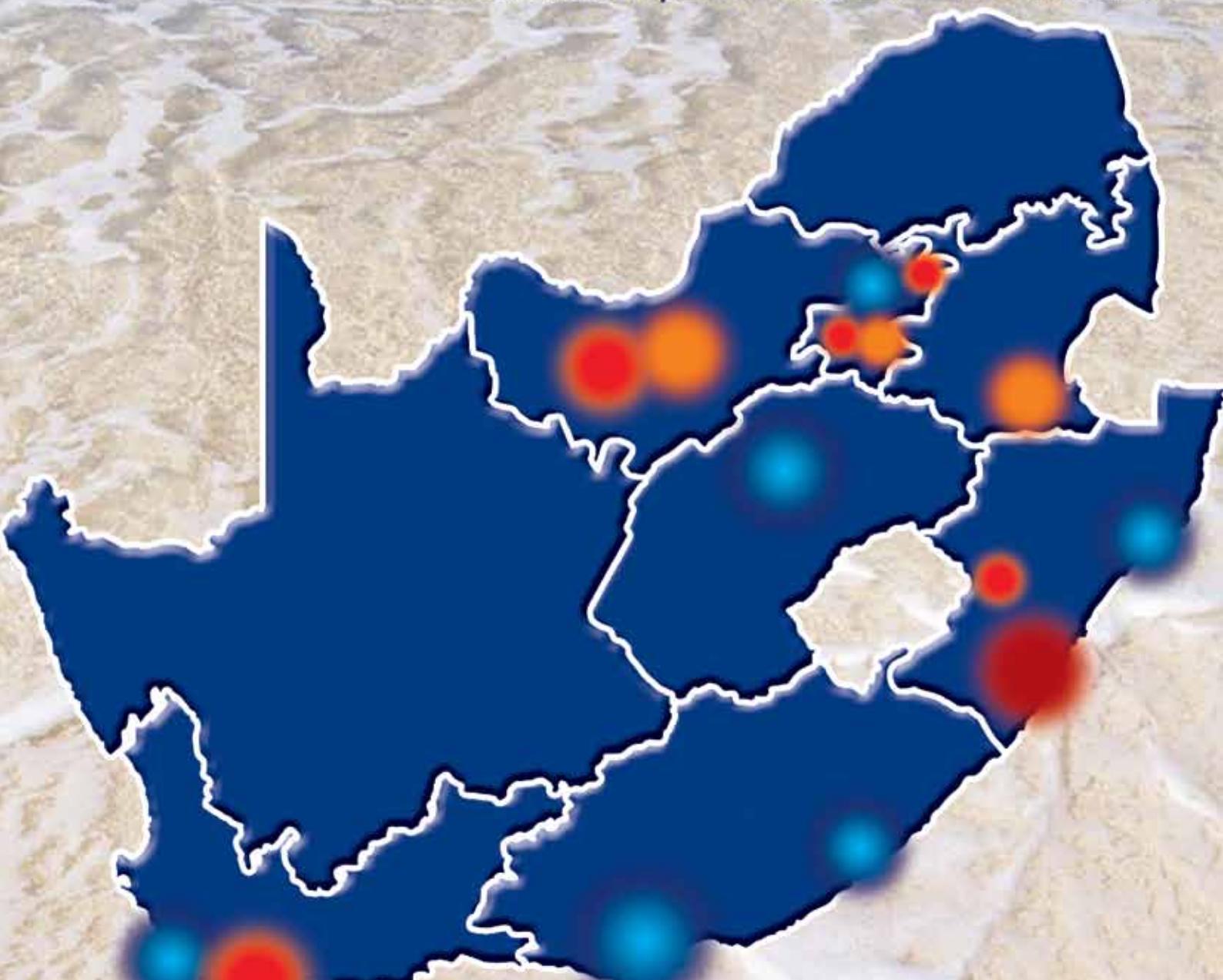




INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS
Founder Acharya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

SANBONANI KRISHNA

Book Distribution Report | June 2014 | South Africa



How Hot Are You?



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Vision

To re-establish the culture of book distribution and make Srila Prabhupada's literatures available to all in South Africa.

Goals for 2014

- Provide training with experienced book distributors.
- A festival for book distributors.
- A marketing campaign highlighting the importance of book distribution in all ISKCON centres in South Africa.
- Establish Monthly Sankirtan Festivals among the congregation devotees. This festival includes a one hour seminar on book distribution, going out on book distribution and coming back together to share realisations.
- Introduce the "Always Carry A Book Programme".
- 50 Smart Boxes and Smart Tables nationwide.
- To assist BBT Africa in distributing pamphlets in the main South African languages.
- To create awareness of book distribution as an offering to ISKCON gurus on their *vyasa-puja*.
- To create sufficient hype and awareness to distribute 500 000 books in 2015 in celebration of 50 years of Srila Prabhupada coming to the West.

Challenges

- Funding

Our funds are too low to allow us travel to the various ISKCON centres.

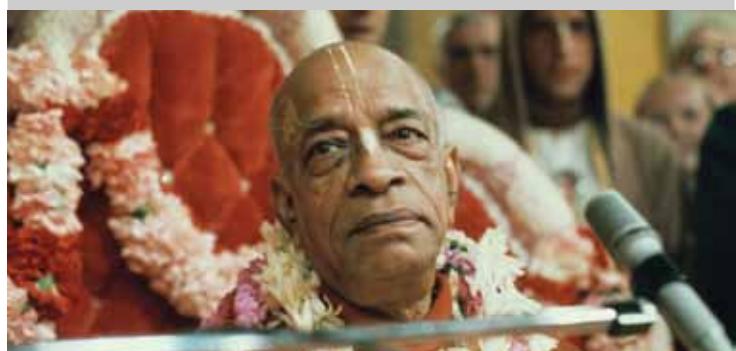
Travelling to ISKCON centres will assist in:

Promoting book distribution;

Enrolling local Book Distribution Ambassadors; and

Understanding the difficulties/challenges of local centres so we can see how best to assist.

A temporary solution is to report regularly and complete the quick surveys we send out.



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Message from Book Distribution Minister

In the period from December 2013 to April 2014, South African Temples reported a score of 38 949 books distributed, accumulating 23 129.05 points. This, in comparison to the rest of the world and the African continent, is merely a drop of what we can offer to Srila Prabhupada.

I sometimes wonder what Srila Prabhupada will be thinking of us if he was still present in this world...as we know that book distribution was his heart.

While there has been emphasis on book distribution in some regions like Midrand, Mafikeng, Lenasia, Sandton, Ermerlo, and the Durban Temple, the rest of the country where there is not enough emphasis on book distribution, is well below par.

As a result, book distribution in South Africa is suffering a slow death. Previously the results of books distributed not only brought life and inspiration to the book distributors but other benefits to the temple, like more and more souls were becoming interested

in Krishna consciousness and at the same time the temples were being solely maintained on book distribution.

