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HARE KRISHNA NEWS

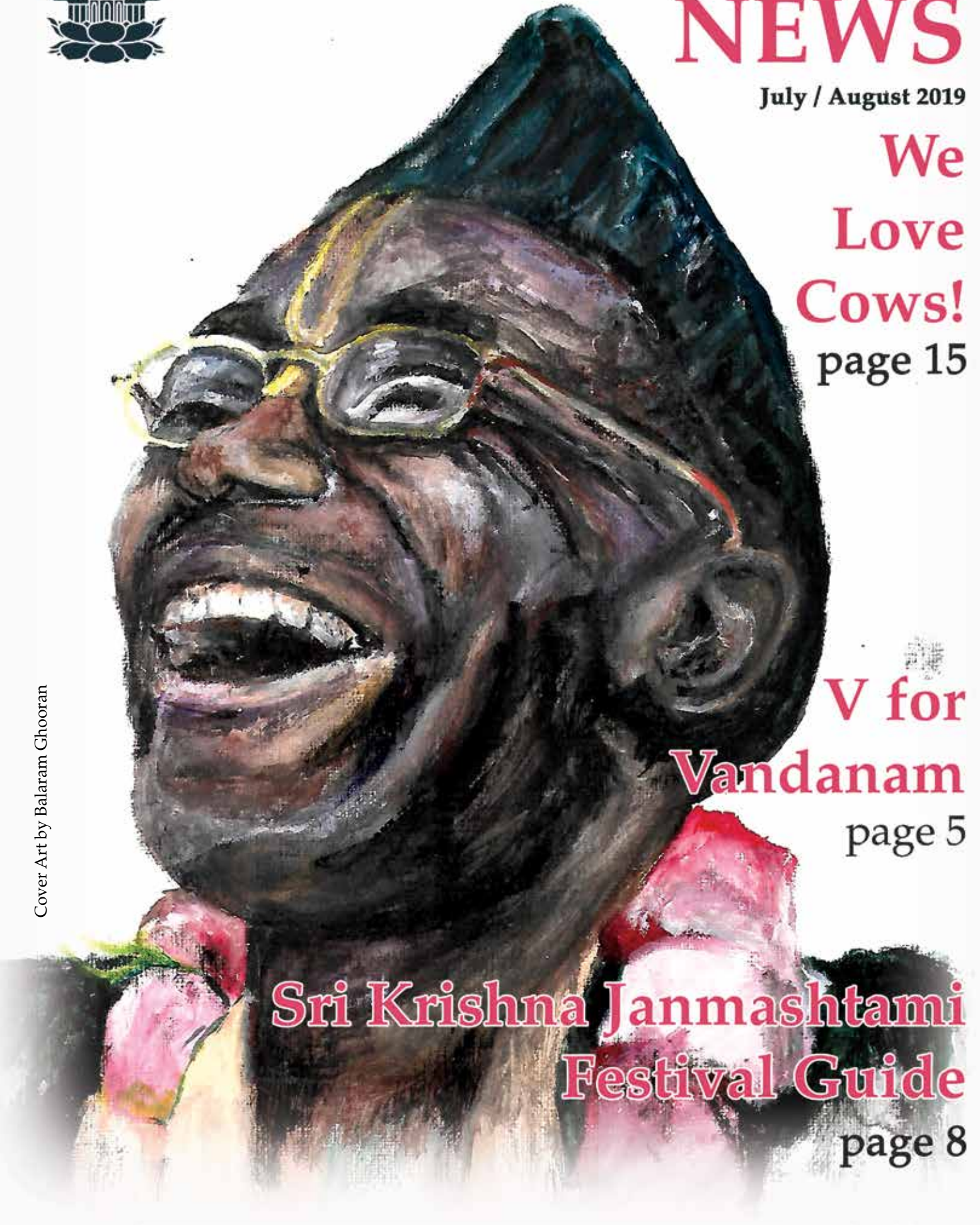
July / August 2019

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Cover Art by Balaram Chooran



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Temple Directory

Communications	Krishangi Radhe 083 254 8339
Facilities Manager	Deepak 076 541 6661
Festival Manager	Balaram 082 881 4521
Finance	Nityananda 083 557 9140
Youth Officer	Sudhir 079 144 0003
General Queries	031 403 3328 o/h 9am – 5pm
Contact the Temple directly for the following departments:	
Back to Godhead Queries (Wednesdays only 9am – 2pm)	
Book Table (10am – 8pm)	
Breakfast/Lunch Sponsorships	
Bhakti Devi 031 403 4600	
Govinda's Restaurant	
(9:30am – 6:30pm. Direct line 031 403 4600)	
Radhanath's Gifts (10am – 6pm)	
Take Care of Krishna – Bhakti Devi (Retail Manager)	

Departments

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Deity Department	Deva Deva 076 178 6850
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An Offering of Love

Editor's Note

Twenty-thousand visitors will bring offerings for Sri Sri Radha Radhanath over Sri Krishna Janmashtami. Therefore I decided to share how to make an appropriate offering. This guideline will help you decide the best way for you to make your offering. There are two major categories: an offering directly to Krishna or an offering that can be used in direct service to Krishna.

What is a direct offering? A direct offering is items that require no further preparation, eg. a flower or fruit arrangement, sweets, milk, cards or letters, and lamps. When making a direct offering consider presentation and content. Just as you take out the best China when you entertain important guests in your home, in the same way you should find the best offering dishes for the Supreme Person. The plate should be free from cracks, dents and scratches. Arrange the fruit, flowers, and sweets artistically on the plate. While it is convenient to bring milk in its packaging, it is best to decant it into an appropriate drinking cup for Krishna to enjoy. Imagine offering an important guest to drink milk from the packaging? After the offering you can pour the offered milk back into the milk bottle. Of course Krishna only accepts our devotion and not the items that are offered, however the effort of presenting a beautiful offering to Him is an act of devotion. It is not about acquiring the most expensive items but rather our mood and attitude in making the offering.

What is an offering in direct service? An offering in direct service is items you offer to be used in the worship of the Deities. This includes cooking ingredients such as basmati rice, *ghee*, butter, sealed milk, fruit, and vegetables; and for *puja*, bunches of flowers, jewellery, and cloth.

Both these offerings can be laid out in front of the altar and offered to the Lord with your personal prayers. When leaving you may take your direct offering and distribute it to friends and family as *maha-prasad*. Offerings in direct service are collected by the *pujaris* (trained *brahmanas* who worship the Deities) and are used for the various offerings and deity worship.

