

# Arcana News

Iskcon Deity Worship Ministry

April 2009



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## upcoming dates

### April 2009

03 - Rama Navami

09 - Vasanta Rasa

14 - Tulasi Jala Dan

27 - Aksaya Trtiya - Candana  
yatra for 21 days

### May 2009

07 - Jayananda Prabhu – Dis.

08 - Nrsimha Caturdasi

09 - Krsna Phula Dola, Salila  
Vihara, Radha-Ramana  
– App.

14 - Tulasi Jala Dan ends.

Advertise your temple's festi-  
vals here.

Please notify us at least two  
months in advance. Photos wel-  
come.

## links

### Websites

[www.deityworship.com](http://www.deityworship.com)

[www.mayapuracademy.org](http://www.mayapuracademy.org)

### Mayapur Academy Blog

<http://mayapuracademy.wordpress.com>

## Welcome to our April Newsletter

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the April edition of the ISKCON Deity Wor-  
ship Ministry / Mayapur Academy Newsletter

The last week we were in Mayapur (8-12 March) was  
spent in meetings with staff and friends of the Mayapur  
Academy. We were working on planning the development  
of the Mayapur Academy for the next five years. I will list  
some of the highlights of these plans later in the newslet-  
ter.

After leaving Mayapur we visited the new Punjabi Bagh  
temple for the third time, then an all too brief visit to  
Vrndavana followed by a few days at the New Delhi, Sant  
Nagar temple.

Again there are a few pictures from the different temples  
we visited.

Keep the letters coming. Your encouragement and feed-  
back are inspiring. I look forward to hearing more from  
you all soon.

Your servant,

Nrsimha Kavaca dasa

[nkd@pamho.net](mailto:nkd@pamho.net)

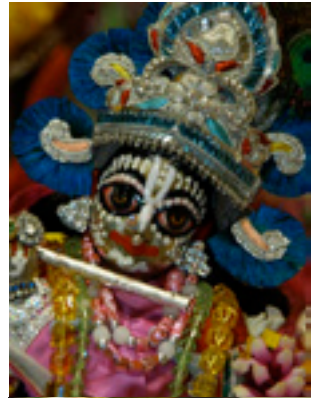
## Ministry News

After leaving Mayapur my wife and I travelled to Delhi.  
Originally we were going to stay in Punjabi Bagh for two  
days then move on to Vrndavana. Unfortunately my wife  
was afflicted by an intestinal parasite and was bedridden  
for four days.

This gave me the opportunity to spend extra time at the  
temple and to get to know the pujaris more, also to have a  
bit of input and trying to encourage them in their service  
to the deities.

## Punjabi Bagh

Punjabi Bagh mandir is presided over by the captivatingly  
beautiful Radha-Radhika-ramana. ISKCON Punjabi  
Bagh is a community-based temple. By this I mean the  
congregation is made up largely of the residents of the





surrounding houses in Punjabi Bagh who daily come to take darsana of the deities and offer service to Radha-Radhika ramana.

The first time we visited Punjabi Bagh the temple was during the final stages of construction. HH Gopal Krishna Maharaja requested us for our input regarding some of the details in the temple and deity department. The next time we visited was a few months after the installation, and now one year after the installation.

The devotees have really been doing a lot of hard work to improve the facilities and worship for Sri Sri Radha-Radhika ramana, Krsna-Balarama, Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra, Gaura-Nitai and Srila Prabhu-pada.

When I visited just after the installation all the deities' clothes, jewellery etc. were kept on the floor and things were generally untidy. Now there are storage cupboards and the standards of cleanliness are greatly improved.

There also appears to be more members of the congregation assisting with the worship.

## Vrndavana

Every year after Gaura Purnima there is a boat festival in the courtyard of the Vrndavana temple. It is very crowded with thousands of devotees eager to catch a glimpse the Lord and His associates enjoying their transcendental pastimes. Sometimes the crowd can be quite overwhelming as the temple is too small to accommodate the number of devotees eager to receive the Lord's darsana and blessings on this special occasion.

This year, in order to facilitate the devotees desire to serve the Lord, there were two boat festivals in Vrndavana. One at Krsna Balarama Mandir, and the other on the Yamuna, at Kesighata.

The festival at Kesighata was well organized. There were cloths spread over the steps where devotees could sit. On an island in the Yamuna, across from the ghata Aindra prabhu and the 24-hour kirtana group were set up in a small pandal with a sound system. An arrangement had also been made with the local boatmen so that all the boats were free and devotees could come and go to the "kirtana island" or take close darsana of the deities and offer Them gifts on the boat.

Radha Syamasundara and Their attendant devotees glided gracefully up and down the length of Kesi ghata visiting the various places that had been set-up for Their pleasure.

## Delhi

There are many developments in the worship since our last visit to the New Delhi, Sant Nagar temple. Gopal Krishna Maharaja is himself a dedicated pujari, he travels with deities and generally offers mangala arati wherever he goes, so it comes as no surprise that he inspires his disciples to also take deity worship very seriously.

