cooking and prepping vegetables was a skill I acquired by helping out at Sunday Love Feasts. When guests arrived, I tried my best to make them feel loved and welcomed, a skill carefully learned from Krishna-chandra. Of course, this is a short list. These people made time for me because they loved me and they loved God. For when you love God, you love every living being.

"Sharing knowledge is not about giving people something, or getting something from them. That is only valid for information sharing. Sharing knowledge occurs when



people are genuinely interested in helping one another develop new capacities for action; it is about creating learning processes.” Peter Senge, director of the Centre for Organizational Learning at MIT’s Sloan School of Management.

My “whispers” got me thinking about how I truly am the sum and total of the efforts of others, whether they’re my parents, friends, spiritual guides, or mentors. *We begin life with large, empty hearts and along our journeys it is those people who sincerely help us, who fill us—little by little.* Until one day we are brimming and beaming with knowledge and inspiration. I learned that everything I have received is meant to be shared – I too must now help to fill the hearts of others. The whole idea of *parampara* (disciplic succession) means to pass on the greatest love and knowledge there is—love of God—and to keep doing so from generation to generation. When I share what I have, I give everyone on my path a chance to become truly happy too.

I never thought, despite my secondary career as a teacher, that I would now be the one teaching what I had been lovingly taught. And as I taught, reluctantly and uncomfortably at first, the more grateful I felt to those who had passed these skills and knowledge down to me. I am slowly beginning to understand why our dear founder, Srila Prabhupada, travelled to the West to teach love of God. He said that he was simply repeating what Krishna, his spiritual master, and the other great teachers had said. He never took any credit for himself, he was devoid of ego, always grateful, and always ready to pass on what he knew. The passing down of knowledge and skills is a large part of a spiritual practitioner’s reality. As the great saint, Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur aptly described it, “If we ourselves do not pass on or share this knowledge it will end and die with us.”

There are no limitations when our actions come from love and in line with the great spiritual teachers. It does not matter what our position in life is, anyone can share and that sharing can make an impact when it comes from the heart. The heart remembers everything it is taught with love. A wise soul once told me, “We never know how we move through this world and how we touch the people who bless our lives.”

I wish to thank everyone, those mentioned here and those who I have not. Thank you for helping me on my journey, for your wisdom, time, patience, and love. A special thank you to my husband for helping me with this article and encouraging me to write. I promise all my loving helpers that, while I still live and breathe, I will share what you gave to me for it’s the only way I can truly thank you.

Lila Shukha Dasi and her husband, Venu Gopal Das live in Okinawa, Japan. Lila Shukha shares bhakti-yoga culture to the English speaking community on the island and assists with the Japanese events too. Both she and her husband are from South Africa and were active members in the university bhakti-yoga programmes.



Nectar of Instruction

By His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada

Published by
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Book Trust

Review by Byron Kyle
R15 (soft cover)
Available at Sri Sri
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Temple

What was most prominent in my reading of the *Nectar of Instruction*, was the tone of urgency in the eleven texts and their purports and the author’s conviction that a human being is capable of so much more than he thinks he is. This tone of urgency says something about the author’s excitement and willingness to share great and profound truths for the betterment of all who read them.

The betterment of a person means becoming a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna. This compact book of wisdom is, at first, a bitter pill to swallow. Becoming a devotee means learning sacrifice. It means surrendering a previous way of living to adopt a new one. It means sacrificing comfort and ease in favour of mindfulness. Mindfulness may seem to be the goal, but it really is constant mindfulness of Krishna. Mindfulness means placing your attention on Him in every thought, word, and deed. From eating to resisting the urges of the body, every action is done for Krishna. In this book, mindfulness means controlling the mind. Controlling the mind is not an easy endeavour. This book reveals that the main tool for mindfulness is the ends and the means – to chant Hare Krishna. Everything you are and everything you do will gradually become purified. Keep to a set of principles and associate with the right people.

