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HARE KRISHNA NEWS

March/April 2021

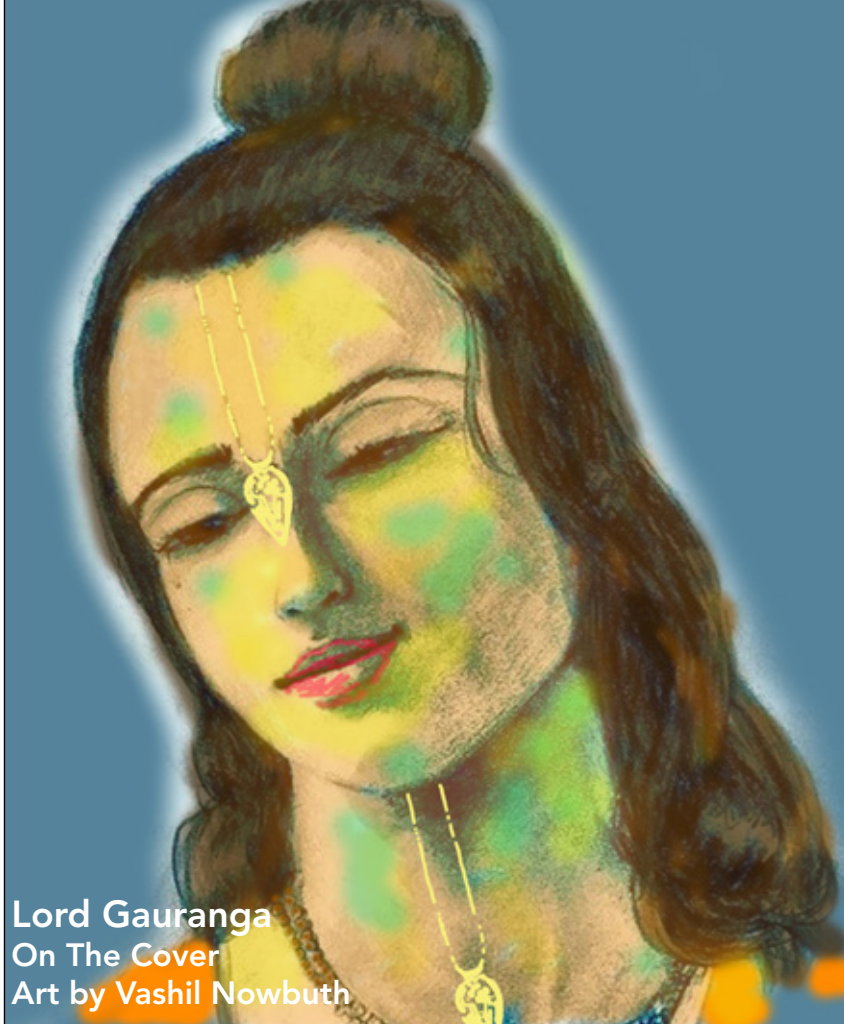
Pieces

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Lord Gauranga
On The Cover
Art by Vashil Nowbuth

Vashil is a 26 year-old holistic medical practitioner. His current services include graphic design for New Jagannath Puri Temple and the Durban Festival of Chariots. He is a fourth generation devotee! His maternal great-grandparents, grandparents, and parents were actively involved in the Tent Campaign (a travelling Hare Krishna Festival, which began in the late 1970s) with His Holiness Partha Sarathi Das Goswami. Vashil expressed gratitude to Maharaja for instilling the love of chanting the holy names.

Vashil shares his artist journey with us:

"I chose to draw Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu because he inspires my love for *bhakti* and the Hare Krishna Movement. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is Radha and Krishna combined. He appeared 535 years ago and inaugurated the *sankirtan* (congregational chanting) movement. Prior to his appearance, chanting was the exclusive practice of the *brahmanas*. But Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu freely distributed the holy name. I feel attached to Lord Caitanya because of His unlimited mercy in allowing anyone and everyone to develop love for God. Without having Mahaprabhu in our hearts we are unable to achieve *prema-bhakti*."

