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**Focus on Food**



Highlights of the issue:

-  Vedic Solution to Food Problem
-  Forbidden Food Not even as Medicine
-  Perfection of Life Through Food
-  Standard Devotee Diet
-  Result of 'Simply Wonderful'
-  Village Out-reach Program to Belgaum

**You will one day become Krishna conscious, simply by eating**

Srila Prabhupada: "We are giving you prasadam. By eating, eating, eating, eating, you one day will become Krishna conscious, simply by eating. Because you are so dull, you cannot understand the philosophy. You know the belly like the animals. So therefore we are giving facility, "All right, fill up your belly, and you'll be infected." As you take foodstuff from an infected area, you become infected with some disease, so this is Krishna-infected, prasadam. You take it, and one day you'll be diseased with Krishna consciousness." Source: Fiji, April 30, 1976.

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# Srila Prabhupada Speaks on Food

## Forbidden Food Items Not to be Taken Even as a Medicine

**Hari-śauri:** We were told it (aloe vera) was good for relieving high blood pressure and clearing the...

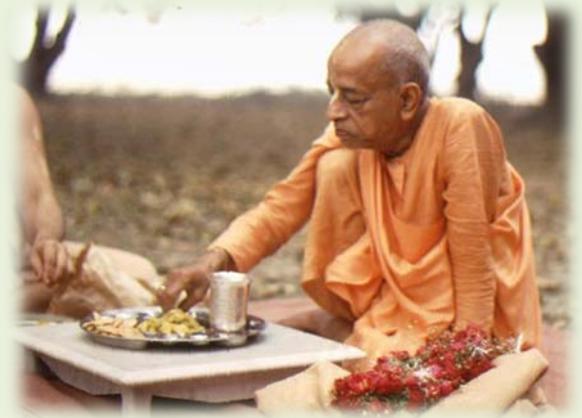
**Indian man:** Relieving high blood pressure, best is garlic.

**Prabhupāda:** Garlic.

**Indian man:** Garlic, you don't want it.  
(laughter)

**Prabhupāda:** Garlic, onions, prohibited.

(A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. 9th October 1976. Room Conversation. Aligarh)



**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** No, if made sincerely with devotion, then Kṛṣṇa will like it. Just like Vidura. Vidura was feeding Kṛṣṇa bananas, but he was so absorbed in thought that he was throwing away the real bananas and he was giving Kṛṣṇa the skin, and Kṛṣṇa was eating. [All laugh] Kṛṣṇa knew that he was giving in devotion, and Kṛṣṇa can eat anything, provided there is devotion. It does not matter whether it is materially tasteful or not. Similarly, a devotee also takes Kṛṣṇa prasāda, whether it is materially tasteful or not. We should accept everything. ... If devotion is not there, He doesn't like any food, either tasteful or not tasteful. He does not accept it.

**A devotee:** In India... Somebody—

**Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Oh, India, India. Don't talk of India! Talk of philosophy. If there is no devotion, Kṛṣṇa does not accept anything, either in India or in your country. Lord Kṛṣṇa is not obliged to accept anything costly because it is very tasty. Kṛṣṇa has very many tasteful dishes in Vaikuṅṭha....Kṛṣṇa must be offered first-class foodstuffs. So if he offers something last class, he is not performing his duty. But Kṛṣṇa can accept anything if it is offered by a devotee, and a devotee can accept any prasāda, even if it is spicy. Hiranyakaśipu gave his son poison [and the son offered it to Kṛṣṇa], and the son drank it as nectar. So even if it is spicy to others, taste, it is very palatable to the devotee. What is the question of spicy? He was offered poison, real poison. And Pūtanā Rākṣasī—she also offered Kṛṣṇa poison. But Kṛṣṇa is so nice that He thought, “She took Me as My mother,” so He took the poison and delivered her.”

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# HH Bhakti Raghava Swami Speaks on Food

## Vedic Solution to Food Problem

### Global food Shortage

The impending overpopulation crisis predicted by scientists and modern day leaders in the next few decades is giving ammunition for governments and researchers to introduce new remedies to help meet the global crisis of food shortage. This can be seen in how food, land and animals are being controlled and manipulated in a feverish attempt to remedy the unfolding anomalies.

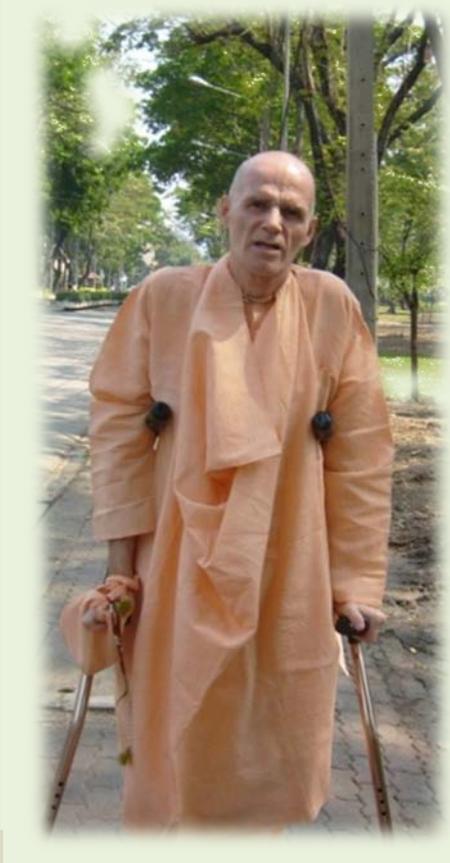
While statistics clearly demonstrate that food grown for direct human consumption requires far less land acreage, to meet the demands of those attached to a non-vegetarian diet, more and more land is being secured to grow food for animal consumption. Large areas are selected to keep such animals in a restricted environment and the food given to these animals is often mixed with various stimulating hormones, and even animal products such as fish oil, to help fatten the animals more quickly. Such “factory farming” is the child brain of demented persons causing untold miseries and sufferings to innocent animals and unleashing karmic reactions beyond imagination.

The more recent trend is that even larger areas of land are now being purchased at an alarming rate around the world by large industrial companies to grow certain types of food like corn, cassava and others to be converted into bio-fuel which will replace the world's fast depleting oil deposits. All of these activities are being carried out in the name of “going green” and with seemingly all good intentions to help humanity.