This book will help one who has started on the path of Krishna consciousness to become more serious and solid in his practice. It is a book for those who are thinking, “Okay, I see the goal and want to get there, but how do I do that?” If this is you, happy reading, your quest is well worth the sacrifice. Sacrifice may seem like poison at first but this book is called *Nectar of Instruction* for a reason.

Contentment

Marriage Matters

By Visakha Dasi

Everyone's goal is to enter and remain in that elusive condition called happiness.

To be happy we must be peaceful (in Krishna's words, "How can there be happiness without peace?") and to be peaceful we must be content with the situation we are in, whatever it is.

We could choose to accept our lot in life and be happy, even if we don't completely settle our marital discord. "One should be satisfied with whatever he achieves by his previous destiny, for discontent can never bring happiness." (*Srimad Bhagavatam* [SB] 8.19.24) In the circumstances of our life, there is no element of chance. They are the result of the law of karma, a law that cannot err, and they are our destiny created by our past activities. It is as futile to rail against our pains and misfortunes, as it is to toil to increase our pleasures. "Without endeavour, one can get the amount of happiness and distress for which he is destined, and one cannot change this. Therefore, it is better to use one's time for advancement in the spiritual life of Krishna consciousness." (SB 7.7.42, purport) A person, content in their circumstances, can still choose to improve his or her life.

This attempt to change is not a gnawing dissatisfaction with the status quo, but a desire to fulfil our responsibility as a husband or wife and to advance spiritually.

"For spiritual advancement, one should be materially satisfied, for if one is not materially satisfied, his greed for material development will result in the frustration of his spiritual advancement. [On the other hand], one should not be poverty-stricken, but one must try to be fully satisfied with the bare necessities of life and not be greedy. For a devotee to be satisfied with the bare necessities is, therefore, the best advice for spiritual advancement." (SB 7.15.21, purport)

In the circumstances of our life, there is no element of chance.

A historical example of a content husband can be found in the prince, Priyavrata. He was content to live as a monk but due to the needs of the kingdom, he was requested by

his elders to marry and rule as King. His marriage and rule were a sacrifice of his own desire. Yet instead of being bitter, he was just as content as a husband, father, and king for he never forgot his purpose and he conquered the modes of passion and ignorance in all their aspects including lust, greed, and envy as well as anger, bitterness and resentment. Srila Prabhupada explains that although Priyavrata was forced to break his vow of celibacy, he did not look upon his elders with resentment but with deep respect.

Unlike Narada Muni and Priyavrata, conditioned souls bind themselves to misery by holding resentments. Forgiveness (which does not necessarily mean approval of the act that caused the problem), frees one from this bondage.

First contentment, then peacefulness, and then happiness all become reality when we learn to forgive. And the first person to forgive is oneself. We can't forgive others unless we first forgive ourselves for our own mistakes and character flaws.

"One should try to keep himself satisfied in any condition of life—whether distress or happiness—which is offered by the supreme will. A person who endures in this way is able to cross over the darkness of nescience very easily." (SB 4.8.33) A contented person remains so through all acts of providence, whether those acts involve change or a lack of change. Contentment is accepting oneself, one's partner and one's situation with grace.

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*.



Leaders Like Salt

Myth Buster

By Ananta Gauranga Das

When Alexander the Great lead his men through the Gedrosian Desert, the loss of life was colossal. He sent phalanxes of his army in search of water. After many hours they came back with just enough to fill a helmet. The parched army handed over the precious liquid to their commander. He clasped the helmet in both hands and to the dismay of his troops, poured its contents onto the sand. Alexander proclaimed, "If the men don't drink, then I don't drink". This selfless act forever forged an impenetrable bond between the commander-in-chief and his men. He inspired them to live and die for him, not by what he said, rather, by what he did.

Alexander lived and lead with integrity and honour. This got me thinking of current political leadership, locally and globally. It turned out to be a depressing thought.

