



Bhaktivedanta Academy Gurukula

# Newsletter

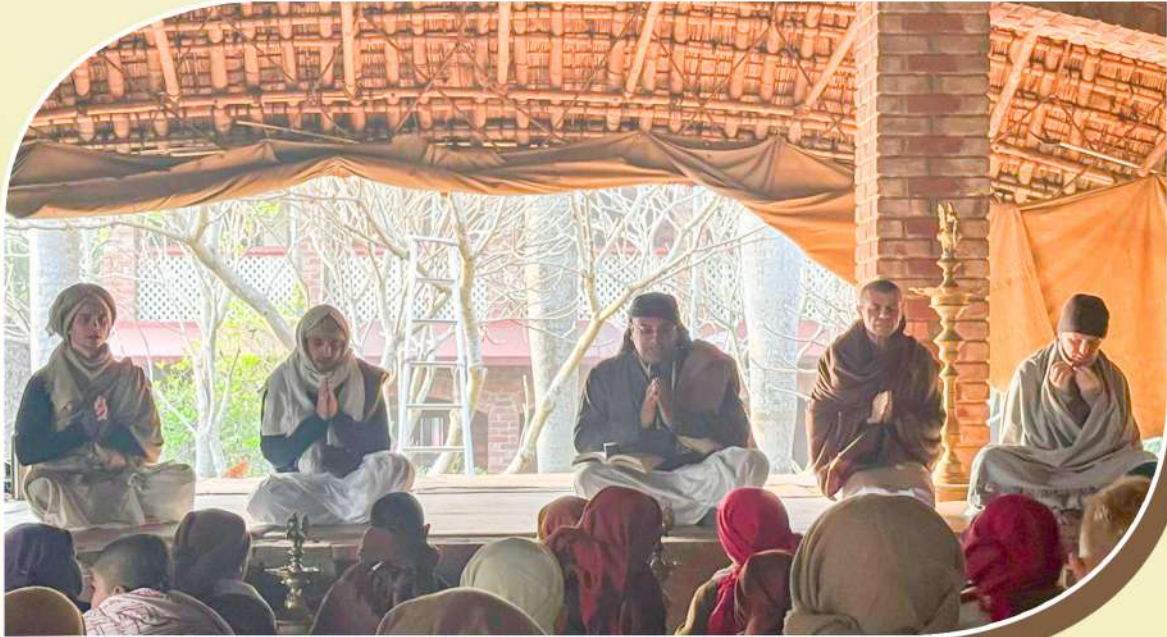
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## Message from the Principal



The months of November and December were very active in terms of academics in the Gurukula. We started a program on Saturdays called Saturday Kitchen, wherein we cook along with the boys and teachers. We prepare different types of Khichdi and Rice preparation for breakfast and then go out to distribute the prasadam to pilgrims, devotees, and visitors to Sri Dham Mayapur, as well as the general public. Up until now, having run this program for a couple of Saturdays, we have found the response to be very positive.

We take a truck and distribute the prasadam on Bhakti Siddhanta Marg. We also have Harinam Sankirtan and book distribution simultaneously with prasadam distribution. We sometimes are marveled at how quickly the prasadam gets distributed.

On the day of Gita Jayanti, Mokshada Ekadasi, many of our boys prepared presentations and spoke in glorification of the Bhagavad Gita, focusing on certain sections of the Gita. The parents came to witness the boys' presentations, and at the end, they were also asked questions by their peers or parents, which they tried to answer. Overall, it was a learning experience for the boys. We also had a couple of debates this month: "Communism versus Bhagavata Communism" and "Srimad Bhagavatam versus other Puranas." Surprisingly, the opposition side prepared very well, and in both cases, the opposition side won.

The winners of the Matchless Gifts test were 1<sup>st</sup>- Samvit, 2<sup>nd</sup>- Mukunda Murari, 3<sup>rd</sup>- Haridev. The winners of the Chant and Be Happy were. 1<sup>st</sup>-Mukunda Murari and Parikshit, 2<sup>nd</sup>-Balaram and Shyam Krishna, 3<sup>rd</sup>-Chandramukha.

Residing in holy Dham gives us an opportunity to visit many places of pastimes in the vicinity. This month, we visited Harihara Kshetra, and then we went to Surbhi Kunj. This Newsletter highlights the learning experience of the boys from various activities and their visit to holy places.