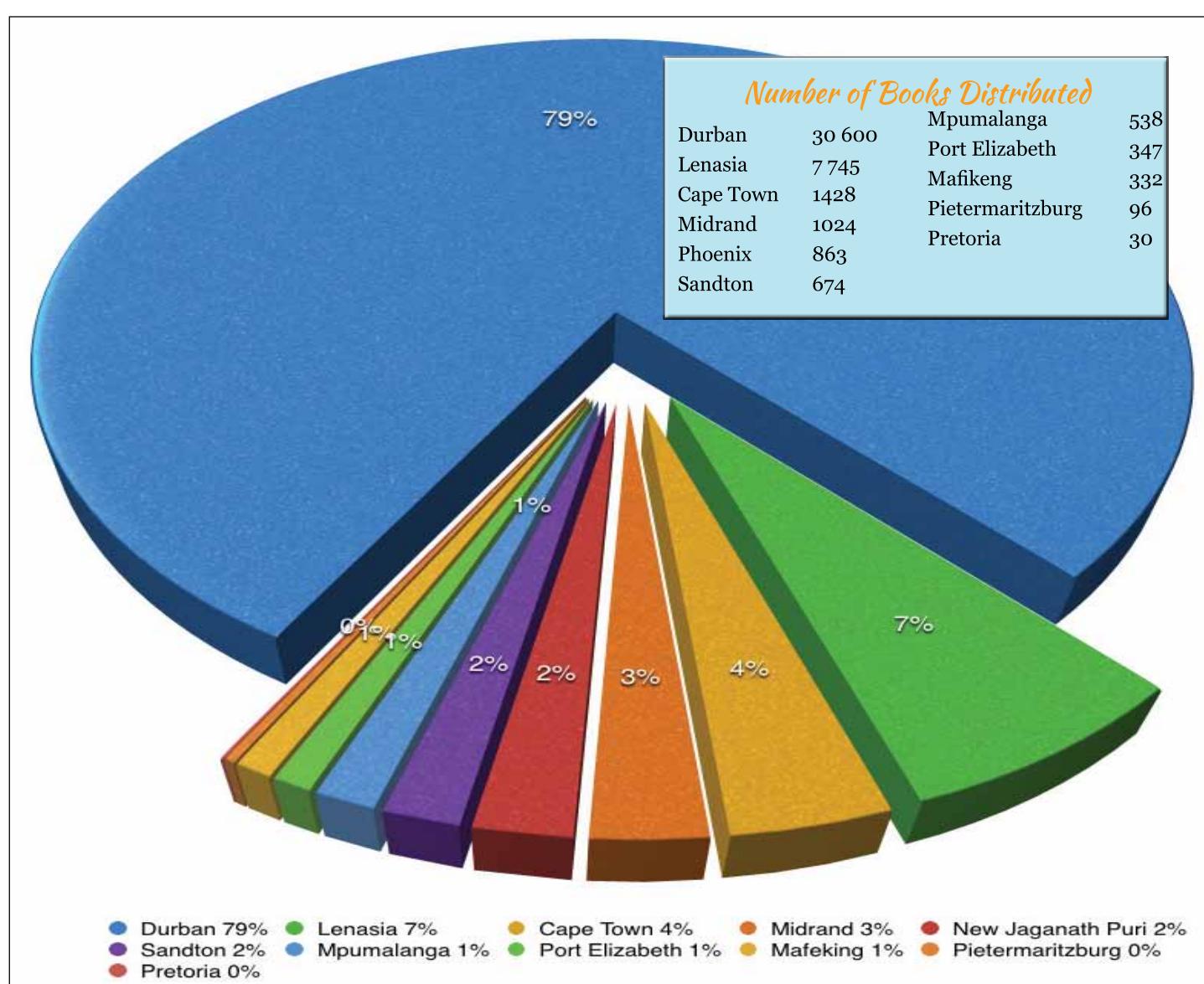
Time and resources, like man power may be a problem for many *yatras* but we should not let that deter us. I would like to urge the temple managers to always keep book distribution on the top of their priority list. After all, Srila Prabhupada did say that management follows preaching.

In this biannual report you will find many successful book distribution programmes running in some parts of the country and our team is ready to assist you in you in helping your temple increase it's book scores.

Everyone one can be a book distributor, all we need to do is understand the great need to distribute Srila Prabhupada's books and reawaken the book distribution culture amongst all the devotees. As Vaishisheka Prabhu says, "Half the battle is won when you are out of the front gate." Happy Sankirtan.

Your servant,
Vibhu Caitanya Das

Number of Books Distributed			
Durban	30 600	Mpumalanga	538
Lenasia	7 745	Port Elizabeth	347
Cape Town	1428	Mafikeng	332
Midrand	1024	Pietermaritzburg	96
Phoenix	863	Pretoria	30
Sandton	674		



by Ananta Gauranga Das

The only constant in this world is change. Subsequently book distribution and book distributors in Africa need to become cognizant of our dynamic environment. As a result, innovative and dynamic mechanisms are required to grapple with an ecosystem in perpetual flux. One such undertaking is the Smart Table/Smart Box campaign.

The Smart Table and Smart Box work on a similar premise, that

“My first concern is that all my books shall be published and distributed profusely all over the world. Practically, books are the basis of our movement. Without our books, our preaching will have no effect.”

— Srila Prabhupada

themselves. Also some of the austerity of book distribution is eradicated as people approach the table, one does not have to search them out — arm chair book distribution if you will. These initiatives have proven quite useful for those shy, socially awkward, reclusive or aloof individuals who would

not ordinarily take a book from a devotee dressed in Vaishnava attire. The Smart Table and Smart Box allows people to browse at their leisure. Books are not always taken but people are introduced to tenets of transcendental philosophy by the ambrosial writings in Prabhupada's books. Location is pivotal. There is a Smart Table located at the reception of Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple, where there is steady foot traffic to Govinda's restaurant. We have discovered that gift sets (4 small books and a *Bhagavad-gita*) which are inexpensively gift wrapped, have been selling extremely well and an ethos of displaying copious amount of books has proven fruitful.

Both Smart Boxes and Smart Tables induce people to contribute donations to the mission. Individuals may not necessarily take a book but donations are not uncommon. In March 2014 the Smart Table donation box received a R500 donation. From the beginning

that all my books and distributed the world. are the basis of our our books, our no effect.”

of March to 18 May, the Smart Table has generated R4700 and 89 books have been distributed. It also provides exceptional advertising space for book distribution. *Bhagavad-gitas* can be displayed on book stands and a variety of Krishna conscious books are not only appealing to the eye but also serve as a marketing apparatus.



Personally I've seen tour groups and other individuals who have been astounded at the depth and array of transcendental literature, which instantly alters their perception of the movement. A vast quantity of varying titles also attract a diverse grouping of interested onlookers — cook books, yoga books, philosophy books, meditation books, autobiographies, scientific books (like *Rethinking Darwinism*), gardening books (Taking Care of Tulasi), children's books, song

books, Zulu, Xhosa, and Afrikaans books — accentuate the depth of the Hare Krishna philosophy and are a means of attracting a broad and myriad audience.

I found the psychological ramifications of the afore mentioned approach to be quite profound and subtle on the psyche of individuals. It illustrates and reinforces an ideology that Krishna consciousness is not simply based on ritualistic extremism or a radical set of bed sheet wearing idol worshipers, rather it eludes to the esoteric, scientific and spiritual transcendental philosophy which permeates our society. “Religion without philosophy is sentiment or sometimes fanaticism, while philosophy without religion is mental speculation” (Bg 3.3, purport).

