



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

HARE KRISHNA NEWS

May/June 2021



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Govinda
On the Cover
Artwork by Bobby Singh

This art was submitted by Roshika Singh on behalf of her late father, Narrian (Bobby) Singh. It is an honour to posthumously publish this beautiful painting. Roshika and her sister shared some of their Dad's artist and devotional journey with us. Bobby taught Afrikaans at the same high school for almost four decades. He retired at 64 and devoted his time to further his knowledge in religion by regularly attending Sunday Satsang at the Shri Vishnu Mandir in Laudium, Pretoria, and further developing his already artistic and musical talents. Bobby had an interest in painting and sketching throughout his life and he would cut out pictures of scenic landscapes from magazines. He would then paint these sceneries on canvas using water and acrylic paint. He later developed an interest in drawing animals, and then progressed on to painting and sketching human forms. He was self-taught.

In retirement he cultivated drawing deities (from Hindu calendars), and this became his passion. He spent many hours perfecting his sketches, first in pencil, and later, as he grew more confident, painting on canvas. In 2016, Roshika and her sister joined a cooking team at ISKCON Midrand, Johannesburg, and became more involved in devotional service. As a result they developed a deeper interest and they began doing book distribution. They subscribed to Back to Godhead magazine, and Bobby took a keen interest in reading about Krishna consciousness. He was inspired by the art in the publications and that sparked his interest in painting portraits of Krishna.

The cover art is done using water and acrylic paint on a canvas board. Roshika believes that her Dad, being a teacher, would want people to know that one is never too old to learn something new. His passion was various forms of art and they believe that he would want others to take an interest in their hobbies, and further develop their abilities. He would also want people to develop their spiritual understanding and feel inspired by the many captivating devotional art in the world.

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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*

Gauri Devi Dasi
During a darshan in his room in New Dwaraka, I was sitting next to Prabhupada and watching his expressions carefully. One by one, devotees were presenting their preaching services to him – on a college campus, with a newspaper, paintings for his books. Prabhupada looked exhausted as he learned back on his pillows and nodded in approval. Then Ramesvara presented the book distribution report. Immediately, Prabhupada sat up, out his elbows on his desk, his chin in his hands and grinned broadly. He looked like a young boy. Book distribution was dear to Prabhupada.

THE GOLOKA TICKET!

If on the full moon day of the month of Bhādra one places Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam on a golden throne and gives it as a gift, he will attain the supreme transcendental destination.

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In Essence

Book Review

By Byron Kyle

In Essence is an apt name for this book. It reads much like the *Science of Self Realization* and this is a great introductory read into self-inquiry, questions about God, and the basic precepts of *bhakti-yoga*.

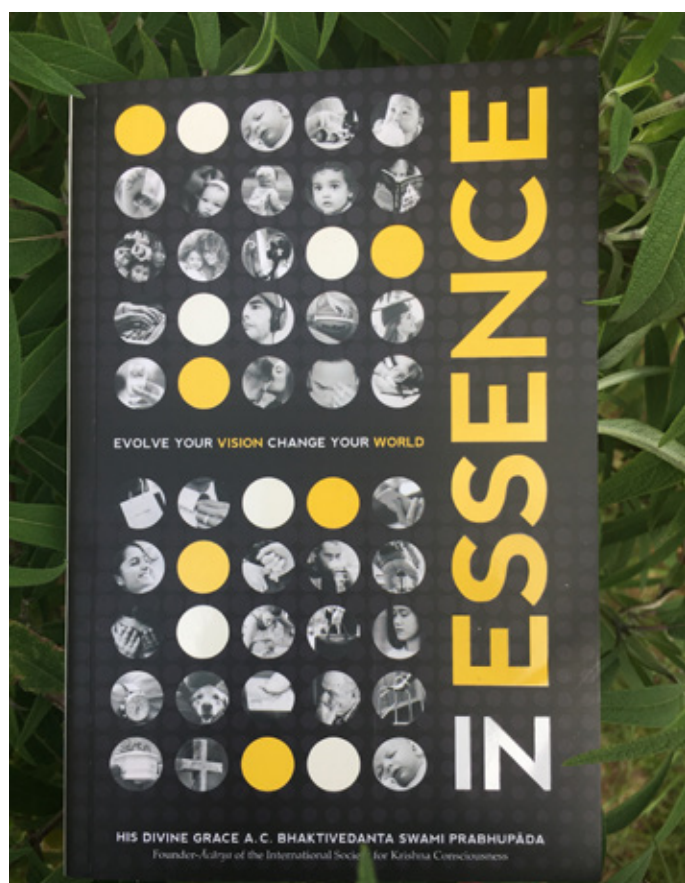
For most of the book the format is question and answer. Later some essays are presented which cover the teachings of the Vedas, an explanation of Krishna consciousness, inquiry into Krishna himself, and the benefits of *bhakti-yoga*.