"My art is not an original in that it is a copy of an artwork that inspired me. Unfortunately I do not know who the original was done by. Mine is a digital drawing. I've used Photoshop to redraw the picture. My prayer is that Krishna consciousness will grow from strength to strength and inspire more and more people to join the Hare Krishna Movement and experience the Love for Godhead."

"My heartfelt gratitude to Rasa-sthali Dasi, the editor for Hare Krishna News, and Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple for giving me this opportunity to express my devotion through art."

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We Want to See You!

Living with Srila Prabhupada

*An excerpt from A Bond of Love:
Srila Prabhupada and His Daughters*

Ashalata Devi Dasi

In the beginning of 1976 Prabhupada initiated my husband and I by letter; my name means "creeper of love." That June we went to see Prabhupada in Detroit, but his secretary wouldn't let us into Prabhupada's room. Subhivilasa send a note, "Prabhupada, this is Subhavi and Ashalata, we want to see you!" As soon as Prabhupada read that he said, "Call them right now!" Then, as Prabhupada's disciple, I asked, "Prabhupada, will you keep us at your lotus feet?" He said, "You are already at my lotus feet." I felt my husband and I had a very close relationship with Srila Prabhupada; he knew us forever.

In Vrindavan 1976, once we were sitting in Prabhupada's room and my son, who was two, fell asleep on Prabhupada's lap. Subhavi said, "What should we do?" Prabhupada said, "You go, I will bring him (Indresh)." Indresh slept in Prabhupada's lap for a few hours and when he woke up, he held Prabhupada's finger as Prabhupada walked him to our room. Prabhupada was thinking, "He's my grandson."

Miniakshi, my daughter, wrote a letter to Prabhupada and Prabhupada wrote back. "From your letter I can understand that you and your brother, Indresh are both great devotees. You are very fortunate to have devotee parents and to take to Krishna Consciousness from your very childhood. I also had the good fortune to have a devotee father and mother and when I was young, they gave me Radha-Krishna to worship and I was also performing Ratha-yatra festival with my young friends. I am always thinking of you and your brother, what nice devotees you



are. Please continue with your service to Srimati Tulasi devi and to Radha Krishna and your life will be sublime."

Indresh slept in Prabhupada's lap for a few hours and when he woke up, he held Prabhupada's finger as Prabhupada walked him to our room...

After Prabhupada passed away, ISKCON faced many obstacles. I felt the problems – I was crying at home – but my family and I did not give up on Prabhupada and Prabhupada's

service and we still went to the temple to see Prabhupada and Sri Sri Radha Gopinath. Whatever strength I have is from Prabhupada's association. Everyone can see Prabhupada is an extraordinary person; everyone can see what he has done all over the world and everyone can have his association and be touched by his mercy.

Krishna is sweet but Prabhupada was still put into such difficulty and had to face so many tests. Sometimes we go through hard times, but we can still stay on track spiritually. My husband and I tell our children and our grandchildren about our sweet memories of Prabhupada and about his glories. By hearing about him, the new generation can also naturally love and follow him. Seeing us worshiping Prabhupada, and Radha-Krishna also keeps them in Prabhupada consciousness, in Krishna Consciousness.

You can purchase *A Bond of Love* on amazon.com



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ISKCON Durban
Durban Krishna



Wise Love

Book Review

By Byron Kyle

A teacher once said to me, "I am here to take and ocean of knowledge and convey it in a bucket, so that you may absorb a teaspoon." There is always difficulty in writing a review for a book that concisely takes timeless wisdom and condenses it in a mere two-hundred and fifty pages. I have felt that this is what the author has done with *Wise-Love – Bhakti and the Search for the Soul of Consciousness*. The book is neither too lofty for the layman to understand nor is too simplistic for a refined intellect.

For those who have encountered *bhakti* before or who are already on the path, they will find great solace and reaffirmation of the knowledge they have already received. Those new to *bhakti* will gain a succinct understanding of the core ideas surrounding what *bhakti* is, how it differs from other forms of yoga and how it is practised.

I have learned and have come to accept my emotions and the yearnings of my heart as an inner guide to my true self

existence. We need to transcend our material nature and rise to a spiritual one, an identity that is immutable and grounded in knowledge of the Supreme Being.