Krishna tells us that he will accept even water if it is offered with love (Bg 10.10). We can attract Krishna's attention by our love for him. An offering is a simple but intimate way to grow and show our love for Him.

Warmest regards
Rasa-sthali Dasi

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How Do You Spend 5.9 Hours?

Message from the Temple President

Vibhu Chaitanya Das

Click, Click. Swipe, Swipe. Like, like. Emoji, Share!

The average person spends 5.9 hours a day with digital media. Most people have developed the habit of looking at their devices as soon as they awake to catch up on what they may have missed during their sleep. FOMO has gripped the world! We spend so much time looking down at our devices that we completely forget our surroundings. The current trend will devolve humans into an even more impersonal way of life. I recently heard someone say that phones were used best when they were attached to a cord.

With most of us spending 5.9 hours on our phones, we can't claim to not have time. How about we re-dedicate some of those hours to Lord Krishna and Krishna's teachings? Choose to invest in the eternal, which is beneficial to our mind (no FOMO), body (no text neck), and soul (every body has one). We are so distracted by social media that we forget to work on the essential aspect of life, which is developing our spiritual life. If we are in proper consciousness, this world can be the best place for spiritual advancement. Regardless of all the special effects technology affords us, no movie director or scientist can truly create a sunrise or sunset. The sky at night, the light of millions of moons and stars, or a heartbeat. God creates the ultimate special effects with a spark of His splendour, and yet we do not take notice! Why? Because we are forgetful of Krishna.

It is described in the Krishna Book that as soon as the Supreme Personality of Godhead wakes up, the Lord washes His mouth, offers respect to sun, and meditates upon Himself, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Sri Krishna Janmashtami is the perfect way to refocus our energy on the Absolute Truth so why not make the time for it?

Sure, social media intrigues and entices but if that post is solely on the material plane it will eventually leave us dissatisfied; either by us yearning for something we don't have or for something we may have once had. This dissatisfaction with the present leads to frustration. Ultimately everything can be used in Krishna service. We can listen to class given by a spiritual leader across the world on Facebook Live, or if you can't come to the temple every day, you can see Sri Sri Radha Radhanath on our social media. Yet every once in a while ask yourself the question, "Do I really use social media in Krishna's service?" According to *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, writing volumes of books on dry philosophy devoid of Krishna consciousness is entirely futile. Wouldn't this be similar to the avalanche of posts, tweets, and messages of temporary and unimportant information? Scripture defines such activity as *atyahara* or the need to possessing more and more things in the shape of scientific knowledge or monetary gain.

So, come along to Krishna Janmashtami and like, love, and share the joy of the Krishna *kirtan*, Krishna's beautiful pastimes, and Krishna prasada. This Janmastami let's go for what is real and truly alive. Let's be a part of the celebration that magnifies Krishna's joy in 3D living colour.





What's New @

SSRRT

DURBAN KRISHNA NEWS



The Greening of Govinda's

No plastic bags & no plastic straws at Govinda's! Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple takes a small step in our bid to reduce single-use plastic. Another great reason to shop at Govinda's Restaurant!



A New Tulasi Garden

Have you visited the new Tulasi garden on the North side of the temple? Laxminath Das and team have created a tranquil Tulasi garden. You are invited to spend time chanting or reflecting in this beautiful new space!



A New Festival-Cooking Kitchen

Just over a year ago, devotees took the initiative to build a new kitchen, which would facilitate the large scale cooking of the Love Feasts and festivals. The new kitchen consists of six burners (of which four are high pressure burners), a cold-room, a pantry and a beautiful altar for offering all the food preparations. The opening ceremony was in April.



Letter to Editor

Hare Krishna! Just a short note to say it took me a while to realize I can access your Krishna News online. No idea why I didn't think of that before. Nevertheless, I'm absolutely loving it. I have attached a painting done by my 11 year old daughter, Sohalia. She keeps this painting next to her books and prays for guidance daily. Thanks again for the wonderful magazine. Best wishes Dee Naidoo

V for Vandanam

Living with Srila Prabhupada
Gaura Bhumi Devi Dasi

“Communication is the key to healthy relationships.” If we are truly serious about someone’s presence in our lives, then no matter how challenging, we will make an endeavour to contribute all we can and more to share our grievances and good news with them. Spirituality is a key contributing factor to our sense of self. Regarding matters of faith, ancient Vedic texts speak of *vandanam* or prayer as a means of communication with the Lord.

Vandanam is an intrinsic part of Gaudiya Vaishnava history. Every page of scripture can be considered prayer. Srila Prabhupada defines prayer as the practical chanting of the holy name of the Lord. The Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* is the primary prayer he gave to us. He reveals that chanting this mantra is the spiritual method for cleansing our heart. There are many dirty elements that reside within the heart, but when cleansed, we begin to understand things as they are and our misunderstandings are wiped away as a mirror is cleaned of dust. Our primary misunderstanding is that we assume our true selves to be the body, when we are in fact, the soul. Once we have purified ourselves of this misunderstanding, we become eligible for so much more growth.

Krishna is known as Uttamasloka – one who is described by choice poetry. There is no limit to who can glorify or appeal to the Lord with choice words — a woman (Kunti), a demigod (Indra), a demon (Vrikasura), a serpent (Kaliya) or a holy man (Srila Prabhupada).

Srila Prabhupada’s entire contribution to the world is a result of prayer. Even during his childhood, his father’s ardent prayer for his son was to become a follower of Srimati Radharani. As Srila Prabhupada’s society grew, so did certain challenges. Srila Prabhupada made


many sacrifices in Juhu, Mumbai to build a home for Sri Sri Radha Rasabihari. At that time, the location seemed isolated, the devotees were cheated of the property, and their temporary temple was almost bull-dozed with the Deities inside. But Srila Prabhupada’s ardent prayer to the Deities was for Them to please bear with him and remain there, and he would very soon build a beautiful temple for Them. Forty-one years later, Srila Prabhupada’s marble temple stands tall and boasts a host of world class amenities.

Our only prayer should be to desire growth in devotional servitude through the via-media of a representative. Srila Prabhupada confirms that simply by offering prayers to Krishna everything becomes auspicious. In a 1973 lecture in Los Angeles, he comments that when Krishna is pleased and smiles even a little, then the whole universe automatically becomes pleased. When praying we should follow in the footsteps of predecessors. There are many prayers by many devotees. In the beginning stages, we should take to heart how they speak to the Lord. As they pray, we can practise our prayer. Krishna’s qualities and opulence are limitless so anyone who feels moved by His qualities and activities offers prayers unto Him.