Yet another disturbing development described by some as potentially more destructive than the deadly radioactivity from the nuclear bomb fall out, is the introduction of genetically modified foods (GM products) by such large conglomerates as Monsanto to produce chemically and genetically modified food. Such foods grow at a faster rate to help meet the high demand from consumers and such foods are said to give higher food value as they contain selected genes of other plants and sometimes specific genes from animals. The manufacturing of high yielding seeds which can produce such cosmetic foods is monopolised by a few multi-national industrialists who allure farmers in purchasing their hybrid seeds and thus prevent them from using natural healthy seeds.

Ironically, as we experience severe food shortages around the world, a recent report from the USA entitled “School Lunches as National Security Threat” points to the very disparity we witness based on overconsumption and consumerism. Due to not following nature's plan, we find ourselves in crisis at both extremes; on the one hand, a growing number of starving people and, on the other, a growing number of overweight people, obesity having become a national security threat in America and some other “developed” countries.

([www.msnbc.msn.com/id/36664612](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/36664612))



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## The Vedic Teachings

“The devotees of the Lord are released from all kinds of sins because they eat food which is offered first for sacrifice. Others, who prepare food for personal sense enjoyment, verily eat only sin.” [Bhagavad-gita 3.13]

*"All living bodies subsist on food grains, which are produced from rains. Rains are produced by performance of yajña [sacrifice], and yajña is born of prescribed duties." [Bg. 3.14]*

*"But Kṛṣṇa does not say that "You open slaughterhouse and industries and brothels and cinema." No. Kṛṣṇa does not say. Kṛṣṇa says, "Grow more food, rascal! You'll eat and become strong." And nobody is obeying Kṛṣṇa. Is it not? Practically try to understand Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavata. Not by sentiment. And preach this philosophy all over the world." [Srila Prabhupada's Lecture, SB 1.8.18, Sri Mayapur, 1974]*

*"The influence of food grains remains in the body for five days, the influence of milk for seven days, the influence of yogurt for twenty days and the influence of ghee for one month. For a person who does not eat cow products for one month, his food is shared by ghosts... a house that does not have a cow is inauspicious." [Padma Purana, Srsti Khanda 57/151-156]*

The above quotes from ancient Vedic literatures such as Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam give us a clear insight as to how food grains and the cows played a vital role in the lives of the Aryan people. Aryan is defined as “a follower of Vedic culture, a person whose goal is spiritual advancement. He truly knows the value of life and has a civilization based on spiritual realization” [VedaBase-Folio].

The Aryan civilization naturally considered life to be sacred. The real goal of life was first and foremost self-realization. Agrarian based, the Aryan people produced what they needed locally and depended on cows and the ox. Before eating any food, they would offer it to God in a gesture of deep respect and recognition. The sanctified food was then honoured as prasadam, the mercy of the Lord. Such a society, based on the principles of God consciousness, was satisfied with the basic necessities of life and respected the laws of nature.

What most people of modern day society fail to understand is that nature, God's nature, has a built-in system which is the most scientific, balanced and planned system. When this divine plan is honoured and respected, all opulences and peace follow. When ignored or rejected, scarcity and calamity follow naturally.

Today's modern society has chosen to ignore, and in some cases outright reject, this simple plan of nature. Although having greatly advanced in material pursuits due to sophisticated technology and industry, although priding themselves in having the largest number of scientists, researchers and learned scholars in known history, and although having had many decades to demonstrate their knowledge and experience, modern day leaders and scientists have failed miserably to provide even enough food for the people on the planet, the result of which is severe sufferings to humans and animals alike. And whatever food they are providing has been de-naturalized through the use of chemical pesticides and chemical fertilizers to such an extent that the soil from which food is produced and the food itself is a threat to the environment and the general health of people on a scale never before witnessed on the planet. Millions die of starvation every year while a greater number suffer from hunger and lack of proper nutrition. The main reason is simply lust and greed, what the ancient teachings of the Bhagavad-gita describe as the two greatest enemies of mankind.

## Practical Solutions

### Grow Your Own Food

The Vedic culture advocates an agrarian based lifestyle where the vast majority of individuals in society live in villages and grow their own food. Practically all householders maintain their own cows

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and thus meet their basic necessities of life. No one is unemployed and all necessities of life are provided locally when living this simplified lifestyle. Land, cows and Krishna make a perfect synthesis. They bring wealth, happiness and long life to individuals and society. We wrongly conclude this to be primitive; rather the opposite is much more the truth.

One's wealth is understood by the amount of grains the land produces and the number of cows and bulls one can maintain. It was the custom in the Vedic times that a young girl would only marry a young man who possessed both land and cows. That was the standard to help maintain a family.

For those living in cities, which is the case for most devotees, if one is determined, one can learn to grow food wherever one resides. Urban gardening and community gardens are becoming more and more popular for city folks. The principles taught in perma-culture teach even those living in high-rise apartments to keep earthen pots and grow at least a few vegetables and flowers. By growing our own food, we again come in contact with mother-nature and whatever food or flowers we grow are pure and wholesome.

### *Offer you Food in Sacrifice*

All the food you produce should first be offered to Lord Krishna in recognition for the gifts of nature He provides. When food is taken without offering to the Lord, every mouthful we eat incurs sins for which we must suffer in both this life and the next. The offering of food to God helps purify both the person making the offering and the food itself. Such food, when taken as prasadam, further purifies those who partake of it in such consciousness.



### *Worship the Land*

Before ploughing the land, farmers would offer puja and would recite various prayers. Even today in the Kingdom of Cambodia, this practice is followed. The royal family still holds an annual function where the King himself ploughs the land using a pair of oxen just before the planting season. Bhumi (land) is considered one of the seven mothers to whom we must give all respect. When working with the land in this developed consciousness, nature will provide in abundance.

### *Worship the Cows*

The cow is also considered as one of the seven mothers for she provides milk and all other necessities of life through agriculture. A house without a cow is considered to be inauspicious. Formally,

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practically all householders kept at least one cow, generally quite a few cows. Land and cows cannot be separated in as much as brahmanas and cows also cannot be separated.

### *Distribute Sanctified Food*

The Vedic maxim is “Produce only what you need” and “Use only what you produce”. These are profound statements which, if properly understood and applied, can simplify immensely how one is meant to live. Food is meant to be widely distributed. The Vedic literatures enjoin that householders call out three times to any hungry person before partaking of food themselves. Householders have a specific responsibility towards food in that they are duty bound to supply food to 1) the saintly persons, 2) the general public, 3) the forefathers, and 4) to themselves.

