

Leicester

Hare Krishna Centre for Vedic Studies NEWSLETTER



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Editorial

It has been some time since the last issue of our newsletter. There have been several changes in Leicester. First, our newsletter has a new face. Our website has also received some new input (www.gauranga.org).

Most important, however, is that we have, by the mercy of Lord Caitanya and the Vaishnavas, been able to open a new Preaching Centre in Leicester. This is proof that the preaching is expanding more and more.

We just returned from the Holy Dham of Vrindavan where we had the blissful and ecstatic association of His Holiness Radhanatha Swami along with some 2000 devotees from Mumbai and Pune. It was an unforgettable experience.

By Srimati Radharani's inconceivable mercy we have been able to bring back with us the most extraordinarily beautiful deities of Lord Caitanya and Nityananda Prabhu. These Lords have now been installed in Leicester.

Also by Radharani's inconceivable mercy Nandini Radha, one of our devotees, received *diksa* initiation from His Holiness



Varsana, the abode of Srimati Radhika

Jayapataka Swami in Vrindavan.

This issue will introduce you to our new Centre, its aims and objectives and what has been accomplished so far. It also features a short report on our Gaura Purnima celebration with some pictures of Their Lordships' *abhisheka*. Moreover, you will find a report on our 'Food for Life' *prasadam* distribution programme as well as a report about our 'Shastra Dhana -

Books for Schools' programme.

We very much hope you will like this edition of the Leicester Newsletter.

With much affection and love I beg to remain your servant in the service of Srila Prabhupada,

Gauranga Sundara das



Aims & Objectives

The Leicester Hare Krishna Centre for Vedic Studies aims to involve the local student community. It is ideally situated for this being only five minutes away from Leicester's University and not more than ten minutes from the City Centre.

Our aim is to not only reach the Hindu community but also other communities who have little or no exposure to Krishna Consciousness, thus complementing

the overall preaching in Leicester.

To accomplish that, we want to build and train a team of devotees who can engage full-time in the activities of devotional service and thus spread Krishna Consciousness far and wide.

Prasadam distribution is also one of our aims. We want to extend our 'Food for Life' programme not only to the home-

less and needy but to all sections of society.

We aim to do regular *harinam sankirtan* (public street chanting), thus giving the Holy Name to everyone.

Moreover, we aim to place Srila Prabhupada's transcendental literature into homes, schools, hospitals and other public institutions.



Contents

Editorial
Page 1

Deity Installation
Page 2-3

Gaura Purnima
Page 4

Food for Life
Page 5-6

Bhagavatam for Schools
Page 7

Book Distribution
Page 8

Sri Sri Nitai Saci-Sundar Deity Installation

13 March 2005

Sri Sri Nitai Saci-Sundar are our beloved deities at the Hare Krishna Centre in Leicester.

Devotees from throughout the UK came to celebrate the installation of the deities and the opening of the Centre.

The deities received Their first *abhisheka* bath with *panchamrita*, i.e. milk, yogurt, honey, sugar and ghee. Thereafter Their blindfold was taken off. Then They were dressed in a beautiful new outfit.

It was overwhelming to see so much support from so many devotees not only from Leicester but from throughout the UK. It was more than we could have ever hoped for. We are eternally grateful for such a strong show of sympathy and enthusiasm for the new Centre.

His Holiness Bhakti Ballabh Puri Gosvami gave an inspiring talk about the most merciful Lord Gauranga. Devotees had arranged a sound system to enable everyone to listen to the talk.

Maharaja is an initiating spiritual master of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, ISKCON. He came all the way from Scotland to attend the installation of the deities during the official opening of the Centre.

He is heading a community of devotees in Scotland, Karuna Bhavan, one of the many branches of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).

Karuna Bhavan is near Lesmahagow, which is between and slightly south of Edinburgh and Glasgow. The Scottish devotees preach throughout Scotland and Northern England, distribute books, run *Nama Hatta* programs and do some festivals. The Scottish *yatra* is amongst the world leaders in book distribution. Devotees are famous for their 'GOURANGA!' Campaign.

Tusta Krishna Prabhu from the Manchester Hare Krishna Centre conducted the *abhisheka* bathing ceremony for the deities. He is a qualified Brahmin and *pujari* (priest) as well as a skilled *mr-dangam* (drum) player.