Furthermore it propounds the manner in which *bhakti-yoga* can so naturally and holistically be incorporated into modern daily existence by harmonising a western contemporary paradigm with ancient teachings of the East. This can be easily deduced by a browser when he/she cast their gaze on the multifarious assortment of thought provoking and soul searching literature at our disposal. Consequently, this simple concept of Smart Table and book tables serves as a means



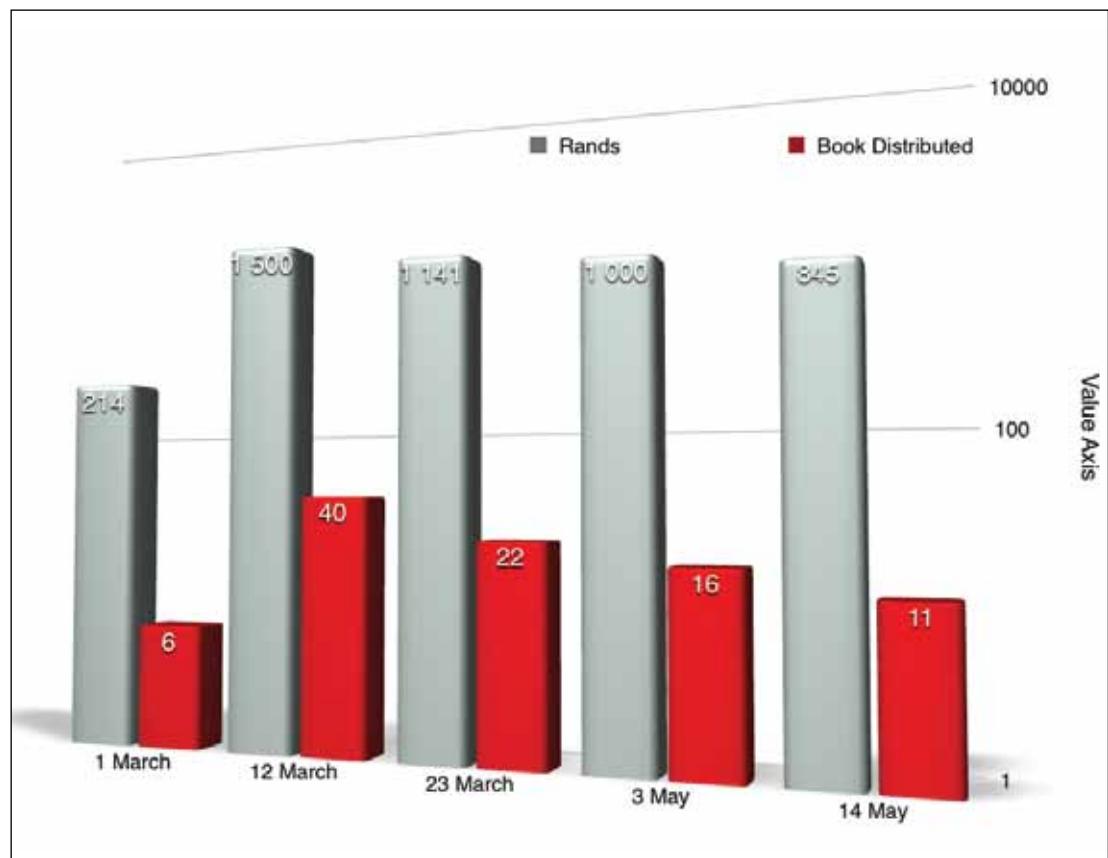
of none verbal communication via the medium of visual effect. It highlights our scientific none sectarian approach based on philosophy and timeless wisdom of the Vedas.

The Smart Box has the added advantage of engaging the community at large in book distribution and is an excellent means of distribution in doctors waiting room, business receptions and checkout counters at small stores.

It has the added benefit of evolving material locations into transcendental libraries and transforming unsuspecting

receptionists and personal assistants into book distributors.

If you would like or know of somebody who can keep a Smart Box or Smart Table please contact me.



Shopping Malls & Book Stalls

By Dineshvara Krishna Das

There is huge capacity to distribute books at shopping malls. Back in the 1990s, ISKCON Cape Town pioneered this method of book distribution. Even though there was only a handful of devotees going out, shoppers were bound to meet a book distributor at any shopping mall. At that time they were the biggest book distributors in South Africa, with some devotees managing to distribute (one-on-one) 1000 books at one spot in one day.

Currently in South Africa we have approximately ten malls and shopping centres that have given us permission to set up book tables. ISKCON Midrand also has a few centres that have given permission.

Times have changed and malls have become more image conscious and especially with regards to NGOs and NPOs. And we are at an added disadvantage because we are a religious institution — centre management are careful not to show favouritism or to upset other religious organisations.

But none of that has deterred me. I start by identifying prospective malls or centres. I then either physically visit the spot to look at the viability in terms of passing trade or contact them via phone and email. I then approach centre management to see who deals with leasing out space. Most centres email me their leasing options, processes and costs. I then submit a proposal stating that we are publishers and printers

of our books on yoga and vegetarianism. The reason for this is that most book stores at the malls do not want any competition. So centre management protect them in this way. After approval, we then negotiate the rates. Currently two malls do not charge us. Some charge between R250-R300 for a full day and three malls charge us between R1150-R2500 for a day. Malls in the north of Johannesburg generally charge higher rates. When we have built a good relationship with the centre managers we renegotiate the rates.

After approval, based on the mall traffic, we apply for specific dates and exact area to do our display. On the day, we arrive with the devotees, books, handbills, *prasada* (like Simply Wonderfuls), and depending on the place, other items like incense, pictures, *japa* beads and bags. An important point to note is that we also take all titles of our books although initially we only presented vegetarian and yoga books.

Most malls and centres provide tables, table cloths and chairs. We make our stall attractive and professional and whoever buys books are invited to join our mailing list. We find more success in approaching people as opposed to them coming to our stall. About 20% of the people we approach buy books. Average distribution is around forty books per day.

We currently have not started or done any sponsorship programmes, but hope to do so in the near future. We also currently have two and sometimes three full time book distributors that go out almost everyday. If you would like to book local malls, then you can contact me at sanbonanikrsna@gmail.com



Book Sponsorship

By Ananta Gauranga Das

This method of book distribution has been around from the time of Srila Prabhupada and has its roots in the library programme. In South Africa, devotees not only had a library programme but they also came up with the innovative idea of getting wealthy people to donate hundreds of books that were later distributed in schools and other educational institutions.

With the dissolving of apartheid, using this programme we were able to cast our net much wider. We can now target disadvantaged communities. There are numerous individuals and communities around the country who sincerely desire books but due to their socioeconomic disposition and lack of resources, are unable to purchase the books.

Donors of this programme get the benefit of distributing transcendental literature. It also helps to generate consumer awareness and fosters book consciousness, both in the practice of reading and the knowledge the books carry. The Book Distribution Ministry has distributed books to the following centres in the past six months at no cost to the centres due to the book sponsorship programme:

KwaMashu: 300 books;
Soweto: 150 books;
Port Elizabeth: 300 books;
Cape town: 500 books;
Escort: 150 books;
Bloemfontein: 250 books; and
Laudium: 40 books.

We choose these areas because there is no or minimal book distribution in these areas currently.

In 2011, the BBT had special on *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* for just R40. The Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple were able to get sponsorships for 2294 *Bhagavad-gitas*, totalling R91 755.

These books were distributed to old age homes, hotels, schools, etc.

In 2013, 2359 new isiZulu books:

Ngale Kwethuna Nokuphila, Imibuzo Eshaya Emhloeni, Izimpendulo Ezihlaba Esikhonkosini, Skwethulela IBhagavad-gita, and Raja-vidya Inkosi Yolwazi to the value of R 14 154 were sponsored.