The book includes thorough appendices in which one can learn how to practice *bhakti-yoga* through *japa*, *kirtan*, offering food, creating a sacred space and altar, and studying sacred texts like the *Bhagavad-gita*.

Lastly, the book contains a brief biography of Srila Prabhupada and a glossary of terms to accompany the answers given to questions posed earlier in the book.

This book is an excellent introduction to those new to spiritual life and *bhakti-yoga*. It will make a superb book for distribution.

In Essence 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: R30



Vaishnava Calendar

21 Jun Mo	Pandava Nirjala Ekadasi
22 Jun Tu	Break fast 06:51 - 06:54
23 Jun We	Panihati Chida Dahi Utsava
4 Jul Su	Sri Srivasa Pandita's Disappearance
5 Jul Mo	Ekadasi
6 Jul Tu	Break fast 06:51 - 10:17
9 Jul Fr	Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's Disappearance (Fast until noon)
	Sri Gadadhara Pandita's Disappearance
10 Jul Sa	Gundica Marjana
11 Jul Su	Ratha Yatra
	Sri Svarupa Damodara Gosvami's Disappearance
20 Jul Tu	Ekadasi
21 Jul We	Break fast 06:47 - 10:17
24 Jul Sa	Guru (Vyasa) Purnima
	Srila Sanatana Gosvami's Disappearance
	First month of Chaturmasya begins (green leafy vegetable fast for one month)
28 Jul We	Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami's Disappearance
1 Aug Su	The incorporation of ISKCON in New York
4 Aug We	Ekadasi
5 Aug Th	Break fast 06:38 - 10:14
18 Aug We	Ekadasi
	Radha Govinda Jhulana Yatra begins
19 Aug Th	Break fast 06:25 - 10:08
	Srila Rupa Gosvami's Disappearance
21 Aug Sa	Last day of the first Chaturmasya month
22 Aug Su	Lord Balarama's Appearance (Fast till noon)
	Jhulana Yatra ends
	Second month of Chaturmasya begins (yogurt fast for one month)

Hare Krishna
Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna
Hare Hare
Hare Rama
Hare Rama
Rama Rama
Hare Hare

Golden Faith and Sturdy Love

Gaura Bhumi Devi Dasi

Fortune never seemed to favour him. Tendrils of simmering anger wafted around Duryodhana's heart and fed the embers of envy which kept him alive. After years of toil, he finally had a secure claim to the throne. The Pandavas (his cousins) and their wife were banished to the forest after losing a gambling match. Granted, the match was rigged in his favour, but that was of little consequence. He would be second-best to no one, least of all Yudhisthira, the eldest Pandava. He needed to ensure that the Pandavas had plentiful suffering for the next decade of their banishment. As Duryodhana drowned in egotistical pity, Durvasa Muni along with his ten thousand disciples arrived and requested food and lodging. The sage was known for his fiery temper and the slightest tick could spark the sages ire. He would not hesitate to cause the downfall of an entire dynasty. Duryodhana's interest was piqued. Day and night he tended to every fickle whim the sage threw at him, no request was too menial for Duryodhana to accomplish. Durvasa was pleasantly surprised with Duryodhana's humble demeanour and offered him a favour. The blackened strands of envy surrounding Duryodhana's heart tightened in delight.

Yudhisthira only had a single complaint about living in the forest. As a king, there was no limit as to how many saints and yogis he could feed at any given moment. His thatched hut had its' limitations, and what is a saintly man without his unbounded compassion? After much prayer, the Sun-god blessed him with a golden pot – the *akshaya patra*. It was capable of creating unlimited foodstuffs until his wife, Draupadi, would eat her sole evening meal. Thereafter, it would produce nothing until the next day. As fate would arrange, Durvasa and his disciples had arrived after Draupadi had eaten, almost as if ordained, requesting food. They had gone to the river to bathe, but would soon return. He turned toward his brothers and Draupadi. Had providence finally turned her back on them?

