



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS
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HARE KRISHNA NEWS

September/October 2026

Cover Art Design by Prema-vanya Devi Dasi



Kartik 2026



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Vaishnava Calendar

22 Oct Th	Ekadasi
23 Oct Fr	Break fast 05:09 - 09:30 Srila Raghunath Das Gosvami's Disappearance Srila Raghunath Bhatta Gosvami's Disappearance Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Gosvami's Disappearance
26 Oct Mo	Sharad Purnima: 1st Night of Kartik Sri Krishna Sharadiya Rasayatra Fourth month of Caturmasya begins (Fast from urad dal for one month.)
30 Oct Fr	Srila Narottam Das Thakur's Disappearance
2 Nov Mo	Bahulastami
5 Nov Th	Ekadasi
6 Nov Fr	Break fast 04:57 - 07:02
9 Nov Mo	Diwali
10 Nov Tu	Govardhana Puja Go Puja
13 Nov Fr	Tirobhava of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (Fast till noon)
17 Nov Tu	Gopastami
20 Nov Fr	Srila Gaura Kishora Das Babaji's Disappearance (Fast till noon)
21 Nov Sa	Ekadasi First day of Bhishma Panchaka
22 Nov Su	Break fast 04:49- 09:24
24 Nov Tu	Kartik Purnima: Last Night of Kartik Sri Krsna Rasayatra Tulasi-Saligram Vivaha (marriage) Sri Nimbarkacharya's Appearance Last day of Bhishma Panchaka
4 Dec Fr	Ekadasi
5 Dec Sa	Break fast 04:47 - 09:26

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Srila Prabhupada's Formula

Living With Srila Prabhupada

By Madhu Chandra Das

Once, Srila Prabhupada and his godbrother, Dr. Kapoor had a meeting. This was earlier, when Srila Prabhupada was still in grihastha ashram (householder life). Srila Prabhupada was a successful chemist and pharmacist. He owned a shop where he sold medicines and even manufactured his own drugs. On that occasion, Srila Prabhupada gifted Dr. Kapoor a tonic that he had created. Dr. Kapoor, appreciative of the gift, asked Srila Prabhupada a deeper question.

Dr. Kapoor said, "This gift of yours is nice, and I must accept it. But what I really wish is that you would give me the formula for the tonic you take—the tonic of *krishna-prema* (love of Krishna). Would you be willing to share the formula for developing a love of God?"

Srila Prabhupada humbly replied, "I don't have that tonic, but I do have the formula." Intrigued, Dr. Kapoor asked, "Oh, excellent! If it is not a secret, please tell me what the formula is." Srila Prabhupada then shared a profound truth that is at the heart of devotional practice: he recited the third verse of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's *Siksastaka*:

*trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna
amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harih*

"One can chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street. One should be more tolerant

than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and ready to offer all respects to others. In such a state of mind, one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly."

This simple yet profound formula shared by Srila Prabhupada encapsulates the essence of the path to *krishna-prema*. The secret to all spiritual success lies in chanting the holy names of Krishna with humility, tolerance, and respect for others. Srila Prabhupada's unwavering faith in the holy name was evident long before he embarked on his preaching mission to the West. This faith was the foundation of his strength, enabling him to serve his spiritual master and ultimately to spread Krishna consciousness around the world.

Srila Prabhupada's deep faith in the power of the holy name is further expressed in a poem he wrote upon arriving at Boston Harbor, known as *Markine Bhagavata Dharma*. In one of the verses, he humbly prays: "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. I have no devotion, nor do I have any knowledge, but I have strong faith in the holy name of Krishna. I have been designated as Bhaktivedanta, and now, if You like, You can fulfil the real purport of Bhaktivedanta."

Srila Prabhupada's life and teachings remind us that the holy name is the most potent and accessible means to develop love for God. By chanting with humility and sincerity, we can unlock the treasure of *krishna-prema*, just as Srila Prabhupada did and taught others to do.



