

# BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR

NEWSLETTER

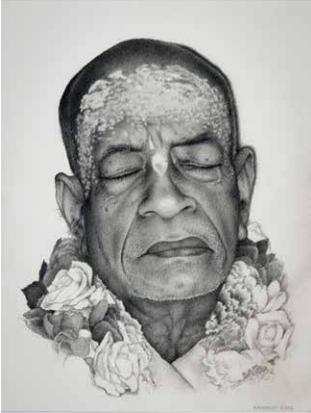
December 2016



International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)  
Founder Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



Diwali  
Celebrations



## Srila Prabhupada:

We can avoid idle conversation and utilize our time in the spare moments for studying slokas from the Gita and Bhagavatam. Practically I have given you more than enough for 50 years at one sloka daily. If we can simply read one sloka daily, that is step by step progress.

*Letter to Pusta Krsna --  
Hyderabad 23 March, 1973*



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Ground Breaking  
for Avanti House



Please send your news, photos and comments to: Radha Mohan das  
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## Prayers at Number 10

Srutidharma das was invited to the Diwali function at Number 10 Downing Street. Along with the Prime Minister and other dignitaries such as the Indian High Commissioner Mr Dinesh Patnail, Srutidharma das lit the ceremonial lamp before being invited to say a few words and lead the Diwali prayers.

Echoing the Prime Minister's own words, Srutidharma das added that the fact that the community is celebrating Diwali at the Prime Minister's home is the symptom of "a fairer Britain." He then proceeded to recite the first verse of the Sri Isopanisad, the Panca-Tattva mantra

and the Hare Krishna mantra.

During the Prime Minister's Diwali message, she made reference to Srutidharma's speech and also gave reference to the government funded Avanti Schools Trust, of which ISKCON is the faith affiliate.

Other ISKCON devotees present included Mahaprabhu das (Head ISKCON European Communications and Chair of the Hindu Forum of Europe), Jai Nitai das (President of ISKCON-London Temple), Dhruva-kusa (Head of Pandava Sena), Bijal Majithia of Veda London and Brijesh Vadhvania from Avanti Trust.



## Diwali at House of Commons

A team of ISKCON devotees attended this year's Diwali event at the House of Commons, organised by the Hindu Forum of Britain. Gauri das, Spiritual Commissioner of the Hindu Forum of Britain, led the opening prayers for the event. Later Priti Patel MP, the Secretary of State for International Development was pleased to receive a book about Sriila Prabhupada from Devaki dasi.



# DIWALI CELEBRATIONS

It's wonderful to think that hundreds of thousands of years after the epic Ramayan took place, devotees continue to celebrate Lord Rama's spectacular return to Ayodhya. The date on which this event took place is still being maintained; specifically on the beautiful temple grounds of Bhaktivedanta Manor on 30th October this year.

An incredible fireworks display entranced onlookers with a tiny snippet of what Lord Rama's homecoming must have been like, as the citizens of Ayodhya lit up the night sky.

That morning Bhaki Charu Swami spoke on the Ramayana from the perspective of Sita Devi, the wife of Lord Rama.

Then throughout the day, the public festival came alive with exhilarating kirtans, exhibitions, mouth-watering snacks and refreshments. There were also dramas which make Diwali at the Manor famous. The two dramas showcased different aspects of the Ramayana with tremendous gusto and both included gorgeous costumes, epic fight scenes and heart-stirring music.

As well as Bhakti Charu Swami, a whole host of dignitaries attended, including Lord Jitesh Gadhia, Richard Harrington MP, Oliver Dowden MP, Theresa Villiers MP, Barry Gardiner MP, Bob Blackman MP and local Mayors and councillors.





## Diwali in EU Parliament

The Hindu Forum of Europe organised a Diwali celebration at the EU Parliament. The evening included the lighting of lamps, prayers, discussions and keynote speeches by Geoffrey Van Orden MEP and His Excellency Mr Manjeev Singh Puri, Ambassador of India to the EU, spiritual leaders and the President of Hindu Forum of Europe (HFE). Mahaprabhu das, Srutidharma das and Gauri das also contributed.

## Diwali in London

For this year's Diwali in London (DIL) celebrations in Trafalgar Square, Sanjay Gadhvi was heading it up on behalf of ISKCON and was the Chair of the event's Committee.

Both Sanjay and Srutidharma das joined the Mayor of London Mr Sadiq Khan and others on the main stage to wish everyone a happy and devotional Diwali.



## Diplomats and Academics Show Support ISKCON at EU 50th Anniversary Event

Devotees from across Europe gathered at the BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels for an evening of culture.