Good Planning = Success

Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple's 2013 Srila Prabhupada Book Marathon

By Pyari Mohan Das

Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple had one of their most successful book marathons in 2013. Preparations began some time in advance and many devotees from around the country were invited to participate. KwaZulu Natal was divided into different sectors viz: Northern Natal, South Coast, North Coast, Pietermaritzburg, and Durban itself. The devotees covering Northern Natal also travelled to Gauteng. The full time book distributors were divided into teams: women, men and a travelling men's team. Each team focused on the different sectors. Some congregation members also formed teams focussing on local areas.

Strategies included: book stalls at shopping malls and market places, door to door distribution in residential and business areas, one-on-one distribution at special events like sports matches, undercover in shopping malls, presentations at various religious gatherings, as well as book sponsorships.

In addition there were inspiring seminars on book distribution, Vaishnava etiquette, as well as other *bhakti* topics — all planned to give participants a healthy dose of hearing and practice.

At the start of the marathon, each temple department and *nama-hatta* were given a quota of books to distribute. Presentations were done at the temple and *nama-hattas* to encourage devotees to go out. In addition, many previously successful book distributors were personally contacted to participate again.

The results speak for themselves. In total 24 000 books were distributed for 16 000 book points to the value of over R500 000, making it the biggest book marathon in years.



By Pyari Mohan Das

Our small team of three men show bravery, commitment and enthusiasm for book distribution and are involved in a variety of avenues:

Daily *Harinam*

The boys go out in Chatsworth every weekday. The main aim is to attract new people to our Sunday Love Feast. They hand out books, invitations and mantra cards. Ten books are distributed a day.

On weekends the *harinam* moves to Durban Central and the Beachfront. Twenty books are distributed on each day.

Door to Door

Since January this year, we have started visiting people in Chatsworth, covering Unit by Unit. We started in Unit 1 and are now currently in Unit 3. The aim is not only to distribute books but more so to cultivate the community. Time is spent building relationships and programmes are held at the homes of interested people. We intend covering all residential suburbs in and around Durban over the next two years. Twenty books are distributed a day.

Universities

Extra funds from the above avenues are used to subsidise books to university students. Books are generally sold at half price to students who

show serious interest in our Bhakti Yoga Society programmes. Around ten books are distributed a week.

Special Events

Sporting events, fairs, fun-runs, etc. are opportunities for this team. They either set up book stalls or meet people one-on-one. Recently, at a local fair one hundred *Bhagavad-gitas* were distributed in three days.

Girls' Weekender Team

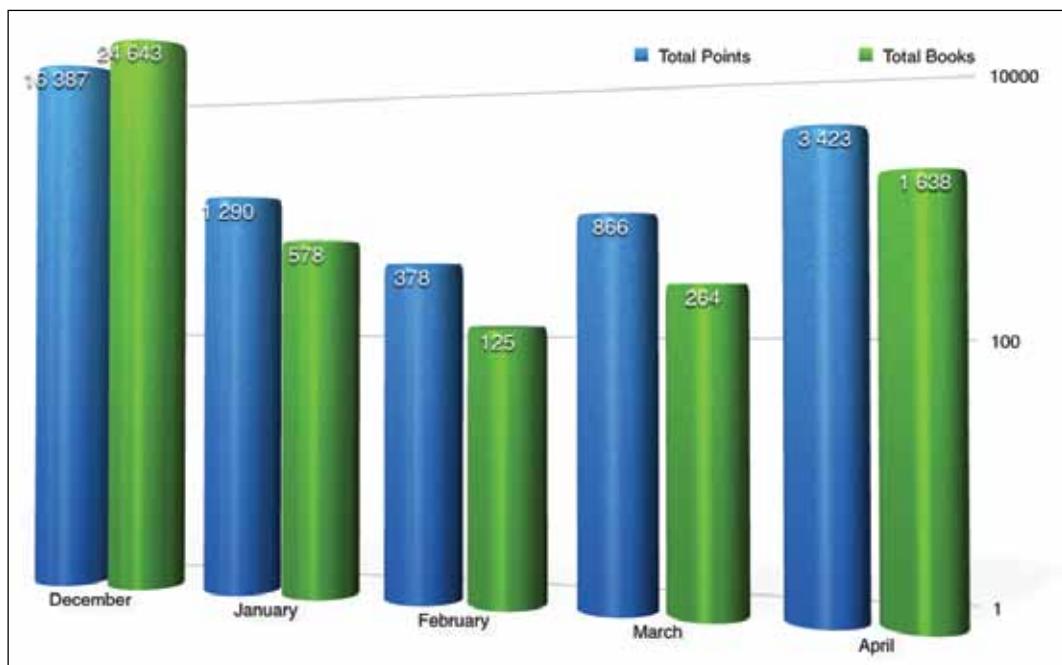
The girls have a humble beginning — with just three girls and a bag of books. Small but determined, the team meet alternate Saturdays in different places doing their bit to put books into peoples' hands. Their first trip was on the North Beach promenade during an air show. They also tackled the famous Blue Lagoon — a day hot spot for families on weekends. Whenever possible the girls join the *harinam* team and definitely score points for innovation; like putting books in decorative baskets with *maha* flowers, they certainly are a colourful sight and attract attention. Slowly but surely they have inspired others to join them.

Future Projects

Travelling Sankirtan

In July we are planning a two week trip of five members covering Northern KwaZulu Natal, Gauteng and the Eastern Cape. We will distribute books door to door, businesses, as well as shopping malls. And from August we would like to do one trip a month covering different sections of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Target: 500 books



Shopping Malls

The team will go at least once a week to shopping malls across Durban. The approach is undercover (wearing plain clothes). Target: twenty books a day.

Intersections

We are going to try to distribute books at busy intersections around Durban at least once a week. Target: 20 books a day.

ISKCON Lenasia

By Dineshvara Krishna Das

Book Distribution Initiatives

Door to Door (Mainly in the South of Johannesburg)
Shopping Malls and Centres.

Book Tables at the Temple on all major festivals.

Book distribution and *harinam* in various areas in Johannesburg.

Universities — Wits and University of Johannesburg.

Annual Book Marathon 2013 — Total Books distributed +- 2900 (includes 14 sets of *Srimad Bhagavatam*).

Sponsorship programmes — Books distributed on *harinam*, hospitals and doctors' waiting rooms.

Book tables at flea markets and specific cultural events like the Diwali shows.

Book Distribution Team & Structure

One team head in the North, South and East of Johannesburg.

