



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

HARE KRISHNA NEWS

July / August 2020

Art by Girisha Naicker

Sri Krishna Janmastami Festival Guide

On The Cover

Yashoda Nandana

By Girisha Naicker

Girisha (Giri) is a student of bhakti and an art enthusiast, who enjoys all forms of art including painting, dance, and drama. Giri says, "The most fulfilling thing for me is to align my spirituality with my artwork and performances."

Giri shares her art adventure:

My venture into the art world started when I was very young from observing my dad smudge oil pastels on paper to recreating images of Krishna. My artworks continue to be influenced by my environment and travels, particularly my recent trip to Vrindavan, India, which increased my faith as well as my relationship with God. I feel that painting brings me close to capturing these magical experiences.

"Yashoda Nandana" was inspired by and collaborated with my partner to create an image for the beautiful bhajan Yasomati Nandana, composed by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur. This song describes the beloved son of Mother Yashoda – a charming, little blue boy who runs through the forests and steals butter from the cowherd girls just as He steals our hearts.

The softness of this piece was created using watercolour, in an attempt to reflect the sweet and loving mood of Mother Yashoda; with a mixture of



other materials such as polycolour pencils, pen and a bit of white gouache (pronounced as gwosh). The warm tones strive to glorify the love between a mother and her child.

This piece revealed to me the closeness that can be felt in such a relationship, which allows me to understand and appreciate the role of my own mother, and the care takers in my community. It urges me to form a deeper connection with my art. I am constantly inspired by the devotional art community — an

endless list of artists that will take me eons to show my gratitude to.

I am always reminded of Krishna's words to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita 11.33 nimitta-matram : "Just become an instrument." A friend told me once that if you tap into the idea of using your talents to serve God and humanity, an amazing transformation happens. The artwork manifests by itself; spiritual and divine energy will flow through you. This desire to see my beautiful Lord appear before my eyes remains deeply embedded in my heart. My aim is to create that same desire to see the Supreme Person, in the hearts of whoever connects with my art.

(Listen to Yasomati Nandana, which is the compliment to this artwork can be found on Soundcloud @ mothercitykirtan. My other artworks can be found on @art_giri on Instagram.)

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A Lifetime of Devotion – The Glorious Life of Bhakti Charu Swami

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The Meaning of Vyasa-puja

Living With Srila Prabhupada

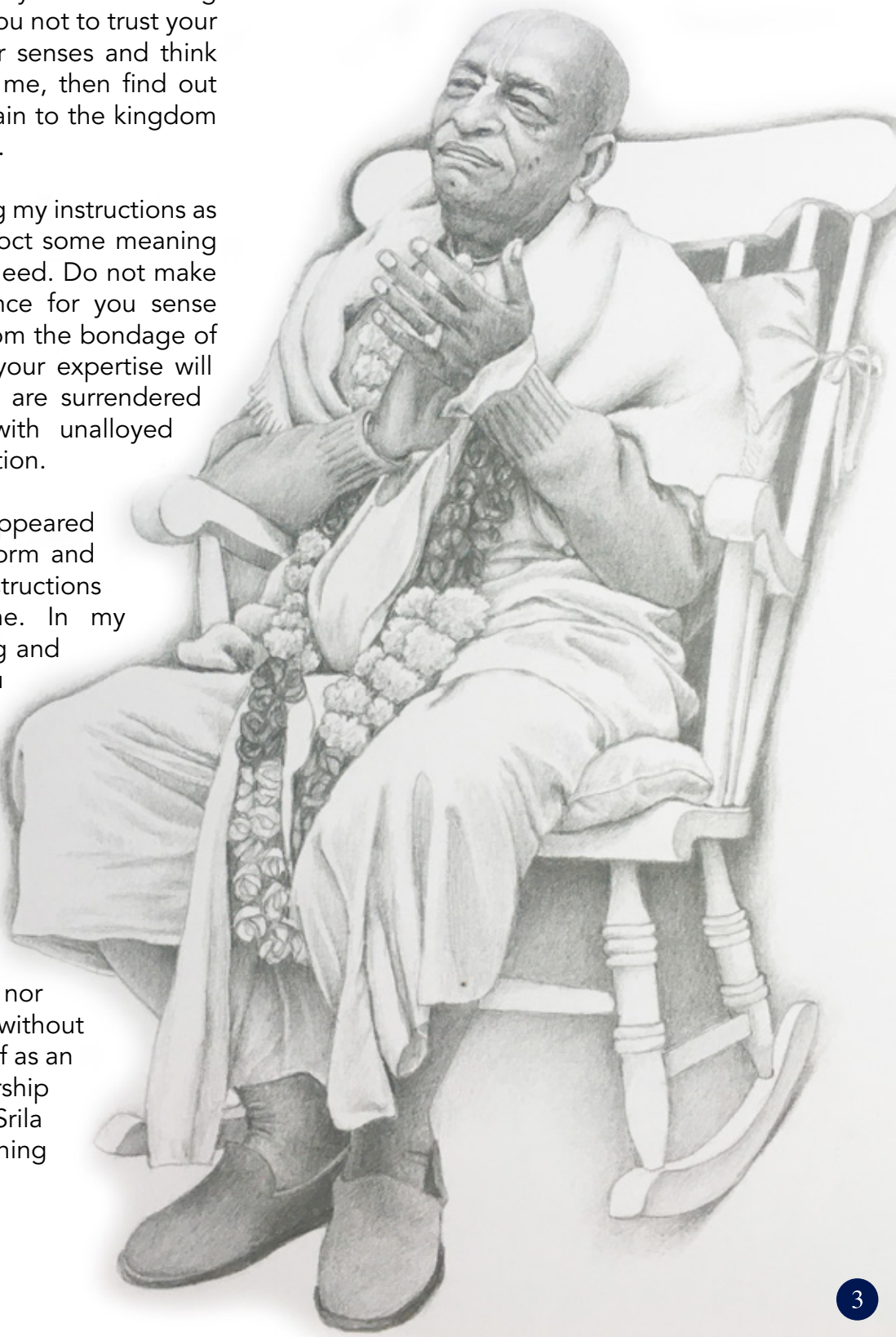
An excerpt from His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami's Sri Vyasa-puja offering to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

When I was with you, you used to say so eloquently how much you love me. Real love flourishes in the fire of separation. Now, prove that your surrender to me was not implied by material motives, but inspired by love that fills the heart with resolute determination to follow my orders. Do not deceive yourself thinking that I am gone. I instructed you not to trust your senses. So do not trust your senses and think that I am gone. If you love me, then find out where I am; thus you will attain to the kingdom of Krishna, Goloka Vrindavan.

