



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

HARE KRISHNA NEWS

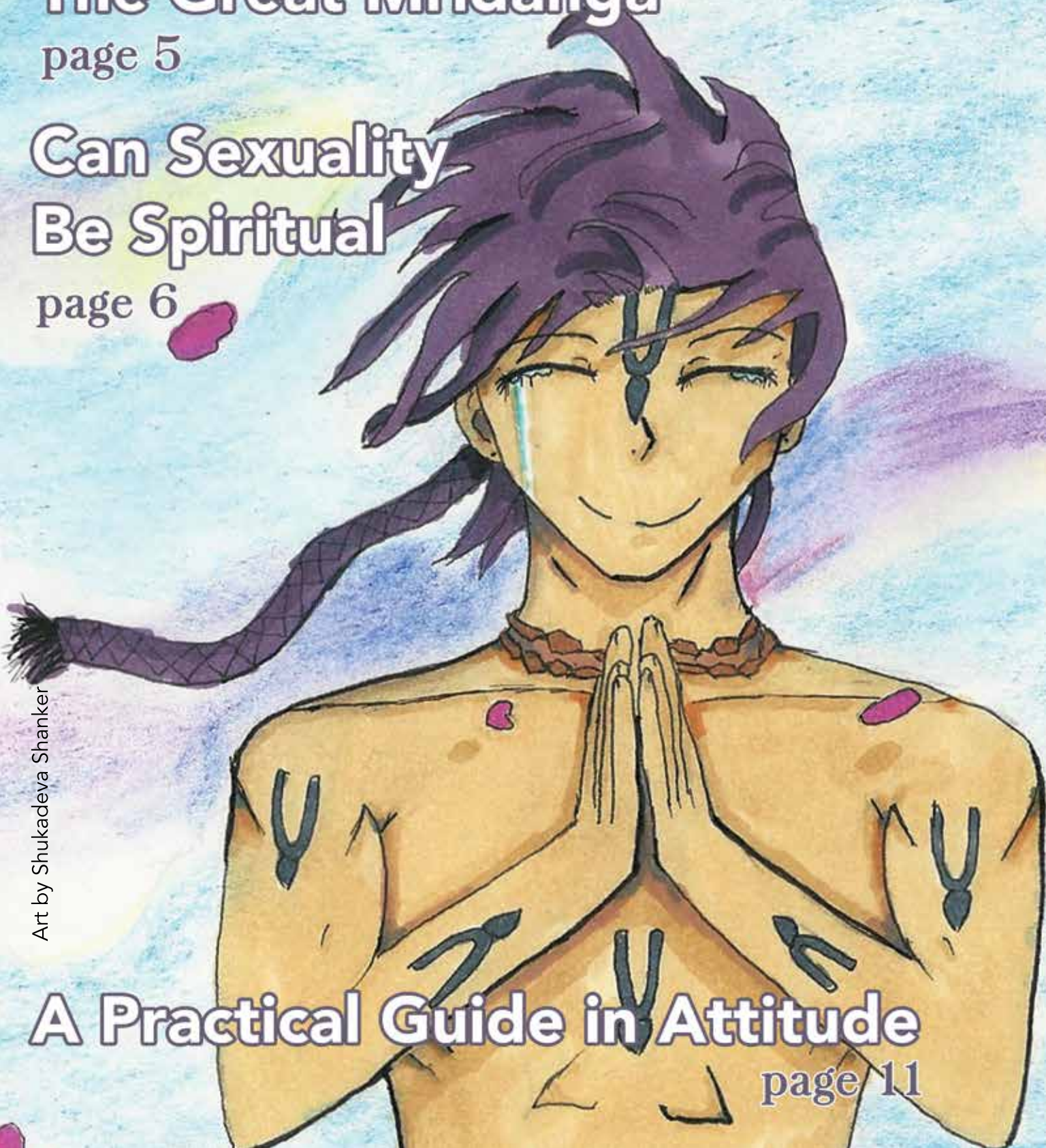
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Editor's Note

When people hear that I am a Hare Krishna, they often ask, "Aren't you not allowed to do..." Why do the first thing people ask Hare Krishnas about is something they are not supposed to do, eat or the like. It is true that all authentic spiritual paths have strict practices. The right question is, "What does such a practice award you?"

First, we need to know and understand God or Krishna's impeccable character. He is the ultimate monarch and divine ruler - Srila Prabhupada described Him as "the supreme autocrat." Krishna is also the ONLY person each of us is 100% compatible with. Krishna is not selfish and is definitely not out to make us suffer. Communing with Him is not an easy thing. And why should it be?

Could you just call up the President and pay him a personal visit? But we think because God is...well God, then He should be at our beck and call and our order supplier. Not so! And if we think like this, it's time we accept that our behaviour is like a spoilt and undeserving child.

Krishna's guidelines or rules, a sort of GPS, help us find our way to Him. When followed we arrive at our destination – His divine lotus feet and to our true authentic selves.

I don't like rules but I certainly do like rhythm. Rules conjure ideas of stuffy, strict and a constrictive environment. Rhythm suggests dance, movement, and flowing to a musical beat. Curiously they are not different.

Like an Olympic athlete in training, we too follow a dedicated program, which is set out by Krishna, and when followed properly and with the right attitude, it becomes the rhythm of the practitioners' lives. In reality, the rules required to reach our goal liberate us from our conditioned thinking and beliefs. It allows us to experience freedom that does not confine us to material standards or limitations.

The key though is how we approach them. Srila Rupa Gosvami explains that we should not follow for the sake of following. Why? It does not bring the desired result – joy and freedom.

When we follow something begrudgingly even in regular life, there is no joy or fulfillment. In spiritual practice, that attitude is contradictory to the goal, which is love. Love cannot flourish in an environment of forced action and a bitter attitude.

The more we pay attention to why we do something the more we can appreciate Krishna's perfect guidelines. And the more authentically we follow those guidelines the more we experience freedom and joy.

As the year draws to a close, take stock of the year past and look to the year coming; recalibrate if necessary but start to love your *sadhana* (spiritual practice) for ultimate freedom.

To conscious devotion!