The definitive result of prayer is for Krishna to see how pure and ready our heart is for service. The words, grammar, and composition make no

impact. Ultimately, we may even offer Krishna prayers in a broken language but He will accept them, because He is Absolute. This is referred to as *bhava-grahi janardana*. Krishna can always see and understand who is communicating with Him.

“O Lord! I am just like a puppet in Your hands. So if You have brought me here to dance, then make me dance, make me dance, O Lord! make me dance as You like.” Srila Prabhupada, Markine Bhagavata-Dharma written on September 17, 1965 in Boston Harbour while still on board the Jaladuta.



Sri Vyasa-puja
Saturday
24 August
@9:30am

You may offer
flowers,
garlands,
food preps,
& appreciation.

We honour
His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada

Devotional Meditation

The Gateway To The Spiritual World

by Mukundanghri Dasa

After Akrura was instructed by the evil king, Kamsa, to bring Krishna and Balaram from Vrindavan to Mathura, he boarded his chariot. Along the journey, Akrura struggled to fathom the good fortune that had befallen him. He was about to see the object of his meditation, the essence of his life - Krishna and Balaram. As his chariot rode along, inching closer and closer to Vrindavan, he thought of seeing the beautiful forms of Krishna and Balaram. He thought of Krishna's face and His enchanting smile framed by His captivating reddish lips. He thought of His soft black hair and the *tilak* that decorated His forehead. Lost in devotional meditation, Akrura went through the gateway to the spiritual world, and entered Vrindavan with his mind and heart first before physically setting foot in the sacred dust of Sri Vrindavan Dham, which is decorated by the lotus feet of Krishna.

The Depth of Meditation

Meditation is much like an iceberg. The bulk of its depth and substance are below the surface of the ocean and cannot be seen by the naked eye.

It can be understood, therefore, that if one wants to

appreciate and experience the entirety of devotional practice, one is compelled to dive deeper and not simply be content with understanding and living on the tip of the iceberg. This process of diving deeper, exploring the meaning and mood of loving devotion to God is called meditation.

The post-modern view of meditation often depicts it as a way to "clear the mind". However, the ancient sages who taught the sacred art of love of God (Krishna), give a different view.

"To meditate means to engage the mind in thinking of the form of the Lord, the qualities of the Lord, the activities of the Lord and the service of the Lord. Meditation does not mean anything impersonal or void. According to Vedic literature, meditation is always on the form of [Krishna]." *Nectar of Devotion, Eastern Section, Second Wave, Chapter 10*

Spiritualizing Our Existence

The purpose of meditation is to give us direct perception of God (Krishna) through the lens of loving devotional service. This is done through continuously hearing about Krishna, speaking about Krishna, living in remembrance of Krishna, and constantly expecting Krishna's mercy upon us.

In the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (3.28.18) Lord Kapiladev instructs His mother on meditation: "One should therefore meditate upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead and upon His devotees. One should meditate on the eternal form of the Lord until the mind becomes fixed."

The *sastra* points out that worship of the Lord is ineffective without *manasa-puja* (worship within the mind). Meditation is therefore known as *manoh-dharma*, religion of the mind.

Colours of Meditation

Meditation is subtended by profuse hearing. The life of a devotee of Krishna is designed around drinking the sweet pastimes of the *Bhagavatam* through the ears to fill the heart. These pastimes of the Lord and His devotees are held firmly in the heart through the chanting of the holy names in a mood that is conducive to sustaining the meditation. This mood is humble, tolerant, free from false pride and respectful to all. "In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly." – *Sri Siksastakam Verse 3*

The devotees in the *Bhagavatam* give hope to the aspiring devotee trapped within the material world. But to gain their mercy and their favour we must humbly submit, and



hear sincerely and profusely from the spiritual master who will guide one towards deeper access into the mood and devotional feelings of the residents of Vrindavan. This is meditation.

Different devotees of the Lord in the pages of *Bhagavatam* exhibit various hues of meditation.

The princess Rukmini became completely enthralled by Krishna's beauty, character and feats simply by hearing about Him from sages. She had never seen Krishna with her own eyes before but by meditating on Krishna her heart became completely overwhelmed with love for Him.

The scriptures describe that the relationship between a cow and its calf is the most genuine of all relationships within the material world. A calf in the Sanskrit language is known as a *vatsa*. The cow is constantly meditating on her *vatsa* (or calf) and has unbridled affection for it. As such, this parental mood is most purely manifest in the spiritual world in Krishna's relationship with His mother, Yasoda. Mother Yasoda is constantly meditating on her son, Krishna, just as the cow meditates upon her calf. Hence, this parental affection is known as *vatsalya bhava*.

In his prayer, *Sri Damodarastakam*, the sage Satyavrata Muni meditates as such:

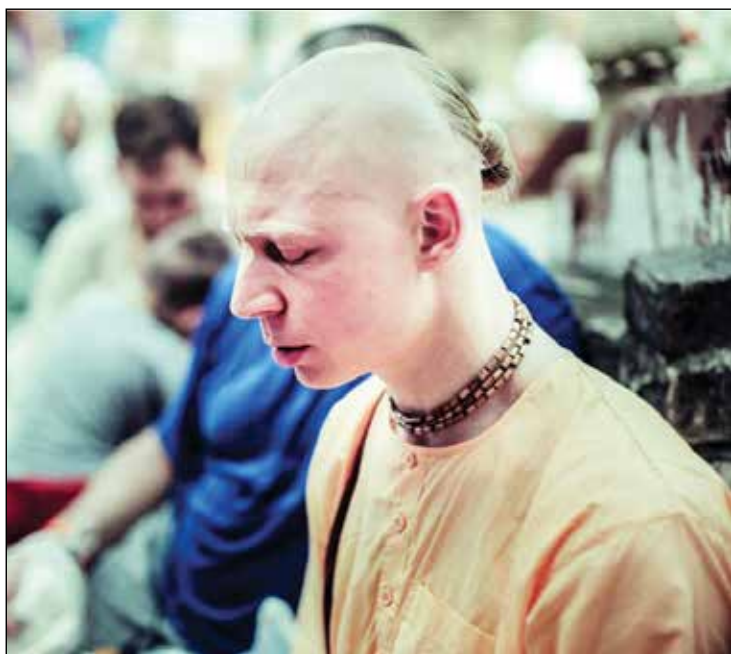
"O Lord, Your lotus face, which is encircled by locks of soft black hair tinged with red, is kissed again and again by mother Yasoda, and Your lips are reddish like the *bimba* fruit. May this beautiful vision of Your lotus face be ever manifest in my heart. Thousands and thousands of other benedictions are of no use to me." *Sri Damodarastakam*, Verse 5

In this way the sages and devotees in the pages of *Bhagavatam* are immersed in meditation of Krishna exhibiting unlimited colours of love of God. This is the goal of meditation.

