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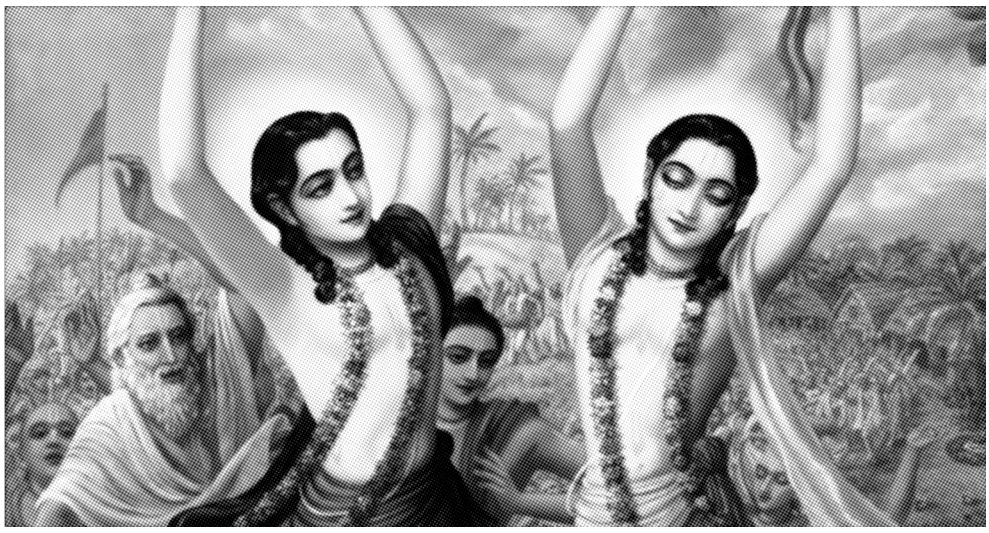
Festivals & Special Days

6 Oct— Indira Ekadasi

Fast from grains and beans.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna then replied, *"This Holy day is called Indira Ekadasi. If a person fasts on this day, all his sins are eradicated and his forefathers who have fallen into hell are liberated. Oh best of kings, one who simply hears about this sacred Ekadasi achieves the great merit earned by performing a horse sacrifice."*

Break fast on 7 Oct between 7.10 -10.55.



If only life came with an instruction manual

Imagine you bought a computer. You would receive an instruction manual from the people who made it, explaining how to use it.

How much more complicated are we, our lives, and the world around us? We are baffled by so many questions. Why am I here? Why do I suffer? What should I be doing? What happens after death? Is there a greater purpose to life?

What if there were an instruction manual for life that answered these questions? Would you read it?

The Bhagavad-gita is such a book. Bhagavad means "of God", and Gita means "song". It is "The Song of God" because Krishna, God Himself, is speaking.

Are we ready to listen?

At the beginning of the Gita, Arjuna is confused. He doesn't know what to do. He has tried to work things out himself, but finally accepts that he needs help and tells Krishna:

"*Now I am Your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me.*"— Bhagavad-gita 2.7

Arjuna's willingness to listen marks the point at which Krishna can begin giving him clear answers.

In bhakti, the first step is *sravanam*, hearing. Spiritual life begins by hearing about Krishna from those who have received this knowledge before us.

Krishna explains that this knowledge is passed down through disciplic succession, from teacher to student. He tells Arjuna that He is giving him this ancient knowledge "***because you are My devotee as well as My friend***." (Bhagavad-gita 4.3)

This tells us how we should read the Gita. We should accept that we don't have all the answers and that we need instruction from a higher source.

Srila Prabhupada encourages us to accept, at least theoretically while we are reading, that Krishna is God and that these are His words. We should also read the Gita in the mood of Arjuna. Arjuna was not trying to prove Krishna wrong or change His words. He listened as Krishna's friend and devotee, with humility and a sincere desire to understand.

So when we open the Gita, we can approach it in the same spirit: with humility and a sincere desire to understand Krishna's message.

If you have a copy, read a little every day, even just one verse. Gandhi famously read the Gita every day, saying: "*When doubts haunt me and my mind is restless, I turn to the Bhagavad-gīita. A single verse gives me peace.*"

If you don't have a copy, write to us at the address at the bottom of this newsletter and we'll send you one. You can then continue exploring the Gita with us.



Chant: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare

A verse to remember

Arjuna stopped trying to work everything out himself and turned to Krishna, ready to listen.

Bhagavad-gita 2.7

kārpaṇya-doṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ

pṛcchāmi tvāṁ dharma-sammūḍha-cetāḥ

yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me

śiṣyas te ’haṁ śādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam

Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of miserly weakness. In this condition I am asking You to tell me for certain what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me.

Chanting Tips - Try This

Most Important Is The Hearing

"*Chanting japa should be done early in the morning with full concentration preferably during the Brahma Muhurta time [before sunrise]. Concentrate fully on the sound vibration of the mantra, pronouncing each name distinctly and gradually your speed in chanting will increase naturally. Do not worry so much about chanting fast, most important is the hearing.*" - Srila Prabhupada, Letter to Radhavallabha — Bombay, January 6, 1972

While chanting, say each word clearly and listen carefully to what you are chanting.

Srila Prabhupada said, "*Just try to hear yourself chant sincerely.*"

When you notice your mind wandering, don't worry. Bring your attention back to the sound of the mantra. If it helps, say the words a little more clearly or a little louder, and listen carefully again.

So the most important item is śravaṇam, or hearing. If you do not do anything else, if you simply sincerely hear about God, then gradually you will be God conscious."

- Srila Prabhupada, Initiation Lecture - Caracas, February 22, 1975

Did you know...

Did you know Nelson Mandela memorised verses from the Bhagavad-gita during his imprisonment on Robben Island? A fellow inmate taught him, and they recited and discussed them to keep their minds sharp and spirits strong. Years later, Mandela could still finish verses when they were quoted to him.

Try learning a verse by heart. Read it aloud several times, then cover it and see how much you can remember. When you know it by heart, you can reflect and draw on the wisdom when you need it most.

Getting Started

If you would like to begin practising Krishna consciousness, write to us to request a worship pack, including books and a set of beads. If you already have some items, let us know and we can send you whatever else you need. You are also welcome to write with any questions about Krishna consciousness.

For your starter worship pack, please write to:

Mother Amala

Hare Krishna Chaplaincy

ISKCON London Radha-Krishna Temple

10 Soho Street

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