Kartik: The Power of Bhakti Revealed

Message from the Temple President

Devadeva Das

Among all the sacred months observed by Vaishnavas, Kartik holds a uniquely cherished place and is embraced throughout ISKCON with deep enthusiasm.

In temples and homes around the world, devotees gather each evening to offer lamps to Lord Damodar, sing the *Damodarastaka*, undertake particular vows, and increase hearing, chanting, and service.

Yet the glory of Kartik lies in more than beautiful observances. Its true splendour rests in the revelation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, controller of all the universes, who allows Himself to be bound by the love of His devotee. That astonishing truth, revealed in the *damodar-lila* of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (SB), gives Kartik its enduring sweetness and depth.

A Captivating Scene

There are but a few descriptions in the revealed scriptures as captivating as Mother Yashoda chasing after her mischievous child after He broke a pot and stole the butter. She decides to bind Him so He will not continue His pranks. She takes a rope and tries to tie it around His waist. But each time the rope is too short, by exactly two fingers. She adds more rope. Still too short. Again, she tries. Again, it fails. Only when Krishna sees her exhausted by loving effort does He finally allow Himself to be bound.

This is no ordinary childhood scene. The child standing before Mother Yashoda is the same Supreme Lord sought by *yogis*, glorified by the Vedas, and worshipped by great demigods. Yet here He trembles before His mother, tears in His eyes, and submits to her affection. Srila Prabhupada repeatedly draws our attention to this extraordinary point in his purports: Krishna, the Supreme Controller, is controlled by the love of His devotee. This is the unique excellence of *bhakti*.

Two Fingers

At the centre of this pastime stands one of its most treasured details: the rope is always two fingers too short. The Vaishnava *acharyas* explain, and Srila Prabhupada echoes in his purport to SB 10.9.16, that the two fingers represent two essential principles of spiritual life: sincere endeavour and the mercy of the Lord. *The first finger is the devotee's effort*. Krishna consciousness is not attained cheaply. One must hear attentively, chant sincerely, render service, follow spiritual discipline, and shape one's life around devotional principles. Kartik naturally inspires such effort. Devotees rise earlier, chant with added seriousness, hear more from *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and take up extra devotional practices with renewed purpose. The month invites us to gather the rope of *sadhana* and try again. But effort alone is not enough. *The second finger is Krishna's mercy*. No amount of learning, austerity, or discipline can compel the Lord to reveal Himself. He remains supremely independent. He is not captured by force, but by love; not by self-sufficiency, but by surrender. Spiritual advancement reaches completion only when sincere endeavour is met by the Lord's mercy.

The Season of Special Mercy

This is one of Kartik's most powerful lessons. *Bhakti* is neither passive nor mechanical. One must do everything possible to approach Lord Krishna, while knowing that success ultimately depends on His causeless mercy. As long as we rely on our own strength, the rope remains short. When humble effort is joined with dependence on Lord Krishna, the impossible becomes possible.

For this reason, Kartik is treasured as a month of special mercy. In *The Nectar of Devotion*, Srila Prabhupada notes the exceptional value of devotional activities performed during this period. The practices themselves may be simple: a lamp offered before the Deity, a prayer sung every night, a vow observed with sincerity, extra services rendered, but the spiritual effect is great. Kartik does not change the process of *bhakti*; it intensifies its atmosphere. It invites the soul to approach Lord Krishna with greater softness, greater attention, greater longing, and to try to develop greater love.

From Majesty to Sweetness

That mood is deeply personal. During Kartik, devotees do not meditate only on Lord Krishna as the almighty Lord. They remember Him as Damodar, the child of Mother Yashoda, the butter thief of Vrindavan, the Lord whose waist was bound by ropes of love.

This shift is significant. It brings forward the distinctive glory of Lord Krishna in the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition: not only His supreme power, but His supreme sweetness.

Generally, God is approached primarily through awe and reverence. But in Vrindavan, the Lord's sweetness eclipses His majesty. Mother Yashoda does not think, "Here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead." She thinks, "Here is my son." Her love is so pure that it covers the awareness of His divinity. Srila Prabhupada often emphasised that the spontaneous love of the residents of Vrindavan is the highest expression of devotion. Lord Krishna takes greater pleasure in that intimate affection than in formal worship offered from a distance.