The Fire of Meditation

To deal with fire, one must become fire otherwise we run the risk of getting burnt. Hence to interact on the spiritual level we must spiritualize our existence. This is done through deep absorption in hearing, chanting and remembering.

In the midst of any material situation, if one simply takes shelter of the Lord within ones heart and mind,



they are swiftly delivered and protected by Krishna. This case is beautifully illustrated by Draupadi, the wife of the five Pandavas.

After Yudhisthir had lost a gambling match, his wife Draupadi, was unceremoniously dragged into the assembly hall of the Kauravas and threatened to be dishonoured by disrobing her in front of the assembly of kings.

Dushashan approached the wailing Draupadi. The Kaurava took hold of the end of her cloth and pulled on it forcefully. Draupadi held her sari tightly in an attempt to protect herself. She looked again at her five husbands. It was obvious that they could not help her. As Dushashan pulled harder, she looked around the hall like a frightened deer assailed by a lion. There was only one person now who could save

her: Krishna. Draupadi fixed her mind on Krishna, threw up her hands and cried, "O Govinda! O Kesava! O beloved of the gopis and Lord of Vrindavana! I am sinking into the Kuru ocean. Save me!"
– *Mahabharata* 1.20

The purpose of meditation is to give us direct perception of God (Krishna) through the lens of loving devotional service.

"Those who worship Me, giving up all their activities unto Me and being devoted to Me without deviation, engaged in devotional service and always meditating upon Me, having fixed their minds upon Me, O son of Pritha – for them I am the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death." *Bhagavad-gita* 12.6-7

For those practising and cultivating feelings of affection of love for God, meditation is the gateway to the spiritual world, the gateway to Vrindavana, and loving devotional service to Krishna.



Sri Krishna *Jannamashtami*

Friday 23 August

4:30am – Midnight

Gifts & Offerings

9am – 9pm

You may offer gifts, jewellery, flowers, cooking ingredients, & birthday cards to Sri Sri Radha Radhanath.

Vedic Cultural Entertainment

6pm – 12:30am

Krishna's Birthday Party for Children

6:30pm – 7:30pm

Marquee next to prasad serve-out

Bhakti Theatre

The Boy Who Lived

7:30pm | Amphitheatre

Campfire Kirtan & Drumming

9pm – 11pm | Temple Gardens

Mantra Park

Chant 108 Hare Krishna maha-mantras with Srila Prabhupada.

6pm – 11pm | Temple Gardens

Movies Under the Stars

8pm – 11pm | Amphitheater

Sri Vyasa-puja

Saturday 24 August

9:30am – 1:30pm

**Birth Anniversary of
ISKCON**

Founder Acharya

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta

Swami Prabhupada

Park & Ride Facility

Friday 23 August | 6pm until 1am

This facility is for anyone parking around Bhaktivedanta Swami Circle, Justice Street, and in front of Chatsworth Centre Shoprite Entrance.

Note: There will be a drop off zone in front of the festival main entrance.

Breyani will be served all day.

Pre Festival

Bangladesh Market Festival

Saturday 17 August

Kirtan & Prasad Distribution

9am – 1pm

Ratha-yatra

Sunday 18 August

Begins at the Sri Vishnu Temple | 10:30am

Festival at Hare Krishna Temple | 12:30pm

Breyani will be served from 12:30pm

Seniors Culture Fest

Wednesday 21 August

10:30am – 1:30pm

Learner's Vedic Culture Fest

Thursday 22 August

9am – 12pm

Janmashtami Hall Festivals

Pinetown

Pinetown Civic Hall, Kings Road

Saturday 3 August | 5pm

Welbedacht

Sarva Dharma Ashram

Sunday 4 August | 10:30am

Arena Park Chatsworth

Sri Vishnu Temple Society

corner of Roads 601/701

Saturday 10 August | 5pm

Lotus Park

Community Hall, 4 Araucaria Place

Saturday 17 August | 6:30pm

Northdene

Santh Samaj, Santh Circle

Saturday 17 August | 5:30pm

Gillitts

Gillitts Temple Hall

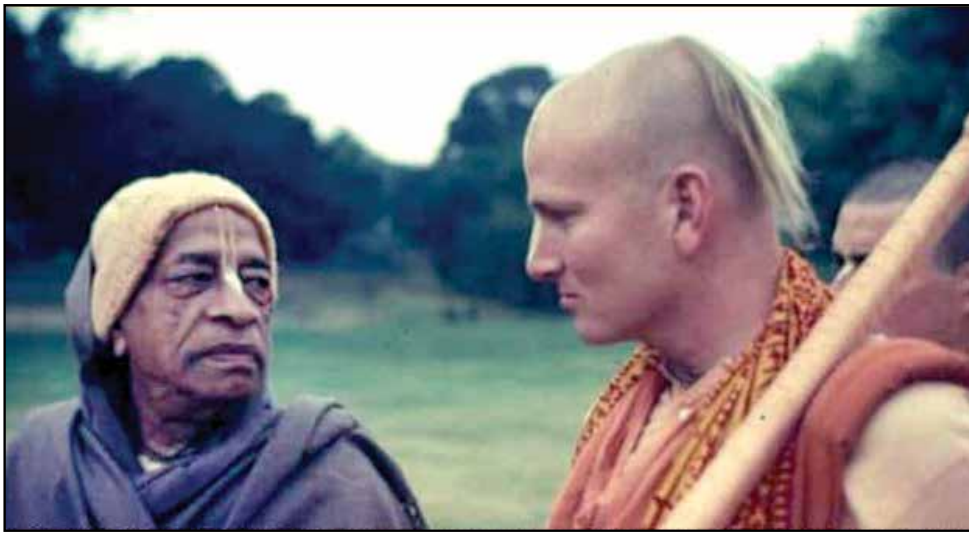
100 Stockville Road, Gillitts

Sunday 18 August | 10am

Merebank

Community Hall, 2 Krishna Rabibal Road

Monday 19 August | 7pm



Farewell Pusta Krishna!