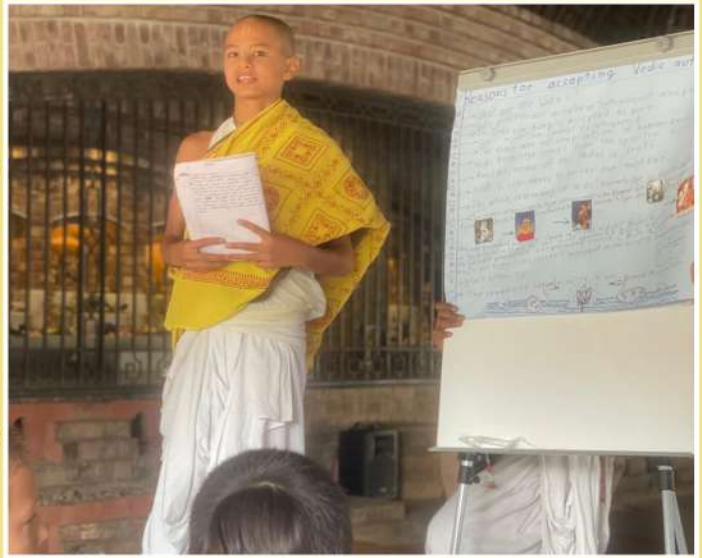
- Nitai Madhav Das  
(Principal)



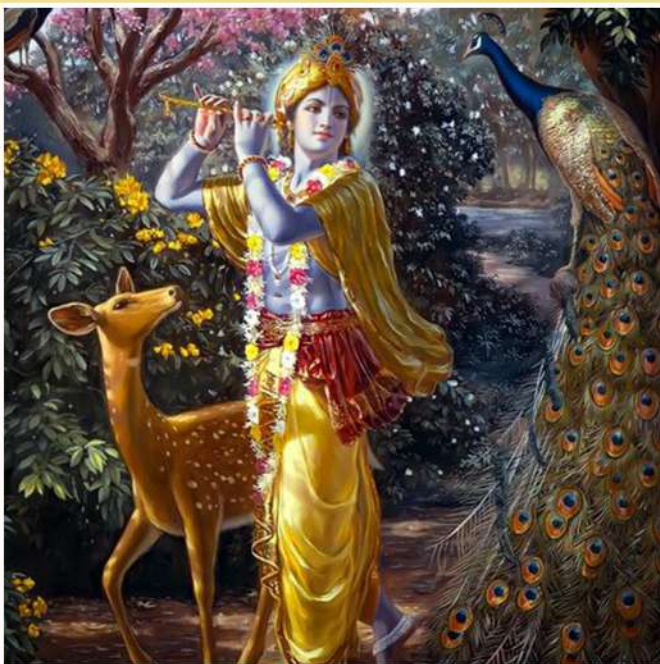
# God is a Person

## The Personal Form of the Lord

The complete whole, the supreme absolute truth, is the complete personality of Godhead. The Supreme Lord is sac-cid-ananda-vigraha. Realization of the personality of Godhead is the realization of all transcendental features: sat (eternity), cit (knowledge), and ananda (bliss). When one realizes the Supreme Person, they realize these aspects of the absolute truth in their completeness. Vigraha means form. Thus, the complete whole is not formless. If He were formless, or less than His creation in any way, He could not be complete. The complete whole, the Personality of Godhead, has immense potencies, all of which are as complete as He is.



The texts of the holy Vedas say that God can take any form He likes. For example, He appears as Lord Narasimha, who is half-man and half-lion, as Varaha (a boar incarnation), and as Matsya (a fish incarnation). In Vaikuntha, He has a four-handed form. As Krishna and Rama, He appears in His two-handed form. For different pastimes, God assumes different forms. But the form that devotees like the most is His two-handed form. When Krishna appeared in His four-handed form to Devaki and Vasudev in Mathura, they prayed to the Lord to appear in His two-handed form. When Krishna showed His Virat Swarupa (Universal form), Arjuna begged Krishna to return to His two-handed form. If we look around us, we find that every living being has a form. I have a form, animals have forms, fish have forms, trees have forms, and even little insects have forms. How can the Supreme Lord, who created all of us, be formless? God is personal; He has a form, and He likes to have a personal relationship. How can we relate to someone who is formless or impersonal? This is why Srila Prabhupada, in his books and lectures, explains with scriptural references that God is personal. He emphasizes that the real purpose of human life is to re-establish a relationship with God and return to the spiritual world. Srila Prabhupada said, "God is complete and has form. Just like here, if something is offered to Krishna, to God, He will eat it, but He will leave everything for you as prasadam. How? pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate. This is God's power. He will eat everything for you and leave everything for you as prasadam, taking everything, but still, it is there." (Lecture, New York, 1966)