The Vedic paradigm explains that, us common folk are influenced and affected by the actions and behaviours of distinguished persons. If the masses bear witness to gross lawlessness by the powers that be, then they too will emulate such atrocities. The converse is also true. If the monarchs, prime ministers, and presidents inculcate spiritual practices, their activities and consciousness become purified. This is enhanced by consultation with sacred texts and individuals who have realised spiritual wisdom. In so doing, they relinquish their lower natures and govern themselves and others by divine principles. There is power in divine sound and intelligent leaders know how to harness it. Sainly leaders armed with spiritual science expand their vision of leadership, resulting in a moral and harmonious society. In this way leaders also empower others righteously and not simply beget a blind following.

A leader should be like salt. The quantity of salt in a dish needs to be just right, too little or too much, results in culinary disaster. Like salt in a preparation, leaders should be balanced. They should have a balanced approach to work, spiritual practice, and recreation. Balance is crucial when dealing with challenges. When one is equipoised, he is neither

disturbed by elation or distress. This state of mind allows for decisions grounded in stability.

Another attribute of salt is that it remains hidden in a dish even though it adds flavour. A leader should see himself as the protector and servitor of others and, like salt, serve without the need for recognition or praise. Have you ever heard anyone say, "The salt in this entree is scrumptious?" Yet, so often we admire other spices or flavours. A capable leader empowers his followers and allows for them to receive praise. His reward is selfless service. He should let those in his care resolve problems without micromanaging. When there is calamity, then he should step in and lead his people out of the threat.

Have you ever volunteered at an organisation? If you have, perhaps you can testify to an interesting dynamic. When people receive a salary they bring their minds to work, but when they are valued they give their heart and soul to a mission. Those serving in a spiritual organisation, by large, do so without financial remuneration. Thus inspiration is required, to attract people and keep them motivated, which can be cultivated through empathy or sensitivity to the needs of others. Thus subordinates are not perceived as pawns for pleasure and exploitation.

Rather, they are family. Followers are sentient beings with feelings, hopes, dreams, and emotions. When a leader views his subordinates in this way, the result is that the members feel nurtured and valued.



A leader should be like salt.

Leadership is not easy. It is said for one who wants to lead an orchestra, he must turn his back to the crowd. Leadership entails the sacrifice of time, energy, and often, relationships. Your grit and character will be tested. Like it or not, you will be placed in the limelight resulting in fair and unjust critique. A virtuous leader is the servant of others, externally he may be perceived as just another manager or CEO. However, he serves not simply for economic gain or prestige. His focus is uplifting of those in his care, a process enhanced by a God centred approach to management.

At the core of genuine leadership is inspired activation through empathy, love, and grace. True leaders reign over the hearts of those in their care as they become conquered by sensitivity and compassion.



Word Scramble

For the Kids

By Mala Rampershad

Word scramble is about sorting letters into words. The story will help you unscramble the words. Here is an example: (ANSHIRK) = KRISHNA

One day Krishna and Balaram and the (WOCREHD) _____ boys were out playing, when the cowherd boys and Balaram returned home and they complained to Mother (HOYASAD) _____ that Krishna had eaten (LAYC) _____. Krishna, being (IFADAR) _____ of his mother, at once said that the other boys were lying. To prove His innocence, He asked Mother Yashoda to look into his (THOMU) _____.

When Mother Yashoda looked into Krishna's mouth, she could see the (EEIVNURS) _____. She saw outer (PEACS) _____, the oceans, the islands, the (TRASS) _____, the planets, and the (ONOM) _____. She saw the living entities, the (DSIDOEGM) _____, and also herself and Krishna, within Krishna's mouth.

Upon seeing this, she was struck with awe and wondered if this was a (REDMA) _____. She immediately offered (RRYAPSE) _____ to the Supreme Lord. Krishna seeing Mother Yashoda in this mood, at once by His mystic power allowed her to remember her (YREHLMTO) _____ love for Him. She immediately forgot what she had seen and took Krishna upon her (PLA) _____ and began to tend to Him as her son.

Matar Dal Bara

The Vaishnava Chef

By Gopi-bhava Dasi

This is one of the many famous recipes by Gopi-bhava. Adiraja Das included it in his Hare Krishna Cookbook.