Tears welled up in the beautiful woman's eyes as she gazed down at the golden bowl in her lotus-like palms. The needle-like envy of others was trying to pierce through the golden strands of faith that sewed her heart together, and oh, did her soul waiver, for even warrior women have moments of ache. Her heart thumped along to the stampede of the ten thousand ascetics and their leader who walked away from her dwelling. Only a miracle could save her. Why did the virtuous always seem to be stranded?

Draupadi wiped her tears and considered the situation. She had no resources of her own, but surely the golden strands encasing her heart would be

enough to weave into a safety net? She cast her net high into the ether, hoping to snare even a smidgen of grace. "I seek shelter, I seek grace, although You may be in another place. Kindly protect me, never forget me. Keep us safe from shame and harm."

A strange gurgling sound broke her concentration. Krishna stood, arms wrapped around His midriff with the faintest blush on His cheeks. "Draupadi, I'll do whatever needs to be done, but please feed me. I am famished!" Draupadi's head dropped in shame, "I can't even offer You a grain of rice. The pot will yield no more." "This isn't the time to joke! Let me have a look." Krishna scrutinized every inch of the pot, "Aha!" and found the tiniest speck of rice and vegetable. As he ate it he said, "May the Soul of Creation be content with this offering and may the God of Sacrifice be satiated. Now Sahadeva, bring the sages back." The Pandavas looked at each other in fear – there was no food in sight! But their safety net tightened with resolve.

Sahadeva, the youngest Pandava, cocked his head in confusion. Where was Durvasa Muni and his disciples? The river itself remained silent as to their whereabouts, nothing but the odd water pot and orange cloth lying asunder.

As soon as the grain had touched Krishna's lips, the sages suddenly felt so full, as if they had eaten a huge feast. Suddenly none of them could even stomach the thought of food. They ran away, fearful of offending the Pandavas, who had probably prepared a grand banquet. He let out a belly-aching laugh as the golden strands around his heart tightened their hold. What could the illumination of faith and the sturdiness of love not cure?



Realizations of an Amateur Gardener

By Karuna-Sakti Devi Dasi

Gardening has been an important part of my family, especially for my father who takes great pride in our well-maintained garden. As a child, and to a large extent, as an adult, I have enjoyed the benefits of having a beautiful garden without putting in effort. In recent years, I have gradually taken on more responsibility in caring for our garden and now realise how much work it actually takes and appreciate how much my father was doing. Similarly, for many years I have been enjoying so much facility in Krishna consciousness, benefiting from the mercy of guru, Prabhupada and Krishna without having to endeavour for it. I realised that at some point I have to take responsibility for my Krishna consciousness and maintaining my *bhakti-lata* (creeper of devotion).

Now that I am more involved in our garden, I realise the constant endeavour required to maintain it. I have to be attentive to watering and removing weeds, otherwise everything quickly goes into disarray. Similarly, in order to maintain the garden of my *bhakti*, I have to be regulated in my endeavour to read, chant, and do service. Otherwise, my *anarthas* or spiritual weeds will take over, making it easy to give into my material desires and neglect my fragile *bhakti-lata*.

Being a new and enthusiastic gardener, I would pull out weeds leaving behind a huge mess of uprooted weeds all around the garden. While my intentions were well placed, I created an even bigger mess that my father had to clean up. While he tolerated my messes for a while, so as to not discourage me, he eventually would pass a comment, or sometimes enlist my mother to politely encourage me to clean up after myself. This made me reflect

on all the times, in my immature enthusiasm to do service, I inadvertently created a mess for other devotees to clean up. I realised now how tolerant and patient they were because they didn't want me to feel discouraged. I mistook their tolerance as confirmation of my excellent service and became proud of my "wonderful accomplishments." In time the devotees had to politely and sometimes not so politely correct me. At the time, my pride did not allow me to see the humility and love for me in both their tolerance of my mistakes and their attempts to correct me so that I could grow.

Another conflict arose from my enthusiasm for gardening. I only cared for the plants that I deemed important. However, the other "unimportant" plants were important to my parents. Frustrated with my blinkered watering priorities, my parents could not trust me to take care of the whole garden. My imbalanced approach made it more difficult for them as they had to do even more work. I reflect on my imbalanced approach to service, where I only gave energy to services that I felt were important or that I enjoyed while neglecting others. I failed to see how all our services are important and collectively contribute to the welfare of Prabhupada's ISKCON.