## Isopanishad Mantra 4 says:

anejad ekaṁ manaso javīyo  
nainad devā āpnuvan pūrvam arṣat  
tad dhāvato 'nyān atyeti tiṣṭhat  
tasminn apo mātariśvā dadhāti

Although fixed in His abode, the Personality of Godhead is swifter than the mind and can overcome all others running. The powerful demigods cannot approach Him. Although in one place, He controls those who supply the air and rain. He surpasses all in excellence.

Here, it is said that the Lord is swifter than the mind and overcomes all others running. Anyone who runs has form. A formless person cannot run. Therefore, the Lord, who is the fastest person, must have a form.





Again, in **Isopanishad Mantra 16**, it is mentioned:

pūṣann ekarṣe yama sūrya prājāpatya  
 vyūha raśmīn samūha tejo  
 yat te rūpaṁ kalyāṇa-tamaṁ tat te paśyāmi  
 yo 'sāv asau puruṣaḥ so 'ham asmi

O my Lord, O primeval philosopher, maintainer of the universe, O regulating principle, destination of the pure devotees, well-wisher of the progenitors of mankind, please remove the effulgence of Your transcendental rays so that I can see Your form of bliss. You are the eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead, like unto the sun, as am I.

This verse explains that the form of the Lord is full of bliss. Devotees experience unlimited happiness when they see the beautiful form of the Lord. In Goloka Vrindavan, devotees are eager to always see the Lord. The gopis, the topmost devotees of the Lord, cursed the creator for creating eyelids because the eyelids would momentarily block their vision of Krishna.

One should know perfectly the Supreme Godhead, Sri Krishna, and His transcendental name, form, qualities, and pastimes, as well as the temporary material creation with its temporary demigods, men, and animals. When one knows these, they surpass death and the ephemeral cosmic manifestation with it, and in the eternal kingdom of God, they enjoy their eternal life of bliss and knowledge.



-Devkinandan Das (14 Yrs)



The Bhakti Sastri is a course for studying Srila Prabhupada's books deeply. Books like the Bhagavad-gita, Ishopanishad, Nectar of Devotion (NOD), and Nectar of Instruction (NOI) are some of the most important, and we study them in the Bhakti Sastri class. If we read and understand these books, we qualify for second initiation after the course. This course helps in understanding philosophy, and it also gives confidence for giving classes and preaching.

- Krishna Das (14 years)





## Macmillan Miracle Story

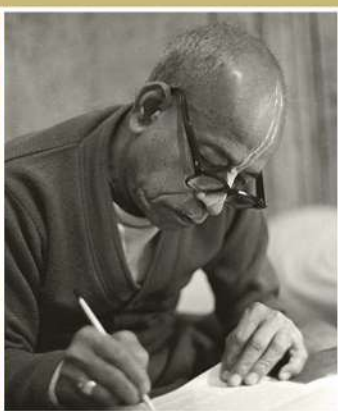
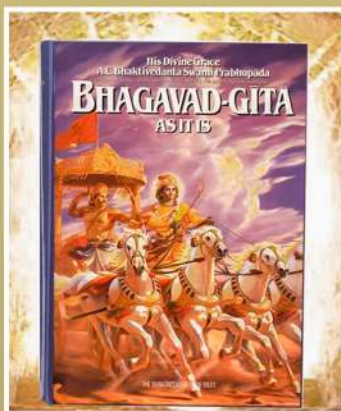
Srila Prabhupada had written to Brahmananda about the publication of his Bhagavad Gita in New York. He was especially enthusiastic because the major publisher Macmillan had agreed to take it on. This was a discussion that had started before Srila Prabhupada left for India. The Bhagavad Gita was important to Srila Prabhupada. He saw it as the perfect book to convey Krishna Consciousness, as it consists of the Lord's own words and His interactions with His loving devotee, Arjuna.