Do not deviate from following my instructions as they are. Do not try to concoct some meaning of them simply to suit your need. Do not make my instructions a convenience for you sense gratification. Become free from the bondage of matter. Your scholarship or your expertise will not be any use unless they are surrendered to Krishna, through me, with unalloyed devotion and intense dedication.

By Krishna's arrangement, I appeared before you in my physical form and made you aware that my instructions are non different from me. In my instructions, I am unchanging and eternal. That is where you will find me. If you love me, then come associate with my instructions, embrace them with all sincerity, and make then your very existence. If you want to worship me, then let this be the standard. I do not need the flowers that are offered without love, nor the food that is prepared without devotion. I want your very self as an offering. That is how you worship the representative of Srila Vyasadeva. That is the meaning of Vyasa-puja.

Sri Vyasa-puja
His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada
Thursday 13 August
Fast until midday.



Soul Poetry

The Hope for 2020

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

2020, an unforgettable year
Masked people hide fear after fear
Traffic lights still blink red and green
Life goes on in a hazy dream

The dead lay to rest without a farewell
Who's to join them is hard to tell
Some don't care for they are deaf to reason
Their reckless behaviour is said to be treason

The thoughtless or the cautious are in the same boat
If the boat goes down, nobody will float
But even if we can't control the wind or the tide
We can make a difference by looking inside

Inside our hearts lie desires so deep
Lust and greed we tenderly keep
Anger and hate in our minds we churn
When we fall or falter, we hardly ever learn

The bombs still go off in the Middle East
Racial tension becomes a formidable beast
Killings and hatred predominate the earth
Is there any hope for the world's rebirth?

Have we not learned from the perils we've faced
That we are in this world momentarily placed?
Great seers warn us that danger's at every step
The world is a platform to reform and reflect

We can turn to the darkness or to the light
We can hear God's voice or block our ears tight
We can seek the purpose for which we were born
Or drown in our sorrows, destitute and forlorn

Let's choose the way to end our pain
Fulfilment and happiness we've searched for in vain
God's love can lead us to eternal bliss
Let's take His hand so the path we don't miss

He tells us to do our work with detachment
To offer the results for His satisfaction
To live in harmony with nature and life
To remember Him in happiness and strife

When we turn to the Divine, the fountain of bliss
We wonder why we had gone amiss
For His shelter is like the soothing moon
That gives us answers, a liberating boon

Why am I suffering? Why am I here?
Who am I? Am I meant to be in fear?

What do I take when I leave this sphere?
Not even my body that I've held so dear

So let's not waste time in frivolous play
In pursuit of pleasures that do not stay
Why accept iron when you can have gold
God's kingdom is yours the scriptures have told

When we see we are meant for something more
There'll be a change of tide like never before
We'll reprieve the earth and mend our ways
And receive divine blessings till the end of our days



100 Days of Lockdown

By Gaura Bhumi Dasi

A single bell chimes where once
Bursts of victory rang

A structure stands where the echoes of a
Community once thrived

The tinted windows dream up
a reflection of bustling crowds.
Seekers, non-believers and
the curious alike.

The leaves rustle, murmuring songs of yore.
There is no one to see.
The birds chirp hymns of contentment.
There is no one to hear. Swirls
Of incense billow in the breeze.
There is no one to smell.

I dance along to the vibrations of past
Ecstasies which have permeated the
Stratosphere.

I walk paths of fading footprints, the pebbles;
twigs and stones nodding a familiar greeting.
We have grown in companionship these past days.

May we meet again in grateful servitude.
#BC-BeforeCoronavirus
#100daysoflockdown

Nagana Go Feta Moo – Think Big

By Taralakshi Devi Dasi

Tarakshi composed this poem by the inspiration of Bhaktimarg Swami during a ZOOM meeting. Catch Bhakti Theatre perform a movement piece to this poem on Sri Krishna Janmastami, Wednesday 12 August @7:30pm.

Nagana go feta moo is a Tswana term, which means to think big or think beyond. Srila Prabhupada was someone who lived by this!

For now, I'll write
Then later, maybe ninja fight
Sing a little song
But that's not all
Nagana go feta moo
Wait
Don't put me in a box

Let's exercise
Yoga your thighs
Paint in oil, dress up Gopi
Dance, dance, toil!
Nagana go feta moo
Wait
Don't put me in a box

I'll do ballet
Offer a lamp of clay
Make a garland or two
Anything for Srila Prabhupada I'll do
Nagana go feta moo
But wait
Don't put me in a box

Tomorrow I'll cook
Then sankirtan-sell a book
Or maybe
I'll sweep the floor and mop
I'll play the drum
Eat gulab jumun
Nagana go feta moo
But Wait
Don't put me in a box

For one day
We'll know our way
The path
Clear and gold
We'll sing that song
Dance all day long
Our words and steps
Guys c'mon
To Srila Prabhupada
We'll go
With all our skills
To offer in hand
Nagana go feta moo



Sri Radhastami
Appearance of Srimati Radharani
26 August 2020 Wednesday
(Fast until midday)

The Thrill is Gone, Baby!

Marriage Matters

By Partha Das

"The result of Krishna consciousness is that one becomes increasingly enlightened, and he enjoys life with a thrill, not only for some time, but at every moment." Bg 18.76, purport. I have read that statement many times over the years and each time, simply filed it in a mental folder I call, "For future understanding." Perhaps at the time Srila Prabhupada wrote this purport, the usage of the word 'thrill' was different. These days it would imply a steady diet of activities such as bungee jumping, horror movies, roller coasters, rich food, fast cars, and passionate romance. It is just not possible to have an endless barrage of passionate thrills. They will either run out or we will get burned out. As the great legend of Blues, B. B. King sang, "The thrill is gone, Baby."