Warm regards

Rasa-sthali Dasi

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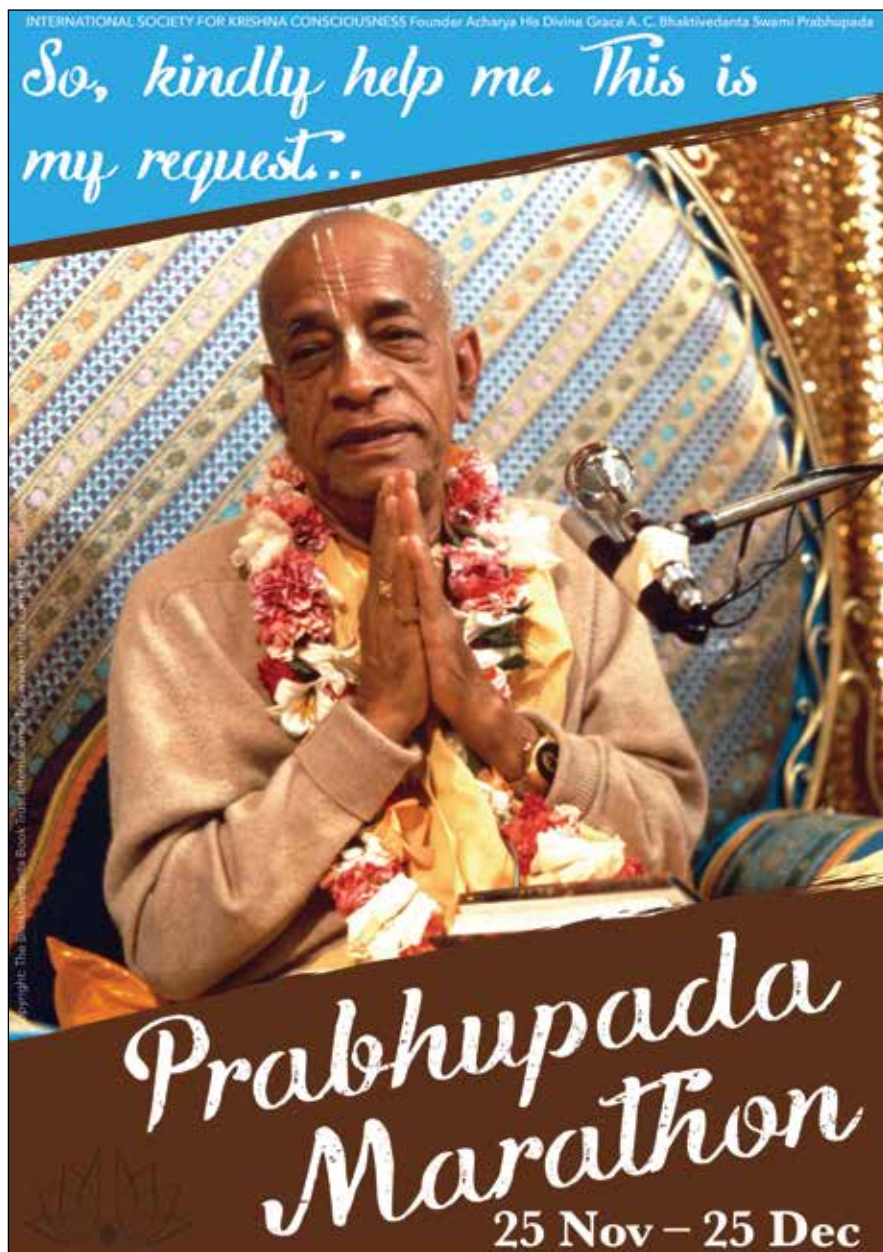
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The Best Day of Your Devotional Life

Message from the
Temple President
Vibhu Chaitanya Das

Srila Prabhupada described that simply thinking of book distribution is liberation, so what to speak of actually distributing his books? Srila Prabhupada's books give people hope in a world which is full of agony, caused by other living entities, natural disasters, and ourselves. His books give permanent solutions to our challenges that cannot be found in this world. They are the law books for his followers and can guide anyone from the shackles of ignorance to developing pure love of Godhead in just one lifetime. So by distributing them, which nourishes the souls of those who receive them, we assist Srila Prabhupada in his mission of helping souls, and we give Krishna far more pleasure. Therefore, it's no secret that Srila Prabhupada gives special blessings to those devotees who endeavor to distribute his books. The Prabhupada Marathon, which is the last festival of the year, is the ideal time for devotees to get the mercy of Krishna and His pure devotee.

For those devotees who have not experienced book distribution, we are inviting you to pledge a minimum of one day of book distribution, which may be the best day of your devotional life.



Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

The following poem is an appreciation for the Ganges and the spiritual master as both purify and uplift the consciousness and bring everyone closer to the Supreme. "My Lord, devotees like your good self are verily holy places personified. Because you carry the Personality of Godhead within your heart, you turn all places into places of pilgrimage." *Bhag 1.13.10*

Ganga

Leaving the mountain to fulfill your destiny
To bless and purify all of humanity
Flowing on with all your might
You meet pilgrims and ease their plight

Swaying through villages and towns
Your mercy has no bounds

Accepting your own water as an offering
Clearing the burdens and the suffering

For the fortunate who stop to listen
They hear your heart beat — a constant chant
In rhythm and in sync
with endless time and boundless space

That's when the soul and you connect
And pause for a sacred embrace
The soul and you forever interlinked

Warm Regards

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Most Wanted

Living With Srila Prabhupada

By Shaunaka Muni Das

It is no stranger to thoughtful society that man is a spiritual being yet consistently tries to satiate his spiritual needs with temporal commodities. In his book *Pensées*, the Christian philosopher Blaise Pascal writes, "...he tries in vain to fill with everything around him... though none can help..."

Since time immemorial, this has been mankind's quest — a quest that is often met with frustration and disappointment by failed numen-replicas trying to imitate God in everything we do.

The reunion of the soul and God is not cheap, it is an intimate and personal journey.

Vedic logic teaches that the soul is undying, fully cognizant, and blissful in nature, but like a fish out of water, it is entrapped in a material body and in a foreign realm, experiencing the opposite of its nature. Ancient wisdom, therefore, advises that the soul reunite with its true nature and God. Srila Prabhupada describes in the *Bhagavad-gita* (2.60, purport) that the process of reunion with God is as fulfilling as a hungry man becoming satisfied by a sufficient quantity of nutritious eatables.

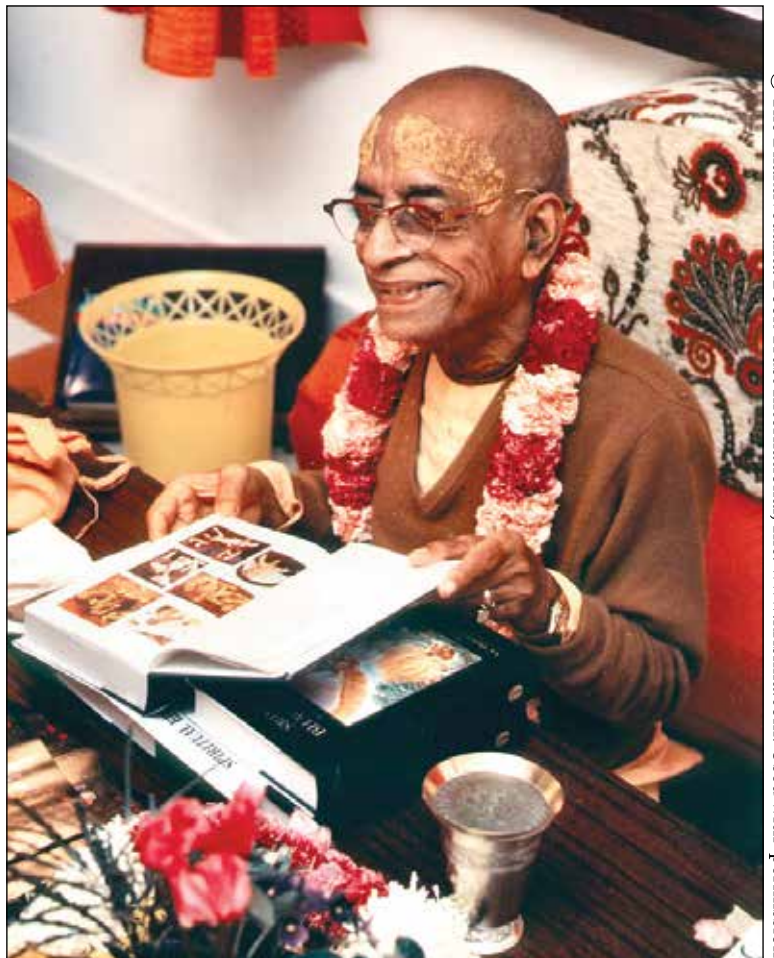
The natural purpose of the individual soul is the performance of loving devotional service because the soul is eternally an associate of God, *jivera 'svarupa' haya — krsnera 'nitya-dasa'* (Cc *Madhya Lila* 20.108). A hand is of great assistance to the service of the body, but as soon it is cut off, it loses its use and value. Similarly, Srila Prabhupada stressed that when the individual soul is involved in devotional activity, life becomes blissful and perfect in all respects, but when it is separate from God, it becomes miserable and loses value.