Sri Sri Nitai Saci-Sundar, the most beautiful Lords at the Hare Krishna Centre in Leicester

His Holiness Bhakti Ballabh Puri Gosvami attended the installation of Their Lordships during the official opening of the Centre on 13 March 2005, the appearance day of Sri Purusottama Dasa Thakura.

Maharaja is an initiating spiritual master of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). He has established a flourishing community of devotees in Scotland.

More than 150 different bhoga preparations were offered to Their Lordships who blessed everyone who came forward to pay their respects.

Devotees again and again were stunned by the extraordinary beauty of the two Lords who descended on Leicester to engulf all people in the *sankirtana* movement of the chanting of the Holy Name and to also ask everyone to spread this Holy Name throughout the land.

Lord Caitanya and Nityananda Prabhu are the most merciful incarnations of Godhead. They appeared 500 years ago to freely distribute love of God to everyone.



His Holiness Bhakti Ballabh Puri Gosvami

Tusta Krishna Prabhu made sure that the *kirtan* for Their Lordships was so contagious that no one was able to escape the transcendental atmosphere. Devotees were shouting out on top of their voice again and again 'GOURANGA! GOURANGA!'

At one point Puri Maharaja stopped the *kirtan* and ask everyone to call out loudly for the Lord to appear. It became obvious to everyone present that the Lord had actually made His divine decent, manifesting Himself in the beautiful forms of Sri Sri Nitai Saci-Sundar.



Puri Maharaja speaks about the most merciful Lord Gauranga

Many of the devotees present where so overwhelmed by the sheer beauty of Sri Sri Nitai Saci-Sundar that they took photos in order to share them with their family members and friends. They felt sad that others were not so fortunate to witness the actual appearance of Their Lordships.

One of the devotees remarked 'it was the best day I ever had in my life.' Others felt fortunate to be present to taste the transcendental experience. Again others said they felt touched by the sheer beauty of Their Lordships and that they could hardly take their eyes off Their divine forms.

However, everyone agreed that the *abhisheka* deeply inspired them, especially when honey and yogurt covered the divine forms of the Lords.

It is tradition to offer at least 108 *bhoga* preparations to the Lords for Their appearance. Devotees from all quarters came forward to cook for the



The temple room filled with devotees from throughout the UK

deities. The final count revealed that there were at least 150 different *bhoga* preparations. In fact much of the temple room floor was covered by these offerings of love, made by devotees from Leicester and other parts of the country.

These offerings of devotion were thankfully accepted by Their Lordships, who reciprocated by giving Their blessings.

The gorgeous *Gaura arati* was one of the highlights of the celebration. The temple room was packed with eager devotees to see The Lords in Their new outfit. Many had to stand in the doorway and in the next room. The atmosphere was spiritually surcharged with the chanting of the Holy Name and with the loud callings of 'GOURANGA!' Everyone was immersed in feelings of spiritual ecstasy. Lord Gauranga and Nityananda Prabhu have finally appeared in Leicester. Some remarked that it felt just like if it was *Gaura Purnima*.

Puri Maharaja sang and read the translation of '*nitai pada-kamala*', a beautiful song by Srila Narottama dasa Thakura.

"The lotus feet of Lord Nityananda are a shelter where one will get the soothing moonlight not only of one, but of millions of moons.

"If the world wants to have real peace, it should take shelter of Lord Nityananda. Unless one takes shelter under the shade of the lotus feet of Lord Nityananda, it will be very difficult for him to approach

Radha-Krishna. If one actually wants to enter into the dancing party of Radha-Krishna, he must firmly catch hold of the lotus feet of Lord Nityananda."

Devotees, friends and supporters of the Hare Krishna Centre got together and prepared over 150 *bhoga* preparations for Their Lordships. This is a shining example of dedicated service with love and devotion.

Krishna does not ask very much, '*patram puspam phalam toyam*', a leaf, a flower, fruit or water offered with love and devotion; Krishna will accept it, what to speak of all those delicious preparations which were offered by so many faithful devotees of the Lord.