Between 1904 and 1987 the meaning of thrill has evolved, or perhaps devolved, from a subtle sensation, to intense emotion and then to emotional excitement. From this I finally understand that Srila Prabhupada was talking about something much more subtle and profound than what our contemporary, B.B. King, had conceived of as a thrill.

Our civilization and linguistic culture is becoming so dull. This was predicted in Srimad Bhagavatam 1.1.22 where Srila Prabhupada comments "...In this age [Kali yuga] the life span will gradually decrease. People will gradually lose their memory, finer sentiments, strength, and better qualities." This is certainly epitomized in the entertainment industries thrill factor which is pandering to gross sentiments by producing movies with prolonged and increased levels of graphic violence. Modern media has mostly reduced love to passionate romance. An effect of the media's presentation of so called love is that the general connotation of the word conjugal tends to be one of a sexual nature. Conjugal is defined as "Relating to marriage." I ask my self, "What kind of activities relate to marriage?" In my experience it's

having children, raising children, changing diapers, cooking, cleaning, picking up toys, doing laundry, talking with my wife, joking with my wife, working to maintain my family, coming home from work and tripping on toys, picking them up again, paying bills, negotiating with my spouse who will do what and when, building a house, shopping, etc. "Shopping? Conjugal?" you question. Well, if I see my spouse and children as having been put in my care and protection by the mercy of Lord Krishna, then even shopping for diapers can be a fulfilling subtle conjugal responsibility, a burden of love. However if I am influenced by the gross paradigms produced by contemporary media and society, I am likely to think of such activities as akin to stringing beads on a thread with no knot on the end, or worse, like the burden of a beast. This is unfortunate and very common as illustrated by the tragic rates of divorce.

So too does our lingo. "The thrill is gone baby!" "The honeymoon is over." "I'm moving on." There is an interesting saying in the field of marital education. "If you made a movie of the small meaningful exchanges that make a marriage successful it would be like watching paint dry." These subtle exchanges would not sell. Therefore media generally portrays love as gross sex and passion to increase sales. Small things, however, are important and meaningful. On the highest spiritual platform, small things can be extremely profound. In *Nectar of Devotion*, there is a lengthy chapter on stimulations for ecstatic love of God. Many of the examples given are very subtle; the sound of Krishna's ankle bells, seeing His footprints, meeting His devotees and even something as slight as hearing the name of Mathura. Yet these fine, faint stimuli evoke joyous rapture in those with advanced spiritual consciousness. This begs a question. If we cannot become appreciative and offer thanks for the small things around us; the warmth of the sun, a cooling breeze, refreshing water, or the small everyday things our spouse does for us, how will we ever be able comprehend these stimulations and impetuses for ecstatic love of God?

"Baby, the thrill is not gone! I have become dull, unappreciative, self centered and selfish, please forgive me," might be a more appropriate song.

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.

For more info: <https://vaisnavafamilyresources.org>





SRI SRI RADHA RADHANATH TEMPLE DISTRIBUTED MAHA-PRASAD ON PANI-HATI CHIDA DAHI FESTIVAL AND ON SRI BALARAM PURNIMA. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE MAHA-PRASAD IN HONOUR OF SRILA PRABHUPADA'S SRI VYASA-PUJA, CONTACT YOUR NAMA-HATTA LEADER. NAMA-HATTA LEADER CONTACT LIST: [HTTP://ISKCONDURBAN.NET/?PAGE_ID=1423](http://ISKCONDURBAN.NET/?PAGE_ID=1423). RESERVATION CUT OFF IS SUNDAY 9 AUGUST @12PM.



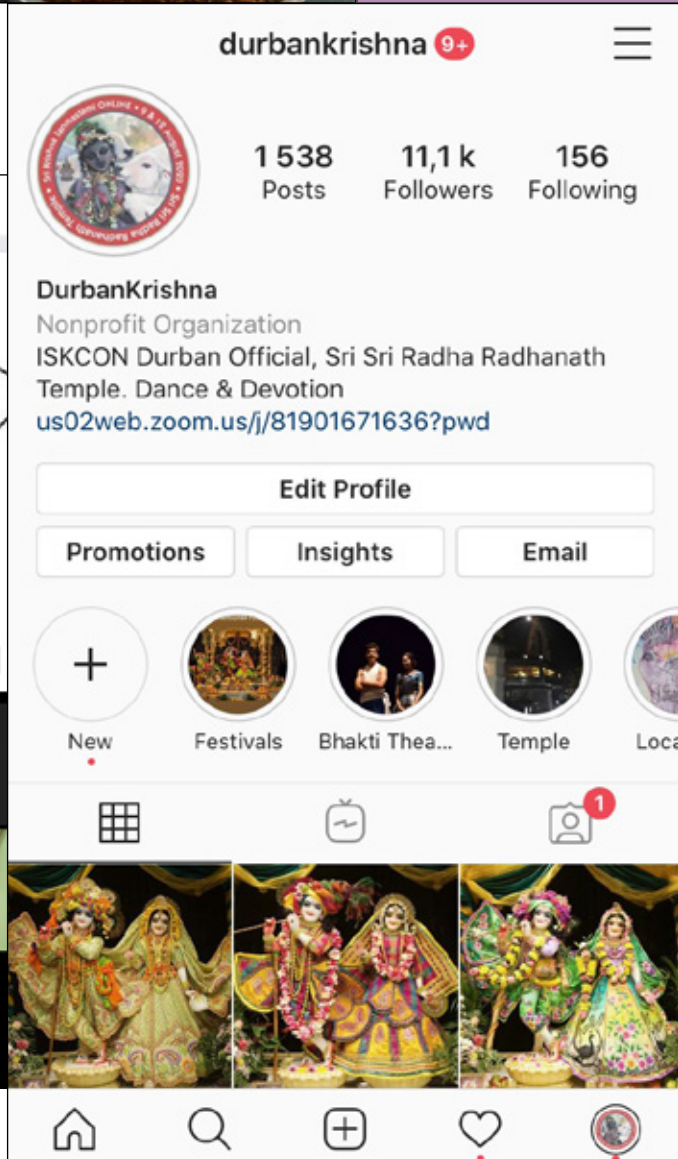
MEREBANK NAMA-HATTA IN CONJUNCTION WITH FOOD FOR LIFE DISTRIBUTED 250K PLATES OF SANCTIFIED VEGETARIAN MEALS DURING LOCKDOWN.