### *Conclusion*

Government reports show that the production of rice during the pre-colonial days of India was 10 times the present production. The number of pure breeds of cows exceeded 100 while today we find only 33. When the respect for land and cows was prevailing, real opulence and social stability naturally follows. The overpopulation problem is but a myth. Nature can produce 10 times more food than today's output if simply there is proper management of resources.

Unless today's leaders and people in general come to understand and accept the clearly defined plan of mother nature where production of food is meant to be local and such food offered in sacrifice to the Lord, no amount of adjustments will bring any solution to the present threatening global crisis. Eco-villages can help bring about such changes if people are properly educated and trained in the basic principles of Krishna consciousness. Knowledge of the proper standards and norms of nature is therefore needed to bring about the required changes in society. Saving our cows and saving our villages form the basis for re-directing today's misguided society. *Making Vrindavana Villages* through programs such as 'Adopt a Village program' will help bring stability to today's troubled society. Those interested to help in this endeavour may join the established groups called Varnasrama Research Teams. One can get more information by visiting [www.varnasrama.org](http://www.varnasrama.org).

- *HH Bhakti Raghava Swami*

### Standard Devotee Diet

Srila Prabhupada recommended a standard diet for the devotees, and instructed that all of the temples should follow it every day. That menu is as follows:

#### **BREAKFAST:**

Simple farina cereal with nuts and raisins  
Milk (steaming hot), or yogurt in the summertime  
Chick peas (raw, soaked overnight)  
Ginger root (raw)  
Oranges, apples and/or bananas

#### **LUNCH:**

Rice  
Chapatis  
Dal made with freshly ground ginger root and freshly ground spices  
Subji made with ghee, freshly ground ginger root and freshly ground spices

#### **BEFORE TAKING REST:**

Milk (steaming hot)  
Bananas

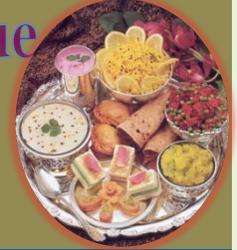


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## Perfection of Life Through Tongue



- By HG Vrndavanlila Dd

**F**ood...yum yum. The very thought of delicious food activates our salivary glands. The demands of the body can be categorized as that of the tongue, of mind, of belly and of the genitals. The entire theatrical of getting trapped in the cycles of lifetimes and suffering evolves from these four demands. When observed, all four of them are situated in one straight line. Srila Prabhupada therefore founded the whole movement on four regulative principles, which take care of all the four demands and four pillars of religion:

- No meat eating, fish or eggs
- No gambling or speculation
- No illicit sex
- No intoxication

Everything begins with the demands of the tongue, if one restrains the tongue, other urges can be easily controlled.  
*jihvara lalase yei iti-uti dhaya*

*sisnodara-parayana krsna nahi paya (cf. CC, Antya, 6.227)*

[That person who runs here and there seeking to gratify his palate and who is always attached to the desires of his stomach and genitals is unable to attain Krsna.] Lord Caitanya further emphasized it when he said, “Bhale na khaibe ara bhala na paribe” [Do not dress luxuriously and do not eat delicious foodstuffs]. So much to sacrifice, and yet it is not sufficient, one has to purify the tongue further by chanting the holy names of Krsna constantly! But what we are doing, Srila Prabhupada’s Krishna consciousness movement is almost always identified as a “kitchen religion”? Thankfully, we need not feel guilt-ridden. Other forms of yoga build on artificial repression of senses, but in bhakti yoga there is lot of scope for indulgent activities on the condition that they are all directed towards Him. The Lord is so merciful that he gave us a way out, whereby we can satisfy our tongue and at the same time make spiritual progress- *yukta vairagya!* Whatever we eat, we first offer to the Lord. A devotee pledges to take only prasadam- Lord’s mercy. We prepare opulently for the Lord, offer Him and then enjoy His prasadam later. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says:

*sarira avidya jala, jadendriya tahe kala,  
jive phele visaya-sagare  
ta'ra madhye jihva ati, lobhamaya sudurmati,  
ta'ke jeta kathina samsare  
krsna bada dayamaya, karibare jihva jaya,  
sva-prasada-anna dila bhai  
sei annamrta khao, radha-krsna-guna gao,preme daka caitanya-nitai*

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"O Lord! This material body is a lump of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow or other we have fallen into the ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world, but You, dear Krsna, are very kind to us. You have sent this nice prasada to help us conquer the tongue; therefore let us take this prasada to our full satisfaction and glorify Your Lordships Sri Sri Radha and Krsna and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Prabhu Nityananda."

The Lord can convert matter into spirit with His immense transcendental energy. The iron rod is a simple matter, but when placed in the fire becomes red hot and acts just like fire. Similarly, food prepared for the Lord and offered to the Lord with devotion becomes spiritualized in His transcendental contact. This spiritualized food is Krsna prasadam — “mercy of the Lord”. Lord Caitanya says, “Everyone has tasted these foods before. However, now that they have been prepared for Krishna and offered to Him with devotion, these foods have acquired extraordinary tastes and uncommon fragrances...Therefore one should know that the spiritual nectar of Krsna’s lips must have touched these ordinary foods and imparted to them all Their transcendental qualities.”

So, when we observe the first regulative itself- “no meat eating...”- we are not advocating of vegetarianism but even further. There are many animals like monkeys, pigeons or deers which are vegetarian, but perfection lies in sticking to the vow of taking ONLY prasadam — food that is offered to the Lord. If one does not offer food to Him, he is veritably taking only sin and will suffer the reactions of his karma. We therefore need to be very careful with ‘tongue’.

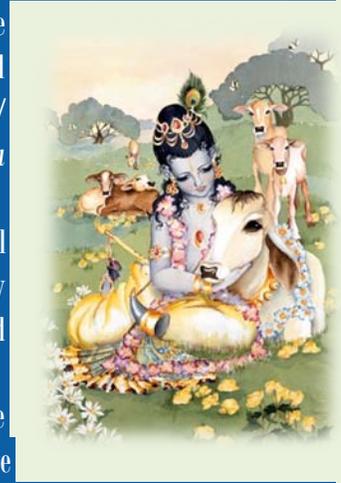
While we ‘indulge’ tongue a little in the strict scope of accepting only prasadam, at the same time we also need to exercise restraint by observing fastings on ekadasis and other special occasions to remind ourselves *sarira avidya jala, jadendriya tahe kala/ jive phele visaya-sagare/ ta’ra madhye jihva ati, lobhamayaa sudurmati,/ ta’ke jeta kathina samsare.*

Everything is for the pleasure of the Lord, the primeval original person, the cause of all causes, the supreme personality of Godhead. Can we offer Him, who is worshipped by everybody in the universe anything substandard? It has to be first class, prepared using pure first class stuff with a pure mind. But are we able to do this?