Other devotees took charge of preparing the entire feast with rice, dhal, *subjis* etc. Everyone was inspired to do something for Their Lordships. There was no shortage of love and devotion anywhere and those somewhat still hesitant were quickly drawn into the deep mood of unmotivated devotional service to Sri Sri Nitai Saci-Sundar.

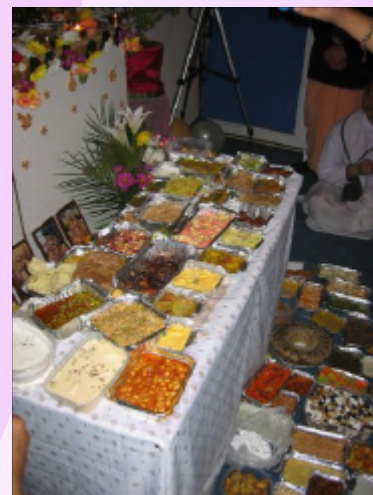
Radhakanta *mataji* from the Manchester Hare Krishna Temple had the privilege to offer the first *arati* to the newly installed deities.

"All glories, all glories to the beautiful *arati* ceremony of Lord Caitanya! This *Gaura arati* is being performed in a grove on the bank of the Ganges and is captivating everyone in the universe.

"On Lord Caitanya's right is Lord Nityananda, and on His left is Sri Gadadhara. Nearby stands Sri Advaita, and Srivasa Thakura holds an umbrella over Lord Caitanya's head.

"Lord Caitanya has sat down on a jeweled throne, and Lord Brahma and the other demigods are performing His *arati*.

"As Narahari Sarakara and other associates of Lord Caitanya fan Him with *camaras*, Sanjaya Pandita, Mukunda Datta, Vasu



More than 150 bhoga preparations

Sri Sri Nitai Saci-Sundar Gaura Purnima 2005

Ghosa and other devotees sing sweet *kirtana*.

"Conchshells, bells, and *karatalas* resound, and the *mrdangas* play very sweetly. This *kirtana* music is supremely sweet and relishable to hear.

"The brilliance of Lord Caitanya's face conquers millions upon millions of moons, and the garland of forest flowers around His neck shines.

"Lord Siva, Sukadeva Gosvami, and Narada Muni are all present, and their voices are choked with the great ecstasy of transcendental love. Thus Thakura Bhaktivinoda envisions the glory of Lord Sri Caitanya."

A mystical atmosphere had descended directly from the spiritual abode. Everyone was able to feel the presence of the Lord in His most beautiful deity form as Sri Sri Nitai Saci-Sundar. Devotees were intensely engaged in chanting the Holy Name, which is the *yuga dharma* for this age.

This process of worship is recommended in all revealed scriptures such as the Vedic literature, the Koran, the Bible etc. The congregational chanting of the names of God immediately elevates one to the transcendental platform, free from anxiety and distress.

The *bhoga* offerings kept coming in in great numbers. It was originally thought of to offer 20-30 or perhaps with great endeavour 108 preparations. This has been far surpassed by devotees bringing with them 150 *bhoga* offerings and more.

The Lords wanted to make Their grand appearance. They didn't care about formalities, time or place or any institutional policies. They wanted to come and give Their most beneficial *darshan* to all the people of Leicester and beyond.



Lord Nityananda, the original spiritual master and savior of the most fallen



The merciful lotus feet of Lord Nityananda

Devotees listened attentively to what Puri Maharaja had to say. Maharaja explained the effects of chanting 'Gouranga', the most merciful name of God. There is no consideration of offences in chanting these names.

Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu descended in this age of *kali* to deliver the most fallen souls and bring them back to His divine abode.

The process is easy and sublime. The congregational chanting of the names of God is therefore the process for Self Realisation for this age.



www.gauranga.org/installation.htm

Prasadam Distribution Food for Life

Devotees from the Hare Krishna Centre regularly distribute hot and delicious Krishna *prasadam* (spiritual food) at Leicester's Anchor Club, a drop-in centre for the homeless. The Club is a registered charity, which is funded by the City Council.