BHAKTI THEATRE ZOOM MEETING WITH BHAKTIMARG SWAMI & DISCUSSION WITH GBC STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

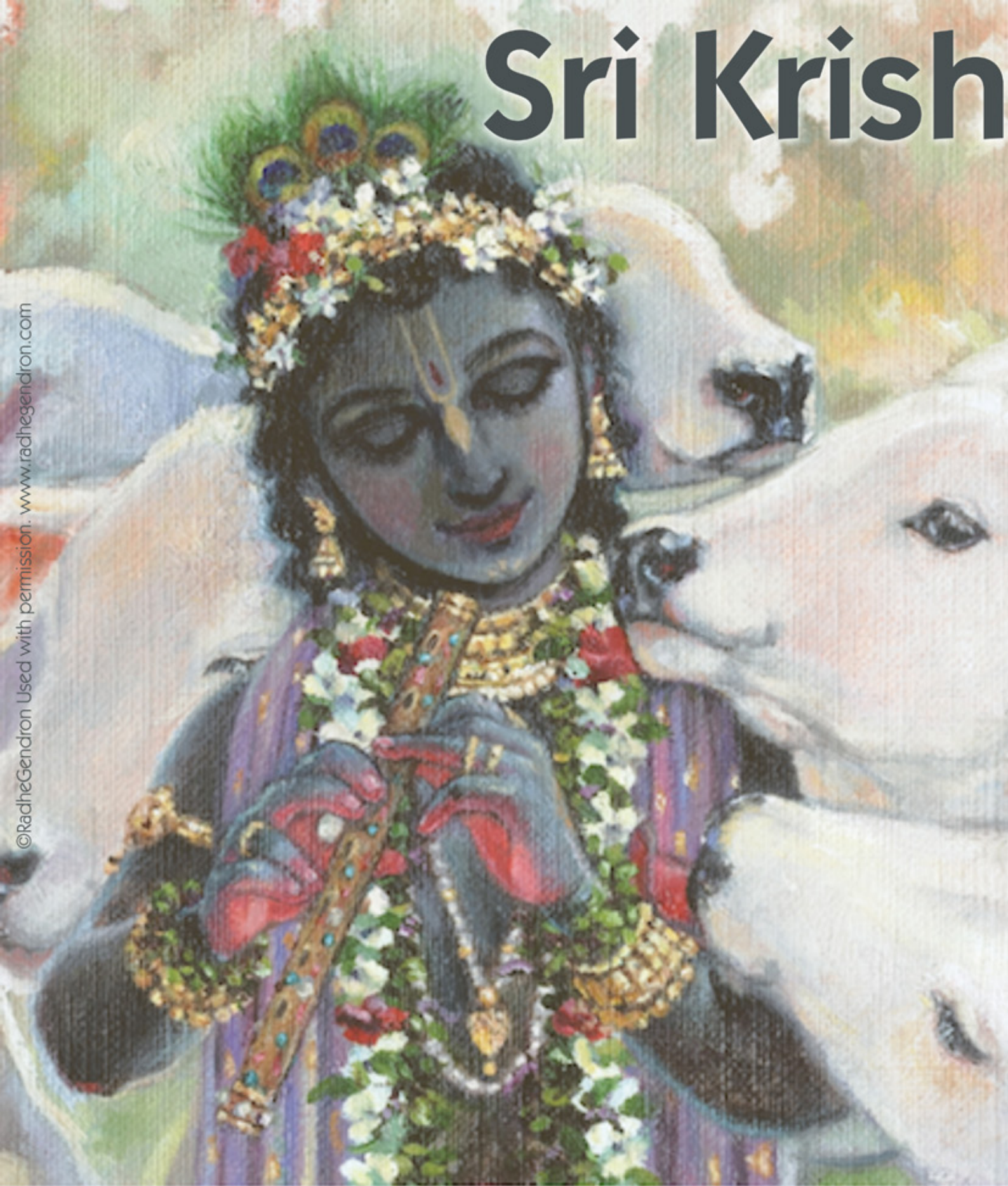
BHAKTI YOGA SOCIETY

BYS BOOK CLUB IS GOING STRONG WITH 2 READING GROUPS. HAVING COMPLETED SCIENCE OF SELF REALIZATION AND SRI ISOPANISHAD NOW THEY ARE READING HE NECTAR OF INSTRUCTION.



@DURBANKRISHNA INSTAGRAM REACHED 10K ON 18/06/2020 AND CLIMBING

Sri Krish



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LIVE BROADCAST

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[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85647076581?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85647076581?pwd=ck5qL0ZnbDJlcllDRUtxTFdKaURWZz09)

[pwd=ck5qL0ZnbDJlcllDRUtxTFdKaURWZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85647076581?pwd=ck5qL0ZnbDJlcllDRUtxTFdKaURWZz09)

Meeting ID: 856 4707 6581 Passcode: 682223

na Janmastami ONLINE Festival

**Sunday
9 August**

2pm-7:30pm

Kids Party

Janmastami Feast

Cooking Demo

DIY Janmastami Tips

Sacred Wisdom

Bhajans

Arati & Kirtan

Thursday 13 August

**Sri Vyasa-puja of
His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami
Prabhupada**

11am-1pm

**Limited Darshan from the
security gate on the bridge.**

**HD Live Broadcast of
Sri Vyasa-puja @9:30am.**

**Wednesday
12 August**

4:30am-1:00pm

5:30pm-Midnight

Sacred Wisdom

Arati & Kirtan

Drama & Movie

Fancy Dress

Bhajans & Abhishek

Midnight Darshan

11am-5pm

**Limited Darshan
from the security
gate on the bridge.**

**HD Live Broadcast
of all Aratis &
Abhishek.**

***Standard COVID-19 Safety protocols
MUST be followed.**



The Creamiest Hummus In Your Entire Life

The Vaishnava Chef

By Radhi Devlukia

Ingredients

- 1 can (15 ounces/ 440g) chickpeas, rinsed and drained, or 1 ½ cups cooked chickpeas
- ½ teaspoon baking soda (if using canned chickpeas)
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- ½ tsp asafoetida
- 1 tsp sea salt
- ½ cup tahini
- 4 tablespoons ice water (more as needed)
- 2 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