However, the reunion of the soul and God is not cheap; it is an intimate and personal journey. Just as a guide is needed for every successful journey, Krishna advises that to return our consciousness back to its original state, we should approach a spiritual guide, an expert of higher consciousness, "...for they have seen the truth" (*Bg.* 4.34).

On a morning walk in Bombay, Srila Prabhupada and his followers saw two dirty and emaciated stray dogs fighting each other. Srila Prabhupada commented that the life of the dog who is without a master is often reckless, agitated, and unfortunate. But a dog who has a master has everything. It is clean, well-fed, beautiful, trained, and satisfied in its existence. Similarly, the seeker who has not

taken shelter of a qualified guru is like a stray dog; his journey will be precarious. But the seeker who has taken shelter of a qualified guru receives guidance and nourishment on his journey.

Srila Prabhupada exemplified this through his own life. He accepted shelter of a spiritual master who came from an ancient line of spiritual teachers. He made his guru's instruction the goal of his life by coming to the West and propagating the science of Krishna consciousness. In his books, he emphasized that without a teacher we cannot approach God nor can we return to the spiritual realm. The teacher is never separated from the spiritual realm, which permeates unlimited love for God. Therefore, through his guidance, we are afforded the elusive opportunity to enter into that realm. Through Prabhupada's example, we learn how important it is to also bring others closer to their natural position as eternal servants of God. In an act of gratitude and to please the spiritual master, we can perform various spiritual welfare activities. One such activity is distributing Srila Prabhupada's books to humanity. Srila Prabhupada's books reveal our true want and real identity. As Pascal wrote, "...this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words, by God Himself."



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The Great Mridanga

2017 Prabhupada Marathon

Message from His Holiness Giriraj Swami

I am pleased to encourage you to participate in the Prabhupada book-distribution marathon. Srila Prabhupada explains, "Srila Rupa Gosvami and Sanatana Gosvami had no fixed residence. They stayed beneath a tree for one day only and wrote huge volumes of transcendental literature. . . . It is certainly not good to write literature for money or reputation, but to write books and publish them for the enlightenment of the general populace is real service to the Lord. That was Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's opinion, and he specifically told his disciples to write books." (Cc *Madhya* 19.132 purport)

This is *parampara*. Srila Rupa Gosvami and Sanatana Gosvami and all the Gosvamis wrote books for the enlightenment of the general populace, and that instruction and practice came down through *parampara* to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, who wrote many books and instructed his disciples to write books. And Srila Prabhupada faithfully followed those instructions and also wrote many books. In fact, it is inconceivable that anyone could write so many books in such a short time.

Srila Prabhupada came to America in 1965, and from the very beginning in New York City he was selling his books. Years later, when devotees were doing research about Prabhupada's life, they went to some bookstores where he had sold his books, and the shopkeepers remembered, "Oh yes, a very nice Indian gentleman came, and he would always give us samosas." He would give them samosas when he went to sell them his books.

Prabhupada said that from the very beginning the basis of his movement was book distribution—the publication and distribution of books—and he showed that example.

In the same purport, Prabhupada explains further, "[T]he business of advanced and empowered devotees is to write books, publish them, and distribute them widely."

Prabhupada wrote books, the BBT has published them, and now it is for us to distribute them. This is "the business of advanced and empowered devotees." We are all already connected to Srila Prabhupada, and we all will benefit when we distribute his books. And if you persevere with sincerity and intelligence, you will also be advanced and empowered devotees.

Prabhupada states further, "According to Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, distributing literature is like playing on a great *mridanga* [type of traditional Indian drum]." He called the printing press the *brihat-mridanga*, the great mridanga, because an ordinary *mridanga* can be heard for a few blocks whereas the *brihat-mridanga*, the printing press, the books, can be heard all over the world.

I was the first ISKCON devotee to go to West Africa, Nigeria. I did *hari-nama* on the streets, and large crowds of people would gather round. Some well-dressed Africans started speaking about the *Bhagavad-gita* and the philosophy of Krishna consciousness, and I asked, "How do you know all these things? Did you ever meet devotees?" They replied, "No. But we have a friend who met devotees on the street in London, bought some books from them, and then shared them with us." Even before any devotees had gone to West Africa, Prabhupada's books had reached there and people were learning about Krishna consciousness.

Sometimes a whole *yatra* can begin just from books. Once, a tourist from Venezuela visited Israel, met devotees, and got some books from them. Back in Venezuela, he shared the books with his friends. They all started reading, became convinced of the philosophy, began to chant, and started practicing Krishna consciousness without having met any devotees. Eventually they developed a community of devotees and invited Srila Prabhupada, and he went—and it all began with the books.

The *brihat-mridanga* can be heard all over the world. Srila Prabhupada concludes his purport with a request to all of us: "Consequently we always request members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness to publish as many books as possible and distribute them widely throughout the world. By thus following in the footsteps of Srila Rupa Gosvami, one can become a *rupanuga* devotee."

Rupa Gosvami is described as *sri-caitanya-mano-bhistam, sthapitam yena bhu-tale*: he established on earth the mission to fulfill the desire of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. And that is done primarily through writing, publishing, and distributing books.

Srila Prabhupada said, "It's like a train." In a train, one car pushes—or pulls—the other, the other pushes another, and the other pushes still another. He said, "My Guru Maharaja is pushing me, and I am pushing all of you."

Hare Krishna. Your servant,
Giriraj Swami

*It is inconceivable
that anyone could
write so many books
in such a short time.*

Can Sexuality Be Spiritual?

Principles of Freedom

By Rukmini Devi Dasi

"What's the big deal about sex?" asked a student, "Why does religion demonize what seems to be a natural human expression? How can we expect the world to imbibe such a restrictive philosophy? Is it not harmful to our physical and psychological development if we exert such repression? Is sex not a spiritual experience?"

A Bhakti Yoga session at university can sometimes feel like a battlefield. Our theme for the month, "Spirituality and Sexuality" had really stirred the arsenal. Honesty is usually the best ammunition yielding a thoughtful approach towards sacred texts and a broader vision of the world and ourselves. With this in mind, we approach the last principle of freedom: avoiding destructive sexual activity.

Does spirituality deny sexuality?

No! On the contrary, Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita* 7.11: *kamo smi bharatarsabha* — "I am sex life which is not contrary to religious principles." If anything, the Vedas is one of the few avenues that places sexuality in its proper spectrum. The world is oversexed. Have you noticed? From an attractive woman smiling on your toothpaste box to an accented Frenchman offering free trials for hair care products in a local mall. Sexual allurements are on every billboard, advert, and brand — even a popular decadent ice-cream is trademarked as "Lust."

Whilst vividly endorsing sexuality, modern culture simultaneously hides it. Sex is portrayed as the dark and secret pleasure meant to entice. In Vedic culture, however, a couple joyously and openly ask for the blessings of mentors and friends prior to trying to conceive a child. It's no secret, and yet it is not advertised. It is a respectful approach as one would adopt with anything sacred.