3 admin

4 Planning

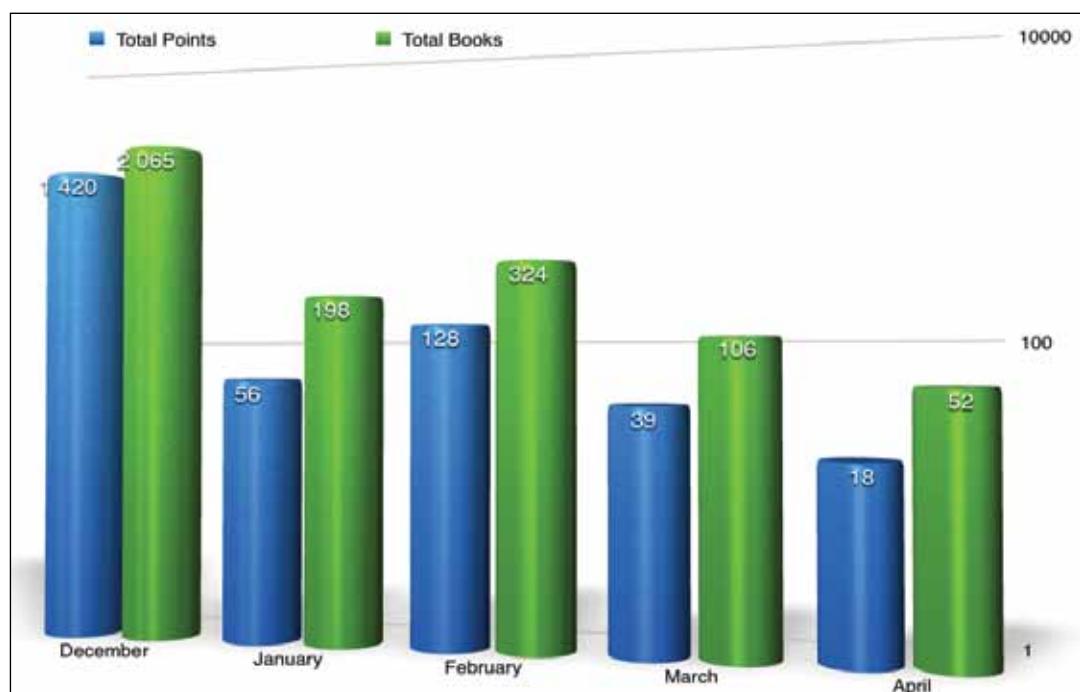
Between 3 to 15 Book distributors

Wonderful Stories

1. We met DJ Fresh from 5 FM Radio at Bright Water Commons. He passed the table in a hurry, but one of the devotees ran after him. After stopping him, the devotee presented one of Srila Prabhupada's books. He said he was in a hurry, but touched the book. Immediately he became calm and relaxed and took the book. He said he will read it soon.

2. In Johannesburg city, a devotee was walking along a street when a man standing outside an office called out, "Are you a Hare Krishna?" The devotee answered, "Yes." He explained that a few years ago he bought one of Srila Prabhupada's books and it immediately changed his life. He went to the temple, met devotees, honoured *prasada* and started chanting. He said Srila Prabhupada's books had all the answers about life but because of his family, on the outside he presents himself as a Christian but on the inside, he is a Hare Krishna.

3. At Trade Route Mall a devotee approached a Muslim lady and explained *bhakti-yoga*. "I have been looking for you guys," she said. Aisha bought two books — *Krishna Consciousness, Topmost Yoga System* and *Perfect Questions Perfect Answers*. She also wanted to learn how to chant and wanted to host programme and invite all her friends.



by Brhat Mridanga Das

Vision

The ultimate goal is to expose more people to Krishna consciousness and to grow our movement. Book distribution is the main medium through which Srila Prabhupada wanted us to achieve this.

Our vision is to increase book distribution, as well as exploring various methods to reach out to different classes and types of people. Naturally, different people require different approaches. An increase in book distribution avenues will have a high probability in increasing the amount of books being distributed.

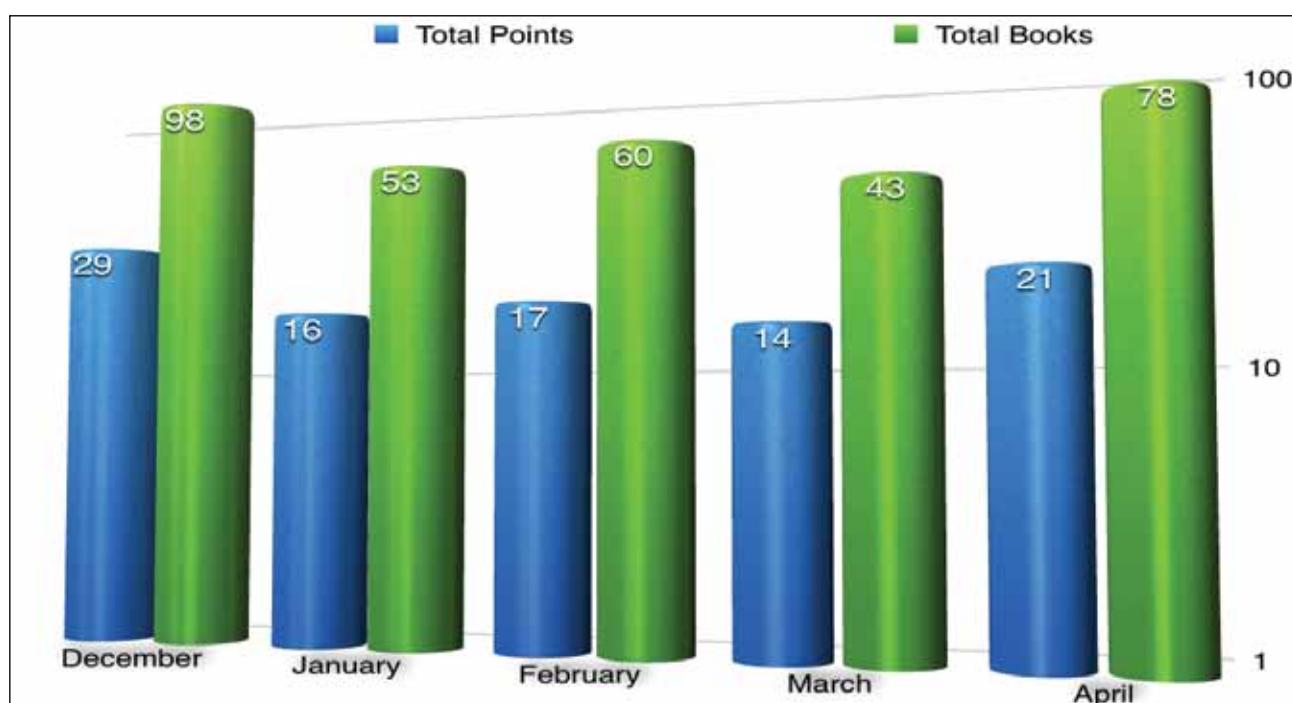
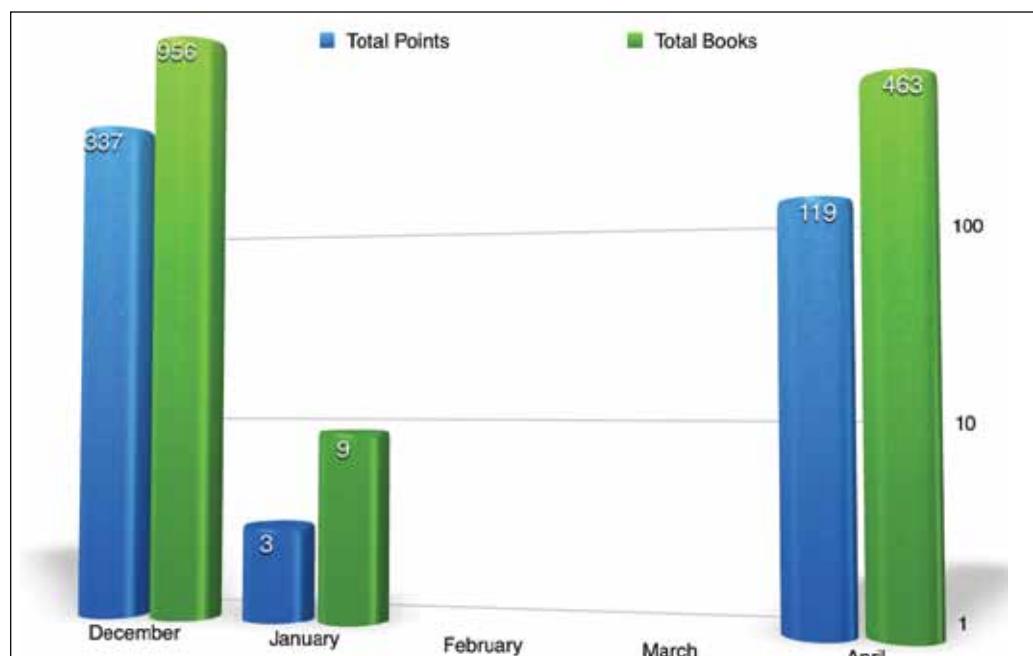
Current Book Distribution Activities