In 1939, just seven years after Srila Prabhupada was initiated by his spiritual master, he wrote a lengthy introduction to the book in English, presenting his full translations and commentary. This appeared soon after he began his mission in the West. When Srila Prabhupada arrived in New York in 1965, he gave priority to his work on the Bhagavad Gita.

Around this time, the devotees had released the "Happening album" an assortment of devotional songs, as described in the previous chapter. They had placed an ad for the record in *The Village Voice* and were receiving orders from various parts of the East Coast. One order came from Midtown Manhattan, relatively close to the little storefront serving as a temple for Srila Prabhupada and his early disciples. Brahmananda brought the letter to his master. "Look, Swamiji, it's an order from Macmillan. They are one of the biggest publishers in the world."

Srila Prabhupada gazed knowingly into his disciple's eyes and gave the following directives: "Do not mail out this order as we do with others. Instead, bring the record to Macmillan's office and hand-deliver it to the person who sent us the letter." Brahmananda nodded, aware that Krishna was using him as an instrument. "When you deliver the album," Srila Prabhupada continued, "tell them that you are a disciple of a guru from India and that he has translated the Bhagavad Gita. They will publish it. Do not worry."



Brahmananda was stunned. Srila Prabhupada was so confident. There was no doubt the book would get published by Macmillan. One could not do much better than that. The next day, dressed in a suit and tie, Brahmananda made his way up to the Macmillan skyscraper at 866 3rd Avenue, just off 52nd Street. His expectations, as large as the building itself, were dashed when he learned that the order for the album had come from an accountant, not an executive or a prominent person in the company.

"This really had nothing to do with the publishing company," remembers Brahmananda. "It was just a simple worker who had some interest in mantras and meditation." So Brahmananda dutifully delivered the album and had pretty much given up hope that his teacher's Bhagavad Gita would get published. Just then, in the midst of polite small talk with the accountant, a young executive happened to appear in their midst and was introduced to Brahmananda. "This is James O'Shea Wade, our senior editor." Brahmananda seized the moment. "I am a disciple of an Indian Guru," he said, trying to repeat Swamiji's words verbatim. "He has translated the Bhagavad Gita."

"What?" Wade responded, incredulously. "We've just published a full line of spiritual books, and we were looking for a Bhagavad Gita to complete the set." Brahmananda's mouth dropped open. Though at a loss for words himself, he contemplated the potency of Srila Prabhupada's words: "They will publish it. Do not worry." Wade then broke the awkward silence. "You bring in the manuscripts tomorrow," he offered. "We'll publish it, sight unseen."

Brahmananda raced back to the storefront and told Srila Prabhupada the news. It should be understood that Srila Prabhupada's translation is not ordinary; rather, it is a translation with spiritual power. This is because the work is not merely his own. His translation and commentary bring to bear the insights of his predecessors in the disciplic succession.



He titled his edition Bhagavad Gita As It Is, boldly announcing to readers that this is not yet another interpretation, but rather the original message of the book's initial speaker, Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Accordingly, Srila Prabhupada's Gita was the first English edition to bring people to "Krishna Consciousness," allowing them to become devotees of Krishna, which is the book's intended purpose (Ref. B.G. 18.65).

Srila Prabhupada's Gita went on to become one of the most significant editions of both popular and scholarly translations. It has claimed millions of readers in some fifty-five languages, from Polish to Japanese, German to Azerbaijani, Danish to Croatian, English to numerous Indian languages. Swamiji's Gita is a phenomenon. It can be found in homes, bookstores, research libraries, and academic institutions around the world. The history of his meeting with Macmillan shows that James Wade, like Brahmananda, served as an instrument in the hands of Krishna, who had already signed the contract.

- By Samvit Das (9 years)



## Parikrama to Harihara Kshetra and Surbhi Kunj



Lord Chaitanya and Lord Nityananda had many pastimes in Godruma Dwip. On Godruma Dwipa, there is a beautiful temple of Harihara, who is half Lord Shiva (white) and half Lord Vishnu (black). This temple lies on the banks of the Alakananda River, which once flowed near this beautiful temple.