We Owe a Spiritual Debt to
His Grace Pusta Krishna Das

Pusta Krishna Das recently passed away from cancer of the liver. The entire South African yatra should acknowledge the debt we owe to this wonderful, enthusiastic, and surrendered disciple of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Pusta Krishna Das surrendered to Srila Prabhupada at a very young age. Recognizing that he was an extremely capable, gifted, and a charismatic preacher, Srila Prabhupada awarded him *sannyasa* after just fourteen months. Ksudhi Das was the first devotee to come to South Africa in September 1972. He was hounded by the police and eventually was forced to leave the country after nine months. When Srila Prabhupada heard that Ksudhi Prabhu was being extradited, he immediately called Pusta Krishna Swami and asked him to come to South Africa to continue the spreading of Krishna consciousness.

Without any fear or concern for his own health or safety during the oppressive apartheid era, Pusta Krishna Swami together with his assistant, His Grace Janakaraja Prabhu, came to South Africa and took on the responsibility of spreading Krishna consciousness. At that time, there was only a few devotees like His Grace Gokulendra Prabhu and Saras Pillay, who is still practising Krishna Consciousness in Cape Town.

Pusta Krishna Swami petitioned Srila Prabhupada to send more devotees to South Africa and he was joined by myself in April 1974, Dhiranga Das, Rocani Dasi, who joined via Rhodes University, and Riddha Das with his good wife, Syamasundari Dasi and Ramanujacharya Das.

Pusta Krishna Swami was an extremely powerful and charismatic preacher and had both the material and spiritual intelligence to spearhead the preaching. We first began in Cape Town on Waterkant Street, then we moved to Durban La Mercy Tongaat Beach, and finally to Johannesburg, in a rented house, 59 Muller Street in Yeoville.

Due to, and only due to, Pusta Krishna Swami's enthusiasm and organizational abilities did

Srila Prabhupada agree to come to South Africa in October 1975. He spent a total of nineteen days here. Srila Prabhupada stayed at the house in Yeoville and also in a house we rented in Westville, Durban. If Pusta Krishna Swami had not been here to organize this, it is unlikely that Srila Prabhupada would have come to South Africa. I can honestly say that Srila Prabhupada's coming to South Africa was due to Pusta Krishna Swami's efforts, sincerity, and enthusiasm.

When Srila Prabhupada left South Africa in October 1975, Pusta Krishna Swami accompanied him as his secretary and remained so for some time.

Later, Pusta Krishna Prabhu completed his education and entered married life. He became a highly recognized surgeon on the West Coast of America while still practicing Krishna consciousness.

The South African yatra owes a tremendous debt to Pusta Krishna Prabhu. We must remember that if he had not been here, Srila Prabhupada would not have come to South Africa.

We can pray to this great soul, Pusta Krishna Prabhu, with a feeling of gratitude and spiritual empathy. He was exemplary in that he was one of the early disciples of Srila Prabhupada who was sent into a difficult situation and completely surrendered with the desire of pleasing his spiritual master.

I offer my respectful obeisances millions and millions of times to this surrendered and enthusiastic preacher and disciple of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

I remain, Your well-wisher,
Partha Sarathi Das Goswami

How to Make God Indebted?

Creatures in Bhakti

By Shaunaka Muni Das

If we had a rand for every time we felt discouraged and aimless in our spheres of livelihood, we would probably be well-off by now and ready to take early retirement. Srila Prabhupada explains that everyone has a prescribed duty according to the four social dispositions; namely the priestly, warriors, merchants, and labourers. Those who properly perform their prescribed duties as an offering to God “live peacefully and are not disturbed by material conditions.” Thus they achieve the highest perfection of life. To see the truth behind this precept we learn from a scene in the life of the great vulture king, Jatayu.

Jatayu was an outstanding devotee of Lord Rama. When the demon king Ravana abducted the beautiful princess Sita, the consort of Lord Rama, he escaped with her on his flying chariot drawn by magical mules. The chariot rose to the sky in the forest of Citrakut, where the great vulture lived. Sita saw Jatayu settled on a large tree and called out to him. Exclaiming she had been seized by the vile king, she told the learned bird not to try to fight Ravana because he was old and Ravana was too powerful. Instead, she urged him to quickly find Lord Rama.

But Jatayu immediately called to Ravana, telling him of his rank as a king and a devotee of virtue. He would not allow him to leave with Sita. The great bird flew to the chariot while reproaching the demon king. Keeping pace with the chariot, Jatayu spoke loud enough to disturb Ravana’s mind, reprimanding him that his heinous act would bring his death. Infuriated, Jatayu finally challenged the evil-minded king.

Hearing this, Ravana swerved his chariot and rushed angrily at Jatayu. He dealt many blows, which the great bird swiftly avoided and retaliated with his sharp talons. Their clash caused great tumult. Ravana aimed vicious arrows at Jatayu, devastating his body. Ignorant to the wounds, Jatayu rushed to Ravana, piercing him with his beak and claws. Back and forth, both combatants were impressive until Jatayu, although determined to serve His Lord, became weary owing to the demon’s youth and consistent attacks. The vulture king, his wings and legs lopped off, lost formidably.

Although Jatayu was old and meagre, his

strength to fight fiercely didn’t come from his own physical power but from his devotion. The duty of acting in such steady meditation appears difficult. Jatayu followed spiritual principles with great determination therefore he was empowered by the Lord.

At the sight of his defeat, Sita sped to embrace Jatayu and acknowledged him for sacrificing his life in attempt to rescue her. The demon king, being inconsiderate by nature, usurped the princess of Mithila back onto his chariot and fled the forest for Sri Lanka.

Later, Lord Rama along with his brother, arrived at the scene. Lord Rama saw his dear friend laying wounded, nearly lifeless. The anguished Lord embraced the defeated Jatayu and celebrated his earnest endeavour with heartfelt words. He was indebted to Jatayu for his great service and assured him that he will attain elevation to the spiritual world.

Sincerity in our intentions is what ascertains our success. Jatayu teaches us that when our mood is selfless and we carry out our prescribed duties for the pleasure of the Lord, we gain His merciful favour. Radhanath Swami explains that from a material viewpoint, the great vulture lost the fight but because of the sincerity in his intent he achieved the highest victory – God’s eternal association.



Will Sex Save a Marriage?

Marriage Matters

By Partha Das & Uttama Devi Dasi

The Grihastha Vision Team explores how to maintain a healthy, respectful, affectionate heart to heart, connection in marriage. This is a subject every couple should thoughtfully navigate with sensitivity, mutual respect, honesty and compassion understanding that the integrity and health of their marriage is an essential part of their spiritual life and Srila Prabhupada's mission.