We have taken a vow of accepting prasadam and following the four regulative principles at the time of initiation, are we doing this? May be unwittingly, but we are

still eating only sin especially if we are in the city where everything from toothpaste, cooking oil, medicines, soaps to cosmetics (lipsticks too) is adulterated with abominable cow-fat and derived products! Can the Lord, who is also known as Gopala or Govinda and who resides in Goloka-Vrindavan accept this offering? Can the Lord who is Himself served by thousands of laxmis (goddesses of fortune) and is still always engaged in serving the cows “*laksavrtesu surabhir abhipalayantam/laksmi-sahasra-sata-sambhrama-sevyamanam*” accept the food that is contaminated?

If we cannot offer Him what He wants or accepts, what about our spiritual progress? Are we ready to renege from our four vows and commit a spiritual suicide? Many may justify by indifferently putting the blame on the age - the blackest of all the four ages- ‘kaliyuga’. But what exactly has changed in this kaliyuga? Has the sun begun rising from the west? Does the wind no longer blow? Does the sea have no waves? Has the sun lost its heat? Do the women no



longer give birth to children? Has the day become black? If all these natural phenomenon are unchanged, then what has changed? Basically it is only we who have changed. We have slackened spiritually. The age that began with the wounding of cow or bull's three legs has made us accept violence towards our mother cow to an extent that we are also offering it to the Lord- Gopala!

However, there is no reason to be despondent when we have a solution. We can grow our own grains, even in the city we can start growing a few vegetables and related stuff. Even if there is insufficient place, we can try doing it in pots. There are many sources from where we can derive good information on home gardening, rooftop gardening, getting good yield even from one square yard place. Even if we have none of these, we can support those who are doing it already and start making plans for starting a daiva varnasrama farm community later. We need to have the sincerity and commitment. Small portion of land, cow, and Krishna- and we have successfully moved out of the dark age towards serving Him!

We will no longer take out old contaminated vegetables from the fridge to offer, but it will be rich with its natural taste and fresh from the farm. When you offer Him that, it will also contain the story of your love-effort while tilling the land, cows' contribution in supplying manure, protection from the pests, in ploughing...everything. Isn't the thought itself so beautiful?

Westerners calling Indian agricultural system primitive labeled it as a gamble of monsoons. When we realize our dependency on elements like monsoon, it brings us closer to the Lord. As we till and sow the land, waiting for the rain, the very situation makes us dependent upon and surrendered to the Supreme Lord. It is this dependency which is the perfection of life. This is not gamble of monsoons, but proximity to the Supreme soul. Our artificial hollow material comforts in city have only taken us away from Him, the axis is missing- "Things fall apart, The center cannot hold" (famous lines from WB Yeats' poem). It is not too late to return to our roots. Let us vow to nourish ourselves spiritually by offering Him what He likes. Let us take the first step by making this promise, His mercy will follow. We always have His representative around us to guide us - *evam parampara praptum* — earlier it was Srila Prabhupada and now his disciples like HH Bhakti Raghava Swami who are showing us the way of implementing daiva varnasrama and perfect our lives.

Hare Krishna!



Result of 'Simply Wonderful' is simply wonderful!

**Nanda-Kisora:** What happens to a person out on the street if we just give him one Simply Wonderful or some prasadam?

**Srila Prabhupada:** Then it is wonderful- simply wonderful. (The devotees laugh). He has not tasted such wonderful sweets in his life. Therefore, you give him wonderful, and because he is eating that wonderful sweet, one day he will come to your temple and become wonderful. Therefore it is simply wonderful. So go on distributing this simply wonderful. Your philosophy is simply wonderful, your prasadam is simply wonderful, you are simply wonderful. And your Krsna is simply wonderful. The whole process is simply wonderful. Krsna acts wonderfully, and it is acting wonderfully. Who can deny it?



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## The Vow of Taking ONLY Prasadam



**P**rasada is a powerful purifying agent. Conversely, to accept any other type of foodstuff is sinful. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gita* (3.13):

*yajña-śiṣṭāśinaḥ santo/ mucyante sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ  
bhuñjate te tv aghaṁ papa/ ye pacanty ātma-kāraṇāt*

The devotees of the Lord are released from all kinds of sins because they eat food which is offered first for sacrifice. Others, who prepare food for personal sense enjoyment, verily eat only sin. The minute living entities are dependent on the Supreme Lord for their sustenance. To take foodstuffs without first offering them to Him constitutes the offense of trying to minimize His position as the Supreme Enjoyer. In short, it is an act of envy, and thus the serious devotee vows to take only the remnants of what has been offered to Kṛṣṇa.

One who knows the difference between the Lord and himself never accepts anything without first offering it to the Lord. SB 2.7.15 purport

Brāhmaṇas and Vaiṣṇavas do not accept any foodstuff which is not first offered to the Personality of Godhead. Foodstuff offered to the Lord is accepted by the devotees as the mercy of the Lord. SB 3.2.28 purport

The devotee of the Lord, or the Vaisnava, does not take anything without offering it to the Lord. Since a Vaisnava dedicates all the results of his activities to the Lord, he does not taste anything eatable which is not first offered to Him. SB 3.16.8

For the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, there are three sinful activities which are prohibited—namely illicit sex, intoxication, and eating food other than the prasada offered to Kṛṣṇa. SB 3. 16.22

The devotees of the Lord, who are in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, offer food to Kṛṣṇa and then eat—a process which nourishes the body spiritually. By such action not only are past sinful reactions in the body vanquished, but the body becomes immunized to all contamination of material nature. When there is an epidemic disease, an antiseptic vaccine protects a person from the attack of such an epidemic. Similarly, food offered to Lord Viṣṇu and then taken by us makes us sufficiently resistant to material affection, and one who is accustomed to this practice is called a devotee of the Lord. Therefore, a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, who eats only food offered to Kṛṣṇa, can counteract all reactions of past material infections, which are impediments to the progress of self-realization. On the other hand, one who does not do so continues to increase the volume of sinful action, and this prepares the next body to resemble hogs and dogs, to suffer the resultant reactions of all sins. The material world is full of contaminations, and one who is immunized by accepting prasādam of the Lord (food offered to Viṣṇu) is saved from the attack, whereas one who does not do so becomes subjected to contamination.