Soaking time: overnight, plus 15 minutes in salted water

Preparation and cooking time: 25 minutes

2 1/2 cups (600ml) plain yogurt
1 3/4 cups (350g) green or yellow split peas
2 Tbsp chopped coriander or parsley leaves
2 Tbsp grated fresh ginger
2 tsp ground coriander seeds
2 tsp cumin seeds
2 tsp ground cinnamon
1 fresh green chili, seeded and minced
1 tsp turmeric
1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
1/4 tsp asafoetida
5 tsp salt
4 1/2 cups (1 Litre) warm water
ghee or vegetable oil for deep frying

Soak the split peas overnight in water twice their volume. Then drain them.

Blend the split peas in an electric blender, adding just enough fresh water to make a very thick paste. Scrape the paste into a bowl. Add half of each spice to the paste, along with 1 teaspoon of the salt. Mix well and set aside. Reserve a teaspoon of the remaining salt and dissolve the rest into the warm water. Set the water aside.

Heat the *ghee* in a karai or saucepan over medium heat. Moisten your hands and form the paste into small patties. Fry them in the *ghee*, turning once or twice, until they are nicely browned on all sides. Remove, and let them drain over the *ghee* for a moment. Then drop them into the salted water to soak for at least 15 minutes.

Combine the yogurt with the remaining spices and salt in a bowl. Mix well. After the *baras* have soaked, remove them from the salted water and place them in a serving bowl. Cover them with the spiced yogurt



Peach Cobbler

The Vaishnava Chef

By Chandrasekhara Das

Warming ginger and nutmeg makes this peach cobbler a perfect winter treat.

Ingredients

1 x 800g tin peach slices drained with 1/3 cup of the syrup reserved from the tin
2 1/2 cups self-raising flour
3/4 cup castor sugar
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp ginger powder
1/4 tsp grated nutmeg
3/4 cup milk
1/2 cup flavourless oil (such as sunflower oil)
1 Tbsp vanilla extract (or vanilla essence)

Method

Preheat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius. Grease a 30cm by 20cm baking dish or casserole. Place peach slices on the bottom of the greased baking dish, reserving a few slices for later.

In a bowl, mix together the flour, castor sugar, baking powder, ginger powder, and nutmeg. Add the peach syrup, milk, oil, and vanilla extract, mixing until just combined, taking care not to mix the batter too much. The mixture should still have a lumpy texture.

Spoon the cake mixture evenly on top of the peach slices and top with the reserved peach slices.

Bake in oven at 180 degrees Celsius for 40-45 minutes until cooked and golden brown. Offer to Krishna with love and devotion.

Remembering Her Grace

Gopi-bhava Dasi

1959 – 2017



Her Grace Gopi-bhava Dasi left this world on Saturday 13 May, under the shelter of Sri Sri Radha Radhanath, in the association of devotees, and the loud chanting of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*. We will miss Gopi-bhava, but we rejoice that she is now with her beloved Lordships. The following are tributes from some of her friends.

"I thank Gopi-bhava for grooming me in Krishna consciousness. You were one of the stalwart devotees whom I will forever cherish and keep close to my heart. I remember the early days in Cato Ridge, when you guided and trained me. You taught me how to cook and bake. You prepared the weekly feast with so much love and enthusiasm. Love is in the details. I would help cut vegetables and even in that, you wanted perfection. Each vegetable had to be cut to a specific size.

It was such a pleasure to be with you. We used to stay up all night and you would create the most wonderful feasts. Bindhu Madhava Prabhu, your husband, used to make fresh butter from the cows' milk and from that butter, we would make *ghee*. The devotees used to be so satisfied and happy after your feasts,

that they would just lay down in the *prasada* room.

You maintained your mood of serving the devotees until the end, even though you could not physically serve. You served by instructing the younger generation on how to cook and serve *prasada*. You hosted many devotees' birthdays in your home and gave instructions for huge feasts to be prepared, and low and behold, every preparation was perfect. Everyone was amazed at your ability. I could clearly see that it was Divine intervention. No normal person can do what you have achieved in this lifetime. You are a Vaishnavi in every sense of the word—devotional, kind, and humble.