Many questions are raised in this book. The one most pertinent to me is "Why are we always changing? Because we're not satisfied: a state only possible in contact with the true self... It takes real work to reclaim one's freedom, but it's not impossible."

The book details how the false self arises and how it differs from the true self. It then dives deep into the true self and how we can reconnect with our innermost nature. It offers fresh perspectives on *bhakti-yoga* and the wisdom of the Vedas.

In essence, it is our false ego and our entanglement with material nature that give rise to many of the problems we face and this is the root of material

"Bhakti reveals that our inherent, perfect state is as a lover. As a yoga practice, Bhakti is the path of evolving the heart and is known as the yoga of love." The attainment of *bhakti* and the exercising of the heart "requires more than physical strength, agility, mental control or intellectual prowess. It requires that we engage our whole feeling self."

I have felt that by reading this book I have learned and have come to accept my emotions and the yearnings of my heart as an inner guide to my true self and not something to be denied, disregarded or made light of, however, great discernment is required in knowing which emotions are shifting currents and which remain still and unchanging.

Emotions can be transmuted through mantra and gives us a vehicle to connect with the Supreme Being. Mantra has become a commonplace word in most homes but I feel few understand its depth. Mantra ultimately brings clarity and peace of mind and brings us to a state of ecstasy in which we are enveloped in a loving exchange between Creator and created.

I highly commend the author, Pranada Comtois, for her work and have recommended this book to friends from all castes and creeds. Allow the yoga of love to enter your life and experience the treasures found therein.

Wise-Love is published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust Africa. You can purchase a copy at the Temple or at our online store: <http://iskcondurban.net/product-category/books/> Selling price: R90



Pieces

Soul Poetry

By Rukmini Devi Dasi

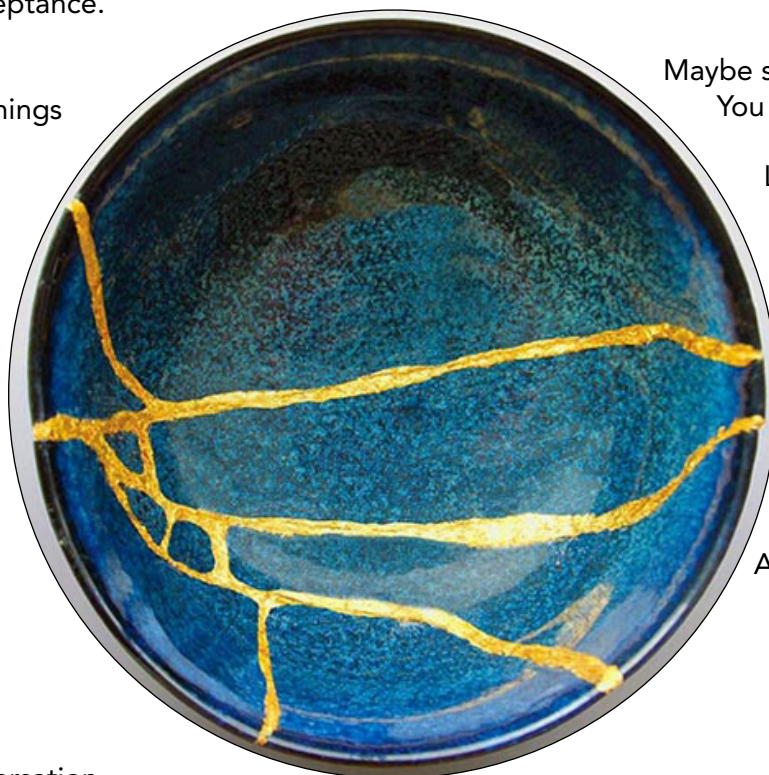
Some lessons come through knowledge and others experience. *Bhakti* is about learning to love Krishna and in the daylight of that relationship to see ourselves, maybe for the first time. This process isn't always easy. In this piece I'm remembering that I can place all that I am and all that I am not at Krishna's feet. For there lies true acceptance.