The vow of taking only prasada situates the devotee as a humble servant of Kṛṣṇa. His mood is like that of the faithful wife who will not eat before serving her husband, thus expressing her submission, dependence, and love.

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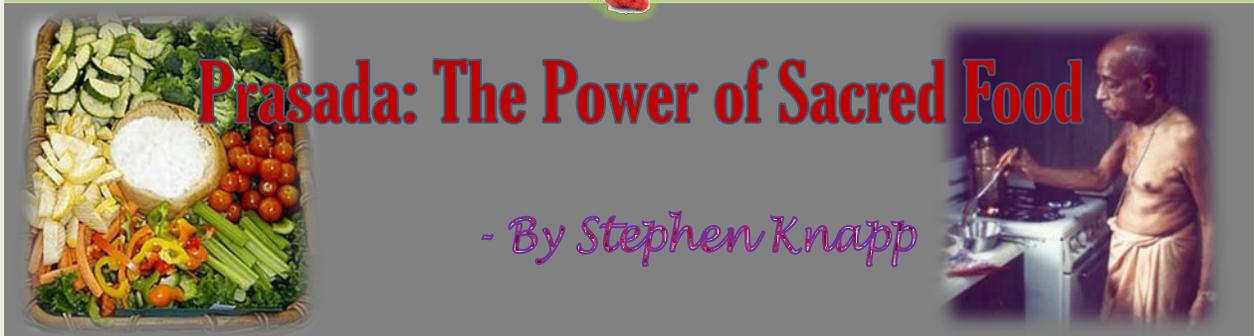
*Brahmanda Purana*: Leaves, flowers, fruits, water, foodstuff, medicine, and whatever else one eats should not be taken without being offered to the Lord. If one takes anything without offering it to the Lord, he is supposed to atone for that. Therefore, everything must first be offered to Sri Visnu.

When a person is attached to Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, he does not eat anything not offered to Kṛṣṇa. CC Madhya 19.213 purport

The vow to eat only kṛṣṇa-prasada also helps devotees to control the tongue. "Of all the senses, the tongue is the most difficult to control, but Kṛṣṇa has kindly given us this nice prasāda to help us control the tongue."

If you lock up, that "I shall not accept anything except prasādam," then if you go on the street and if you see hundreds and thousands of restaurants, you'll not be allured. ... So automatically it becomes controlled. SB.

You should take prasada...Otherwise the tongue will dictate, "Give me this kind of food, give me this kind of food." Kṛṣṇa-prasada means to control the tongue. Our main enemy is the tongue. In another place it is said *sevon mukhe hi jihvadau svayam eva sphuraty adah*. God realization comes by keeping the tongue engaged in the service of the Lord...So if you do not control your tongue, if you feel inconvenience in taking prasada, that means you are not making progress. This is the formula. ŚB 6.1.18 Denver, July 1, 1975 (Source: [www.salagram.net/sstp-Prasada3.htm](http://www.salagram.net/sstp-Prasada3.htm))



**O**n the spiritual path those that are most inclined to lead a peaceful existence that respects the value of all life often adopts the vegetarian lifestyle. It is in accordance with the yogic principle of ahimsa, which is to observe nonviolence and abstain from injuring any being in any way.

However, in the process of bhakti-yoga, devotion goes beyond simple vegetarianism, and food becomes a method of spiritual progress. In the Krishna temples, food is offered to the Deities in a special sacrament, after which it becomes prasada or prasadam. This means the mercy of the Lord. Thus, the food we eat after it is offered to the Lord becomes a means for our purification and spiritual development.

Devotional service or Krishna consciousness is often described as a process of singing, dancing and feasting. But the feasting is done with spiritual food, Krishna prasadam. In the Bhagavad-gita Lord Krishna says, "All that you do, all that you eat, all that you offer and give away, as well as all austerities that you may perform, should be done as an offering unto Me." So offering what we eat to the Lord is an integral part of bhakti-yoga and makes the food blessed with spiritual potencies. Then such food is called prasadam, or the mercy of the Lord.

The Lord also describes what He accepts as offerings: "If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it." Thus, we can see that the Lord does not need anything, but if one offers fruits, grains, and vegetarian foods, He will accept it. The Lord does not accept foods like meat, fish or eggs, but only those that are pure and naturally available without harming others. So we

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offer what Krishna likes, not those items which are distasteful to Him. We also do not use garlic, onions, or mushrooms when we prepare food for Krishna.

The Lord is fully satisfied in Himself. He is the creator of all so everything is already His. He supplies us with food through nature, but we give thanks to Him by offering it back in a mood of loving devotion. So if His devotee offers something with love, out of His causeless mercy Krishna accepts it. The Lord is never hungry for our food, but for the love and devotion we offer. And then He reciprocates with that love.

So on the spiritual path eating food that is first offered to God is the ultimate perfection of a vegetarian diet. The Vedic literature explains that the purpose of human life is reawakening the soul's original relationship with God, and accepting prasadam is the way to help us reach that goal.

The food is meant to be cooked with the consciousness of love, knowing that it will be offered to Lord Krishna. In the spiritual world, Radharani cooks for Krishna and She never cooks the same preparation twice. The temple kitchen is understood to belong to Radharani.

The ingredients are selected with great care and must be fresh, clean and pure vegetarian. Also, in cooking for Krishna we do not taste the preparations while cooking. We leave the first taste for Krishna when it is offered.

After all the preparations are ready, we take a portion of each one and place it in bowls on a special plate and take it to the altar to offer it to the Deities or pictures of Krishna. Then the preparations are presented with special prayers as we ask that God accept our humble offering. The Lord accepts it with the most important part being the love with which it is offered. God does not need to eat, but it is our love for God which attracts Him to us and to accept our offering. Even if the most sumptuous banquet is offered to God but without devotion and love, Krishna will not be hungry to accept it. It is our love which catches the attention of Lord Krishna who is then inclined to accept our service. After He glances over and tastes that loving offering of vegetarian preparations, He leaves the remnants for us to honor and relish. Krishna's potency is absorbed in that food. In this way material substance becomes spiritualized, which then affects our body and mind in a similar way. This is His special mercy for us. Thus, the devotional process becomes an exchange of love between us and God, which includes food. And that food not only nourishes our body, but also purifies our consciousness. By relishing the sacred food of Krishna prasadam, it purifies our heart and protects us from falling into illusion. In this way, the devotee imbibes the spiritual potency of Lord Krishna and becomes cleansed of sinful reactions by eating food that is first offered in sacrifice to God. We thus also become free from reincarnation, the continued cycle of life and death. This process prepares us for entering the spiritual world since the devotees there also relish eating in the company of Krishna.