Will sex save your marriage? The answer is no... and maybe yes. But is this the real question? Does sex assure a lasting, stable, and happy marriage? This is a complex issue. In the world, where sex is the norm, the divorce rate, in many nations, is around 50%. So from that angle, the answer is no, sex does not assure one a successful marriage. And within ISKCON, where sex is discouraged, some estimate divorce rates are even higher. So, that begs a much larger question.

Being part of the Grihastha Vision Team, we offer marriage counselling and workshops for ISKCON devotees. While writing on the subject of intimacy for a Grihastha Vision Team book, our attention was caught by research done in the United Kingdom, on reasons for divorce. The major reason cited was "growing apart."

Growing apart now trumps extramarital affairs as the No. 1 cause of divorce in the U.K., according to a survey of divorce lawyers. Since accountancy firm Grant Thornton started publishing its annual matrimonial survey in 2003, infidelity had been the biggest marriage killer.

According to Seattle based researcher, Dr. John Gottman, who has studied marriage dynamics for over 40 years, what couples fight about and end up divorcing over is not money, sex, the in-laws, the TV remote etc., it is about failed bids for connection. Bids for connection are attempts for affirmation, attention, affection, or other positive interactions. Acknowledging these bids can be as small as a verbal acknowledgement of your spouse when they comment on observing a beautiful bird or reading something inspiring. Turning towards can be as simple a smile or a warm glance. Gottman observed such small,

affectionate exchanges nurture a sense of trust; a confidence that, "My world is important to you, that you care for me, that you are there for me." It nurtures a deep bond. Repeatedly ignoring these bids sends the message, "You and your world are not important to me," resulting in the couple growing apart as mentioned in the UK survey.

Research showed that in flourishing marriages, partners turn toward each other 86% of the time. Healthy marriages have a large balance of positive exchanges. If there is an inevitable withdrawal or negative exchange, the impact will be negligible, due to the large positive balance. If you have R100,000 in the bank and withdraw R500, the impact is not so noticeable. This confirms what Srila Prabhupada said about a husband and wife's

quarrel being like a thunder bolt. It does not amount to anything.

It is extremely important for couples to look at intimacy and connection with a broad vision.

"Actually, when husband and wife fight, it shouldn't be taken very seriously. It is

just like sometimes in the morning there will be thundering in the clouds, but everybody knows there will be no rain." Srila Prabhupada Friday, March 31, 1972

However, if there is only a small positive emotional balance the negative exchanges will be amplified. A R500 withdrawal from a R750 account will pinch. Or, like here in Saranagati, where I live, during a dry summer one lightning bolt can start a huge forest fire. Couples headed for divorce in dry marriages turn toward each other only 36% of the time.

Over time, neglecting these subtle, affectionate exchanges can cause resentment to develop which may slowly swell into contempt, the precursor of divorce. Gottman's research affirms Srila Prabhupada's description of affection as a symptom of life:

"To cut off the tie of all other affections does not mean complete negation of the finer elements, like affection for someone else. This is not possible. A living being, whoever he may be, must have this feeling of affection for others because this is a symptom of life. The symptoms of life, such as desire, anger, hankerings, feelings of attraction, etc., cannot be annihilated." (Srimad Bhagavatam 1.8.42. Purport)

From this statement it is evident that affection and love are integral aspects, or needs, of the soul and an essential part of spiritual reality. We can easily deduce that affection is the symptom of life in a Vaishnava marriage. Conversely we can infer that a marriage devoid of affection is devoid of life.

Unfortunately in an immature pursuit of spiritual progression couples may minimize these bids for connection and affection. They may minimize emotional connections to avoid physical attractions, which could lead to “illicit sex”. They may minimize shared activity to avoid attractions. They may minimize intellectual connections to avoid attraction. They may avoid exchanging any affection to avoid attraction. Thus they become increasingly distant.

We observe that abnegating affection results in extramarital affairs, divorce, relationship dysfunction, and couples living in parallel separate worlds. All these result from a tragic unmet need, the need for affection and connection. The challenge for *grihasthas* is to maintain a holistic relationship while facing the challenge of dealing with affection and physical intimacy in relation to the principle of no illicit sex.

Matters are further complicated by a plethora of opinions by current initiating gurus on the principle of no illicit sex. Some devotees consider licit sex to be only that which is done specifically for procreation within marriage and others consider licit sex to be sex within marriage, leaving it up to the couple to progress. Both views are based on Srila Prabhupada’s teachings. On the liberal side we have gurus advising disciples to acquiesce to sex to save their marriage. Hence the title of this article.

However, as much as the sex concern may be a component of maintaining the marriage bond or connection, so also are emotional connection, intellectual connection, and affection as described above. It is extremely important for couples to look at intimacy and connection with a broad vision. A relationship with

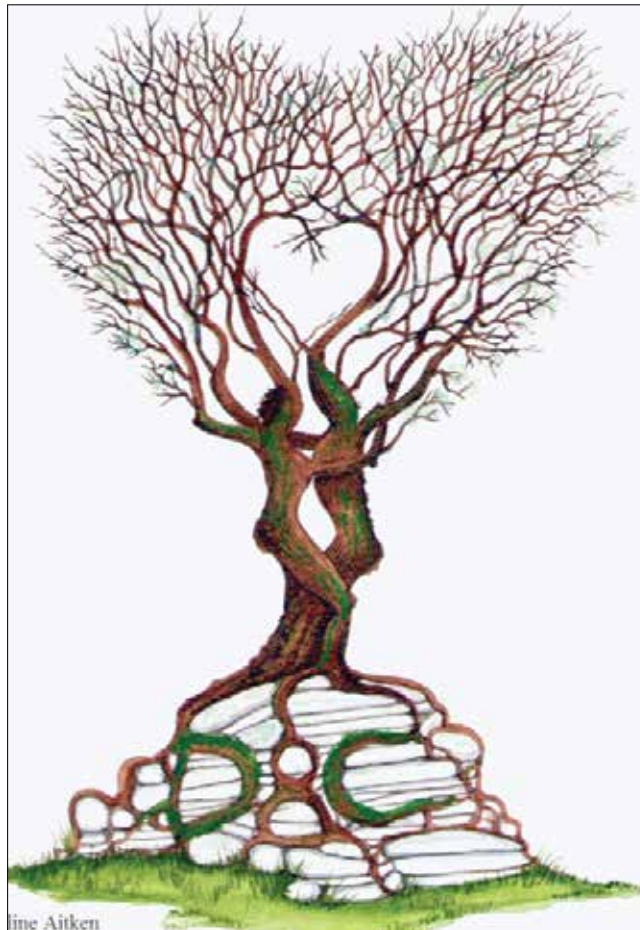
sex but no emotional connection, no intellectual connection and no shared activity is also at risk of failure. Another pit fall of simply advising a wife to give her husband sex is that she may feel objectified, reducing her to the status of an object of gratification.