Lord Nityananda revealed to Jiva Goswami that this place is the Kashi (a holy place in India) of Navadwip and is much superior to Varanasi, as Lord Shiva is eternally engaged here in singing the glories of Lord Gaurachandra. In Hari Hara Kshetra, Lord Shiva encourages his followers to accept devotion to Lord Gauranga.

On December 6th, 2024, the Gurukul boys went on a parikrama to Harihara Kshetra and Surbhi Kunj. First, we walked to Taranpur Ghat and took a boat to Swaroop Gang. From there, we took totos and went to the Harihara Kshetra temple. In the main altar, there is Harihara (half Shiva and half Vishnu). In the altar, there is also a footprint of Gadadhara Pandit. We all had a wonderful darshan of the deities and then performed a drama on the mercy of Lord Shiva and Vishnu.

The next destination was Surbhi Kunj. We boarded our totos from Harihara Kshetra and then went to Surbhi Kunj. At this place, we took darshan of the deities of Bhaktivinod Thakur, namely Gaur Nitai and Radha Krishna. In Surbhi Kunj, we performed another drama on Bhaktivinod Thakur and how he defeated the self-proclaimed God, Bhisak Sen. Bhisak Sen was a yogi, and after cutting his hair, he lost all his powers. After the drama, we performed kirtan. It was ecstatic to dance and chant with all our friends.

We then took prasadam cooked by Avadut Maharaj, a resident sannyasi at Surbhi Kunj. Maharaj had prepared a wonderful and big feast. He himself prepared wonderful items such as puri, paneer sabzi, chachari, saag, pakora, chutney, misty dai, and rasgulla. It was very tasty.



Then, from the backwaters of Surbhi Kunj, we boarded a private boat from Mayapur Tourism. We took a boat ride in the Jalangi and then the Ganga for 45 minutes until Prabhupada Ghat. From there, we walked back to Gurukul.

Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur describes in his book Navadwip Mahatmay that when Indra approached Surbhi, he said that he had heard that Lord Krishna would perform his wonderful pastimes in Nadia in the age of Kali. Surbhi answered, "Let us go to Navadwip Dham and worship Nimai." After Lord Chaitanya disappeared, after performing his pastimes, Surbhi remained by a banyan tree, constantly serving the lotus feet of Gauranga.

It was really a nice spiritual trip.

- Haridev Das (10 Yrs), Mayapur Chandra Das (9 years), Vrindavan Das (11 years old) and Danavir Caitanya Dasa (9 years)



### Importance of reading Srila Prabhupada's Books



Srila Prabhupada said, "I am requesting all my students to read my books very seriously every day without fail". The only way we can advance in spiritual life and ultimately get out of this miserable material world and go back to Godhead is by the association of pure devotees of Krishna. Only one who is already elevated and situated on the topmost spiritual platform is qualified to guide us in such a way that we can also ultimately achieve the same perfection and go back home, back to Godhead. Now we are so fortunate that we have Srila Prabhupada.

by becoming fully Krishna conscious in this lifetime." Srila Prabhupada, in his purports, has explained everything. We get complete guidance on every aspect of devotional life in his books. Our faith in Krishna consciousness increases by reading Prabhupada's books. This blissful transcendental process continues forever in the life of a sincere and faithful follower. Anandam budhivardhanam.

Balaram Das (12 Years)

### Food for Life program by Gurukul Boys

30th November 2024 onwards every Saturdays, the Gurukul boys have started organizing a Food for Life (Prasadam, Harinaam Sankirtan and Book Distribution) event for the visitors and local residents of Sri Mayapur Dham. Since it was a holiday, attendance was optional, but many boys eagerly participated.



We all contributed by helping with cooking, cutting, chopping, and cleaning. We made Khichri, and once the bhoga was ready, we offered it to the Lordships and then honored the breakfast prasadam. After honoring the prasadam we served it to others.

Once we finished honoring our breakfast, we loaded everything into a rickshaw truck and proceeded to different local locations in Mayapur.



In just a few minutes we finished all our prasadam approximated 500 cups of Khichri or Rice prasadam. We participate in all activities by doing Sankirtan, prasadam distribution and also book distribution. We took turns sitting in the open rickshaw while chanting the Mahamantra. It was an enjoyable experience, and we had a lot of fun.