Suta Gosvami dasa, a disciple of Gopal Krishna Maharaja, as well as a graduate of the Mayapur Academy, is now the head pujari. He is diligently applying the knowledge, skills and values he gained from his training at Mayapur Academy and this has brought about many improvements.

The cleanliness has greatly improved. Suta Gosvami prabhu has been steadily working at training the pujaris and has introduced many details learnt at the Mayapur Academy, such as checking the tilaka polishing paste for stones before using it to polish the deities.

## Pujari profile

*This column is dedicated to the service of ISKCON pujaris.*

Arjuna Hari dasa and his wife Maha Manjari dd first started visiting the ISKCON Punjabi Bagh temple in 2005. From this point on their interest in Krsna consciousness grew. HH Gopal Krishna Gosvami initiated them, at Kuruksetra, in 2007. They both received gayatri the following year in Vrndavana.





## our thanks

to the following devotees for their assistance and support:

**Gopal Krishna Maharaja** - for his generous donation.

### Monthly donors

Guru

Abhiseka

Visvatma

Chetan

Devamrta dasa

Krsna Candra dasa

Murlidhara dasa

Brahma Kunda dasa

Thank you all very much for helping to make the Mayapur Academy a success.

Hare Krishna!

Arjuna Hari prabhu is a strict sadhaka and attends the morning program daily. They are both active in the temple community, preaching, fundraising etc. Both are humble devotees dedicated to the service of Sri Sri Radha-Radhika ramana and the Vaisnavas. Most evenings you will find them cooking the sitala bhoga offering for the deities and Arjuna Hari prabhu offers the bhoga and the sandhya arati. Maha Manjari mataji also helps to make the deities clothes.

While Arjuna Hari prabhu was visiting Mayapur in 2007 he picked up a brochure from festival stall. When he returned to Delhi he asked the temple president if he could attend course. He attended the next diploma course in 2008.

*Help us make "Pujari Profile" a regular feature.*

*Tell us about a pujari in your temple? Please send photographs along with your article.*

## Srila Prabhupada on Deity Worship

Sometimes we hear that too many rules stand in the way of the natural flow of devotion to the Lord when serving the deities. A point of view not supported by Srila Prabhupada as you will see from the following letter.

The letter is about rules. In the closing paragraph Srila Prabhupada highlights the importance of following rules.

“The main thing is that whenever prasadam is offered to the Lord, everything should be very respectfully and cleanly presented and prepared. In Jagannatha Puri, the Lord eats 56 times. So the Lord can eat as many times as you can offer. But only thing is whatever is offered must be with respect and devotion. (He is neither hungry nor poor, nor unable to eat, but He accepts everything, when such eatable is within the groups of vegetables, fruits, flours, milk, water,

etc. is offered to Him with love and devotion, and faith. He wants our love only, and that makes Him hungry for eating as many times as you may offer. He is absolute, therefore, all contradictory points coincide in Him. He is hungry and satisfied simultaneously. So the purport is that everything should be offered very cleanly and pure things should be given.)

“If a preparation is cooked all together, then offer all together. But if it is prepared separately, then the milk, the sugar and the cereal should be offered separately. But if the milk, sugar and grains are all cooked together, that can be done. (Everything should be prepared very carefully and cleanly within the groups of foods listed. And nothing should ever be eaten before offering to the Lord. Best thing is to prepare separately each preparation. No, food which has been offered should never be put back into the refrigerator with the unoffered foods, or brought back into the kitchen. You should prepare as much as can be consumed, and after offering, nothing should be put back in the refrigerator, or kitchen. Refrigerator should always be very cleansed and pure. Everyone should be careful to make only as much as they can eat; they cannot keep any leftovers in refrigerator. I know this is a practice in your country, but in the temples or at homes of any Krishna Consciousness persons, a person should not indulge in such unclean habits. If there is any food extra, that should be kept separately; and if there is a separate refrigerator, not within the kitchen and not having in it any unoffered foods, then you may have such special refrigerator for leftover prasadam. But it cannot be kept within the same refrigerator as the unoffered, unprepared foods. That cannot be. One should never eat within the kitchen, there is ample place to eat so why should one eat in the kitchen? Kitchen should be considered as good as the Lord's room, and nobody should wear shoes in the kitchen, smelling and tasting of foods being prepared for the Lord should never be done, talking within the kitchen should be only what is necessary for preparing the prasadam, or about the Lord, and dirty dishes (those taken from kitchen and eaten from) should not be brought back into the kitchen (but if there is no other place to wash them, then they should be put into sink and washed immediately), hands should always be washed when preparing prasadam, and in this way, everything shall be prepared very cleanly and pure.

“What is the difficulty of enforcing these rules? They are rules, and they are simple rules, and must be followed. *One must be prepared to follow the rules for Krishna. Otherwise where is the proof that he loves Krishna. And they are not very difficult to follow.*”

*Letter to: Aniruddha -- Montreal 16 June, 1968*

## Mayapur Academy News

Many exciting ideas were presented and discussed at the development meetings. In attendance were Pankajanghri dasa, Ananda Tirtha dasa, Manoj prabhu, Yaksa dasa, Maha-mantra dasa, Asesa Sadhini dd and myself.