The Language of Bhakti

Kartik draws the heart toward sweetness. Its observances are simple, but they are never superficial. The daily offering of a ghee lamp while singing the *Damodarastaka* is a striking example. Externally, it is a small act. Yet in the language of *bhakti*, such an offering can carry immense meaning. Krishna declares in *Bhagavad-gita* (9.26) that He accepts even a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water when offered with devotion. Kartik gives devotees a beautiful opportunity to live that verse daily.

When a devotee offers a lamp to Lord Damodar, that act becomes an expression of the first finger, the endeavour. It is a conscious step toward remembrance, service, and surrender. At the same time, the offering is made in dependence on the second finger, the Lord's mercy. No sincere devotee stands before Damodar thinking, "I have attained." Rather, the prayer is, "Please accept this small offering. Please purify my heart. Please let me come closer to You."

Hope

This is why Kartik is so encouraging, especially for struggling devotees. In conditioned life, one encounters distraction, inconsistency, and lingering *anarthas*. Even after years of practice, one may feel far from pure devotion. But the *damodar-lila* does not end in failure. Mother Yashoda does not succeed immediately, yet she does not give up. She persists, and Krishna responds. Her repeated effort, born of love, draws His mercy.

So too for us. Kartik offers hope to the soul that feels weak, distracted, or unqualified. It does not demand perfection; it invites sincerity. It teaches that no genuine effort in devotional service is ever lost. Srila Prabhupada stressed this repeatedly: even a little advancement in *bhakti* is permanent and spiritually significant. Kartik embodies that truth in a particularly tender way. It welcomes repeated attempts. It sanctifies the small offering. It assures the devotee that perseverance in Krishna consciousness is itself pleasing to the Lord.

The Real Glory

This is the real glory of Kartik. It reveals that Krishna is conquered only by love. It teaches that sincere effort in devotional service is essential, but incomplete without mercy. It elevates simple acts of devotion into profound expressions of surrender. And it reminds us that the goal of spiritual life is not merely to acknowledge God's greatness, but to awaken loving service to the all-attractive Lord of Vrindavan.

Each evening, as lamps are raised and the *Damodarastaka* is sung, devotees stand before that same mystery that astonished Mother Yashoda: the Supreme Lord can be approached, pleased, and even bound by devotion. *The rope remains two fingers too short until endeavour meets mercy. And when mercy comes, the heart draws nearer to Lord Krishna.* That is why Kartik is so deeply loved. In this sacred month, the unconquerable Lord becomes conquerable, the infinite becomes intimate, and the devotee is reminded once again that the path back to Lord Krishna is illuminated by two truths alone: sincere effort and His causeless mercy. May Lord Damodar shower His causeless mercy upon you! Hare Krishna!



The Inner Adventure

2026 Bhakti Yoga Society National Retreat

Where Students & Self-Discovery Meet

By Vasanti Devi Dasi

The Night-Before Hype Was Already Building...

On eve of September 10th, the Inner Adventure WhatsApp group was buzzing with excitement. Students were introducing themselves, packing bags, planning their social schedules, worrying about waking up early, and asking one another—with increasing anticipation—what exactly the weekend had in store.

By the following morning, 66 students and facilitators from Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Durban were set to travel to the fresh, picturesque retreat destination of Banana Beach Holiday Resort on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast. They were also paving the way for a more important sojourn, the journey within. The adventure had finally begun.

Finding Signal — Creating Space to Connect

Students had arrived sans the usual everyday distractions and pressures, entering a setting where there was room to pause, connect and explore. After settling in and having dinner, everyone gathered in the conference room for an evening of fun, connection, and laughter.