The Anchor Club staff is very grateful for the devotees' efforts and the homeless eagerly take to the Lord's mercy in the form of hot and delicious Krishna *prasadam*. All vegetables are kindly donated by Mr Lakhani from 'Pauls Fruit & Veg' in Leicester. Bhakta Jimmy, who caters for the taste of those frequenting the Centre, is the main cook of the 'Food for Life' programme.

Kenny, a member of staff at the Anchor Club, is an enthusiastic 'Gouranga' fan. He eagerly greets the devotees by calling out 'Gouranga' or 'Hare Krishna'.

Devotees from the Hare Krishna Centre started the *prasadam* distribution programme two years ago and the staff as well as the regulars who come for hot Krishna *prasadam* have learned to appreciate Krishna's mercy by chanting 'Gouranga' and 'Hare Krishna'. Those who are not familiar with either generally say 'God bless you'. Actually it is them who are really blessed. All are grateful and some said it was their first hot meal in days. Since 2003 the *prasadam* distribution has been continued to the very day.

Sometimes the devotees come with *mrdangam* drum and *karatalas* (cymbals) to lead the chanting of Hare

Krishna. This is very much appreciated by those who visit the Centre. Many join in the chanting and thus get purified. Others have read some books on Krishna Consciousness and feel

over in the plates of those who take to this delicious *prasadam*.

Nandini Radha is also an excellent cook. Devotees at the Hare Krishna Centre can vouch for that. She too prepares *prasadam* for the Anchor Club. In the Holy Dham of Vrindavan in Kartik 2004 she received *diksa* initiation from H.H. Jayapataka Swami, a spiritual master of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).

Frank, the kitchen boss at the Anchor Centre, makes sure that everything is well organised and that the whole operation runs smoothly. He

is always eager to wash the transfer containers after the *prasadam* has been distributed. He loves that service and will not part with it under any circumstances. He also keeps in regular touch with the Hare Krishna Centre to make sure devotees are coming on time and to co-ordinate and liaise between the Anchor Club and the Hare Krishna Centre.

Srila Prabhupada writes the following about *prasadam* distribution:

"When the guru is fully satisfied that *prasadam* distribution is going on, he is very much pleased, and he engages himself in the devotional service of the Lord by chanting and dancing." (JSD 4.2)

"If you eat *bhagavat-prasadam*, then gradually you become spiritualized; it has this potency. Therefore it is said that realization of God begins with the tongue. *Sevonmukhe hi jhivadau*: [Brs. 1.2.234] If you engage your tongue in the service of the Lord, then you realize God. So what is that engage-



Devotees with the Anchor Club staff and some happy prasadam eaters

the philosophy is just right for them.

Everyone loves Krishna *prasadam*. Jimmy's hot vegetable pasta is one of the favourites at the Centre. People come for a second and even a third helping. There is hardly any left



Food for the body, mind and soul

ment of the tongue? You chant the holy name of the Lord, and you take this *prasadam*, remnants of food offered to the Lord. Then you become self-realized, God-realized-by these two methods. You don't have to be very highly educated or be a philosopher, a scientist, or a rich man to realize God. If you just sincerely engage your tongue in the service of the Lord, you will realize Him. It is so simple. It is not very difficult". (JSD 4.2)

"Now, this worship of Krishna ... The whole day is engaged for Krishna's *mangala-aratika*, for Krishna's chanting, for Krishna's cooking, for Krishna's *prasadam* distribution, so many ways. So our devotees all over the world - there are 102 centers - they are simply engaged in Krishna consciousness. This is our propaganda, always, no other business. We don't do any business but we are spending at least twenty-five *lakhs* of rupees, twenty-five *lakhs* of rupees every month, but Krishna is supplying. *Tesam nityabhiyuktanam yoga-ksemam vahamy aham* [Bg. 9.22]. If you remain in Krishna consciousness, fully dependent on Krishna, then there will be no scarcity."

"I started this Krishna business with forty rupees. Now we have got forty *crores* of rupees. Is

there any businessman in the whole world within ten years with forty rupees he can increase forty *crores*? There is no example. And ten thousand men, they are eating *prasadam* daily. So this is Krishna consciousness. *Yoga-ksemam vahamy aham* [Bg. 9.22]. As soon as you become Krishna conscious, you simply depend on Him and work sincerely and



The best food I have ever eaten in my life

then Krishna will supply everything. Everything." (SB lecture, Vrindavana 2.12.1975)

"Because *sastra* says, *papi tapi jata chilo, hari-name uddharilo*.