I would regularly buy plants without consideration of the space needed for them to grow properly, the proper time for planting, or knowing how to plant them. Often my father had to rescue those poor plants, and sadly he was not always successful. This made me think about the times I initiated a service or tried to cultivate someone in a manner that was more destructive than helpful. How many times I could have saved myself much trouble if I had only consulted someone? If I only had leaned on and learned from the experience of others?

The aspect of gardening that I found required the



most vigilance and constant endeavour was the removal of weeds. Weeds grow without endeavour. A little rain and they spring up everywhere. There were times when I did not treat weeds as a high priority and they grew wild, taking over the garden. Now, not only did I have to put in an even greater effort to remove them but they also hindered the growth of valuable plants. In the process of removing the jungle of weeds, I found myself accidentally uprooting important plants.

On the path of devotion, *anarthas* do not need encouragement to grow. The seeds of *anarthas* have been scattered throughout my heart from numerous past lives. Even slight indulgences in seeming innocence can act as showers of rain for *anarthas* to sprout. Unless I am vigilant, *anarthas* will become deeply rooted and completely overrun my devotion making it even more difficult to change unwanted habits. When I allow my *anarthas* to become all-consuming, I end up neglecting my devotional practice. This leads to a downward spiral where I become so overwhelmed that I feel like giving up on everything. At others times, I swing like a pendulum to the opposite extreme, where I frantically over endeavour to fix things, I act without thinking and nearly uproot my *bhakti-lata*. In some instances, I severely damaged it, to say the least. Only by careful nurturing with *japa*, reading Prabhupada's books and the association of devotees was I able to resurrect my fragile *bhakti-lata*.

Once my father amusingly remarked that I was happily watering the weeds. Of course, in order to be vigilant against weeds, one needs to discriminate what a weed is from what is not. In my ignorance I could not tell the difference, as a result, I was focusing all my effort in the wrong place. In my Krishna Consciousness, I have often lacked discernment between what is desirable and what is undesirable. I

fooled myself into believing that I was advancing in my spiritual life when in fact I was going in reverse. By taking shelter of Prabhupada and the holy name, my vision has become clearer, making it easier to discern what is favourable and unfavourable for *bhakti*.

Some weeds are deceptive, appearing small and innocent, yet when I try to pull them out, I realise that they have deep roots. Sometimes I only break off the surface stem, leaving the root to regrow. The only way to uproot them completely is to dig them out with a spade or fork and with a lot of effort. Interestingly, the same stubborn weeds, are easier to pull out, sometimes even by hand, after very heavy rain when the ground is very wet and soft. At times I have underestimated the power of certain seemingly innocent habits, mistakenly believing that I had overcome them, only for the habit to resurface. I have to work very hard to properly uproot my bad habits, yet when I take shelter of Krishna, absorbing myself in *japa*, reading Prabhupada's books, associating with devotees, the same challenges are much easier to overcome because Prabhupada and Krishna are helping.

With a little experience and knowledge, I have come to realise that I cannot maintain our family garden by myself. It is something that my parents and I do together as a team. The process of devotional service is supposed to start with *sraddha* or faith, however by the mercy of Lord Caitanya and the devotees, I am able to get *sadhu sanga*, or the association of devotees, even with my lack of faith. My *bhakti-lata* is growing in the garden of my heart and through *sadhu sanga*, I have strength in the process of devotion and can tend to my creeper so that it grows into a strong tree and will eventually bare the fruit of love for Krishna.



Peanut Butter Biscuits

The Vaishnava Chef

By Chandrasekhara Das

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cake flour
 $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp baking soda
 $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp salt
1 tbs ground flax seed
3 tbs warm water
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup brown sugar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup peanut butter
1 tbs vanilla essence
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter
3 tbs milk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ground peanuts (optional)



Method

Preheat the oven to 190°C. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt in a small bowl and set aside. Whip the flax seed powder with the warm water until thick and creamy. In a large bowl combine the butter, brown sugar, peanut butter, milk and vanilla and beat until well blended. Add in the whipped flax mixture and beat until just blended. Add in the dry ingredients and ground peanuts, if using, and mix until well combined. Drop rounded tablespoons of dough onto parchment lined cookie sheets. Flatten slightly in a crisscross pattern with a fork. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until lightly golden brown. Remove from oven and let cool for 5 minutes before handling. Cool completely on a cooling rack before storing. Offer to Krishna with love and devotion.

Design your own decorations

Dress Lord Jagannath