Introductions were made, teams were formed, war cries were forged, and friendships began. The guests of honour were Svayam Bhagavan Keshava Swami and Bhakti Sarvajna Gauranga Swami who arrived just in time to help ground the exuberant energy towards thoughtfulness, contemplation, and intention-setting for the weekend ahead. Keshava Swami was fresh out of a semester at the Harvard School of Divinity and has been a global social media sensation presenting *bhakti* philosophy in a relatable and authentic way. Gauranga Swami is our youngest South African *sannyasi*, who himself connected to the process of Krishna consciousness in a similar Bhakti Yoga Society (BYS) student retreat in Pretoria. They formed a powerful duo.

Keshava Swami's introductory interactive session planted the seed of curiosity. He opened up the floor for students to conduct thought experiments and question and express themselves. A lively *kirtan* with Gauranga Swami and the Harinaam-Ruchi team had students singing, dancing, and joyfully bringing the evening to a high-energy close. It set the tone perfectly.

Beyond the Mask — A Call to Look Deeper

The next morning, the WhatsApp chat revealed that while some students were awake and energetic, others were negotiating with their alarm clocks or trying to "defrost" in the morning chill. In between laughter and logistics a rhythm emerged: yoga at sunrise, morning mantra recharge (*japa*), and "Beyond the Mask," where Keshava Swami inspired students to think deeply and search for inner meaning by building a life of internal value and character. "Let's not only create 'to-do' lists; let's also create 'to-be' lists."

The message inspired everyone to consider not only what they wanted to achieve, but who they wanted to become: people of character beyond the mask of external achievements.



Challenge Accepted — Three Pillars of Amazing Grace

The day continued with a team-building exercise. The teams reconvened with their war cries and embarked on a series of challenges.

Broken Telephone taught the importance of authentic sources of knowledge, specifically from realized teachers (gurus). *Blindfolded Across a Floor of Lava* challenged teams to navigate a large space using only three moving rubber blocks while blindfolded. It demonstrated the importance of a like-minded community—or *sadhus*—when navigating life's challenges. Finally, a heated game of Charades had teams acting out and guessing phrases from the *Bhagavad Gita*, introducing the concept of *sastra*, or scripture. Some students also teamed up for a volleyball match before lunch.

Navigating Life's Currents — The Courage to Question

Keshava Swami turned up the heat by inviting students to have an open and honest debate with him. Maharaja selected a WITS alumni student as an opponent. Affectionately named "The Tormentor," the student presented a series of charged questions on the soul and karma & reincarnation, and a debate ensued. It opened the door for students to participate wholeheartedly and even challenge the thoughts presented. Maharaja responded thoughtfully and respectfully, using quick, sharp wit and conviction to articulate the authenticity of the spiritual path. The evening reached a spectacular crescendo with a huge bonfire *kirtan* on the beach, led

by Harinam-Ruchi. The flames and the *kirtan* roaring into the night sky and the ocean roared alongside them. Gauranga Swami boldly answered nearly 50 rapid-fire, pre-written questions submitted by the students – a fantastic close!

The Inner Compass — Life Is Not Happening to You, It's Happening For You!

The final morning came too soon. In the last *Mantra Recharge* session with Gauranga Swami, he invited the students to join his daily online *japa* sessions. The heartbeat of the morning was hearing from the students. One by one, they shared their reflections, highlights and appreciations from their time together. It was evident they had been impacted in a meaningful way. Some laughed, some cried, and some shared deeply moving sentiments. A resounding common thread ran through their reflections: gratitude. The students were deeply grateful to have met our special guests and each other. They appreciated the art of mantra meditation and how it calmed their minds. They wanted to keep the connections made with both people and practices.

And finally, many were astounded to discover that they were no longer alone. They had found a tribe of fellow students who were just like them: deep thinkers, questioners of the meaning of life, and explorers in search of truth. Without a retreat like this, that search can often feel like a very isolated path. Instead, they had made friends, met wise teachers, and discovered practical tools to help them navigate the biggest journey of all: *The Inner Adventure*.