We all learned how important it is to engage in Annadaan (charitable giving), Sankirtan and Book Distribution.

-Lakshyaveer Das (9 years) and Danavir Das (9 years)

## Gita Jayanti

On 10th December 2024, we celebrated the most auspicious occasion of Gita Jayanti. We, at Gurukul Boys, marked this festival by making presentations on the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. We started our day with the Mangala Arti, followed by a visit to the temple for the Darshan Arti, where we took darshan of Sri Narasimha Dev, Sri Sri Radha Madhav, and Sri Pan-chattva. After the darshan, we participated in the Bhagavad Gita Jayanti Mahotsav Yagya.

In the afternoon, at 2:00 pm, our parents were invited, and we students made presentations on various teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. It was a wonderful experience to present in front of our teachers, students, and parents. Everyone was very happy with the presentations. Later, we served prasadam and juice.

I was very happy to participate and present.



- Danvir Das (9 years old)



## Stories of Aindra Prabhu

On 13th December 2024, we had the opportunity to hear from H.G. Govind Prabhu, a Mridanga player who had served on the 24-hour kirtan committee. We were very fortunate to hear stories about Aindra Prabhu from someone who had served alongside him.

We started with a kirtan, which was very energetic, and everyone actively participated. After the kirtan, Prabhu shared some stories about Aindra Prabhu.

Once, in the Krishna Balaram Temple, Aindra Prabhu was in his room on the second floor, and there was a Gurukul on the first floor. During their free time, sometimes the boys would scream, "Oh my God! Oh my God!" Aindra Prabhu would reply, "No, no... Oh my Krishna!"

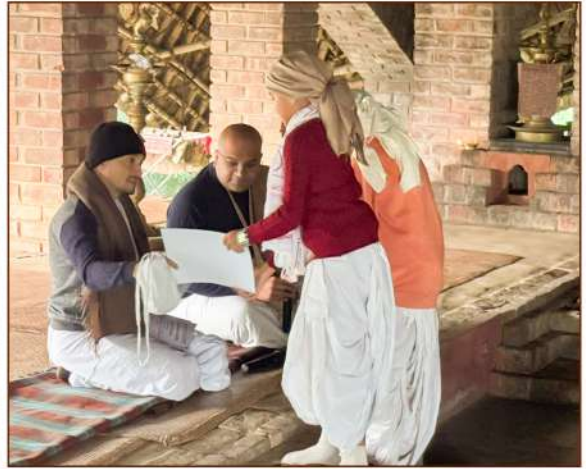
Aindra Prabhu had a trunk. If you opened it, you would see small Gaura Nitai deities, a microphone system, a mridanga, and kartals. It was his little temple. He had a desire to have a bullock cart and chant kirtan on the streets. One day, the temple president came to his room and said, "I had a dream where Srila Prabhupada was upset. He said there was no 24-hour kirtan and that no one was willing to do it. You must do it." Aindra Prabhu took this as an instruction from Srila Prabhupada, his spiritual master, and started the 24-hour kirtan in Krishna Balaram Temple.

Aindra Prabhu had only one interaction with Srila Prabhupada, where he was leading kirtan and playing the mridanga, and Prabhupada said, "Jaya!" This was the only interaction he had with his spiritual master. Prabhu also mentioned that Aindra Prabhu was very austere. He would eat simple raw rice and dal soaked in water during Chaturmas. He chanted 116 rounds every day, and on Ekadashi, he would chant 192 rounds. We all felt very inspired after hearing the glories of Aindra Prabhu.

- Danavir Das (9 Years Old)