Thought you'd like a puzzle
You're so good at making things
FIXED
Cos here I lay in pieces
Splintered, fractured,
Jagged edged.

Be careful of sharp shards,
My shattered self-esteem
It was brutal bomb blast
My last attempt of
"Sheer determination wins"

Excuse the sarcasm
I'm actually trying to pray
Oh, there may be missing
PIECES
My hope is fading away

Cos it's not the first time
Me & You, having this conversation
It hurts, cos You have the glue
But You'll watch me be
BROKEN



Yeah, I've heard the story
Break the cocoon
And the caterpillar can't fly
But I've tried and tried
And tried and tried and tried
And this wannabe butterfly is
TIRED

Maybe some aren't made to fly?
You made me like this, why?
I could have been pure
Like Nanda and Yashoda
But You made me
TATASTA –
Able to be flawed!
So fix me!

Fix me
Please, please
Fix me
I'm so scared
Because I can't go back
And I can't move forward
And I found You
But I can't reach You
Please
Fix me

Why won't you fix me?

"Because you are not broken, you are growing!"

Vaishnava Calendar

17 Apr Sa	Sri Ramanujacarya — Appearance
21 Apr We	Rama Navami: Appearance of Lord Sri Ramacandra (Fast until midday)
23 Apr Fr	Ekadasi
24 Apr Sa	Break fast 06:20 - 10:02
27 Apr Tu	Sri Balarama Rasayatra Sri Krishna Vasanta Rasa Appearance of Radha Kunda
6 May Th	Srila Vrindavana Das Thakur — Disappearance
7 May Fr	Ekadasi
8 May Sa	Break fast 06:29 - 10:04
11 May Tu	Sri Gadadhara Pandit — Appearance
14 May Fr	Aksaya Trtiya
19 May We	Jahnu Saptami
21 May Fr	Srimati Sita Devi (consort of Lord Sri Rama) — Appearance

21 May Fr	Srimati Jahnava Devi (consort of Lord Nityananda) — Appearance
23 May Su	Ekadasi
24 May Mo	Break fast 06:38 - 10:08 Sri Jayananda Prabhu — Disappearance
25 May Tu	Nrsimha Caturdasi: Appearance of Lord Nrsimhadeva (Fast until dusk)
26 May We	Sri Sri Radha-Ramana Devaji — Appearance Sri Madhavendra Puri — Appearance Sri Srinivasa Acarya — Appearance
30 May Su	Sri Ramananda Raya — Disappearance
5 Jun Sa	Ekadasi
6 Jun Su	Break fast 09:29 - 10:11 Srila Vrindavana Das Thakur — Appearance

Ha Gauranga!

By Gaura Bhumi Devi Dasi

Golden-limbed Divinity had foretold of the boy's birth, heralding the appearance of one who would be the greatest of men. Gauranga whispered into Nityananda's ear, "We won't be here for much longer. Someone has to keep the flame of love burning. This mission is too important to die off with Us." Gauranga dived deep into the Padmavati River, storing His love and grace deep within her depths, where she would keep it safe until the boy was ready to receive it. But prophecy faded into myth as the elders of the age passed on; as smoke dissipates in the wind.

The dust of Kheturi's land did not quite settle as the people ran about with electrifying jubilation. After much prayer, a Prince had been born to the land. A steady stream of holy men blessed the baby with an abundance of happiness and grace but the King was cautioned by one to keep his son away from the river, lest the prince encounter a life unlike any other...

Prince Narottama's eyes were wide with wonder. The stories of the old Baba never ceased to stir his young heart. Every day after school he would race down the dusty path to hear more of Krishnadas's tales of yore. Saints were always welcome in his father's kingdom. "Where is Gauranga now? Is He in Nadia or Puri? I'd really like to meet Him!" The boy said earnestly. The Baba's eyes curled up in sorrow. "I'm sorry, dear one. Gauranga no longer walks among us in this world." Narottama's heart shattered. "No, no!" He shook his head despairingly, his anguish echoed through the universe.