Books mainly get distributed at preaching programmes. The main programmes are the Bhakti Yoga Society, held once a week at the University of Cape Town, as well as Spirit Matters, our Saturday night loft programme. Books are displayed and sold at our Govinda's restaurant. Books are also available in our gift shop, which is opened only during festivals and the Sunday Love Feast. One-time opportunities, such

as the Maynardville Community Festival and the Grahamstown National Arts Festival, generates a good book sales result. Also, books are distributed by visiting devotees, who are not present in Cape Town for the whole year, most notably Gaurasundara Das. In April there was a sharp increase in book distribution due to the travelling Harinam-Sankirtan party, made up of three *brahmacharis* from the Czech Republic.

Solutions and Strategy

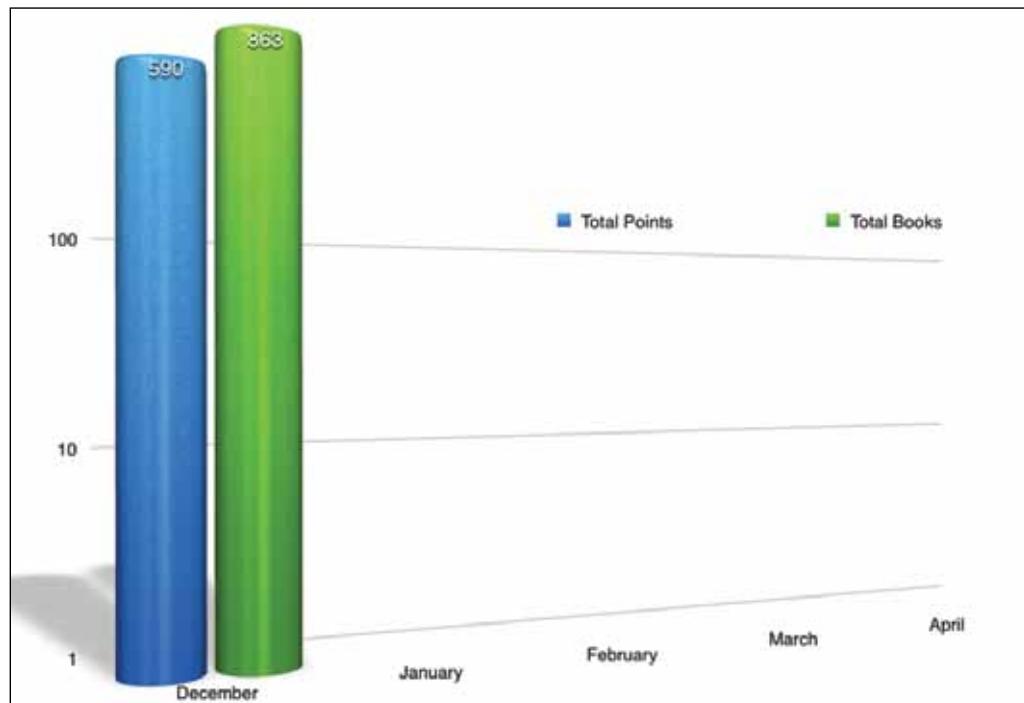
We can make books available at the Yoga Lounge. We could approach stores to stock them. Having a book box in doctors' waiting rooms and similar places is another easy, non-demanding method to increase the public's exposure to the books. For devotees who struggle with straight street book distribution, book tables are a good alternative. Sponsored books can be delivered to prisons and schools.



New Jagannath Puri Temple

By Srinivas Acarya Das

Every month we host a wonderful Sankirtan Festival. It is a simple programme of book distribution, Food For Life and *harinam-sankirtan*. An average of 20-25 books are distributed. I find that people are receptive generally and we meet people from all walks of life, who experience a variety of challenges — some good and some not so good.



Once I decided to approach a couple walking hand-in-hand. I walked up to them holding out literature on vegetarianism and their immediate response was, "We are Christians." I responded without even thinking and I surprised even myself, "Aren't we all..." To my astonishment they stopped and bought one of Srila Prabhupada's books.

Had I been silent or non-responsive, that would have been a missed opportunity. My realisation is that Srila Prabhupada is the reason for that particular answer.

Srila Prabhupada often said that Krishna consciousness is non-sectarian. How we interact with the public and within our devotee community is important as we are representatives of Srila Prabhupada.

One of the challenges we face at New Jagannath Puri Temple is not having sufficient stock and that is purely a funds challenge.

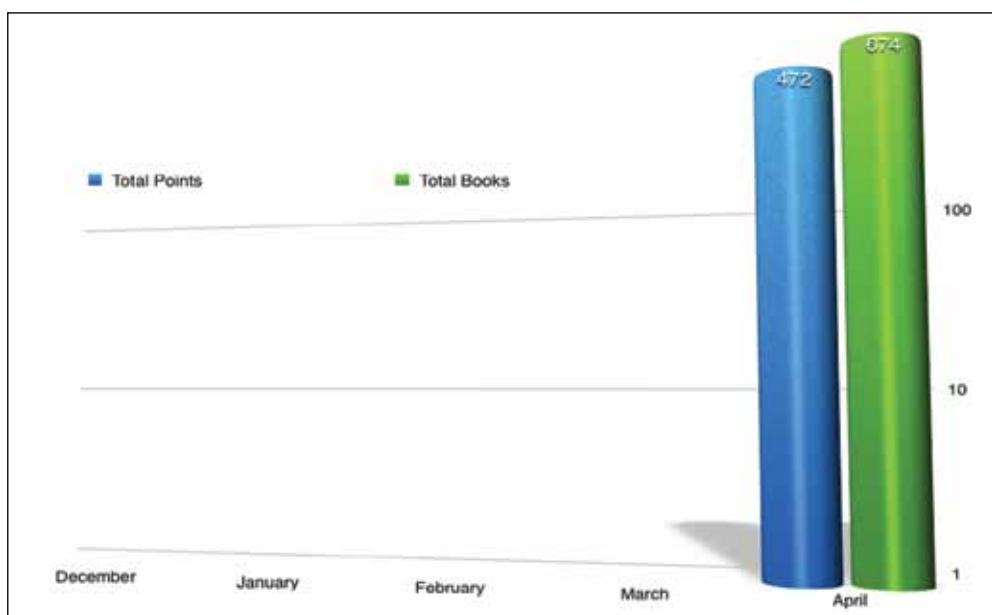
There is huge potential for improvement and we will make the endeavour to explore this special service of distributing Srila Prabhupada's Books.