# Prabhupada books, Awards & Certificate Distribution





# Saturday kitchen



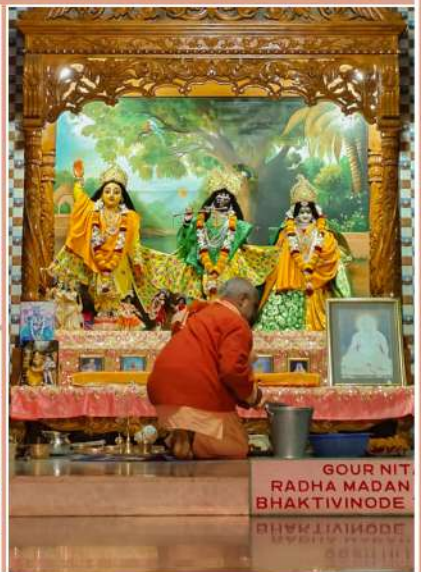


# Harinaam Sankirtan Anna-Daan & Book Distribution





# Parikrama to Harihara Kshetra and Surbhi Kunj

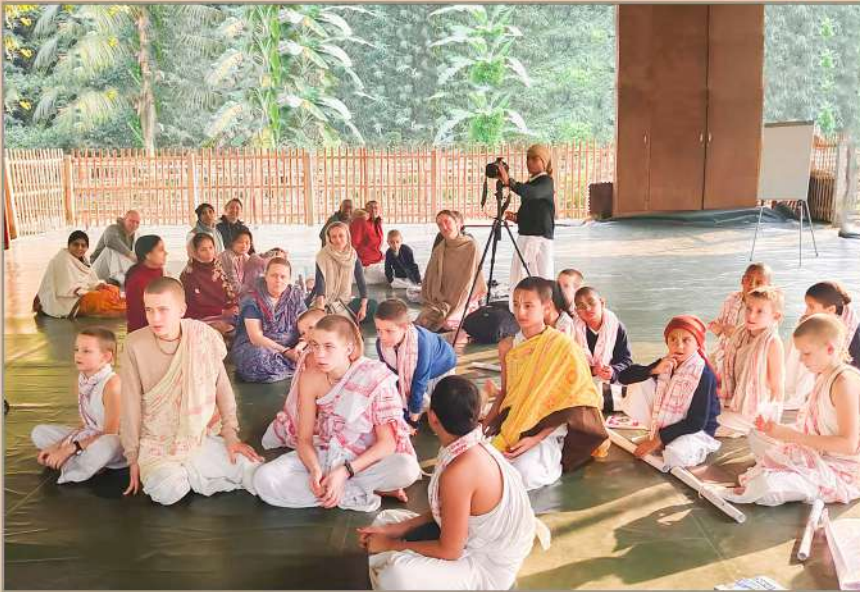


GOUR NIT  
RADHA MADAN  
BHAKTIVINODE



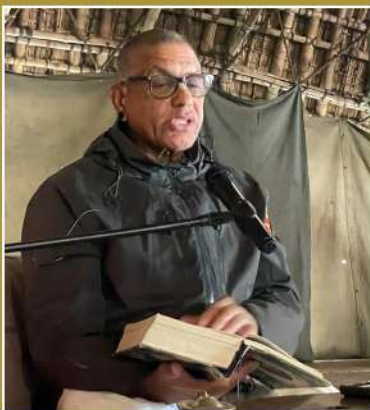
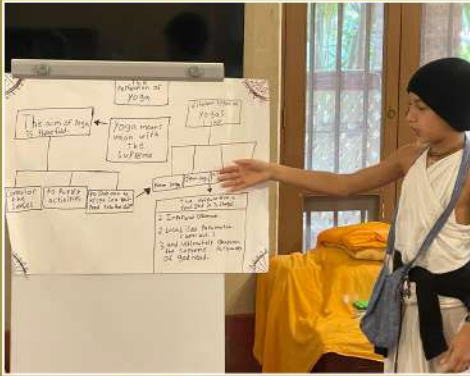


# Gita jayanti Mahotsav 2024



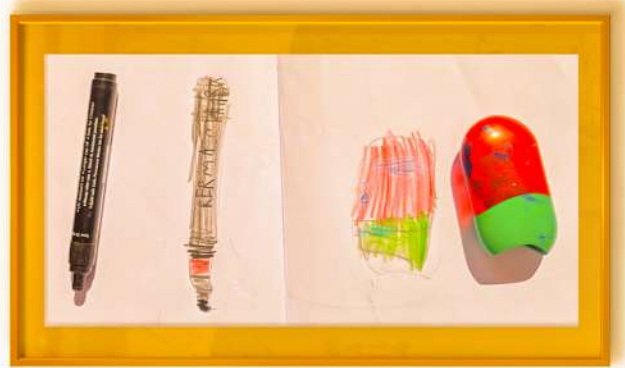


# Highlights of The Month





# Creative Minds



Artist Name:- Bharat, Shyam Krishna, Gaura naam, Vedang, Nimai