Years passed, but the Prince's melancholy never left. Youthful Narottama stared into the darkness in frustration. He had no interest in tax collection or property management. All he ever wanted in life was to meet Gauranga. Time was passing and Gauranga's associates were now old. If he wanted to act, it had to be now. He had to leave for Vrindavan. As silently as a thief, he slid down his window and slunk out of the compound. He found himself on the river bank, and as if possessed, slipped into the water and called out, "Ha Gauranga! Ha Gauranga!" The stagnant water began to stir, swirl and churn around his legs, rising with gusto and timed with his calling. The river Goddess surged with her waves and touched Narottama's hands with a golden lotus flower. The flower morphed into a long-limbed body. The form danced to and fro along with the water's momentum and surged into Narottama's heart. Powerless to the penetrating ecstasy that engulfed him, Narottama's complexion

lightened to a golden colour as he staggered out of the water, shivering with emotion.

Decades had passed since the departure of Gauranga from the world, and those who had seen Him were dying day by day. As he read a letter from his spiritual master instructing him to engage in deity worship, Narottama's heart ached with a burning desire to unite all the Vaishnavas from Bengal, Orissa and Vrindavan under one umbrella of *sanga*. The passing of time and physical distance had allowed for small differences of philosophical interpretations to sprout up. He wanted to put an end to these doubts before they festered into disunity while also easing the broken hearts of all who yearned for Gauranga. His mind's eye painted a vision in swirling and vibrant colour of a grand celebration. Why not use the opportunity of a grand deity installation to hold a celebration of Gauranga's appearance day? Such a celebration had not been observed since the Lord's departure. Narottama's eyes lit up with a mischievous twinkle – he had a festival to arrange, the likes of which none of Gauranga's devotees had ever witnessed and one which they all would grace with their presence. Narottama would pen invitations to each and every one of them.

As the evening announced its arrival, Narottama completed writing the last lines of his compositions. This would be his personal offering for the festival, a collection of songs and poetry composed in his own unique style of *kirtan* in honour of Gauranga and his followers. The festival date would soon be upon them and he looked around to observe the progress. The townsfolk had opened their hearts and homes, constructing houses to accommodate the guests; a lavish and ornate temple was being constructed in the centre of the town, with a large storehouse and enormous *kirtan* hall. Gardens were

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare



being landscaped, new musical instruments crafted and five sets of exquisite Deities to be installed in the temple. "Ha Gauranga!" Narottama sighed. The excitement was building.

As the day drew closer, he stood in thrilled anticipation on the riverbank, eagerly welcoming the guests. With the arrival of Jahnava Devi, the head of the Vaishnavas, his heart swooned with delight. Such a gathering of exalted saints had not happened since Gauranga's time. The festival had begun.

The temple courtyard swooned with the palpable love of the assembly. The ether vibrated with a symphony of sounds – conch shells, gongs, bells and shrill ululations of joy. The *kirtan* reverberated throughout the sky, coming to a crescendo at the first *darshan* of the Deities. The roars of the assembled guests brought tears of bliss to Narottama's eyes. As daylight turned, he was requested to sing. As the musicians set up, Narottama turned to the crowd. He had welcomed each and every one of them into his home and hearth. He prostrated himself before them all, asking for their grace. He circled the room, offering homage to each of his seniors with all humility. Finally he turned towards the Deities, "Ha Gauranga! Give me your blessings."

Narottama took a deep breath of contemplation in and out poured a quivering note of love. He began to churn out the love in his heart for Gauranga. '*gauranga*' bolite habe pulaka-sarira 'hari hari' bolite nayane ba' be near: when will that opportune moment come to us, when there will be shivering of the body as soon as we chant Lord Gauranga's name? While chanting Hare Krishna, when will there be tears in the eyes?

Nectar streams followed and tears fell from the

eyes of all as he sang verse after verse through the silence. Not a single creature was untouched by Narottama's love.

radha-krishna prana mora jugala-kisora jivane marane gati aro nahi mora: the divine couple, Sri Sri Radha and Krishna, is my life and soul. In life or death I have no other refuge but Them.