Gopi-bhava, I will miss your daily call and the *prasada* you used to send with Bindu Madhava. Thank you, Bindu Madhava Prabhu for your selfless service to Gopi-bhava. I also would like to thank Swarup Damodar Prabhu for his care and attention in dealing with Gopi-bhava in her final days. Finally, thank you to Partha Sarathi Maharaja for being there for her." Radha Radhanath Dasi

"I first met Gopi-bhava in 1978. She had come to the Cato Ridge ashram straight from the Tent Campaign late at night. In those days, new recruits would come to the ashram around that time—after the tent campaign. There were not many rooms. The few rooms we had were getting filled daily by the churning of the Tent Campaign led by Partha Sarathi Maharaja. Getting ready for *mangal-arati* was a mission because there were about eight to ten girls in one room with only one bathroom. Gopi was very friendly and enthusiastic and happy to be in the temple.

Those days the temple never bought *bhoga*. A team of ladies would go to the market and get fruit and vegetables donated. Gopi was also part of the "*bhoga* run". Two girls would carry a cardboard box and ask, "Anything for Krishna?"

Gopi-bhava had a unique ability to cook and her cooking captured the hearts of devotees. The highlight of any festival was the elaborate feast she had prepared. Of course, she was the head chef working with a team. She was meticulous about how things were done, from the cutting of the vegetables, or the rolling of *puris*, to the filling of *kachoris*. Gopi-bhava's *prasad* was powerful. Every prep had a specific taste. She was a humble and a dedicated student to Mother Lila, who instructed her on what to cook and how to cook the Vedic way.

There were bus loads of people coming on Sundays for the Love Feast, and Gopi-bhava never felt it was too much to cook for them. Immediately after the Sunday feast cooking, she began working on the

Monday devotee feast. She usually spent time in the kitchen preparing feasts until the wee hours of the morning. At the time, most of the devotees would be traveling to raise funds to build the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple. They would return to the temple every Monday for the much-awaited feast. She was empowered by Srimati Radharani. Her only desire was to serve and please the devotees.

She used to cook for Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurahari and was eager to try out new recipes for Their pleasure. Breakfast and lunch were offered directly to the Deities, so the devotees ate the remnants of the Lord. The evening food offering to the Lord was introduced and Gopi-bhava spent hours preparing it.

Gopi-bhava performed other services too, such as *harinam sankirtan*, book distribution, "Buy a Brick" campaign to raise funds to build the temple, and she also carved candles. Gopi-bhava, Saci Priya and I formed a travelling *sankirtan* team. We once went to Chatsworth and stayed at Gopi-bhava's parent's home. Gopi-bhava made her entire family practice Krishna consciousness and they took such good care of us. In 1979, we went to Johannesburg. Srutadev Prabhu had opened a centre in Hunters Street. It was a dinner programme targeted at white South Africans. Gopi-bhava used to prepare wonderful bread pastries and *subjis* (cooked vegetables). The programme was well attended and the guests appreciated the *prasada*.

In 1983, Bhagavan Das, noticing Gopi-bhava's expertise in cooking, sent her to France to teach the devotees there how to cook. Gopi-bhava's *Matar Dal Bara* recipe (which you will find on page 15) is featured in Adiraja Prabhu's cookbook. He writes, 'This is one of the recipes that have earned Gopi-bhava Dasi the reputation of being the finest cook among the Hare Krishna devotees in South Africa. When visiting devotees taste her cooking, they know that even though they have travelled far, they are still close to home.'

Even though Gopi-bhava has been ill for several years, her mind was focused on cooking for Krishna and serving the Vaishnavas. In spite of being bedridden, she thought of the welfare of devotees and would make arrangements to help a devotee in need. Of course, this was done with the help of Bindu Madhava Prabhu. Gopi-bhava put the needs of the devotees before her own. This, in my opinion, is real devotee care.