The lively stage program included a collaboration between singer Ananda Monet and the Samadhi Dance Company, depicting scenes from the Mahabharat. The Bhaktivedanta Players performed a drama about the early days of Srila Prabhupada's mission in New York, and to round off the evening Jahnvi Harrison led bhajans.

Devotional artwork adorned the BOZAR, curtesy of The Museum of Sacred Art (MOSA).

Kripa Moya das, who MC'd the proceedings, introduced special guests, including the Chief Guest Mr Manjeev Singh Puri, the Indian Ambassador

for the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg, who said:

"You have given 50 beautiful years for humanity. You have brought the world together by peace, love and kindness. I hope you continue to do so for many years in the future!"

Academics, including Prof Anna King from Winchester University, spoke about ISKCON as not only an authentic tradition with an ancient heritage but also one that has achieved many wonderful things.

"This is an historic year for the movement, which over the past fifty years has gone from strength to strength," said Mahaprabhu Das. "It has been an incredible journey and this was a fitting celebration."





# Govardhana Puja / Annakut/ Go Puja

On Monday 31st October, the Manor celebrated Govardhan Puja.. The occasion was celebrating an extraordinary event that happened in the small but sacred village of Vrindavana. Specifically, when Lord Krishna miraculously lifted Govardhan Hill to protect the villagers from thunderous storms, courtesy of the disgruntled celestial monarch, Lord Indra! Celebrating the beautiful and esoteric pastime included the opportunity to view a huge sacred mound of flavoursome sweets, arranged in a way to resemble Govardhan Hill. Participants were given the opportunity to circumambulate the

Hill and later taste it!

This was followed by Go Puja which is when the cows are venerated and honoured with beautiful music, arati ceremonies, decorations and lots of loving strokes! Just like Krishna and Balaram did with their cows in Vrindavana.

The Annakuta spectacle took place on the beautifully adorned shrine in the Temple room, and many devotees had cooked literally hundreds of delicious delicacies for their Lordship's pleasure! Over a 1000 different varieties of sumptuous offerings were made.





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## Yoga community's 6 Hour Kirtan

In October Kirtan London hosted their final 6 Hour Kirtan of the year at the Swiss Church in Covent Garden, observing that the type of people attending had become more consistent - many from the 'yoga community' as well as many who have just found out about them online.

"We consistently receive very warm feedback for the 6 Hour kirtan events which is very encouraging," explained Jahnvi Harrison.

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## Bhakti Weekend Retreat

Kirtan London hosted their second weekend retreat of the year, at West Lexham Manor near King's Lynn. Each morning participants gathered for morning meditation and a yoga class. Later, discussion groups were held followed by Ayurvedic cooking workshops and, of course, kirtan.



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## Bhakti Sanga

Kirtan London have started a new regular event called Bhakti Sanga. It is held in the same Covent Garden venue as Mantra Lounge, and is an opportunity for regular attendees to get to know each other and to learn the basics of Krishna conscious philosophy.



# Prabhupada remembered with sweet songs and beautiful decorations

On 3rd November, devotees honoured the anniversary of the day Srila Prabhupada, the founder of ISKCON, left this world. Heartfelt memories of Prabhupada were shared by his disciples and followers and the area around his seat in the Temple was beautifully decorated with a multitude of illustrations, colours, flowers and plants.

Above the seat was displayed a banner reminding everyone of Prabhupada's

achievements in sharing the light of spiritual knowledge to dissipate the darkness of ignorance. After the bathing of Prabhupada's murti image, as is also customary on this day, hundreds of delicious savouries, sweets and drinks were offered to Prabhupada in his room upstairs. Temple visitors were able to participate in a solemn offering of flower petals to honour him.



# 200k

*The final offering.*

## 200k Book Marathon: The Final Offering

As ISKCON's 50th Anniversary draws to a close, Bhaktivedanta Manor would like to make an epic final offering. Every December the entire ISKCON world focuses all attention on distribution of transcendental literature, something devotees all know was so close to Srila Prabhupada's heart. He was incredibly eager to hear the figures of how many books were being distributed. Indeed, he said it gave him life. When a new book was printed, Prabhupada felt as though he had conquered an empire. He told one disciple - "the best of me is in my books."

Last year's historic "100k Effort" was a resounding success, with a record number of devotees participating. Now the team is planning something bigger and better. This year they are aiming to distribute 200,000 books!