What is sacred sexuality?

When Krishna speaks of sexuality according to religious principles, what is He referring to? The *Manu Samhita* explains that sexual activity is licensed to married couples for the prime purpose of conceiving a child. Usually, this statement evokes shocked expressions of, "Are you for real?" Hold off judgement for a moment, and let's take a discerning look at how this principle is freeing.

What lies behind sexual desire? It is obviously part of the natural scheme of things together with the basic needs for food, shelter, and companionship. How else would we live and populate? Yet these instincts, essential for our survival, often far exceed their proper functions. Powerfully, blindly, and many times subtly, they drive and dominate us and can insist upon ruling our lives. And when out of sync, man's natural desires can cause him great trouble.

Does sex mean marriage?

The sexual attraction between two people is natural and just as natural is the subsequent result: children. To say sex is natural but to unnaturally deny conception is hypocritical. The sacred expression of sexuality is protected when there is a long-term commitment, marriage. Within the forte of a family, sexual desire is expressed with responsibility. All members have their contribution to emotional, mental, physical, financial, and definitely spiritual wellbeing. Irresponsible expression of sexuality leaves some, if not all, of the above areas lacking, creating a society that is chaotic and very much unfree.

When Krishna speaks of sexuality according to religious principles, what is He referring to?

I thought that this concept was archaic until it became evident how the irresponsible expression of sexuality had caged my society. I could see it in the phenomenal number of single girls, fighting to get through campus

and provide for the two children they conceived as teenagers and who are fast growing up without them. Does either the child or the parents feel free and cared for?

Sex is natural. And children are its natural fruit. Marriage provides the proper soil for such fruit to germinate organically and holistically.

When we are intent on expressing our sexuality but find marriage a stifling idea and are unwilling to accept commitment and responsibility, be wary — our desires are out of joint. And who doesn't sometimes feel this way? It is second nature for us to opt for the "discounted deal." Yet it is the very act of marriage (that makes us less self-centered) and having children (who instill deep levels of sacrifice) that free us from selfishness. In this way, sex can free us from lust.

When is sexuality destructive?

On the other hand, our world is rampant with "lust cures" that perpetuate selfishness. Sigmund Freud famously compared sexual repression to a pressure

cooker. His solution was to “let out the steam” to be mentally healthy. On the Oprah show, thirteen-year-old girls were encouraged to masturbate to get their sexual fix and not succumb to the self-demeaning oral favours demanded by male classmates. Young men are taught, subtly and not so subtly, that this is what it means to be a man. An incremental number of people are now dealing with sexual addictions from pornography, to prostitution, to serial relationships and extramarital affairs — all of which makes these people increasingly lonely, distant, socially awkward, and in search of a new (more interesting and more bizarre) hit. The health risks are common knowledge.

This is destructive sexuality. After all, to do it just because I feel the need to do it is also the validation of the rapist. Simply put, we are at a loss in understanding how to deal with sexual energy.

Understanding the spiritual science behind sexuality

The *Bhagavad-gita* elucidates that when spiritual beings contact the material realm, they become polluted by lust or selfishness. Lust is our drive for pleasure that takes precedence over people, better judgement, and the natural order of things. When that desire is frustrated it transforms into anger. We then lose our sense of discernment and act in destructive ways.

To deal with sexual energy, we don't need to resort to artificial repression or the antithesis — that wild release of sexual tension. We do need to search for spiritual solutions, the first being knowledge. We won't die if we don't do exactly as we feel like in this moment. We need to understand why we act the way we do and what is behind our desire. We need a clear perspective of life, and its purpose — a goal beyond the physical plane. The Vedic school of thought explains that we try to fill the lack in our relationship with the Supreme through unsatisfying and temporary replacements of this world.

With knowledge, practice is essential. This is a step often bypassed by many who accept the existence of God but fail to invoke His presence into all areas of life at all times, especially in the heated moment when we are dealing with disjointed desires. At these times we can pray. This is surrender. It is not just reciting words or pretty verses.

To transform our selfishness into Supreme Love is a process. Part of that

process is to invest our energy in positive projects that are in line with Krishna's will. Because love is a verb and we show it by our deeds, we can adopt actions of devotion. Channeling our energy in such a way is highly effective, such that some opt for a life of celibacy — with documented benefits (known as *urdva reta*) in health, creativity, and mental ability, let alone the opportunity for the spiritual growth it brings. Others opt for marriage, seeking a relationship with an enlightened partner that goes beyond externals, and embracing the sacrifice. Both paths, when thoughtfully and honestly executed, aim at diminishing selfishness and developing love — the true constitution of freedom.

The process alongside the principles

This year we have covered the four principles of freedom: a compassionate vegetarian diet, physical and mental freedom from intoxicants, the truthful approach in a non-gambling mentality, and avoiding destructive sexual activity.

In making the transition of acquiring these principles in my own life, I am well aware of two things: it brings a freedom I have never tasted before, and it is not easy. For those in the process of adopting these principles, and maybe struggling with them, I applaud your zeal. I would also humbly suggest that you invite kind-hearted and broad-minded practitioners to assist you. With honesty and friendship, this journey is sure to help you become the best version of yourself.