Simply by this chanting, all these things can be stopped. There is no doubt about it. They are spending so much money uselessly going to the moon planet and this planet and for stopping crime. The same amount may be spent for distribution of *prasada* and chanting Hare Krishna in a mass scale. Everything will be all right. Mass scale. Simply organize nice *prasadam* distribution and mass joining Hare Krishna. Just see the effect." (Arrival address, Chicago 3.7.1975)

"But this *prasadam* distribution should be introduced very vigorously." (Conversation, Bhuvaneshvara 23.1.1977)

"*Kirtana* and *prasadam* distribution. This is our preaching mainly. And if they hear little philosophy, that is very good. Otherwise simply *kirtana* and *prasadam* distribution is sufficient. Caitanya Mahaprabhu used to do that. He was not speaking philosophy to everyone. *Kirtana* and *prasada* distribution. So our men can perform very nice *kirtana*, and if they come to take little *prasadam*, that is preaching. You have to maintain this standard, that *kirtana* must go on and *prasadam* should be distributed." (Room Conversation, Bhuvaneshvara 29.1.1977)



www.gauranga.org/prasadam_distribution.htm

Prabhupada Quotes

"I want that every respectable person has a full set of Bhagavatam and Caitanya Caritamrita in his home."

"Please try to popularise this book throughout England as much as possible. Because if these books are read, there is no doubt that many sincere souls shall be attracted and will join you in your work for Krishna. So please try for selling these books, it shall be considered as the greatest service."

"I am very glad to know that the new BTG is selling well. These publications are the backbone of our movement, and if we can distribute them

successfully then everything will be all right."

"I am very glad to note of how you are increasing the 'Back To Godhead' distribution there in such a remote place. Our 'Back To Godhead' is the backbone of our movement so we should always be thinking how to increase it increase it increase it."

"Also continue your program of door-to-door *Sankirtana*. That is certainly Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's movement and he will bestow upon you all blessings."

"I am also thinking like that after reading your letter that if I could induce even one person to Krishna consciousness through my publication, Bhagavad-gita As It Is, then I shall think my labour is successful."

Krishna consciousness is the absolute need of the present day society, and there are many people who will come to join us if we simply make these teachings of Bhagavad-gita and rest of the Vedic literature available to them. So try to sell Back to Godheads as far as you are able to do ...



Srimad Bhagavatam for Schools Book Distribution

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder Acharya of the Hare Krishna movement, performed many sacrifices to present the ancient Vedic culture to people throughout the world. One of His biggest sacrifices is revealed in the following story:

"Once Srila Prabhupada was staying with an Ayurvedic doctor, a *sannyasi* named Balarama Maharaja, who was treating him. Balarama Maharaja remembers how Srila Prabhupada would sit in his room and day and night he would continually translate Srimad Bhagavatam. Balarama Maharaja had met the greatest of *sadhus* throughout South India, but he had never seen anyone so absorbed in Srimad Bhagavatam. He would personally bring Srila Prabhupada his *prasadam* and leave it outside his door. Sometimes it would sit there for some five, six or seven hours because He was so absorbed in his translations, he just couldn't step away from it. And throughout the night his light was on as he translated Bhagavatam."

As a leader spreading this spiritual movement throughout the world, the only chance he got to translate was during the early

hours of the morning. He literally sacrificed his sleep, to give us this knowledge.

As followers of Srila Prabhupada we feel it is our duty to distribute these books and make this knowledge available. For the past few months devotees from the Hare Krishna Centre have



Elizabeth Wayne and Nick Hall are receiving a set of Srimad Bhagavatam for their RE department at Soar Valley College

been approaching people to either purchase a set of Bhagavatams for themselves or sponsor a set, which will be placed in schools and libraries throughout Leicestershire.

Soar Valley College is the first to receive a set and there are several more educational centres which will also receive sets. Elizabeth Wayne, who worked with Rasamandala das from ISKCON Educational Services (IES) on the 'Heart of Hinduism' book for schools and colleges gratefully accepted a Srimad Bhagavatam set on behalf of Leicester's Soar Valley Community College. Gauranga Sundara das from the Leicester Hare Krishna Centre handed over the Srimad Bhagavatam set to Nick Hall and Elizabeth Wayne, who is the head of Religious Education at the College. Elizabeth said she will certainly use the Bhagavatam in the classroom.