Help Us Continue the Journey

Bhakti Yoga Society (National) is a self-funded student-outreach initiative serving students across South Africa. BYS Durban is active in UKZN, at both Howard College and Westville Campus. Our online shop, markets and various fundraising initiatives help us make these valuable events possible. You can help us connect students to the process of *bhakti*. If you feel inspired to support this journey, we would love to hear from you. To find out how you can contribute, volunteer or get involved, please contact: Rukmini Devi Dasi on +27 84 579 1080. Together, we can help create more spaces where students discover that the journey inward does not have to be walked alone.



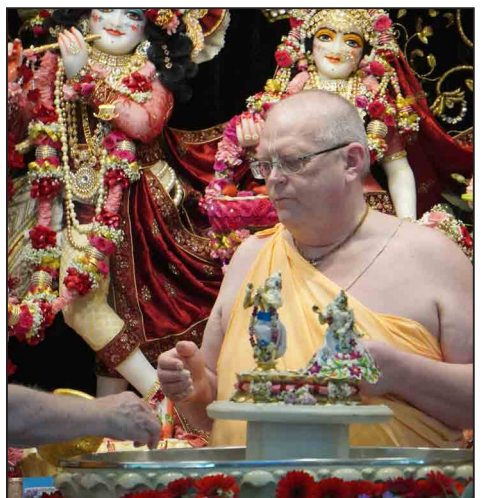


Sri Krishna Janmashtami





Sri Vyasa-puja





Sri Sri Radha Radhanath

Soul Poetry

By Nrsimhadeva Das

On the warm coast where the Indian Ocean sings,
Where jacaranda and frangipani learn your name,
Rises a home of ghee-lamps and *kirtan*—
Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple, in Durban's heart
of flame.

Not Vrindavan's forest, but Durban's summer rain,
Not the Yamuna, but the waves at uShaka's shore.
Yet here too Radha's bangles answer the conch,
And Radhanath still steers the chariot to every
door.

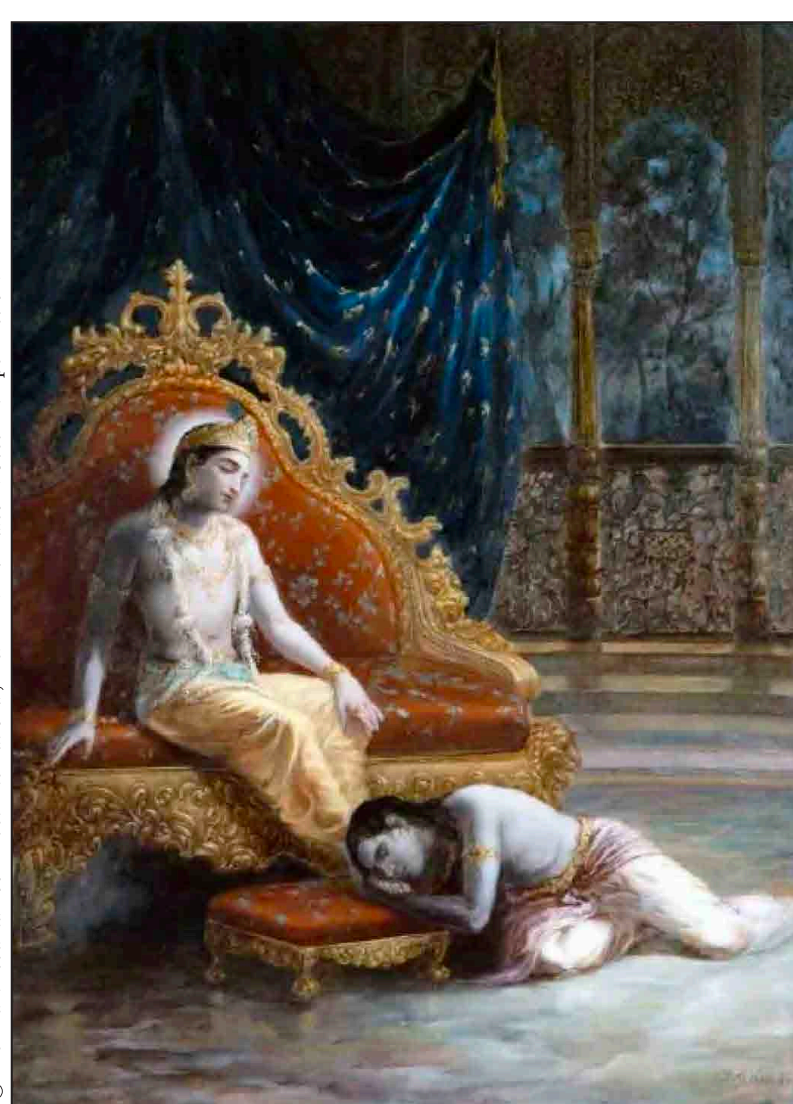
Marble cool under bare feet at *mangala-arati*,
Incense threading through the hum of N3 traffic.
Mothers in *saris*, children with *tilak* bright,
Grandfathers chanting while the gulls call back.