ISKCON Sandton

Active book distribution programmes are:

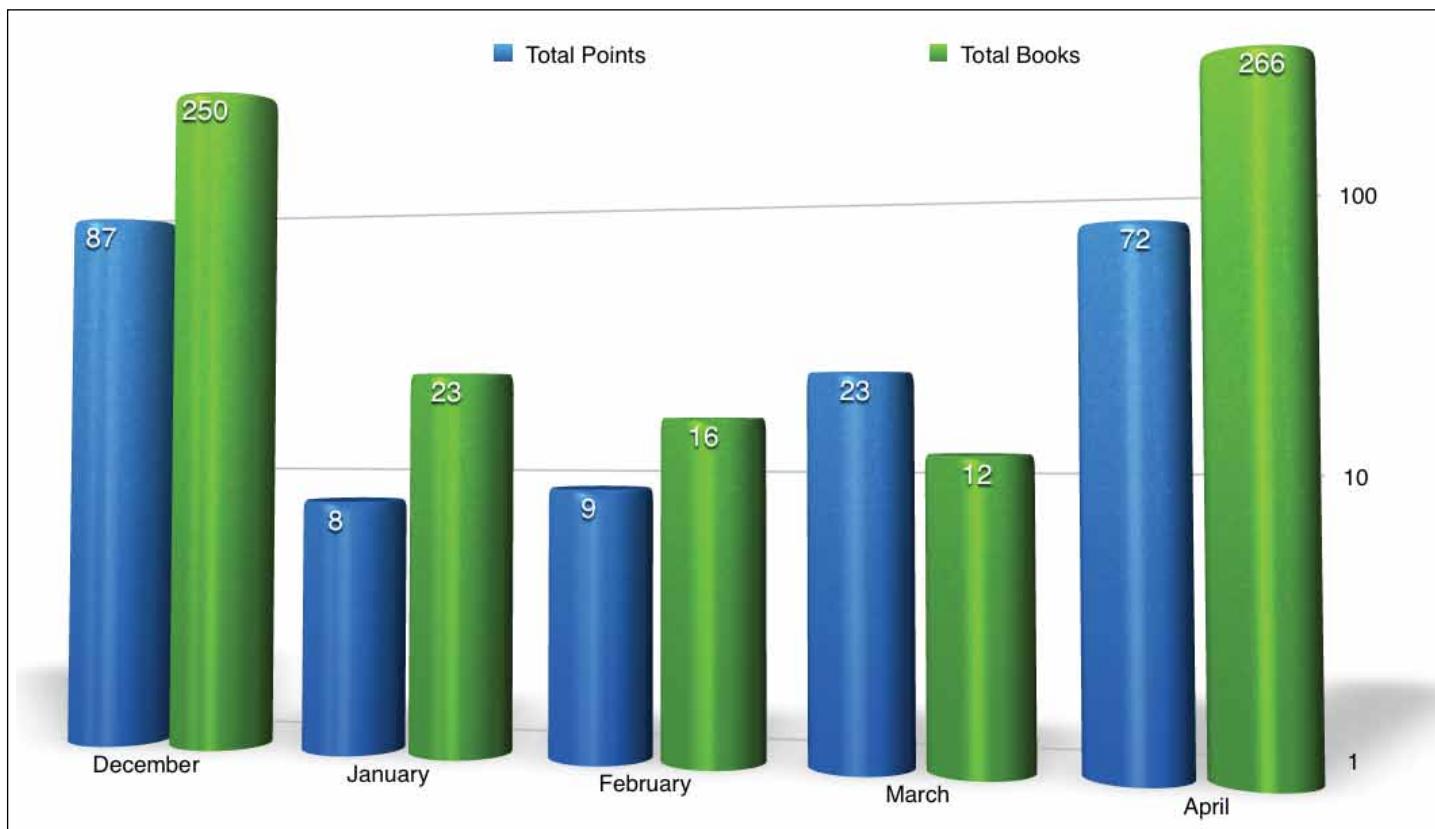
1. Door to Door.
2. Shopping Malls and Centres.
3. Book table at Sunday Love. Feast over recent weeks.
4. Book distribution on the streets at various areas in Johannesburg.
5. Universities.

Total number of books distributed in the past ten weeks is approximately 800 books.

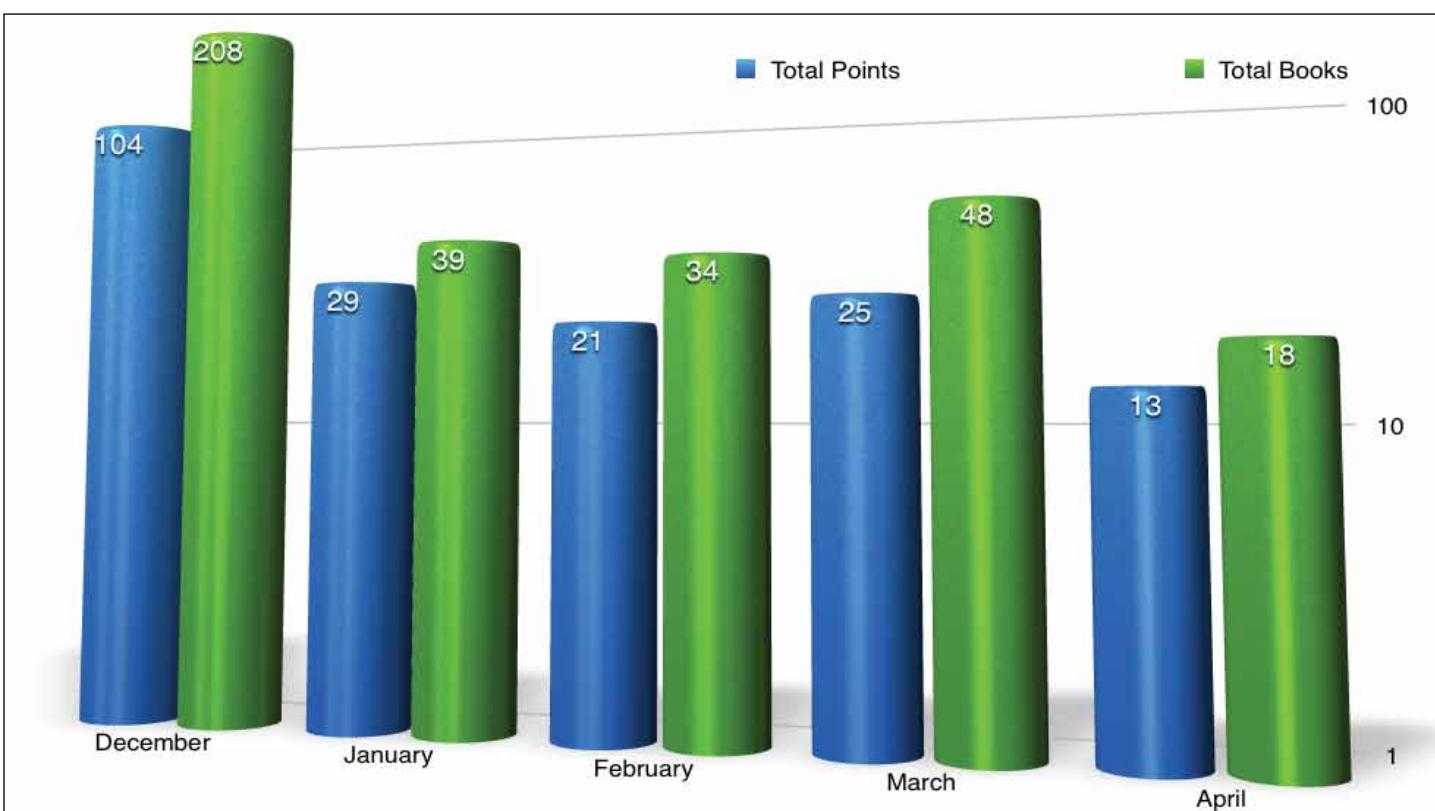


*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare*

ISKCON Mpumalanga



ISKCON Port Elizabeth



By Jayadev Das

This report focuses on travelling *sankirtan* from Potchefstroom to Rustenburg beginning from October 2013.