Special thanks to those who sponsored these books. We are sure Lord Krishna will bless them many times. The schools are certainly very grateful. Anyone interested in buying this beautiful 30 volume set either for themselves or for placing into schools, libraries, hospitals etc. they are currently on offer at a much reduced price of £108.



"I am especially pleased to learn that you are introducing my books as textbooks in the colleges. We especially have to try to attract the educated young men and women in your country so that in future there will be many strong leaders to keep our Krishna Consciousness Movement strong."

"Your report of the book distribution there is very encouraging. Make program to distribute our books all over the world. Our books are being ap-

preciated by learned circles, so we should take advantage. Whatever progress we have made, it is simply to distributing these books. So go on, and do not divert your mind for a moment from this. I have full confidence in you."

"I am so glad to hear that you are beginning door-to-door Sankirtana. This door-to-door San Kirtana is the mission of Lord Caitanya. Even there is language barrier, this door-to-door Sankirtana will fulfil your

mission and you can introduce our literatures to the higher circles as you have done by presenting Krishna Book to the Prime Minister."

"Continue this door to door program. It is very nice. Lord Nityananda used to do that; Haridasa Thakura used to do that; all of Lord Caitanya's close associates used to do that. So we must follow in their footprints.



Prabhupada Quotes

Bhagavata Purana Its Glories

“This *Bhagavata Purana* is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Krishna to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the age of Kali shall get light from this Purana.”

These ancient teachings whose value has been so beautifully described by the above mentioned verse, have been glorified by many of history's greatest thinkers:

“What extracts from the Vedas I have read fall on me like the light of a higher and purer luminary, which describes a loftier course through a purer stratum.”
(Henry David Thoreau)

The famous German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer described these *Upanishads* as “The production of the highest human wisdom.” He went on to declare “It is the most satisfying and elevating reading which is possible in this world, it has been the solace of my life and will be the solace of my death.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson, the nineteenth-century American transcendentalist once exalted the *Bhagavatam* as a book to be read “on one's knees.”

The author of these books, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, comes from a disciplic succession which leads all the way back to the original speaker, Lord Sri Krishna Himself. The message therefore, has retained its purity, and the original pur-

pose of the *Bhagavatam* is clearly expressed.

Dr Mahesh Mehta, Professor of Asian studies at the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, expressed his appreciation of Srila Prabhupada's translation of the *Bhagavatam* in the following statement:

“In the diversity of religious approaches offered by the yogis of India, the most significant, of course, is the way of Krishna Consciousness. It is amazing to

This 30 volume set is a must for any religionist, philosopher or anyone inquisitive about the Absolute Truth, and at just £108, a very affordable price.

“If we strain, and if he takes one book home, some day people will come to understand what valuable knowledge they have received. It is transcendental literature. Nobody can challenge it. It is done so nicely, without any spot, the spotless *Purana*. Please continue like this to print books in all the languages for the benefit of suffering, misdirected humanity.” (Srila Prabhupada)

Sankirtan Scores

The sankirtan scores between the months of January and March are as follows:

Gauranga Sundara Prabhu distributed over 20 sets of *Srimad Bhagavatams* and Bhakta Jimmy distributed over 1,000 'Back to Godhead' magazines.



Srimad Bhagavatam set of 30 volumes

see how Sri Bhaktivedanta Swami has in less than ten years succeeded, by His personal devotion, untiring energy and efficient direction, in organising the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Now, he has undertaken the stupendous project of rendering the entire *Bhagavat*, the great devotional classic of India, into English. His edition is learning blended with devotional feeling and inspired by a definite purpose of communicating the intense lyrical and devotional quality of the *Bhagavat*. Srila Prabhupada has done an excellent service by his able rendition of 'the abode of divine joy' that the *Bhagavatam* is.”



Keith Vaz, MP for Leicester, receives a copy of the Bhagavad-gita

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~ Chant Hare Krishna and be Happy! ~