ISKCON Pietermaritzburg

Sri Sri Dayal-Nitai G



Temple Schedule

Love Feast every Sunday @11am

Monday – Sunday

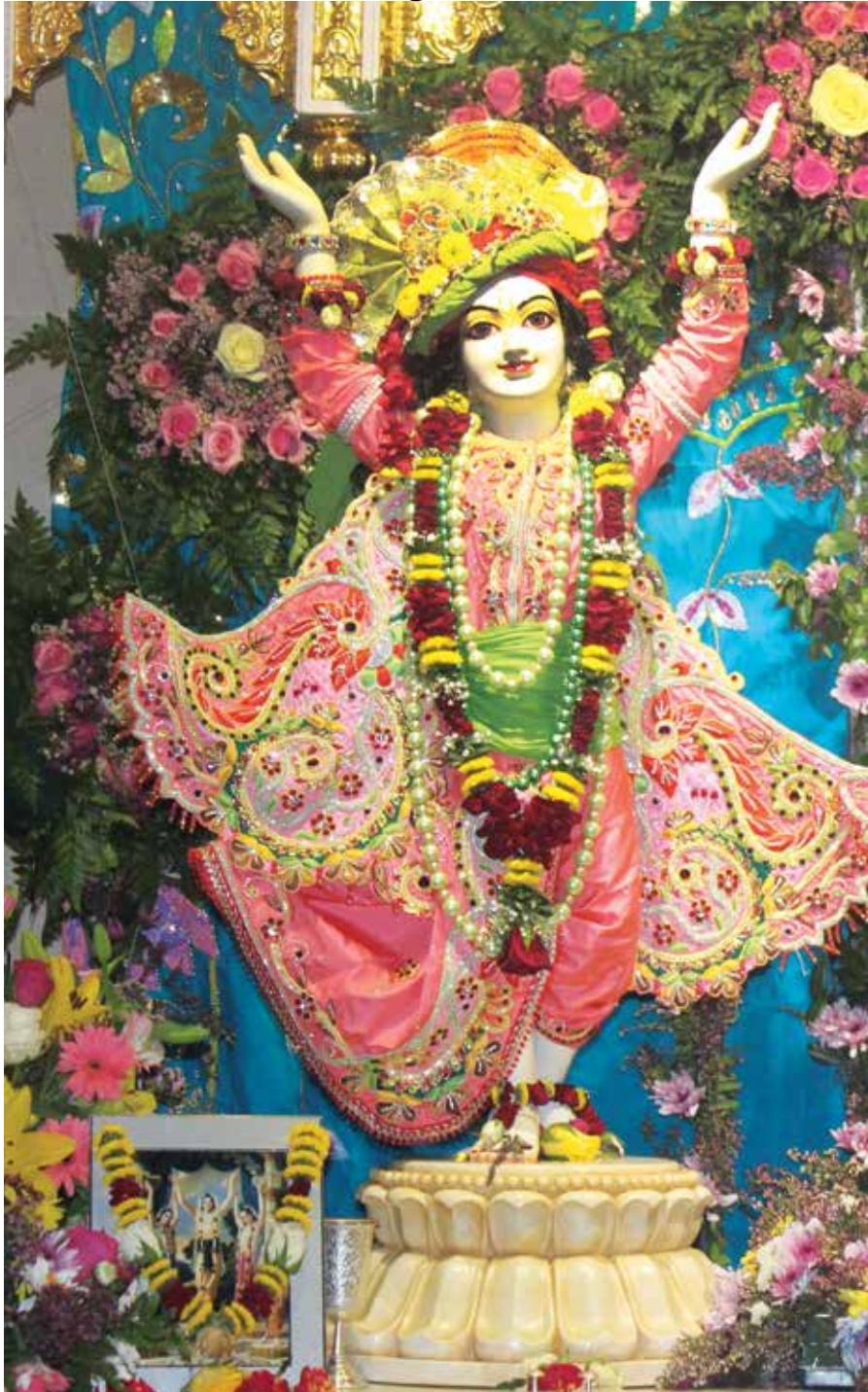
4:30am Mangal arati

6:30am Greeting of deities

6:45pm Srila Prabhupada Gurupuja

7:00pm Sandhya Arati

Temple is open for *darshan* all day.
The Gift Shop is open during the Love
Feast only. Items include devotional
paraphernalia, apparel, and books.

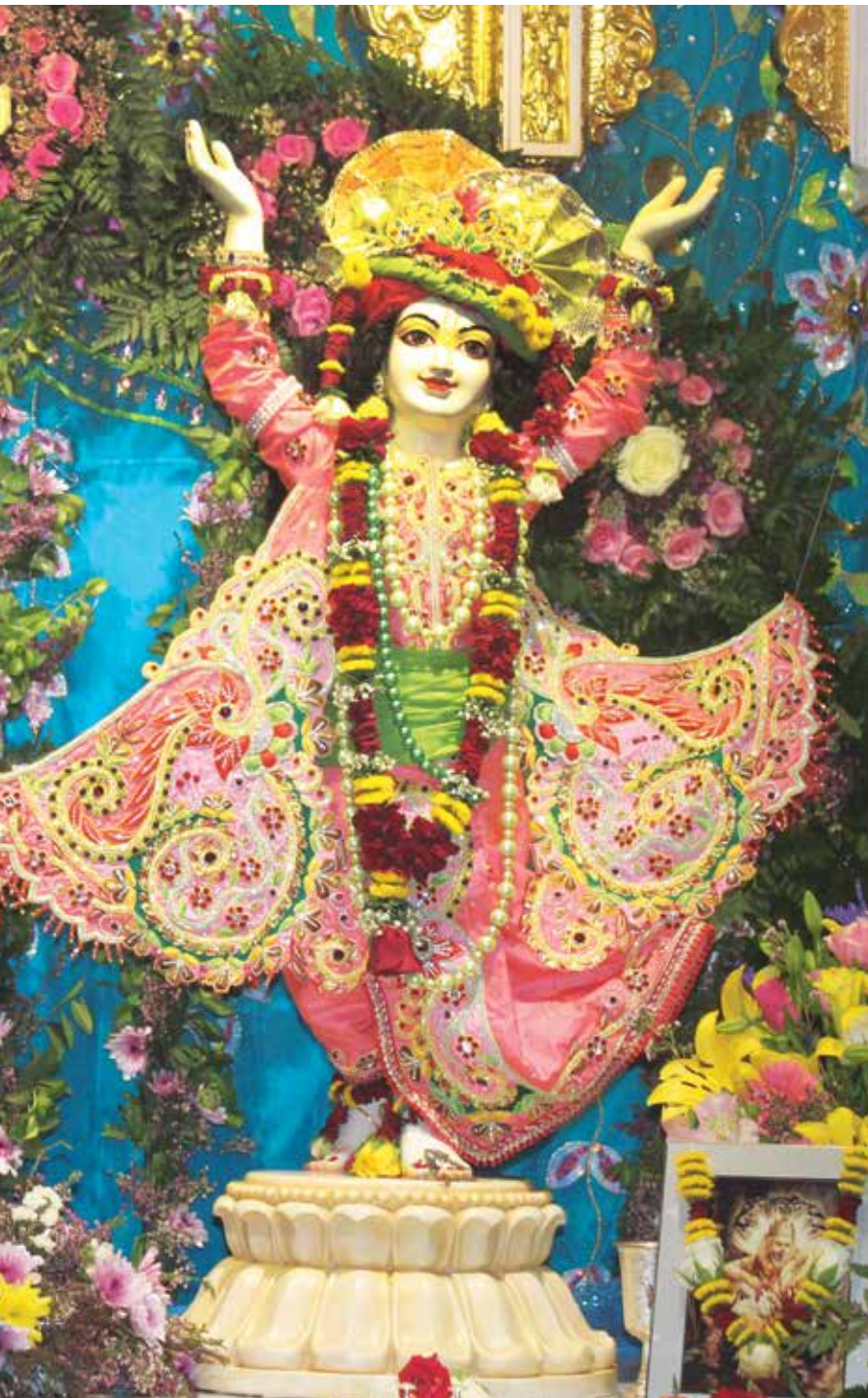


"The community had waited almost 22 years for this temple to open. It had a wonderful energy. Many guests were not a part of the Movement, but they had sparked within them, and this was something that stood out to many. From different religions of our community members, many had come out to participate, learned, intermingled, and ate together. The festival was basically there to remind the community of the unity in their diversity. Initially, it was there to attract me. It was an opportunity of a lifetime; I kept thinking that I wanted to have an experience like this again. I thoroughly enjoyed the plays and the music. The most I enjoyed the most was the feeling of being charged up. It is unexpected that attending the festival I felt so much lighter and happier." K. Gayadiri



Pietermaritzburg Temple Opening

Gaurahari have come!



The temple opening event, however, interest me. Irrespective of the lack of curiosity, prayed, the perfect occasion to witness the Deity unveiling that I may never be a part of. But what an incredible experience. But what an incredible experience. But what an incredible experience. But what an incredible experience.



"A poignant and mystical event full of fire sacrifices, the chanting of mantras, colourfully clad *pujaris*, and of course the most exquisite Gaura Nitai deities arriving." Rasamrita Dasi

"Being able to admire the glory of the Deities in such an extravagant and radiant altar was definitely a highlight." Milan Hamichan

"The Deity Installation ceremony was the major highlight for me. I've never witnessed this ceremony before, and I felt blessed to bear witness to this magnificent spectacle. The *arati* ceremony at the end, after the Deity Installation, was breathtakingly beautiful. The Deities appearing in all Their splendour was a sight to behold!" S. Rampersadh



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ISKCON PIETERMARITZBURG

The Reality of Dreaming

Devotional Psychology

By Ananta Gauranga Das

You aborted your hopes of becoming an afonaut; though lying on the beach drinking a beer, is sort of like floating through space. A dream come true?