The Magic

1. Place the chickpeas into a saucepan and cover with boiling water, reduce to medium heat and cook for about 20 minutes until the chickpeas are soft, bloated, and the skins have wilted off.
2. Rinse the cooked chickpeas in cold water and rub them to take off any remaining skins. Then place the chickpeas in the saucepan, and cover with cold water. The skins should float to the top of the water, use a small mesh strainer to remove the skins, keep stirring the chickpeas and scooping the skins from the top. Continue doing this until there are very little skins left (its a long process but stick with it, you're on the way to some hella good hummus!)
3. Drain chickpeas and set aside.
4. Meanwhile, in a food processor or high-powered blender, combine the chickpeas, lemon juice, tahini, asafoetida and salt, blend until the mixture is thick and creamy. Slowly pour in the cold water.
5. Scrape down the sides of the food processor, and blend until the mixture super smooth.
6. Lastly, pour the olive oil in and blend for another couple of minutes, if you hummus is still somehow not smooth enough add a little more cold water
7. Scrape the hummus into a serving bowl or platter. Add toppings of your choice and drizzle with a generous amount of olive oil. Offer to Krishna with love.
8. Best eaten fresh or store in an airtight container for up to 3 days in the fridge.

Barbari (Persian Sesame Bread)

The Vaishnava Chef

By Chandrashekara Das

Ingredients

- 2 tsp instant yeast
- 325ml lukewarm water
- 500 g white bread flour
- 1½ tsp salt
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp runny honey
- 2 tsp sesame seeds

GREAT
COMBO!

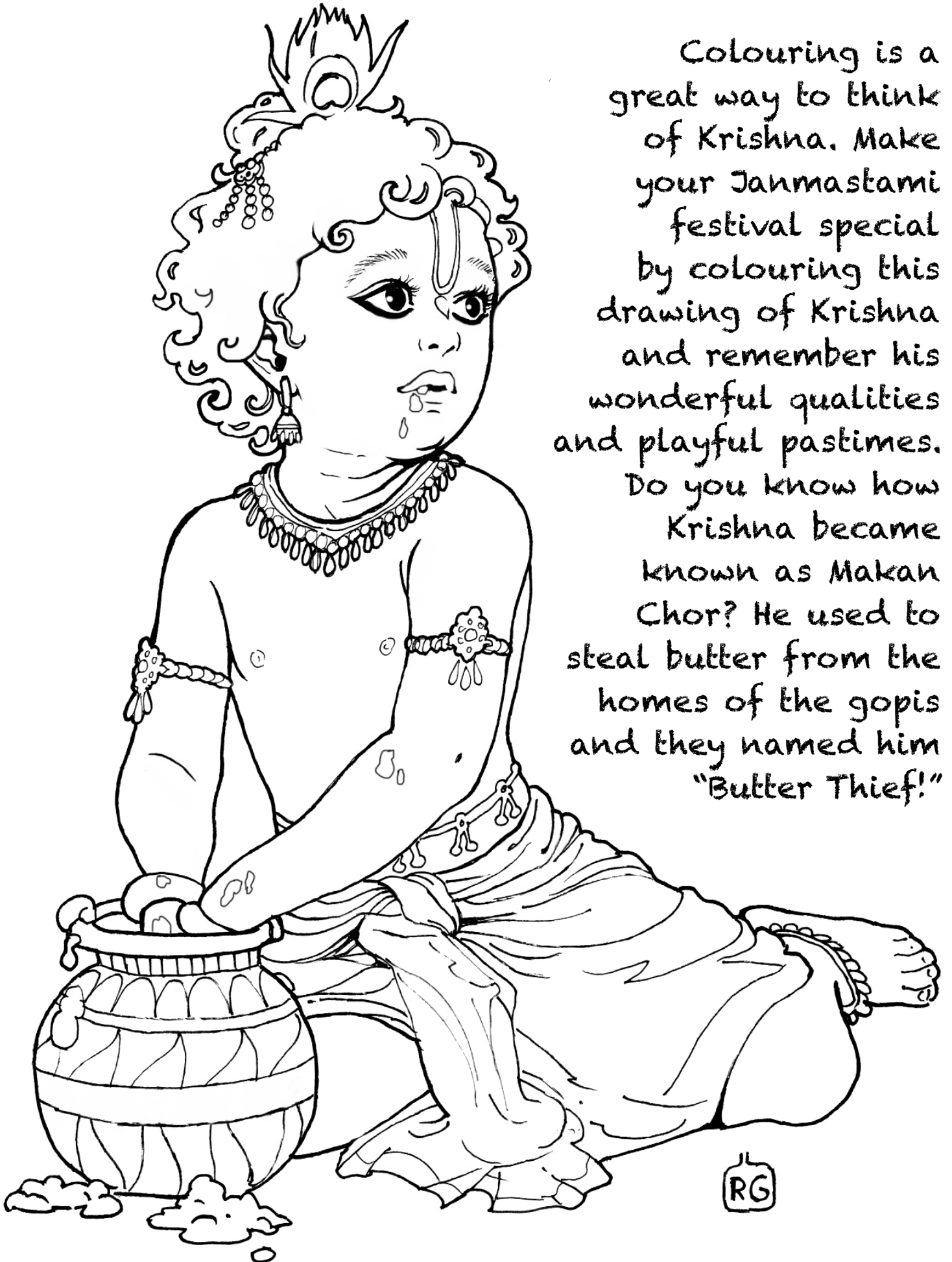
Method

1. Stir honey into 175ml of the water in a bowl. Sprinkle over the yeast and let sit for 5 minutes allowing the yeast to hydrate; then stir to dissolve. (Tip: After this time the yeast mixture should be frothy; if not the yeast is probably inactive and the recipe should be started over with a fresh batch of yeast).
2. Combine the flour and salt together in a large bowl. Make a well in the centre and pour in the yeasted mixture. Use a wooden spoon to draw enough of the flour into the liquid to form a soft paste (do not draw in all of the flour).
3. Cover the bowl with a tea towel and let sit for 20 minutes. Pour in the remaining water (holding back about half) and olive oil into the well. Mix in the rest of the flour; stirring in the remaining water as needed to form a firm but moist dough.
4. Knead the dough until elastic and smooth; about 10 minutes. Place the dough in an oiled bowl and let rise for 2 hours.
5. Knock back the dough and allow to rest for a further 10 minutes.
6. Divide the dough into four equal pieces. Roll out each piece into 12cm round (2.5cm thickness) and place onto a lined baking sheet. Cover with a tea towel and allow to rise for 45 minutes. Use your fingertips to make dimples on the top surface of the dough. Brush each round with olive oil and sprinkle over the sesame seeds.
7. Bake at 220°C for 20 minutes until golden brown and hollow sounding when tapped underneath. Leave to cool completely before slicing. Offer to Krishna with love.