Some developments that are in the pipeline;

- The next 2-3 years we will focus on developing and expanding the courses that we already are presenting with a few additions such as 2nd year courses, Radha Krsna worship, mantra course,
- An expanded two level samskaras course.
  - o Level 1 – An introduction – This will be a simplified version of the present course. The theory part of this course will be open to both men and women.
  - o Level 2 – Will cover all the samskaras except for the vivaha, or wedding samskara, which will be a simplified version.
- In the second year we will develop a Samskara diploma. The samskara diploma will include a detailed study of all the samskaras used in ISKCON, including the vivaha samskara. The existing Brahminical Culture and Ethics unit as well as a new unit on mantras will be part of the “Diploma in Samskaras.”
- The dressmaking unit will be expanded into three modules, design, pattern making and sewing. This unit will be open to men and women. A point of discussion that came up is that the Diploma in Arcana is aimed at training head pujaris. Head pujaris need to know the process of dressmaking.
- Complete remodelling of the kitchen classroom with stainless steel teacher and student kitchen workstations, new stoves and more kitchen utensils.
- A scholarship program where successful applicants will have all their tuition, prasada and accommodation paid for. We will publish the details of the scholarship by the end of this month.
- In three years time we will have online courses so

that devotees may do much of the theory before coming to Mayapur for the practical training and assessment.

- Expand the number of students per diploma intake to 100 within 5 years.
- Build a permanent facility for staff & student accommodation.

Some big plans here and to achieve this we need your help.

Join our family of volunteers who tirelessly work on improving the Mayapur Academy as an offering of love to Radha Madhava. Experience the bliss of devotional service to Krishna by getting involved in this exciting project. Volunteer your time, talents, skills and abilities in His service, seva.

Enrol in the next course.

Tell others about the course.

Become a member of our team. We need teachers and administration staff.

You can help us to make a difference to the quality of deity worship in ISKCON by supporting this important project.

Our vision of a better future for ISKCON is only as strong as the people who support us. Join us today and make your contribution to Mayapur Academy commitment to returning deity worship to the standards established by Srila Prabhupada. Your support will make all the difference.

To find out more please write to:

[nkd@pamho.net](mailto:nkd@pamho.net)

or visit:

[www.mayapuracademy.org](http://www.mayapuracademy.org)

## Protect the Lord

*This is a plea to all devotees to see that the deities of ISKCON are adequately protected.*

Since Srila Prabhupada introduced deity worship in



ISKCON there have been a number of occasions where our deities have been attacked. The deities have been either damaged or irreparably broken. Sometimes visitors to the temple get up on the altar to steal jewellery directly from the body of the deities.

I received the follow disturb-

ing email on Gaura Purnima evening:

“Yesterday night, after the Gaura Purnima celebrations, the Deity of Caitanya Mahaprabhu was stolen from the temple in Barcelona. The devotees suspect one of the guests who was known as mentally unstable, but they do not know his name or address, nor anybody else who may know this person. They have filed a report with the police, but there is little hope that they will be able to do anything.”

Obviously a very disturbing situation. After expressing my regrets I responded:

“I am sorry to say it, particularly in these circumstances, but this only reinforces the need for security for all deities in ISKCON. There must be security gates fitted on all altars and the gates must be closed during the day and when there are no devotees in the temple.”

A week later I received the following good news:

“Fortunately, the Lord has returned. The mother of the person who took him, called the temple.”

This story highlights the need the need to protect the deities. In the purport to Cc Madhya 24.334 Srila Prabhupada writes:

“(31) Precautions should always be taken so that demons and atheists cannot harm the body of the Lord.”

The GBC has also affirmed the importance of protecting our deities on two separate occasions.

### **GBC Resolutions 1976**

In every temple there should be wrought iron gates in front of the deity.

### **GBC Resolutions 1995**

THAT all temples must make arrangements for the protection of installed Deities immediately. This is to include adequate protection during daršana times when the curtain and doors are open. Locking iron gates are recommended. All GBC men must include details on how the Deities in each temple in their zone are being protected in their 1995 Annual Report. [This is already an ISKCON law but it should be implemented by the 1996 Centennial.]

It is the responsibility of our leaders, temple presidents and GBC members, to ensure that gates are fitted on all altars in ISKCON centers and temples. It is the responsibility of all devotees to see that the gates are securely locked so that the deities can never be endangered.

## **like to help?**

*Mayapur Academy is a new project and needs all kinds of things to help us grow.*

*Vaisnava scriptures, commentaries of our acaryas, various spiritual books, Sanskrit dictionaries, etc.*

*Art and craft books, jewellery making, dress design and making etc. etc.*

*We also need deity paraphernalia for dressing and worshipping our deities.*

*If you are unable to help with any of these and would like to make a donation, please visit our websites:*

[www.deityworship.com](http://www.deityworship.com)

or

[www.mayapuracademy.org](http://www.mayapuracademy.org)

## **contact details**

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## **contributions**

Keep the newsletter alive by making a contribution. Send your articles and photos to:  
[nkd@pamho.net](mailto:nkd@pamho.net)