In the sacred tradition of marriage, couples should be taught to focus on “a heart to heart connection” with the understanding that navigating the sex issue is one component of a much bigger picture. This is an essential understanding for those advising *grihasthas*. Simply advising couples to concede to sex without helping them to develop meaningful heart to heart emotional and intellectual relationships may just be a Band-Aid solution.

As much as a man may have need for physical affection, the woman may have a need for emotional connection. In such a case if only one side of these needs are met the marriage may not remain healthy. A couple’s focus should be on connection and affection, understanding what they themselves as individuals need to be peaceful and progress in spiritual life and what their spouse needs to be peaceful and to progress. This will require an open and honest dialogue.

“*Guhyam akhyati prcchati*. And you disclose your mind; there is no secrecy between the lover and the beloved. And the other party also discloses. In this way, love becomes manifest.” *Srila Prabhupada lecture, July 6, 1976, Caitanya Caritamrta, Madhya-lila 20.101*

In addition, if they are unable to follow the highest standards set by Srila Prabhupada, they should find a position from which they can be peaceful and gradually progress. Sex only in marriage should be seen as platform from which couples can be encouraged to progress to higher platforms. Sex outside of marriage is sinful and carries a reaction that is extremely crippling to family and society—divorce is devastating.





On The Cover

Balaram Ghoorun is eighteen years old. He lives in Mauritius and shares a dual nationality with South Africa (his mom is South African). He is completing his High School Certificate and majoring in art, specifically sculpture.

Balaram shares a little about himself and his art with us: "I am still in the process of self-discovery. For me, being a Vaishnava is a way of life. I did the portrait of Bhakti Tirtha Swami for my final art project,

entitled *Ananda: The search for Eternal Happiness*. For many, happiness is a feeling of contentment, a state of enjoyment and an expression of pleasure that comes and goes. Sometimes we feel happy, loved, and the world is at peace, but these states are soon overridden by distress, hate, and war. This cycle continues over and over leaving us confused and questioning if there really is a true eternal state of happiness. The Vedic scriptures explain that such happiness does exist and can be experienced on a metaphysical platform, for it is deep within us and is of spiritual essence. My art is an exploration of eternal happiness. The original photograph of this painting comes from the biography of Bhakti Tirtha Swami, *The Black Lotus: The Spiritual Journey of an Urban Mystic*, written by Steven J. Rosen. I was inspired to draw Maharaja's picture as the title of the book and Maharaja's image on the cover caught my eye. It reminds me of the analogy of the lotus that is often cited in our scriptures. That is, just as the elegant lotus can be seen wavering above the murky water, so should we rise above the dualities of this world and be fixed in transcendental happiness or *ananda*. Bhakti Tirtha Swami was the first Afro-American Vaishnava guru. He was a student at Princeton, and a leader in the Martin Luther King Movement. He searched for happiness in his younger years. Under the guidance of Srila Prabhupada, he bloomed like a lotus, becoming a transcendentalist who found happiness beyond the dualities of this world. I decided to draw Maharaja, as his picture captured the image of a man who has found true inner bliss. The painting is done in mixed media, acrylic, and gouache. I would like the readers to grasp that true happiness is of an eternal nature and it can be found by taking a spiritual journey."

Nut Butter Oat Balls

The Vaishnava Chef

By Chandrashekara Das

This high energy snack is gluten-free and easy to digest. They are great for lunch boxes and store well in an airtight container.

Ingredients

2/3 cup room temperature nut butter of choice (I used peanut butter in this version)
 1/3 cup runny honey
 1 Tbsp hot water
 ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
 ¼ cup white chocolate chips or raw cacao nibs
 ¼ cup chopped nuts of choice
 2 cups rolled oats

Method

Stir together the oats, nutmeg, white chocolate chips,

and nuts until well combined. Warm the nut butter and hot water in medium sized pot over low heat. Stir continuously to avoid scorching the nut butter. Once warmed remove from the heat and stir through the honey incorporating well. Mix in the dry oat mixture and roll into bite sized balls. Offer to Krishna with love.





We ♥ COWS!

For the Kids | By Devaki Radhika Dasi

Fun Facts about Cows

A male is called a bull. A female who has given birth is called a cow. A female who has not given birth is called a heifer. A cow is pregnant for nine months, just like people. A baby cow is called a calf. A calf is about 40Kgs when it is born. An adult cow can weigh between 181-726Kgs. They have 32 teeth. Cows drink 130 litres of water a day. They eat 23Kgs of food a day. Cows eat grains, grass, hay, and lettuce. Can you believe that there are over one billion cows in the world! Cows live on every continent except Antarctica. Cows have an acute sense of smell and can detect odours up to six miles away. Like a human