You can get involved in the following initiatives:

- 1) **Sacred Street Party** – go out on Saturdays with a team of devotees from the Manor!
- 2) **Door-to-Door** – go out in the evenings / weekends and visit homes!
- 3) **Street distribution** – visit the bustling town centres during the week!
- 4) **Sanga Groups** – if you would like to participate as a sanga / nama hatta
- 5) **Gita Jayanti / Sponsorship** – Sponsor books which will be placed in Schools, Universities, Hospitals, & Jails!

### **For more information:**

Facebook: "200k – The Final Offering"  
Please contact Sutapa das if you have any ideas, and he'll do his best to assist.  
Sutapa@krishnatemple.com



## Celebrating Mother Yashoda's love for Krishna

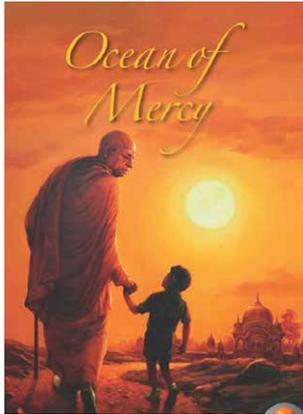
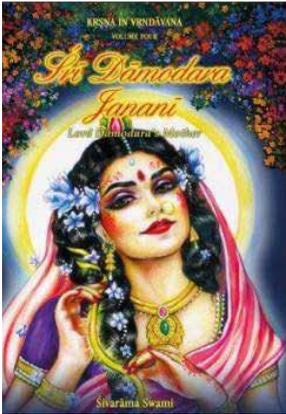
From mid-October to mid-November, the Manor celebrated the month of Kartik. Lord Krishna is famous for attracting us by His enchanting activities. One such enchanting activity was performed by the Lord when He was a small child in that month. The mischievous Krishna stole butter from the pantry of His mother, Yashoda, and proceeded to feed it to the village monkeys. Mother Yashoda tied naughty Krishna up with rope around His belly to make sure He would learn not to act so mischievously again.

To remember this wonderful loving exchange, during this month, devotees daily offered candles in the morning and evening to deities of Mother Yashoda and child Krishna. While candles were offered, devotees sang the Damodarastakam, a beautiful eight-verse poem about Yashoda and Krishna. On the first day of Kartik, the Manor community was treated with discourses on the tying of Lord Krishna by Subhag Swami and Radhanath Swami, aiding the devotees in their daily meditation.

## Dussehra - The dramatic burning of Ravana



In mid-October, the Manor celebrated Dusshera, the festival commemorating the day Lord Rama killed the ten-headed demon Ravana. A drama on Ramayana was acted out on the fields by members of the youth group, Pandava Sena. A huge image of Ravana was made and burnt as a re-enactment of the when he was killed. Ravana was a victim of lust, having kidnapped Lord Rama's wife, Sita. On this day, devotees pray to Lord Rama to destroy all the vices in their hearts, just as He destroyed Ravana.



## Swamis' book launches

As part of ISKCON 50th Anniversary, Sivarama Swami and Bhakti Charu Swami launched their new books at Bhaktivedanta Manor.

Sivarama Swami's book, Sri Damodara Janani, is a unique retelling of the damodar-lila. It focuses on the exceptional mercy receive by Mother Yashoda from whose love for her baby

son, Krishna, sprang a most remarkable pastime which is central to the month of kaartik.

In Ocean of Mercy, Bhakti Charu Swami recounts his spiritual journey and in particular his experiences with Srila Prabhupada during his latter days, together with the wisdom and mercy he received from him.



## Subhag Swami

As part of his ISKCON's 50th Anniversary campaign, Subhag Swami is travelling and preaching in 50 different countries this year. His visit to Bhaktivedanta Manor brought back many happy memories from when he stayed in England during the early 1970's.



## Chaitanya Charan das

Distinguished Indian speaker and spiritual scholar Caitanya Charan das visited the Manor for the very first time. He began with a series of seminars on the Ramayan, confronting challenging issues and the related underlying principles with a sensitive and innovative perspective.



## 50th Anniversary of ISKCON hosted at House of Lords

Bhaktivedanta Manor hosted a gathering at the House of Lords at the Palace of Westminster to acknowledge ISKCON's 50th anniversary. The event was hosted in the Principal State Room for an incredible yet intimate gathering of profiled guests. The peer sponsor, Lord Dholakia recollected on the challenging yet exciting journey of ISKCON in the UK. Srutidharma das, described the significance of the 50th

Anniversary and Managing Director, Gauri das, presented the journey in receiving planning permission to build the Haveli. His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami presented the keynote speech and reflected on the many sacrifices made by Srila Prabhupada in the establishment of ISKCON. Shailesh Vara MP closed proceedings by describing the unique contribution that ISKCON brings to wider society.