Conscious Colouring For the Kids

Colouring is a great way to think of Krishna. Make your Janmastami festival special by colouring this drawing of Krishna and remember his wonderful qualities and playful pastimes. Do you know how Krishna became known as Makaan Chor? He used to steal butter from the homes of the gopis and they named him "Butter Thief!"



RG

A Lifetime of Devotion

The Glorious Life of His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami

17 September 1945 – 4 July 2020

By Anuradha Devi Dasi

His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami, a disciple of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, was a spiritual leader of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. He left the earthly world in July this year. We share some of his extraordinary life of service.

Early Life

Bhakti Charu Swami was born into an affluent, aristocratic family in British-ruled Calcutta in 1945. His earliest years were shaped by his Bengali mother's never-ending love and piety. She would fascinate him with stories of divine inhabitants on celestial planets, and guide him to take shelter of Lord Krishna and Lord Rama. He was always attracted to spiritual life and maintained a deep attachment to the Supreme Lord.

His favourite subject in school was English and he was particularly drawn to the classic European literature of Homer, Tolstoy, and Dumas. They ignited in him a deep hunger to go out and see

the world. Outside of class, he loved cricket. In his final school year, he was the only student chosen for the district cricket team. He scored the winning runs in a tight final of the inter-district tournament, and was ceremoniously honoured in a victory celebration at the town hall. He enrolled to study for an Honours Degree in Chemistry, and later accepted a scholarship to train as a pilot. After completing flight training in Calcutta, he decided to follow his lifelong dream of travel. He set out to pursue further study at the University of Hamburg, Germany.

Pursuit of higher knowledge

He intrinsically accepted the importance of spiritual life, and the existence of the soul. He was a proud patriot of his motherland, India. However, during an impassioned exchange in Hamburg, over a demeaning comment made by a fellow student about India, he became painfully aware of how little he knew of his cultural and spiritual heritage. He developed a burning desire to learn more, and began to read prolifically. His deep appreciation for India's culture and philosophy grew. Through his reading, he discovered that he needed a guru, one who would direct him to the path of liberation. He returned to India with newfound purpose, and made his way to the Himalayas to pursue a spiritual path.

Surrender

He was deeply disappointed. The self-styled gurus he met seemed shallow and materialistic, and due to his readings, he appeared to know more about yogic practice than many of them. He could not find the spiritual connection he yearned for. He returned to Calcutta, disillusioned and confused about his way forward. Soon after, an old friend visited him. His friend had just joined ISKCON. He was impressed by his blissful transformation and his display of love and respect for his guru, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada. Out of curiosity, he accepted an invite to the nearby ISKCON temple where he was gifted a copy of Srila Prabhupada's *The Nectar of Devotion*. He began to read the book and was riveted by the detail



shared within those pages. It revealed to him that God is a person, the Supreme Person, and He is known as Krishna, the All Attractive. It exposed his limited and incomplete understanding of impersonal liberation based on Brahman. Srila Prabhupada was teaching that liberation is meant to lead us to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and enable us to develop a loving relationship with Him. Due to this relationship, we become elevated, beyond this material nature, into the ultimate spiritual reality. He finally understood this is what he was looking for.

That night, he dreamed of Srila Prabhupada, sitting on a throne, with a crowd at his feet. A brilliant light emanated

from Srila Prabhupada's body. He woke up knowing he had found his spiritual master! He planned to meet Srila Prabhupada when Prabhupada returned from USA. He travelled to Sri Dham Mayapur, to spend a few days at the ISKCON temple there. Completely attracted to the warmth and spiritual atmosphere at the temple in Mayapur, he shaved his hair, left a sikha, dressed in devotional clothes, and moved in as a full-time resident, pledging to never act in any way that would bring dishonour to Srila Prabhupada. A short while later, he received news that Srila Prabhupada was going to the Kumbha Mela in Allahabad. He headed out with a group of devotees. At the Kumbha Mela, he saw Prabhupada, brilliant as the sun, seated on a *vyasasana*, surrounded by devotees — just like in his dream.

Personal Service

To his utter disbelief and joy, out of the hundreds of devotees at the Kumbha Mela, he was invited to join the small team accompanying Srila Prabhupada back to Calcutta. On the train, he was invited to Prabhupada's compartment to meet him personally. Prabhupada smiled sweetly and insisted he sit next to him. After some initial exchanges, Srila Prabhupada instructed him directly, in this first meeting, to translate his books into Bengali. Feeling completely inadequate, he prayed to Krishna for the ability to please Srila Prabhupada through this service, and gratefully accepted his good

fortune. This service would allow him regular access to Srila Prabhupada. Back in Mayapur, he approached Srila Prabhupada to accept him as a disciple, and Srila Prabhupada agreed to initiate him on Gaura Purnima. Srila Prabhupada went on to give him *harinam* and *brahman* initiation in one ceremony — a most rare occurrence. When asked about this decision, Prabhupada responded to his intimate followers, "I can see purity, you can't." He was awarded the spiritual

For Bhakti Charu Swami, ISKCON was no different from Prabhupada's body. He would serve ISKCON with the same care and attention he had served Srila Prabhupada personally.

name of Ksira-chora-gopinatha Das. Srila Prabhupada urged him to become free from the bondage of material existence and offer this one life to Krishna. Ksira-chora-gopinatha accepted this to be the ultimate perfection of his existence. Within

three months, in another rare occurrence, Srila Prabhupada gave him *sannyasa* initiation. He became Bhakti Charu Swami. Prabhupada appointed him as his secretary for Indian Affairs, and soon after, Prabhupada asked Maharaja to travel with him as his personal assistant and cook. Maharaja continued to serve Srila Prabhupada in this capacity with complete love and dedication. When Srila Prabhupada's health deteriorated in his final weeks, he indicated that he wished to return to Vrindavan to leave his body. Stricken with pain and heartache, Bhakti Charu Swami lovingly nursed Srila Prabhupada until his final departure. Together with His Holiness Tamal Krishna Goswami, he accompanied Srila Prabhupada into his *samadhi*, performed his final rites, and filled the sacred pit with salt. The day after, Bhakti Charu Swami travelled with His Holiness Jayapataka Swami to Mayapur, carrying the sanctified flowers that would be used for Srila Prabhupada's Puspa Samadhi. Bhakti Charu Swami would go on to serve Srila Prabhupada, through ISKCON, in meaningful and dynamic ways, over the next four decades.