Sri Radha — you are the monsoon in our prayer,
Turning dust to green on temple verandas.
Sri Radhanath — you hold the reins of this city,
Guiding taxis, students, nurses, aunties, and uncles
home.

From Chatsworth to Isipingo, from Phoenix to the
Berea,
They carry your *prasad* in *tiffins* and in hope.
Kirtan lifts over tin roofs and palm trees,
And for a moment, South Africa breathes like
Vrindavan.

Two names, one love, one temple light,
Where the Ganges meets the Indian Ocean tide.
Sri Sri RadhaRathanath, in Durban we found,
That home is wherever You choose to reside.

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Letter for the Gopis

Soul Poetry

By Kusum Sarovara Dasi

I spent my days in Mathura,
thinking of Vrindavan.
I felt hopeless and sad.
I missed my cows,
my trees,
my friends,
Mother Yashoda
and Nanda Baba.
But most importantly,
my *gopis*.
I sent Uddhava,
my trusted friend and relative,
to travel on this journey,
delivering nothing but a letter
and a few words.
In my letter I said:
"I have not forgotten you.
Just remember Me,
that I am always with you,
even when you cannot see Me.
I am within your hearts.
I will return."
Uddhava was the vessel of My words.
He did his duty.
He carried out what I could not carry—
words meant only for My *gopis*.



Chelsea Buns

The Vaishnava Chef

By Ananga Sundari Dasi

Ingredients

450g strong bread flour
1 tsp salt
75g (approx. 75ml) castor sugar
7g sachet instant yeast
150ml milk
170ml water
50g butter
Cranberries and/or raisins
Sugar for sprinkling
Cinnamon powder for sprinkling
1 tbsp melted butter for brushing

Icing

Milk & icing sugar

Method

- Warm up the milk, water and the butter and allow to cool until lukewarm.

- Using a hand mixer with the dough attachment, combine all of the dry ingredients and gradually add in the lukewarm mixture. Knead the dough until well combined and still slightly sticky.
- Allow the dough to proof for an hour in a warm place, keeping the dough fully covered and sealed.
- Punch back the dough once it has risen and add in dried cranberries and/or raisins. Roll out into a rectangular shape roughly about 3cm in thickness. Spread on melted butter, a drizzle of sugar and cinnamon. Roll out the dough into a log shape and cut out discs.
- Place the discs in a buttered casserole or baking sheet and allow to proof for another 30 minutes.
- Bake on 180°C for 40 minutes, checking regularly.
- Once the buns are removed from oven, make a thick but runny icing with milk and sugar. Drizzle on the warm buns and allow to cool.
- Offer to Krishna with love and devotion, and then serve.



KARTIK - PLAYER LEVEL UP



For the Kids • By Lila Suka Devi Dasi



Hare Krishna little Friends!
My name is Dadhilobha. I have a
special secret to share. Its all
about how you can level up this
Kartik! Like in all your favorite
video games.



Game Start!

WHAT IS KARTIK?

Kartik is a special time of year.
When you remember Krishna. In
this month you get EXTRA special
spiritual player points!