Not only do we make advancement, but also all of the plants that are used in the preparations as an offering to God are also purified and reap spiritual benefit. However, we become implicated in karma if we cause the harm of any living being, even plants, if we use them for food without offering them to God. Thus prasadam also becomes the perfect yoga diet. Therefore, the cooking, the offering and then the respectful eating or honoring of this spiritualized food all become a part of the joyful process of devotional service to the Lord. Anyone can learn to do this and enjoy the happiness of experiencing prasadam. The Sunday love feast in the Hare Krishna temples is the opportunity in which everyone can participate in this opulence of Lord Krishna. So we invite you to attend as often as you like and make spiritual advancement simply by relishing Krishna prasadam.

Source: [www.stephen-knapp.com/prasada\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_sacred\\_food.htm](http://www.stephen-knapp.com/prasada_the_power_of_sacred_food.htm)

- By Stephen Knapp



लक्ष्मण चन्द्रवर्धन चौधरी





- Bhaktin Nithika Reddy

More than a year ago, HG Radhavinod prabhu decided to renovate a more than a hundred year old dilapidated Krishna temple at Bolarum (Secunderabad) and start the regular deity worship activities. With the help of HG Stoka Krishna prabhu, HG Gour Gopal prabhu, HG Rasamandal prabhu, HG Anantsesha prabhu, HG Sridhar prabhu and local devotees now it has taken the shape of a small congregation. With the blessings of Sri Sri Radha-Madhava, the presiding deities, the enthusiasm of the temple congregation is remarkable, which has helped transform Bolarum to Balram Kshetra.

This May 27, 2010 the devotees celebrated their first Narsimha Chaturdasi at the temple. The atmosphere was surcharged with anxiety and curiosity. The first picture of Lord Nrsimha dev was brought. In the absence of Nrsimha dev's vigraha, HG Gour Gopal prabhu brought his Nrsimha dev Saligram to the temple.

As the sun settled in the west, the crescendo of the kirtan led by HG Gourgopal prabhu glorifying Lord Nrsimha dev also reached new heights. To witness the function many devotees had come from far off places like Chirala and Hebri. Amidst the live-wire glorifications followed by chants from Sri Brhma-Samhita, the Lord was showered with love filled juices drawn from various exotic fruits, flowers, extracts, and milk products. As HG Anantsesha prabhu poured the fluids, every hue was making Him look variedly resplendent. The excited glorification by the devotees was reminiscent of His transcendental roars aeons ago on the same day.



HG Harikirtan prabhu from Chirala gave a short lecture enlightening everybody with the significance of the event, while in the background devotees decorated the Lord with sandalwood paste, placing Him on a rose petal filled simhasan. As the lecture got over and the curtains opened to let everybody have darshan of His beautiful form, everybody chanted in unison: *Sri Nrsimha Jaya Nrsimha Jaya Jaya Nrsimha/ Prahladesa Jaya Padma Mukha Padma Bhringa*. The lecture had filled everybody's heart with love and reverence for little Bhakta Prahlad, whose devotion had made the Lord appear on earth for the benefit of everybody. His love and submission to the lord along with faith in the words of his guru, Sri Narada Muni was exemplary. As all the devotees looked mesmerized at Him thinking of His little devotee, Sri Nrsimha dev also seemed to be satisfied. Nrsimha dev ki Jai! Bhakta Prahlad ki Jai!



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• Village Out-Reach Program to Belgaum

# Nature is the Best Teacher



- By HG Ram Laxman Das

**A**fter visiting a few villages and attending two-day workshop in Gundaipalam (Govinda Palam), I prayed to Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha-Madhavaji that I get some more taste of it and an opportunity to spend some more time in some farm community. In a few weeks itself my prayer was answered I got to stay at a farm in Karnataka, reaching there on the auspicious days of Sri Rama navami. I was warmly received by my god-brother, HG Smita Krishna prabhu and HG Ranachor prabhu who are full-time inmates at the farm. They enthusiastically showed me around to the farm goshala, kitchen, temple hall and briefed me about the general farm activities.

Soon I was also taken to one natural spring, where devotees take bath and even collect water. It was scenic, verdantly surrounded by small hillocks and stepped green fields, lush valley a little beyond with number of beautiful cows grazing around – presenting a contrast to the artificial life style and made-up beauty of the city.

The sight of spring beckoned me to take a plunge, but suddenly I felt that so much water was getting wasted here and I should do something to stop it- so much conditioned by the city life where even clear drinking water is a scarcity. So much for the 'famed' opulence of cities! I realized how Krishna gives everything in abundance to fulfil all our needs. It is only our greed which makes it insufficient. With the new realization I made myself fresh in the stream.

The village set-up itself seems to be in sattva-guna, even if one wants, one cannot sleep late. Next day I was up for mangal arati and regular morning programs. I desired to go grazing the cows along with the regular devotee prabhu. It was a new but very invigorative experience.

As the cows grazed by, we chatted light-heartedly sharing a lot of experiences, singing kirtans, and reading books. Round the noon time, another devotee came with a box of prasadam for us. We took prasadam sitting under a tree in the deep forest. Everything was reminiscent of Lord Krishna's pastimes (with cowherd boys as they shared prasadam) and was very wonderful...A couple of hours later, we returned with the cows (go-dhuli bela), took shower and proceeded for the sandhya arati. By 8:30 pm, I was already in the bed! First day in Vrndavan village setting!

The devotees there took good care of me and taught me many things, and we were soon friends as I graduated to different services (like constructing a new hut, drawing water from the well for construction, grazing cows, cooking on chulhas, deity worship) for the pleasure of the Lord. The experience gave me a new insight in the understanding of importance of villages.

One day as we were returning from the fields, I could hear children calling- "Hare Krsna" to us. It happened almost everyday. It was so different from the city, where nobody has the time to even look at others, forget about greeting "Hare Krsna".

Everything comes to a pass, so was this stay, but the memories of this stay and experience remain deeply rooted in my heart. Nature is the best teacher, farther we go from it, farther we distance ourselves from our original relationship with the Lord. My heart yearns to spend the rest of my life in those "Vrndavan Villages" or at best convert every place to one such where it is so natural to chant, dance, and serve Krishna in the association of devotees. However, let us first make a beginning even in city to grow our own food and serve the Lord, may be in the pots, or in the gardens, or on the terrace, but serve Him everything farm fresh! Hare Krishna!