Oblivious to his surroundings, Narottama's body was drenched in perspiration mixed with tears of love. By now, the assembly danced with abandon, nothing mattered except this very moment of paradise. An unusual fragrance began to permeate the air. An unearthly, maddening scent had come from the Deities and swept through the crowd, crawling into every nook and cranny of the hall. In that moment, a thunder bolt of longing struck Narottama's heart. As if wading through honey, he changed the melody to match his mood.

gauranga karuna koro dina hina jane mo-samo patita prabhu nahi tri-bhuvane: Gauranga, show your mercy to this lowly destitute soul, there's no one more fallen than myself in all the three worlds.

In the rain-darkened clouds of the assembly, the lightening that is Gauranga appeared with his closest companions. Narottama's heart stopped. Disbelieving, he reached out and actually touched the Lord's hand. This was no hallucination, dream or mirage! Gauranga was here and everyone — qualified or not, could see Him! Jahnava Devi burst into sobs at the sight of her husband, Sri Nityananda.

Gauranga lifted his long golden arms high and began to dance. The *kirtan* shattered through the ether. *Mridangas* thundered and *karatalas* clashed. The devotees clapped, danced and chanted, bellowing towards the heavens, "Ha Gauranga! Ha Gauranga!" With a lion-like roar, Narottama was pulled into the fray as the earth trembled with the swishing of the Lord's *dhoti*.

Utter madness reigned, yet life had never made more sense. Everyone dove deeper and deeper into the ocean of love as the *kirtan* thundered on and on with no end in sight. Gauranga's family was reunited. And as quickly as He had appeared, the Lord disappeared.

A heart-wrenching wail arose and pandemonium broke out. Narottama blacked out. As he awoke, Narottama could not comprehend what he had just seen. Jahnava Devi said with tears in her eyes, "We are forever in your grace, for you have personally called the Lord through your pureness of heart." Narottama simply bowed his head muttering, "Ha Gauranga! Ha Gauranga!"

are Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare





Chocolate Pudding Tart

The Vaishnava Chef

By Chandrasekhara Das

In the recent years tofu has gained tremendous popularity and has shown its versatility in creating full bodied vegan desserts. This decadent dessert has a creamy, smooth pudding set on a rich brownie base. The taste and smell of tofu in this dessert is completely masked by the chocolate and vanilla flavour. Give it a try!

Brownie Base

Ingredients

½ cup cake flour
¼ tsp baking powder
3 Tbls cocoa powder
¼ cup Canola oil
¼ cup pure maple syrup
2 Tbls milk (use non-dairy for vegan option)
1 tsp vanilla essence
¼ tsp salt

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Grease a 23cm pie pan. In a medium sized bowl combine the flour, baking powder and cocoa powder. In a separate bowl whisk the oil, maple syrup, milk, vanilla and salt. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients mixing just until the dry ingredients are thoroughly moistened. Pour the batter into the pie pan and spread evenly with a spatula. Bake for 10 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the crust comes out clean. Allow to cool before adding the filling.

Filling

Ingredients

1 cup water
1 Tbls china grass powder
3 Tbls cocoa powder
2 cups chopped dark chocolate plus ¼ cup chopped dark chocolate for garnish (use non-dairy for vegan option)
340 grams firm tofu
¼ cup caster sugar
2 tsp vanilla essence
1/8 tsp salt