People are addicted to the folly of dead dreams, that which yield no spiritual result and give fleeting pleasure. The dream of happiness in this realm is just that — a dream. Yet our eternal reality awaits; all we have to do is slay the monsters of madness, which reside not under our bed but beneath the blanket of our mind.

We have already discussed the mind, material enjoyment and their toxic attraction to one another. This article focuses on how to repel unhealthy bonds of attraction, based on understanding the psychology of *bhakti-yoga*.

The psychology of *bhakti* pivots on nurturing the mood of pure devotional service, which entails a

cultivation of emotions. Emotions act as an adhesive for the mind's attachment and via the process of *bhakti*, the mind becomes "stuck on" God. In psychological terms, an emotional response is derived from the *affective* side of the mind. The word *affective* means a mental state of aroused emotions, like the state of affection Donald Trump has for ... Donald Trump. The mind is also constituted of a *cognitive* or rational/thinking side and a *conative* or active willing side. Of the thinking, willing, and feeling aspects of the mind, *affective* (emotions/feelings) are chief — *cognition* and *conation* are subservient.

*"Paradise isn't a place,
it's a state of mind."*

All truly wholesome and harmonious emotions culminate in love. *Bhakti* deflects the mind's love for

deadening mundane dreams to the Supreme Reality. As the *affective* side of the mind holds sway over the thinking and active feature, the purifying effect of *bhakti* on the *affective* side is of paramount importance. But *bhakti* can enchant all mental functioning; it's not solely an affair of the heart.

Bhakti is at the pinnacle of the yoga ladder as it amalgamates all aspects of the mind. One's cognition is fully engaged with reading spiritual literature, planning of festivals, and other such activities for the pleasure of God. In pursuance of this, *bhakti* brings discrimination and integrity to the cognitive side. Meditation, singing, dancing, spiritual literature, and food distribution appeals to the active side of the mind. This results in the conative part of the mind becoming purified by right action, spiritual practice and spiritual welfare work. And serving God in His Deity form — cooking, dressing, or monetary contributions for His daily services — creates an emotional link between the practitioner and the Supreme Person. This slowly instills in the affective side of the mind a resolute yearning for God and nothing else. As a result, other ideal emotional states are brought forward: a well-wishing attitude to all living beings (compassion), nonviolence, and joyfulness. *Bhakti* brings to all three parts of the mind a holistic and practical means of surrender to the all-attractive Absolute Truth.

Paradise isn't a place, it's a state of mind. The trouble is we spend our days looking for that place. That place where dreams truly come true resides neither in heaven nor in hell, but within you. *Bhakti-yoga* connects all aspects of psychology (head and heart), transforming the nightmare of material existence into eternal reality. Seize the day, live in the now, and rise to the reality devotion brings — an awakening of your love Supreme.



Limitations Challenged

By Byron Kyle

I was reluctant to continue writing for Hare Krishna News. I am a simple *bhakta*. I am not initiated and do not have the title Das to my name. I was feeling defeated and unworthy. My *sadhana* (spiritual practice) is not as I would like it to be, and I still cling to behaviours I see as unfavourable to spiritual practice. The impressions on my heart formed by many lifetimes of material contact seem too deeply ingrained to ever be purified. When confessing these feelings, I was reminded that a service like writing would help in my own purification. What I decided to do next has helped me to overcome my limitations.

We can choose the attitude with which we approach anything...

I agreed to write. Prabhupada was always in the habit of encouraging devotees, being merciful, and offering kind words when they needed, and also cracking the whip when they needed reform. He had an uncanny ability to know when a devotee needed some tough love or a gentle nudge in the right direction. Prabhupada was a master at changing perceptions, which included changing devotees' perceptions about themselves.

I realised what I needed was a shift in perception. Of course, we need to adhere to our moral principles, which is the first requirement, but I realised that the content of our lives is often not as important as the context. Anything can either be performed joyfully or miserably. We can choose the attitude with which we approach anything, including our devotional service.

In the book *The Journey Home* Radhanath Swami says, "If we identify with the mind, we subject ourselves to (all these) shifting emotional states." I realised that my devotional service had turned into something material. By feeling unworthy and defeated, I was identifying with the mind. I had taken on self-limiting beliefs and no longer saw myself as the spirit soul which is, "...Invisible,

inconceivable and immutable." (Bg 2.25). While it is good and healthy to experience shame, I realised that my shame had become toxic and was preventing me from discharging my duties with the correct attitude.

It was then I also realised that I needed to show myself a little bit of mercy. While we uncover this jewel of the soul, which is perfect, we should not be surprised that our hands will get soiled with the muck that surrounds it. Behaviour change takes time, discipline, patience, and dedication. Albert Einstein said that we cannot change our problems with the same thinking we used to create them. Many of the problems I encountered came from flawed thinking, and as soon as the thinking was changed, perceptions shifted and the problems were no longer so great.

Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gita* (7.8) that He is the ability in man. The ability to perform our devotional service naturally lies within us. And our most satisfying relationship is our relationship with the Supreme. Krishna enjoys being overwhelmed by the love of his pure-hearted devotees. So when we perform service, it is futile to start with the mental gymnastics of self-deprecating thought. Instead of thinking our service should be a certain way, rather start with what Krishna might feel. Yes, there are guidelines we need to follow, but for too long I was saying that I must be a certain way in order to perform devotional service. Identifying with the mind and trying to be a certain way was preventing me from performing any devotional service at all.

I now see my service as to encourage others. I can do little myself and know that I am flawed, and I know the burden of a guilty mind. So

I'd like to share my own little prayer I begin my service with, "My dear Lord, I come before you fallible and imperfect to offer you this service. I'll try my best and hope that you may one day make me perfect. May it be to the greatest benefit of You, myself and the others whom I serve." Hare Krishna Dear Devotees, may your service to our dear Lord be blissful.



A Practical Guide in Attitude

Marriage Matters

By Mahatma Das

Becoming the Right Person

Succeeding in marriage is less about finding the right person and more about becoming the right person. Why? Because you affect those around you.

A man once arrived at a new town and asked the local sage, "I'm thinking about moving here. What kind of people live here?" The sage asked the man, "What kind of people live in the town you came from?"

"Where I'm from the people are liars, cheaters, and mean-spirited," the man responded.

"The people are the same here," said the sage.

Another man came to town and asked the sage the same question. The sage asked the man, "What kind of people live in the town you came from?"

"Where I'm from the people are wonderful, kind, and courteous," the man responded.

"The people are the same here," responded the sage.

The point is:

We are not just an objective observer of the people in our life; we're a subjective influence on them.

In other words, our presence changes people and thus changes what we observe. Your relationship is not simply a function of who you pick; it's also a function of who you are. Would your spouse be a better or happier person married to someone else? It is painful to admit this could be true. Okay, your spouse may be contributing to bad dynamics, but you play a role as well. I've never seen a marital situation caused only by one spouse. What can you do to improve the situation? One of the easiest ways to know what changes to make, and probably the most overlooked, is simply to ask your spouse how to be a better partner. This helps avoiding quick fixes.



Quick Fixes

When a person learns that their husband or wife doesn't "love" them anymore, they usually try to find a fix for their problem. The same is true for couples trying to resolve serious differences before it's too late. Many people go online and search for THE answer. But finding a solution to your marriage problems is not like finding a solution to a financial problem. You can't just click, get a loan, and have an instant solution.