लकड वरुदववन वीलडुडड





### Food inflation rises to 16.55percent (Source: Times of India).

June 3, 2010. New Delhi. Food inflation rose to 16.55percent for the week ended May 22 on account of high prices of pulses, fruits and vegetables.

Inflation increased by 0.32 percentage point from 16.23percent in the previous week.

The uptick was mainly due to a 7percent increase in fish marine prices, 5percent rise in prices of poultry chicken, 2percent in prices of barley and masur each and onepercent increase in prices for fruits and vegetables.

On an annual basis, prices of pulses rose by 30.84percent, milk by 21.12percent and fruits by 13.74percent. The overall inflation for April stood at 9.59percent, moderating slightly from 9.90percent in March, according to the provisional data.



### Restoring Traditional Farming Methods to Meet Food Security

(Source: news.in.msn.com)

June 8, 2010. New Delhi. Maharashtra's Korvu tribe stores grain with dried neem leaves, while the Konda Savara tribe of Andhra Pradesh has an irrigation system where water is diverted through pipes made of banana trunks. These are some examples of local wisdom sustaining agriculture, which will now be backed by a specialised UN agency.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is a specialised agency working to improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices and ensure good nutrition and food security for all.

"We need to preserve traditional agricultural practices if we want to ensure food security," says FAO land and water division director Parviz Koohafkan.

The Rome-based director was in Delhi last week to attend a workshop on tribal heritage agricultural techniques. "Agriculture heritage is similar to the world heritage sites of Unesco. Twelve countries have already joined and now India is also joining," Koohafkan told IANS.



### Karnataka poised to become leading food processing hub (Economic Times)

June 4, 2010. Bangalore. Karnataka is poised to become the leading food processing hub in India, according to a FICCI-Yes Bank report, thanks to a strong and expanding physical infrastructure base, specific supply strengths and opportunities arising out of gaps in the food value chain.

In urban Karnataka, while monthly per capita expenditure on low value food items like cereals and pulses increased by about 73 percent and 102 percent between 1993-94 and 2006-07, spending on beverages and processed food has increased by a massive 144 percent.

Karnataka has an excellent road network of about 52,000 km, a railway network of about 3,180 km, two major and eight minor ports, five domestic airports and two international airports. The state also has very strong agri-infrastructure, including 146 main market yards, 352 sub-market yards, 138 cold storages of about 0.4 million tonnes capacity and warehousing capacity of about 1.95 million tonnes. These strengths are further augmented by policy-makers' efforts to promote development of supporting agri-infrastructure, especially through initiatives like crop cluster development, food parks, agri-economic zones and agri-SEZs among others, it said.



### Surging Costs Hit Food Security (Source: Straits Times)

June 7, 2010. United States. Families from Pakistan to Argentina to Congo are being battered by surging food prices that are dragging more people into poverty, fueling political tensions and forcing some to give up eating meat, fruit and even tomatoes.

Scraping to afford the next meal is still a grim daily reality in the developing world even though the global food crisis that dominated headlines in 2008 quickly faded in the US and other rich countries. With food costing up to 70 percent of family income in the poorest countries, rising prices are squeezing household budgets and threatening to worsen malnutrition, while inflation stays moderate in the United States and Europe. Compounding the problem in many countries: prices hardly fell from their peaks in



2008, when global food prices jumped in part due to a smaller US wheat harvest and demand for crops to use in biofuels.

Majeedan Begum, a Pakistani mother of five, said a bag of flour for bread, the staple of her family's diet, costs three times what it did two years ago in her hometown of Multan. She can no longer afford meat or fruit. 'My domestic budget has been ruined,' said Madam Begum, 35. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's food price index - which includes grains, meat, dairy and other items in 90 countries - was up 22 percent in March from a year earlier though still below 2008 levels. In some Asian markets, rice and wheat prices are 20 to 70 percent above 2008 levels, it says.

Many governments blame dry weather and high fuel costs but critics in countries such as India, Argentina and Egypt say misguided policies are making shortages worse and collusion by suppliers might be pushing up prices.



#### **DAIVAM Minister's Appearance day celebrated**

June 2, 2010. Secunderabad. Vyasa Puja of Head, Daiva-varnasrama Ministry, HH Bhakti Raghava Swami, was celebrated with great fervor. The festival was spread across 4 days, with every day coinciding with different phases of Srila Prabhupada's movement to culminate with the fourth wave of Varnasrama on the day.



#### **Import Duty on Wheat Likely (Source: Economic Times)**

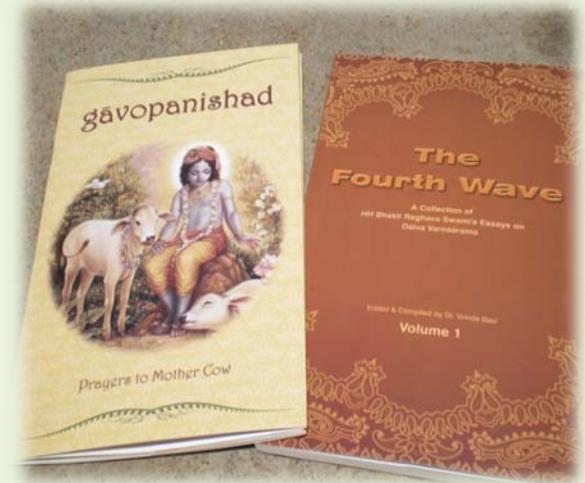
June 7, 2010. New Delhi. The government is likely to consider imposition of import duties on wheat in a meeting of key ministers later this month. With stock of wheat rising in the country, the empowered group of ministers on food will examine the food ministry's proposal of stopping zero-duty wheat imports by imposing "reasonable tariffs", a government official has said.