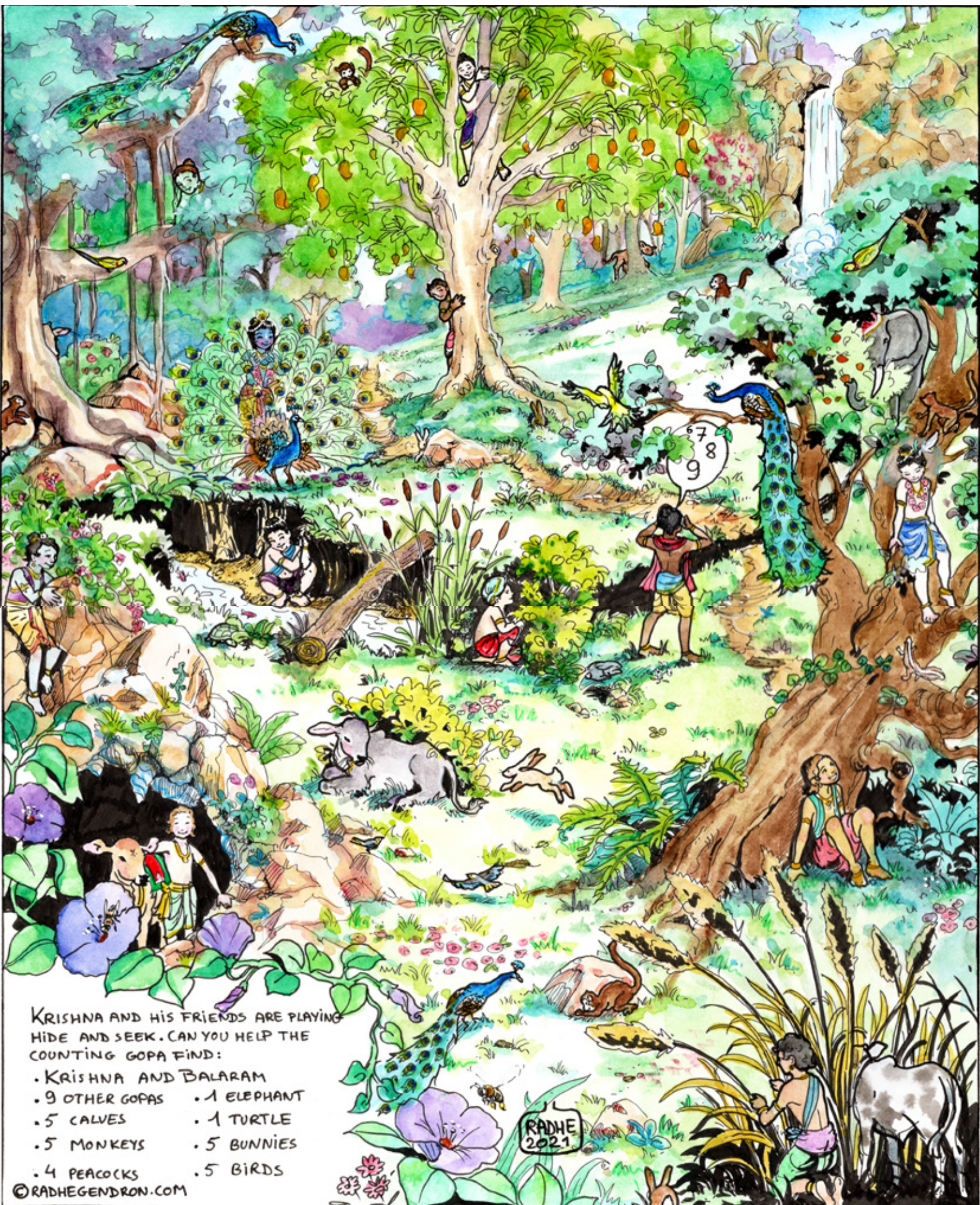
Method

In a small saucepan combine the water, china grass and cocoa powder. Heat until the mixture boils and then lower the heat and gently simmer for 5 minutes. Switch off flame and add in the chopped chocolate. Let sit for a few minutes for the chocolate to melt and then whisk to thoroughly blend into a smooth sauce.

Combine the tofu, sugar, vanilla and salt in a food processor and process until smooth. Pour the melted chocolate mixture into the food processor and process until thoroughly combined. Pour the mixture onto the brownie crust and spread evenly. Let it sit for a few minutes and then sprinkle the reserved chopped chocolate pieces around the edges of the tart; gently pressing them in. Refrigerate for 2 hours or until completely set.

Un-mold and plate with ice-cream and offer to Lord Krishna with love and devotion and then serve.

Krishna Search



KRISHNA AND HIS FRIENDS ARE PLAYING
HIDE AND SEEK. CAN YOU HELP THE
COUNTING GOPA FIND:

- KRISHNA AND BALARAM
- 9 OTHER GOPAS
- 5 CALVES
- 5 MONKEYS
- 4 PEACOCKS
- 1 ELEPHANT
- 1 TURTLE
- 5 BUNNIES
- 5 BIRDS

RADHE
2021