I spoke to her the day she went to the hospital, as usual, she enquired about our well being. I told her that we want to have a program with some of the Cato Ridge devotees. She was enthusiastic and

said that when she returns from the hospital on the weekend, we can plan a day. But it was not to be. Thank you Gopi-bhava, for tolerating my childish behaviour during those early years. Thank you, Bindu Madhava Prabhu, for taking such good care of her during her difficult times. She always praised you for that. Also to Radha Radhanatha and others who also constantly served Gopi-bhava." Sri Murti Devi Dasi

"Gopi-bhava was my inspiration in cooking. When I joined, I had no idea how to cook. Creative cooking was her forte. She was a true artist, in the art of cooking. I think she got her direction from Srimati Radharani because I never saw her browsing through books. It was such a great pleasure cooking with her. True to her name, Gopi-bhava, she was like a real gopi and she had an unlimited feeling (bhava) for Krishna. On festival days, she was so enthusiastic that she would cook the devotees' breakfast, lunch, and go on a nonstop creative cooking spree. She would cook all afternoon into the night, even past midnight and into the next morning. I never had that stamina, because I never had that bhakti and bhava. All I can say is that I was her first disciple in the art of creative cooking." Sarvakanthi Devi Dasi

"I can speak about Gopi-bhava from the late eighties when I joined ISKCON. By this time Gopi-bhava's name was legendary, especially her culinary prowess. She had the good fortune of working overseas in France and Italy, honing and developing her cooking skills. She had an analytical mind in terms of her appreciation of expert cooking. If she had praised someone's cooking that was something exceptional. She set high standards. Her doughnuts filled with strawberry jam and fresh cream were out of this world. She always remembered my birthday and I would request her to make those doughnuts.

Sadly, over the years Gopi-bhava's health deteriorated to the point that she had become bedridden. Her doting and dedicated husband, Bindu Madhava, exhibited amazing character by taking care of her in her stricken condition with selfless dedication and sacrifice. She had accepted her situation as Krishna's mercy and saw it as only a matter of time when she would be freed from her suffering. It is her good fortune that she left this world in the presence of devotees hearing the loud melodious sounds of the *maha-mantra*." Jaisacinandana Das

"Besides Gopi-bhava's talent for cooking, one other thing that really stands out for me is how she addressed anyone as 'Prabhu'. She used this honourific term as she considered herself a servant of all devotees. She rarely called anyone by their name, even until the end, she addressed everyone as 'Prabhu'. This is because she truly saw herself as a servant of the devotees." Nikunja Seva Dasi

Event Guide



Ganga Puja
3 June | Saturday



Panihati Cida Dahi Utsava
7 June | Wednesday



Disappearance of
Sri Srivasa Pandita
19 June | Monday



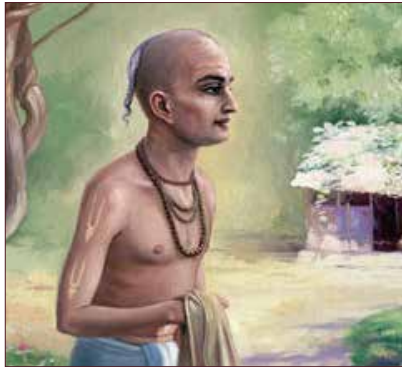
Disappearance of
Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur
24 June | Saturday
Fast until midday



Disappearance of
Sri Gadadhara Pandita
24 June | Saturday



Disappearance of
Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami
14 July | Friday



Guru (Vyasa) Purnima
Disappearance of
Srila Sanatana Gosvami
8 July | Saturday



The incorporation of ISKCON in
New York
18 July | Tuesday

EKADASI

Fast from all grains, beans and legumes.

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

Pandava Nirjala Ekadasi

5 June | Monday

Break fast

6 June | Tuesday | 06:45 - 08:15

Ekadasi

20 June | Tuesday

Break fast

21 June | Wednesday | 06:51 - 10:15

Ekadasi

19 July | Wednesday

Break fast

20 July | Thursday | 06:48 - 10:17

Ekadasi

3 August | Thursday

Break fast

4 August | Friday | 06:38 - 10:14



First month of Chaturmasya

8 July - 6 August

(Fast from green leafy vegetables)



BHAKTI THEATRE

8 July | Saturday | 4pm



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