## Borehamwood Festival

Cllr Clive Butchins, the Town Mayor of Elstree and Borehamwood, was the main guest at the cultural evening in Fairway Hall, organised by the Hare Krishna Festival Team.



## A visit to the Manor

The Chair of Hertfordshire County Council Cllr Francis Button and Cllr Rabbi Alan Plancey enjoyed their special visit to Bhaktivedanta Manor.



## Legendary rapper expresses appreciation

KRS-One, a legend in the world of Hip-Hop, made a special visit to the ISKCON Temple in Leicester. He expressed his appreciation for prasad, telling the devotees that he used to receive it as a homeless youth in New York. "You never know who you are feeding...I was one of them!" he explained. "The New York devotees would distribute food to the poor, and gave copies of the Gita to those who would help out," explained KRS-



## Norwich restaurants distribute 10,000 books

The Namas Te India restaurant chain in Norwich has distributed no less than 10,000 copies of The Higher Taste. Restaurant manager Mr Vijay Jatani and his family became devotees through the local Nama Hatta (meeting) group. They have two vegetarian restaurants in the city and over the last five years they have distributed the books as complimentary gifts to their customers.



## Science of Ayurveda and its growth in the West

One of the annual events at the Manor is the Ayurvedic retreat, conducted by Dr Vasant Lad. Hailing from Maharashtra in India, Dr Lad is one of the foremost authorities in Ayurveda and comes from a long line of practitioners.

Ayurveda is the Vedic science of healing that incorporates medicine, diet and herbology. Ayurvedic practices even featured in the Ancient epic Ramayana, specifically when Sushena ordered Hanuman to retrieve the Sanjivani herb to revive Laxman from his injury.



## Building a strong, happy community

Focus of the Mentorship System (MS) is on the all-encompassing care, both spiritual and material, of existing devotees and not on expansion. Mentees have the facility also of having one-to-one personal meetings with their mentor based on Sacinandana Swami's "Tree of Life" concept.

Devotees feel part of an extended family and by regular training and positive, healthy, devotee association, they will naturally become more stronger in their spiritual lives and happier too!

After some years of being in ISKCON we often tend to mechanically perform our sadhana and service, by getting together in the mentee groups we are reminded of the most important regulation which is to "Always remember

Krsna, and never forget Him". Mentors assist us in becoming more conscious of Krsna and keep us focused on our ultimate goal of life of going back home, back to Krsna. As a result of feedback, to cater for devotees of differing levels, our meeting formats have flexibility to be more tailor made for the individual groups.

We are very delighted to be able to offer a new prasadam service to those in the MS and we are looking for more devotees to assist in our new initiative of cooking and/or delivering prasad to mentees in times of illness etc. Please email us at [mentorship@krishnatemple.com](mailto:mentorship@krishnatemple.com) if you can help. To find out more about the MS visit the "departments" section on [krishnatemple.com](http://krishnatemple.com)



## Offering a helping hand

A lively team of employees from the construction firm "Skanska" spent the day at Bhaktivedanta Manor to offer a helping hand. Commenting on the day spent volunteering, Raj Kumar said: "The team really enjoyed the day spent at the Manor. Everyone got involved and helped make the day a success."



## The Synthesis of Science and Religion

Radha Mohan das delivered a thought-provoking presentation and answered questions at a public seminar on the subject of science and religion. Other panellists included Revd Prof Nick Goulding PhD, Prof Polina Bayvel FEng FRS and Barney Leith OBE and the event was organised by the Revd Canon Dr Tim Bull from St Albans Cathedral.

“Science and religion seem opposed like the thumb and forefinger are opposed- - but actually they are joined at the hand,” concluded Radha Mohan das. “If you use the two together: Then and only then can you truly grasp things- - the entirety of reality, both physical and non-physical ”.



## Shree Krishna Haveli Model

“At the Manor, one hopes to be able to serve Lord Krishna at their highest levels of cognizance,” explained Harish Patel, “This dream became a reality for me when Gauri and Srutidharma prabhush approached us to make the model for the Shree Krishna Haveli. With assistance from my graduating students Amit Bhagat and Pradeep Hirani, this devotional service was taken on. Kamal Chunilal from India helped us overcome the most complicated parts! After about 300 hours of service our prayers were answered and the model was complete!” The model of the Haveli can be found within the visitor’s section of New Gokul farm.



## A Tale of Five Temples

A recent BBC documentary explored the history of five different temple communities within the Hindu diaspora in the UK. The program included extensive interviews with Akhandadhi das and Dilip Patel, who reminisced on the campaign to save Bhaktivedanta Manor from closure.