Would your spouse be a better or happier person married to someone else?

Today people are into quick fixes. But you can't "microwave" a relationship. Relationships work according to the law of the harvest. In the spring time you plant. Then you water and fertilize all summer long. And, of course, you wait. Then you harvest the crop. Relationships are similar. They take time to grow and improve. But most people look for short-cuts. Today everything is about efficiency. Efficiency works with machines, business, and finances. But efficiency does not work with relationships. Relationships, like crops, are governed by the natural laws of the universe. If you skip a step, you'll short-circuit the process and slow yourself down. Taking time, going step-by-step is how you improve a

The point is:

The only way you can change your marriage is to change yourself. You've got to become the man or woman that your spouse would want to be married to. You have to learn what your spouse wants in a marriage. And you need to learn how to implement relationship habits so that you can offer them what they want consistently. A good place to start is by watching your speech.

There is a nursery rhyme that goes like this: "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me." But the fact is that words do hurt. Words do more damage than breaking bones; they break hearts.

In frustration or anger people say stupid things and use obscene language. Even if you or your spouse didn't mean to say it, once it's said, the damage is done. That's why it's so important for spouses to learn to control themselves and watch what they say.

The point is:

The most common request married couples have is that they just want their spouse to be nice to

them. Can we not learn to be nice to the very person we vowed to serve and protect? It sounds simple, but it is often a challenge. Of course, a devotee is meant not only to be nice to family but to be nice to everyone. And more than nice, we are meant to be compassionate. Isn't it an irony that we are sometimes challenged to speak nicely to our spouses?

We need to learn how to:

1. Express our feelings in a healthy way.
2. Say what's on our mind without destroying our spouse.
3. Understand what it means to be honest with our spouse.
4. Control destructive impulses.
5. Listen so our spouse will talk.
6. Talk so our spouse will listen.

You Can Be Right or You Can Be Happy

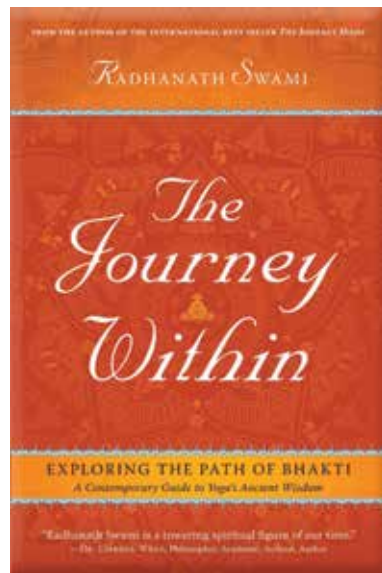
In a courtroom, a hospital, or an office, right and wrong determine success or failure. The decision to prescribe the right medicine, for example, could be the difference between life and death. The relationship between the doctor and the patient is secondary. Being right is what matters. But in marriage, being right has no value. All that matters is the relationship. Sometimes you have to choose whether you want to be right or you want to be happily married. Just because your right/wrong paradigm works at the office doesn't mean you should bring it home. "He who is a hammer thinks everything is a nail." Some things work perfectly in one area of life and fail terribly in another. In marriage, you have to be like a carpenter and know which tool to use. The right/wrong mode is the wrong tool to use in your marriage.

The point is:

The more you insist on being right, the more you will be miserable in your marriage. Don't go for right; go for relationship.

IQ is a measure of your intellectual intelligence. The higher your IQ, the better your ability to process information and determine what's "right." EQ is a measure of your emotional intelligence. The higher your EQ, the better your ability to connect with people and succeed in relationships. Just as some athletes are strong but not fast, many people have a high IQ but a low EQ. In fact, a high IQ coupled with a low EQ can be a disastrous combination for a marriage. Anyone can increase their EQ and learn to make their marriage right.

So remember, the most important thing is the relationship. And if you have a good relationship, then you are right.



The Journey Within

By Radhanath Swami
Published by
Mandala

Review
By Byron Kyle

Available at the
temple.
R310

Radhanath Swami's words effortlessly flow off the page. I love how accessible his writing is to people of all faiths. A favourite school teacher of mine used to say, "My function as a teacher is to draw upon a well of knowledge and convey a bucket in the hope that you absorb a teaspoon." Drawing upon a wealth of experience from his own life, the lives of others, and sacred texts from all traditions, Radhanath Swami has taken the timeless wisdom of *bhakti* and distilled its essence. *The Journey Within* has become for me a fountain of nectar from which I can quench the thirst of my soul.

Written plainly, *The Journey Within* is a manual for those outside or new to the tradition of *bhakti*. Its simplicity does not detract from its poignancy, and by reading it, I felt a call to discernment. The message is so inviting and presented in such a humble manner that it was easy for me to leave my personal bias at the door and imbibe the wisdom on offer. It really excites me that this book has the potential for a wide audience.

I have no idea whether it was Radhanath Swami's intention to reach so many people, but it is easy to understand that he is a true servant of God because what he writes transcends culture and creed. He writes, "Spiritual practice begins with a healthy engagement of the mind." I can see how a genuine examination of our own perceptions will lead to greater harmony between people's holding apparently contradictory theological views.

This is a book I have recommended to friends and family both theistic and atheistic and those vehemently opposed to any theology differing from their own. The response I have received has been marvellous. Love changes perceptions, and I encourage you to first read this book and then spread this message of love contained in Radhanath Swami's words. It is in giving that we receive, and I testify having been nourished by passing on this wisdom to others.



The Peacocks' Love

For the Kids

By Mala Rampershad

Animals and plants can be devotees of Krishna too. Krishna can speak the language of all birds and beasts and would often have conversations with the various forest animals. Once, some peacocks approached Krishna and requested, "Please make us dance!" Krishna obliged them and began playing on His flute. The sweet musical notes led to the peacocks unfurling their colourful feathers and dancing joyfully in rhythm to His tune. Such was their love for Him that they danced in a circle around Him, making Him the centre of attention. Their tails fanned out and formed a cloud of swirling colours.

The doves, deer, and other birds and animals made their way to the top of the hill to view the spectacle. Some remained frozen in their tracks unable to tear their eyes away from Krishna dancing with the peacocks. The dance continued until the peacocks had to stop due to exhaustion. To show their gratitude to Krishna, they offered Him their feathers. Krishna accepted their pure love for Him and took the feathers and set it in His turban. Srila Prabhupada said that Krishna wears a peacock feather because Krishna likes it.

We can learn from the peacocks' devotion: just as they kept Krishna in the centre of their dancing, we too can keep Krishna at the centre of all our activities. Their simple offerings of their feathers were accepted by Krishna. In the same way, any offering, however small, when given with love, is accepted by Krishna.

(reference: <http://www.dandavats.com/?p=5717> by His Grace Bhurijana Das)

Activity

Colour in the peacock feather and use as a bookmark.

You will need colour pencils/pens/paint; scissors; glue; blue/green/purple glitter dust; sequins/sparkly beads or buttons; and stiff cardboard.

1. Cut out, trace or photocopy the feather and stick onto the stiff cardboard.
2. Colour in and decorate to your taste.
3. Cut out the feather shape and you have a beautiful bookmark to remind you of the peacocks' devotion to Krishna.
4. You can send photographs of your bookmark to +27 (0)62 526 3606 or rasasthali@iskcondurban.net.
5. Your creative bookmark can make a great holiday gift too.