Service in Separation

Amidst the dark days and significant turmoil that followed Srila Prabhupada's physical departure in 1977, Bhakti Charu Swami chose to immerse himself in his service of translating Prabhupada's books into Bengali. He emerged later, with a strong capacity to take the ISKCON movement forward. He joined the Governing

Body Commission (GBC), ISKCON's highest managerial authority. It was a time of systemic transformation. For Bhakti Charu Swami, ISKCON was no different from Prabhupada's body. He would serve ISKCON with the same care and attention he had served Srila Prabhupada personally. Perfectly disposed, with the compassionate nature of a Bengali mother and the fierce loyalty and selfless leadership abilities of an army general, he actively engaged in supporting and propagating Srila Prabhupada's mission. He began to travel around the globe, unifying ISKCON devotees with Srila Prabhupada's words, "Your love for me will be shown by how much you co-operate with each other." He worked tirelessly to restore faith and encouraged reconciliation by placing Srila Prabhupada firmly at the centre of ISKCON. Devotees were already turning to Bhakti Charu Swami for spiritual shelter, and following their prayerful petitioning, the GBC authorized him to become an initiating spiritual master in ISKCON in 1987.

Bhakti Charu Swami's desire to preserve and promote Srila Prabhupada's legacy began before Srila Prabhupada's departure.

Bhakti Charu Swami's desire to preserve and promote Srila Prabhupada's legacy began before Srila Prabhupada's departure. As a young *brahmachari* in Mayapur, he painstakingly researched and compiled Srila Prabhupada's early Bengali writings into the book *Renunciation Through Wisdom*. For Srila Prabhupada's centennial celebration, His Holiness offered Srila Prabhupada the Bengali translations of all his books. Bhakti Charu Swami wrote, directed and produced a beautiful chronological video series of Srila Prabhupada's life and achievements, Abhay Charan, and then negotiated its broadcast on Indian national television, with over four million weekly viewers. He tirelessly endeavoured to establish Srila Prabhupada's position as the Founder-Acharya and the pre-eminent *siksa-guru* for all ISKCON devotees for all time. He focused on creating an ever-increasing awareness of devotees' deep connection to Srila Prabhupada.

Maharaja taught *bhakti-yoga* inexhaustibly and with great enthusiasm, spreading the glories and teachings of Srila Prabhupada far

and wide — through temple programmes, spiritual retreats in mountains, country sides and oceans, through innovative lifestyle expos, in cultural and scientific settings, government and corporate forums, in print, broadcast and on digital media. He was an erudite scholar, with a ripened spiritual understanding. He spoke with great authority, faith, and conviction. He taught the *bhajans* of the great Vaishnava saints — his deep, melodious voice connecting hearts with the highest poetic expressions of love. His warm, cultured, and gentlemanly disposition attracted all ranks of society and he was able to engage them, according to their propensity, and for their ultimate benefit, in devotional service to Krishna.

Bhakti Charu Swami embodied devotee care. He was most concerned to see that Srila Prabhupada's followers were well situated in their spiritual lives. He was similarly protective of ISKCON property and projects. He gave hands-on support to a vast and diverse range of

ISKCON projects all over the world — temple constructions, book distribution, *harinams*, ISKCON's colleges and schools, cow sanctuaries, festivals, outreach events and youth groups. He established

a marvelous marble temple in the holy city of Ujjain, India, with a world class Ayurvedic facility. He pioneered the development of a temple in Pani Hati, a place of significance in Gaudiya Vaishnava history, on the banks of the majestic Ganga. He initiated a self-sustainable farm project and cow sanctuary in Deland, Florida. All his projects included free mass distribution of *prasad*. Bhakti Charu Swami gave extensive time and resources for the building of the awe-inspiring Temple of the Vedic Planetarium at ISKCON's headquarters in Sri Dham Mayapur. When ISKCON was on the verge of losing its beautiful château in France, Maharaja facilitated an astounding financial intervention to save it. In London, he gave enormous impetus to the successful 'Save the Manor' campaign, when the burgeoning temple in Watford, generously donated by George Harrison, was threatened with closure by disgruntled residents. In South Africa, he provided strategic guidance in leadership challenges. In New Jersey, he was ISKCON's fearless front-line defense, protecting Srila Prabhupada's property from detractors.

His role as a guardian of ISKCON's projects, property and people was always priority and he would extend himself well beyond what was requested.

Final Pastimes

In late June 2020, Bhakti Charu Swami travelled from Ujjain, India, to Deland, Florida, to give support to a special project he had initiated. Devotees there were distributing free *prasad* to first responders — policemen, ambulance services, and front-line health care workers involved in treating COVID-19 patients. Their service was needful and deeply appreciated by the community. Maharaja felt strongly, as their leader, that he needed to be with these devotees. He was also eager to meet two well-wishers who wanted to donate property to ISKCON to develop large cultural centres. For weeks before, Maharaja had been in lockdown in Ujjain, engaged in presenting several on-line lectures daily, to devotees all over the world. Devotees were relishing his systematic presentation of *Uddhava Gita*, the seventh chapter of the eleventh canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. The text provides Lord Krishna's final instructions to his friend and devotee Uddhava, before leaving the planet to return to His eternal abode. When Bhakti Charu Swami arrived in Florida, he fell ill. He tested positive for COVID-19, and was hospitalized. For two weeks, the Vaishnava world came together in urgent, fervent prayer for his recovery. In those two weeks, the holy names of Krishna potently reverberated, loud and powerful, creating auspiciousness throughout the planet, as devotees chanted with their hearts. On the 4th of July, at 14h30, CAT, on the auspicious day of Sri Guru Purnima, the first day of the holy month of Sravana and Chaturmasya, and the divine disappearance day of Srila Sanatana Gosvami, the Supreme Lord executed His will. Our beloved Srila Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaja returned to the lotus feet of his divine master, Srila Prabhupada.