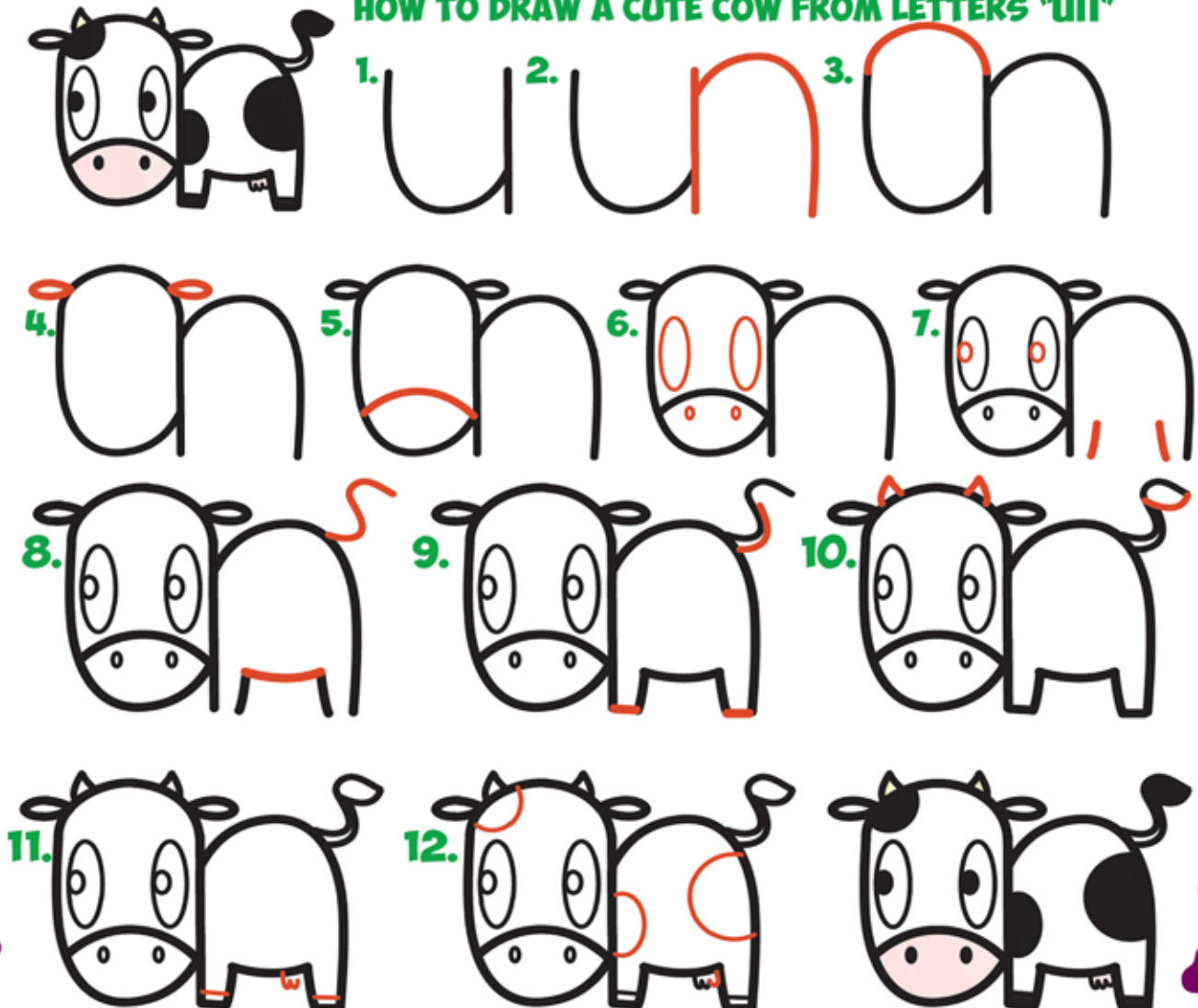
fingerprint, no two cow's spots are exactly the same. Cows are smart and intelligent animals.

Cows Make Friends!

Cows are very social and emotional animals. They like to interact with other cows. They even become friends with others cows. Did you know that cows also can hold a grudge? They will often stay mad at a cow who they felt was mean to them, or treated them badly. Cows communicate with other cows by saying, "moo." Cows will use different tones in their voices when communicating. If they are trying to call their calf (baby) they often will have a soft tone. When they are upset the tone will be loud.

Reference: www.kidsplayandcreate.com

HOW TO DRAW A CUTE COW FROM LETTERS "UN"



DrawingHowToDraw.com

EVENT Guide



Disappearance
of Srila Gopala
Bhatta Gosvami
22 July | Monday

Disappearance
of Srila Gopala
Bhatta Gosvami
22 July | Monday

Appearance of
Srila Jiva Gosvami
10 September |
Tuesday



The incorporation of
ISKCON in New York
26 July | Friday



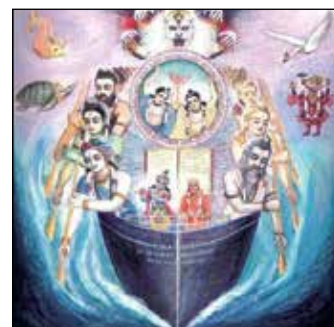
Women's Day Celebration
9 August | Friday
Keep an eye out on social
media for details.



Radha Govinda Jhulan
Yatra
11-15 August



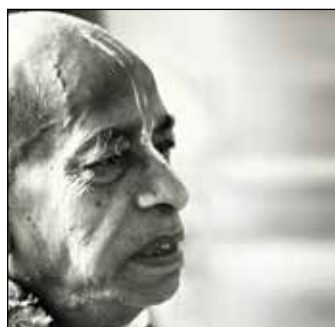
Appearance of
Lord Balaram
(Fast until midday)
15 August | Thursday



Srila Prabhupada's
departure for the USA
16 August | Friday



Sri Krishna Janmashtami
(Fast until midnight)
23 August | Friday



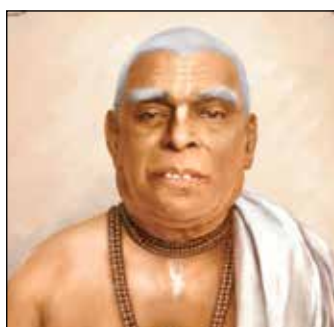
Sri Vyasa-puja of His Divine
Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada
(Fast until midday)
24 August | Saturday



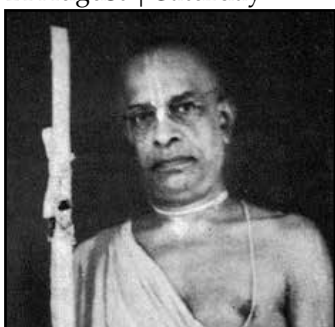
Sri Radhashtami:
Appearance of Srimati
Radharani (Fast until midday)
6 September | Friday



Appearance of Lord
Vamanadev
(Fast until midday)
10 September | Tuesday



Appearance of Srila
Bhaktivinoda Thakur
(Fast until midday on Tuesday 10 Sept)
11 September | Wednesday



Anniversary of the day
Srila Prabhupada accepted
sannyasa
13 September | Friday

2nd Month of
Chaturmasya
(Fast from yogurt)
from Thursday 15 August
until Thursday 12 September

3rd Month of
Chaturmasya
(Fast from milk)
from Friday 13 September
until Saturday 12 October

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Ekadasi
28 July | Sunday
Break Fast
29 July | Monday
06:43 - 10:16

Ekadasi
11 August | Sunday
Break Fast
12 August | Monday
06:32 - 08:38

Ekadasi
26 August | Monday
Break Fast
27 August | Tuesday
07:03 - 10:04

Ekadasi
10 September | Tuesday
(Fast until midday for Lord Vamana &
Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur)
Break Fast 11 Sept | Wednesday
05:59 - 09:55

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