HOW DO I GET SPIRITUAL POINTS?

Here's the fun part!

When you visit a temple, you can offer ghee lamps to the deities. You can even offer ghee lamps at home every day to a picture of Krishna. Remember to always ask a grown-up first.



You can also offer flowers, fruit, and even make special arts and crafts for Krishna!



There you have it my little friends! Now I have to swing back to another exciting butter stealing pastime with my Supreme Bestie Krishna! Before I go one more tip. Chanting the Maha mantra equals bonus points! Heres a fun rhyme too. I like to sing it when Krishna feeds me butter.



MAHA MANTRA

Hare Krishna Hare krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama
Rama Rama Hare Hare

Stealing butter

Sung to the tune of Here we go around the Mulberry Bush

This is the way we steal the butter, steal the butter, steal the butter

This is the way we steal the butter when the Gopis not looking!

Makenchor! Makenchor!

We all get caught!

This is the way we run from the Gopis, run from the Gopis, run from the

Gopis, this is the way we run from the Gopis.

Makenchor! Makenchor!

We all get caught!



So Many Festivals, So Much Love!

By Gaura Bhumi Devi Dasi

Sometimes it can feel like Krishna consciousness leaves no space for breathing.

One festival finishes and before the temple floor has dried, another one is already waiting. An immense amount of energy, time, dedication, and love goes into each and every festival celebrated – from the logistics, *prasad* preparation and serve out, to the programme co-ordination and deity worship – all for us to look at the calendar and realise that there is yet another festival just around the corner.

Sometimes it can feel like a lot. But perhaps this is exactly the point. It is so easy to forget Krishna. Life gets busy. The mind becomes occupied with work, family, responsibilities, plans, and problems. A whole day can pass before you realise that Krishna hardly entered your thoughts at all.

And in response to this, Krishna in all of His abundance gives us opportunities of love through year-round festivals. He gives us another reason to come to the temple. Another opportunity to hear His name. Another excuse to cook for Him, decorate the temple for Him, sing for Him, serve His devotees, and sit together to hear His glories. It is almost as if Krishna keeps finding ways to remind us of the space He occupies in our life.

And then comes Kartik – a whole month dedicated to remembering Him in a particularly intimate way. Even within this one month, there is so much to remember and celebrate. From the daily lamp offerings to the wonderful celebrations, and the personal practices we all aspire to deepen within the month.

It would be hard to do everything perfectly, but perhaps what we should be focusing on is the opportunity love presents within relationships – that little lamp offered to Lord Damodar after a long day. The few minutes spent singing the *Damodarastaka*. The *prasad* prepared with love. The kirtan joined in, even when you are

tired. The moments where we pause, look around, and really notice Krishna in everything.

In the *Bhagavad-gita*, Srila Prabhupada highlights Krishna's advice to Arjuna in that it is not right to abandon responsibilities to focus on spiritual life. Rather, Arjuna is encouraged to continue with his occupation and remember Krishna simultaneously.

Life is rife with responsibility. Sometimes tiredness seeps in, and sometimes the mind is everywhere except where we want it to be. Krishna consciousness does not mean waiting for the perfect quiet moment when everything is finally under control.

It means finding Krishna in the centre of it all.

And perhaps that is one of the beautiful purposes of the festivals celebrated within the Bhakti tradition. They help us remember Krishna while we are living our life.

So perhaps the busy spiritual calendar can be viewed a little differently.

Instead of staring in tired wonder at the next festival and wondering where the energy to serve will come from, we can accept it as another opportunity to love. What a beautiful kind of exhaustion that is.

Maybe this is one of Krishna's greatest gifts – He is so eager to give us opportunities to come back to Him that He fills the year with reminders. So as Kartik approaches, welcome it not as another thing to fit into an already busy life, but as a loving invitation.

An invitation to slow down. To light a lamp. To sing a little more. To remember a little more. To become a little closer.

And just as Krishna is so eager to give us every opportunity to remember Him, may we also remember Him with that same fondness – eagerly, lovingly, and without respite.