Thousands came together again — the devotional community, well-wishers, Heads of State, and international media — in an outpouring of grief and love. Strict lockdowns, due to the global pandemic, were in full force. The Indian government, and the State of Bengal in particular, intervened to facilitate the smooth and stately return of Maharaja's *vapu*

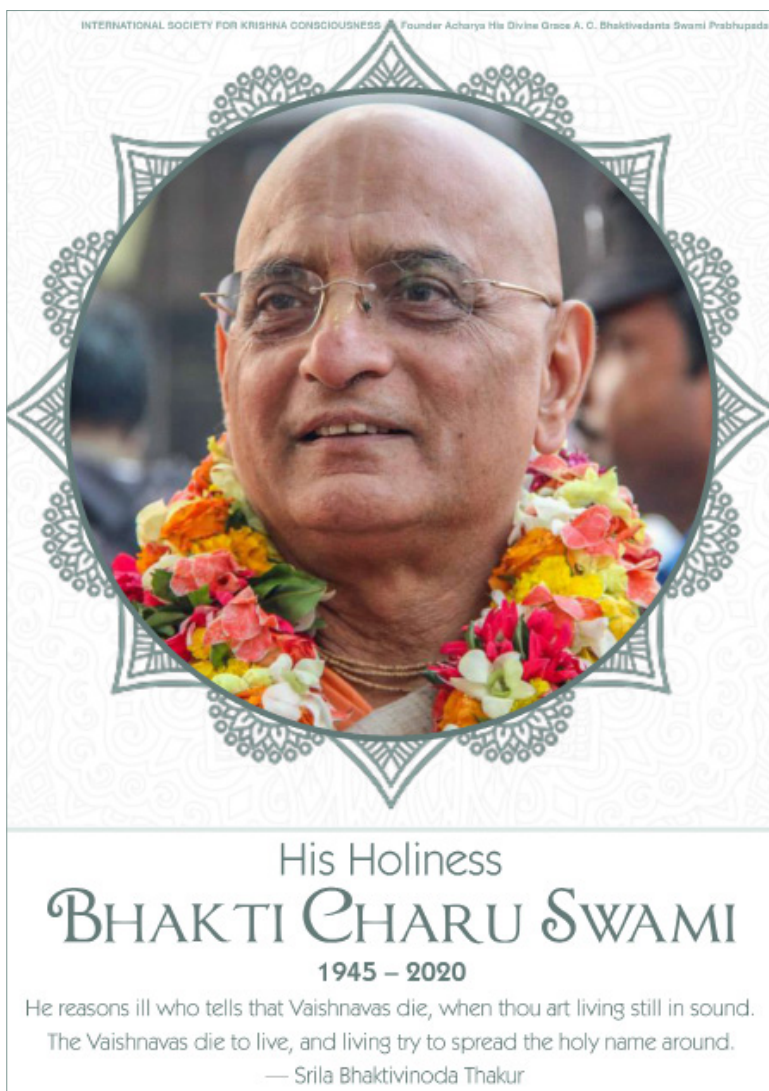
(physical body) to Sri Dham Mayapur. In the early hours of the morning of July 13th, on the auspicious disappearance day of Srila Lokanath Gosvami and on the anniversary of ISKCON's Incorporation, the *vapu* of Bhakti Charu Swami gloriously entered into *samadhi* (tomb), in full accordance with the ceremonies of the great *acharyas* of the Gaudiya Vaishnava sampradaya, the spiritual lineage to which ISKCON belongs.

He Lives Forever

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur has written about the influence a Vaishnava carries in this world, even after his departure:

He reasons ill who tells that Vaishnavas die
When thou art living still in sound!
The Vaishnavas die to live, and living try
To spread the holy name around!

His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami lived an exemplary life of pure devotional service. He transformed the lives of thousands of followers and inspired many more to take to the path of perfection. His divine presence will live forever, deep in the hearts of those who follow in his example and take shelter of his teachings.



Event Guide

12 August 2020 Wednesday
Sri Krishna Janmastami:
Appearance of Lord Sri Krishna
(Fast until midnight)

13 August 2020 Thursday
Nandotsava: Festival of Nanda
Maharaja celebrating
Krishna's birth
Srila Prabhupada Sri Vyasa-puja
(Fast until midday)

23 August 2020 Sunday
Appearance of Srimati Sita Thakurani
(Sri Advaita Acharya's consort)

24 August 2020 Monday
Lalita Sasti: Appearance of Srimati Lalita
Devi

26 August 2020 Wednesday
Radhastami: Appearance of
Srimati Radharani
(Fast until midday)

29 August 2020 Saturday
Sri Vamana Dvadasi: Appearance of
Lord Vamanadeva (Fast until midday)
Appearance of Srila Jiva Gosvami

30 August 2020 Sunday
Appearance of Srila Bhaktivinoda
Thakura

31 August 2020 Monday
Disappearance of Srila Haridasa
Thakura

2 September 2020 Wednesday
Badra Purnima
Acceptance of sannyasa by
Srila Prabhupada
Third month of Chaturmasya begins
(Milk fast for one month)

9 September 2020 Wednesday
Srila Prabhupada's arrival in the USA

17 September 2020 Thursday
Purusottam Adhik Maas Begins
(Chaturmasya is not observed during
Purusottam Adhik Maas.)

Ekadasi

15 August 2020 Saturday
Fasting for Annada Ekadasi
Break fast
16 August 2020 Sunday 06:28 - 10:09

29 August 2020 Saturday
Fasting for Parsva Ekadasi
Break fast
30 August 2020 Sunday 06:13 - 10:02

13 September 2020 Sunday
Fasting for Indira Ekadasi
Break fast
14 September Monday 05:55 - 09:52

27 September 2020 Sunday
Fasting for Padmini Ekadasi
Break fast
28 September Monday 05:37 - 09:43

13 October 2020 Tuesday
Fasting for Parama Ekadasi
Break fast
14 October Wednesday 05:18 - 08:23