Easy Granola Bars

The Vaishnava Chef

By Chandrasekhara Das

This recipe can be put together in a jiffy for a perfect on-the-go breakfast or picnic snack.

Ingredients

2½ cups rolled oats
½ cup nuts of your choice, roughly chopped
¼ cup honey or golden syrup
¼ cup butter
1/3 cup brown sugar
1 tsp vanilla essence
¼ tsp salt
¼ cup desiccated coconut
½ cup raisins or dried fruit of your choice
150g melted dark chocolate or carob chunks

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C.

Line a 20cm square pan with baking parchment/paper.

Place the oats and nuts on a baking sheet and bake for 10-12 minutes until lightly browned.

Melt butter over low heat in a saucepan and stir in the brown sugar until dissolved.

Remove from the stove and stir in the honey, vanilla essence, and salt.

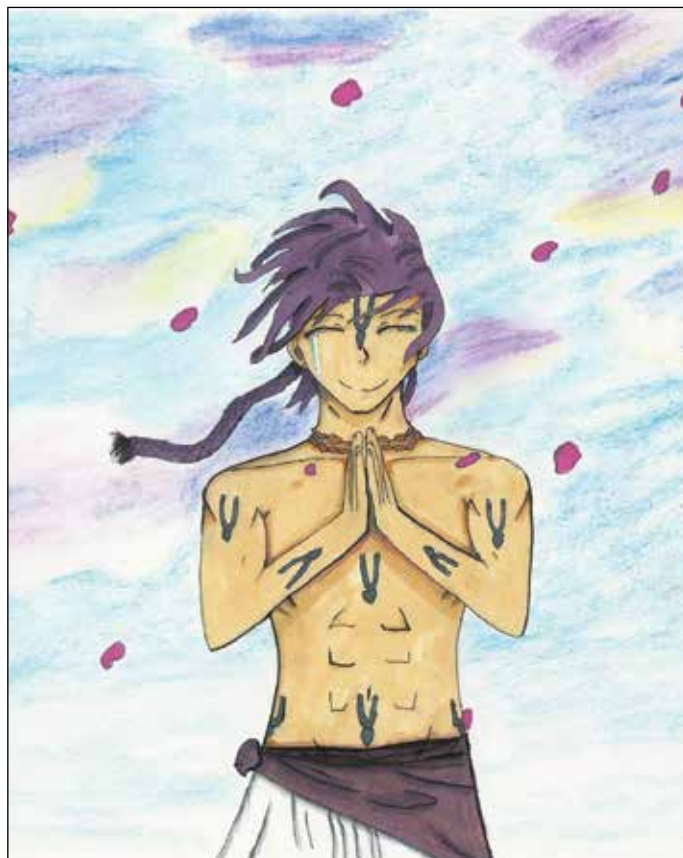
Pour the wet mixture over the oat and nut mixture and stir thoroughly to combine making sure that none of the oats are dry.

Pat the mixture tightly into the prepared square pan using a rubber spatula or the bottom of a greased measuring cup. (If the mixture is not tightly packed into the tin the bars are likely to crumble when cutting.)

Pour the melted chocolate over the mixture and chill for 2 hours.

Once firm, remove from the pan and cut into bars.

Offer to Krishna with love and devotion and enjoy.



On the Cover

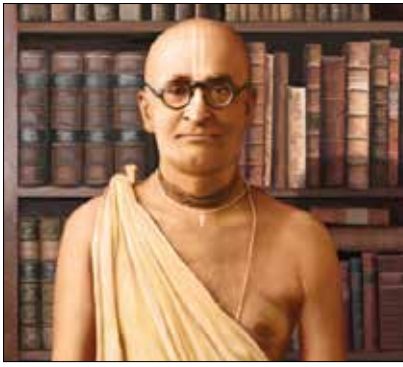
Drawing by Shukadeva Shanker

Shukadeva (17) is home-schooled and has a passion for art forms such as drawing, music, and acting. He will be visiting the holy *dhama* early next year to serve in the drama department under His Holiness Bhaktimarga Swami. He has been practicing *bhakti-yoga* since birth.

Shukadeva tells us about his drawing style:

This drawing is commonly known as anime. Anime is a term for hand-drawn or computer animation that originates in Japan or that is based on the Japanese style of animation. My drawing is hand-drawn. Like many young people, I came across anime through Dragon Ball Z. It is a common misconception that anime is for children only. In fact, anime caters for all age groups and genres and is a particular style of storytelling. What I like about anime is how the drawing, even though one dimensional, can convey movement by the use of shading. I was at the temple one day and felt inspired to offer my talent to Krishna and ISKCON. My drawing is not a self-portrait, although people have asked me because I have a long *shikha* (tuft of hair on the back of one's head) too. He is actually a devotee of my own creation. You may have noticed that he is crying from his right eye. It is said that when you cry out of joy, the first tear comes out of the right eye. Devotion is joyful, and I really tried to get that feeling across. I'm hoping to show that everything we do must be done out of compassion and for Krishna and that by seeing this art, people's hearts will become softened.

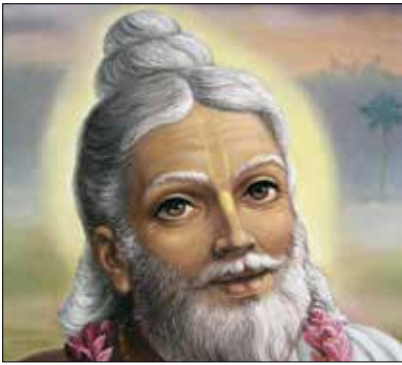
Event Guide



Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur's Disappearance
Thursday 7 December
(Fast until noon)



Vasanta Pancami
Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakur's Disappearance
Monday 22 January 2018



Sri Advaita Acharya's Appearance
(Fast until midday)
Wednesday 24 January 2018



Lord Varahadeva's Appearance
(Fast until noon for Lord Varahadeva and Lord Nityananda)
Sunday 28 January 2018



Sri Nityananda Prabhu's Appearance (Fasting is done on Sunday, 28 January)
Monday 29 January 2018



Srila Narottama Das Thakur's Appearance
Wednesday 31 January 2018



EKADASI

Fast from all grains, beans and legumes.
This fast awards spiritual benefits and detoxifies the body and mind.

Ekadasi

13 December | Wednesday

Break fast

14 December | Thursday | 06:22 - 09:30

Ekadasi

29 December | Friday

Break fast

30 December | Saturday | 04:57 - 09:38

Ekadasi

12 January 2018 | Friday

Break fast

13 January 2018 | Saturday | 05:07 - 09:45

Ekadasi

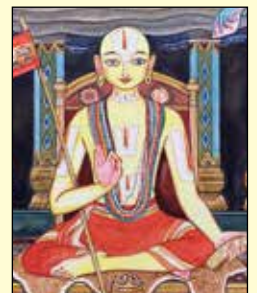
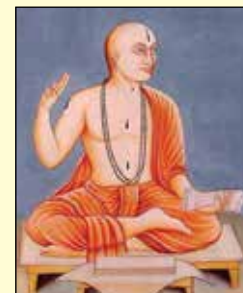
28 January 2018 | Sunday

Break fast

29 January 2018 | Monday | 05:21 - 09:53



Srila Jiva Gosvami's Disappearance
Thursday 21 December
Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami's Appearance
Saturday 6 January 2018
Srila Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami's Appearance
Monday 22 January 2018



Sri Madhvacharya's Disappearance
Friday 26 January 2018
Sri Ramanujacharya's Disappearance
Saturday 27 January 2018