## Second National Convention

The Convention took place at the newly renovated temple in Leicester, bringing together over a hundred devotees from across the UK.

Organised to promote one UK yatra, and encourage a mood of

unity, cooperation, trust and positive communication between devotees, there was opportunity to hear from a variety of leaders from across the UK. Presentations were delivered on a number of topics, including book distribution, how to grow the congregation, end of life care, deity worship and devotee care.

## Child Protection

Bhaktivedanta Manor, the Global Headquarters for ISKCON Child Protection, hosted a child protection training seminar for more than 20 leaders, GBC members, Temple Presidents and ISKCON charity Trustees from across the UK. The training was delivered by Paul and Derek from RWA Child Protection Services and the Manor Child Protection Team. Ray Wyre Child Protection Services are an independent child protection specialist organization that, for the last eight years, have been assisting the UK Regional Director, Daksina devi dasi, in an advisory capacity.

The GBC Chairman for the UK,



Praghosa das commented:

“It is always most interesting and engaging listening to experts, not least because they know their brief inside out. When the subject is of such crucial importance for the well-being and safety of our children, that listening becomes quite magnetic.



# UNIVERSITY RETREAT

170 university students attended an uplifting meditation retreat called “The Treasure Within” at Bhaktivedanta Manor.

Organised by the Krishna Consciousness Societies (KCSOC), who have over 30 running weekly events, each with food, kirtan and a lot of philosophical discussion, this year’s retreat brought students from across the UK.

“Young people need excitement, education and entertainment.” said organiser Mabick Thappa. “The day consisted of seminars on ‘happiness’, cow milking and mantra meditation. The drama was also a hit showing the

difference in result between serving Krishna and serving ourselves.”

One student mentioned, “This was a wonderful event that provides an opportunity to anyone and everyone to experience an insight into Krishna Consciousness. The talks and Q&A sessions were very interesting and thought-provoking!”

A huge congratulations to the University Retreat team of Jahnvi Raniga, Lila Sara Harbal, Nalisha Patel and Krishna Caitanya Patel, led by Mabick Thapa. The National University Team also played a huge part in making this retreat a success.





## Ground-breaking Ceremony for Avanti House Secondary School

After years of effort, support and hard work, the ground-breaking ceremony for Avanti House Secondary School's permanent site of 20 acres took place. The event saw the first spade being dig into the ground by special guest, Radhanath Swami, who spoke about the need for education based on moral and spiritual principles in his keynote

address. The mayor for Harrow, Rekha Shah, Bob Blackman MP, Navin Shah GLA Member, Sachin Shah Head of Harrow Council and other Local councillors were present, along with students from year 10 and year 11 and members of staff. The Avanti Trust now has a total of 8 schools with capacity to educate over 7000 children.



## Volunteers Thank you

To Appreciate the immense contribution of over 1900 volunteers who serve at Bhaktivedanta Manor an evening of entertainment, reports and Prasadam was organised. Many volunteers had performed over 50 hours of service



as an offering to Srila Prabhupada to mark the 50th Anniversary. The temple is indebted to the commitment and selfless service given by all our volunteers.



## Seva Day at Bhaktivedanta Manor

The Veda London and Food for the Mind, Body and Soul teams came together at Bhaktivedanta Manor for this year's Seva Day initiative. The project has grown significantly and this year's team consisted of a wide range of 100 volunteers, with the youngest aged just two! The day included cooking for nine homeless shelters across Watford, spending time at three Dementia Care homes, raking leaves at the Manor, making care packages for the homeless at Matchless Gifts in Kings Cross, assisting in an abandoned animals sanctuary, helping to maintain the grounds at the Learning Through Horses charity and raising funds for the Sandipani Muni School in Vrindavan.



## The Call of Dharma

Bhakti Charu Swami was invited to give a keynote speech at the Ernst and Young HQ for Veda London's collaboration Diwali event with its Hindu Network. The event was titled 'The Call of Dharma' and was a cultural showcase. With over 100 professionals from across the city in attendance, His Holiness explained how one can take lessons from the story of Diwali and reflect them in ones' professional life. He also spoke at other financial and professional intuitions including the HSBC bank in Canary Wharf, Clifford Chance and Accenture.



## Remembrance Sunday

Srutidharma das laid a wreath and recited prayers of Remembrance at the annual Remembrance Day service at Letchmore Heath War Memorial. The service was particularly poignant because it marked exactly 100 years since the Battle of the Somme.

**Hare Krishna Hare Krishna  
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare  
Hare Rama Hare Rama  
Rama Rama Hare Hare**