#### **Two Books on Daiva Varnasrama Released**

June 2, 2010. Secunderabad. On the auspicious occasion of vyasa puja celebration of HH Bhakti Raghava Swami, Head, Indian Daiva-Varnasrama Ministry, two books were released by HG Harikirtan dasa, the Andhra Pradesh State Coordinator, Indian Daiva Varnasrama Ministry. One is titled, *The Fourth Wave: A Collection of HH Bhakti Raghava Swami's Essays on Daiva*

*Varnasrama, Volume 1*, Edited and Compiled by Dr Vrinda Baxi (HG Vrindavanlila devi dasi), (Seva Nidhi: Rs 108/- within India) and the other *Gavopanishad: Prayers to Mother Cow*, Edited and compiled by HG Gangagati devi dasi (Seva Nidhi: Rs 40/- within India). Both the books boast of good quality and good presentation. The 'Preface' for *The Fourth Wave* has been written by HG Patita Pavan Adhikary, a senior disciple of Srila Prabhupada, a strong daiva varnasrama supporter, a prolific writer, and an astrologer who has the distinction of having served in the capacity of ISKCON Temple President and Director (Book Reviews) for BBT. While for the *Gavopanishad*, the 'Foreword' has been written by HH Bhakti Raghava Swami himself.



The DAIVAM National Coordinator, HG Bharatchandra Dasa, who was also present to participate in the celebrations and witness the event expressed his pleasure. Encouraging the endeavor, he described it as "a wonderful book". The response to the books was very enthusing. For further details and placement of order, kindly contact: [vrindavanlila.brs@gmail.com](mailto:vrindavanlila.brs@gmail.com)



#### **Government plans 'monitoring system' on food subsidy (Source: Economic Times)**

June 7, 2010. New Delhi. The government is considering setting up a 'monitoring system' to ensure effective utilisation of the food subsidy given to the states under the targeted public distribution system.



• Mails to the Editor

Dear Vrindavana Lila mataji,  
Om Surabhyai namah! Om Sri Gurave namah!  
Please accept the blessings of Sri Sri Gaura Nitai.  
All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you for your latest edition of *The Eight Petals*. It is very attractive. ...very inspiring ....  
Krsne matir astu.  
Your well-wisher,

- *HH Bhakti Raghava Swami.*

My dear Mother,

Please accept my blessings. I am very grateful indeed to be included on your mailing list. Your newsletter has the message to save the entire world because it is pursuing Srila Prabhupada's dream, in a parampara way, of reliance upon the cow and the bull. Dharma and Mother Earth.

- *HG Patita Pavan Adhikary, Bulgaria.*

Hare Krishna Vrindavan Lila Mataji.

Please accept my humble obeisance. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

...It is really very enlightening to see how lucidly you present many facets of Varna-Ashrama life. I am sure Srila Prabhupada, your Guru Maharaj, current ISKCON acharyas, and all devotees would be extremely pleased by your efforts. I would like to refer to a particular article in the issue for "Vishnu Mas", "One Acre and a Cow for Self-Sufficiency" by HG Sachi Kumar Prabhu. His analysis of how the economics work-out in favour of a rural life-style, completely dependent on mother earth and mother cow for sustenance, is truly well-presented. He ends his article with the following words, "*This will be my upcoming project from coming rainy season*". I appreciate his dedication to take it upon himself to prove his analysis to be worthy of all one's attention. I sincerely pray to Their Lordships Srimati Radharani, Sri Kunjabihari, Sri Gauranga, and Sri Nityananda (presiding deities of ISKCON Pune), to bless him in his endeavour to bring to reality the dream of a simple village-based lifestyle that Srila Prabhupada had.

...In the end, I would once again like to thank you for your wonderful efforts in presenting principles of Daivi-Varna Ashrama to urban-ites like me in a very practical, do-able, livable, and understandable way. I pray to Srila Prabhupada to empower you to further spread the glories of a simple village-based life.

I am extremely thankful to you for sparing so much of your valuable time to go through my mail, and give it much more attention than it deserves.

- *HG Amar Gaur das, India.*

Dear VrindavanLila Mataji,

I am appreciating each edition of *The Eight Petals* newsletter. Especially that you are bringing the focus on the important areas such as education, as well as the recent grhasta edition. I feel sure the varnashram field will keep expanding to encompass every aspect of important human functions.

I want to mention that I feel priveleged to have spent a day and night at the Hebri Sri Sayadri community .We were nicely accommodated by the group of friendly devotees -whose congenial spirits show the essence of simple life.It really made me think about Chaitanya Lila ,How the Lord in His travels must have enjoyed so many intimate exchanges of village hospitaly Hope to spend longer there next time around doing as Dhanesvara prabhu recommends-just living.

- *HG KaliyaKrsna das, Australia.*

*Make Vrindavan Villages*



Hare Krishna Vrindavanlila mataji,  
Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada. All Glories to varnasrama mission.  
...i read the grahashta ashram issue. It is excellent. I am so amazed by you and your team work because you are totally serving guru maharaj in his mission of Varnasrama.... May the mercy of Guru and Krishna always be with us. Hare Krishna!

- *HG Sita Sundari devi dasi, Indonesia.*

Hare Krishna Mataji.  
Please accept my humble obeisance. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.  
I would like to congratulate you for having taken to heart the desire of Srila Prabhupada, and HH Bhakti Raghav Swami of bringing the concept of varnashrama to life by means of sharing the associated news/views/articles with the whole world. Empowerment comes with instructions, and blessed are those who take such instructions to their heart. I am sure your efforts in presenting updates and articles on varnashrama are extremely laudable, and pleasing to Krishna. Thank you very Mataji for sharing the vision of Vrindavan through the monthly news-letters...

- *HG Amar Gaur das, India.*



### Simply wonderful recipe from HG Yamuna Mataji

Preparation time (after assembling ingredients): 10 minutes; Makes: 24 simply Wonderfuls

½ cup (120 ml) unsalted butter, at room temperature

2/3 cup (60 g) confectioners' sugar

1 ¾ cups (220 g) dry milk powder, or as needed

1 teaspoon (5 ml) milk or cream, or as necessary

a few drops of flavoring essence or 2 tablespoons (30 ml) grated nuts or dried fruit puree

Method:

1. Cream the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Using your hands, work in the milk powder and milk or cream, (adjusting proportions as necessary) to make a medium-soft fondant. Flavor with essence, nuts or fruit puree and continue to work until well blended.
2. Wash and dry your hands, then roll the fondant into smooth balls. (You can also roll the fondant around whole nuts or sandwich a pellet between nut halves). Place the confections in paper candy cases and keep refrigerated in a well sealed container for up to 4 days. Serve chilled or at room temperature.



The mails/ articles can be posted to [eightpetalsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:eightpetalsnewsletter@gmail.com) or [vrindavanlila.brs@gmail.com](mailto:vrindavanlila.brs@gmail.com)

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# Medicine

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