Target Areas

I usually approach people on streets, inside malls, in shops and even offices where possible. The malls are generally difficult because security guards do not allow us to sell books there. Alternatively we can ask for permission from the centre manager, where possible and then have about three to four devotees doing a book display. Entrances to offices, especially government offices, is also not always possible.

We normally try to stop people, tell them that we are selling books and explain briefly about the books. We meet different kinds of people. Some are not interested, but there are those who have an interest and a few who show a serious interest. Among those who have an interest, I find that some have already met devotees or have come across Buddhists and learned about meditation from them or that they are just attracted by the philosophy. Sometimes I may also come across a stubborn Christian who may want to start an argument. I think it is best to avoid arguments. In spite of all these challenges, book distribution is always enjoyable. Though book distribution is a difficult service, it has a purifying effect and therefore it is good for devotees.

Feedback and Realisations

People generally find Prabhupada attractive. The best way to distribute a book is to let a person touch it. Most often if they open a book and read even one sentence, they become attracted. For instance, once a gentleman screamed loudly, "I have seen something", after reading just one sentence.

One day I approached a guy who was sitting inside his car. He did not want to look at me nor the books. I could see him say something but I could not hear him clearly. Then I pushed the books in front of him so that he could see them and immediately he turned, "Oh! It's him!" I realised that he was trying to tell me that he read Prabhupada's books but because he couldn't pronounce "Prabhupada" correctly, I couldn't understand him. He also mentioned that our philosophy makes sense, and continues to buy books from me every time he sees me. He was first introduced to Prabhupada's books by a friend.

I have observed that some people who would just pass by when I try to stop them, but after passing they turn back and call me to inquire about books and then buy some. This shows that we actually have the assistance of both guru and the Lord and that they engage us as instruments in their service.

One realisation is that when you go out regularly you develop tolerance, peace, taste for chanting and enthusiasm to distribute more.

Follow Up

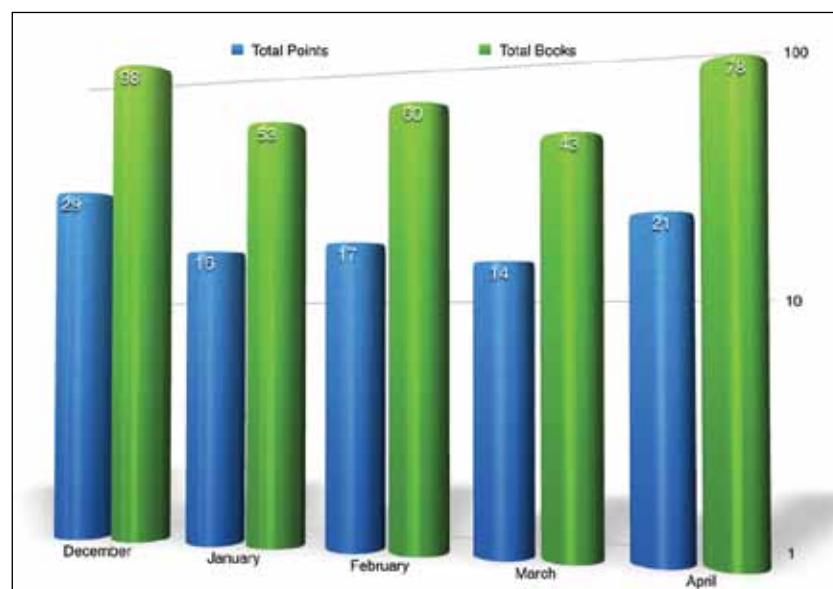
The best strategy is to ensure that you give out pamphlets with contact details or alternatively write contact numbers on the last page of the book. It is also good to make people aware of the contact details you give to them and ask them to call you in future, if they have questions and would like more books. In this way you end up having regular customers. For instance, in Mafikeng there were a number of people who would buy any new book that I present slowly building up their library.

One can also identify people who have an interest to know the philosophy and start to cultivate them. Prabhupada's books are not ordinary books, they are life-changing books.

Interfaith Programmes

Book distribution gets one connected with influential people in society. We are sometimes invited to different types of programmes such as radio and other community programmes to make presentations. I was once invited to a radio programme to discuss meditation. Afterwards some people who were listening called me and bought books about meditation.

Whilst preaching at the University, I also managed to sell *Bhagavad-gita* to a number of lecturers and professors, including a Professor of Philosophy.



ISKCON Pietermaritzburg

By Vaishnav Pran Das

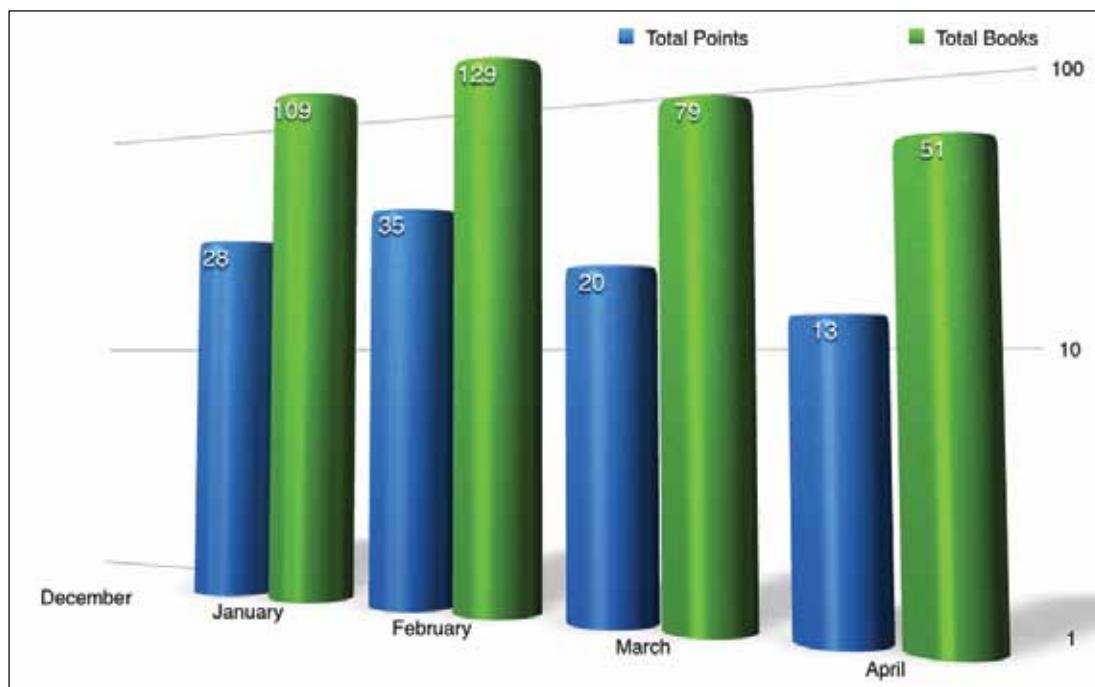
There was no strategy in the propagation of the holy name by book distribution and *harinam* in the last few years. Then late last year Bhakta Jagannath and Bhakta Dineshan got the youth to commit to go out on weekly *harinams* and book distribution. It was simply amazing to see Krishna consciousness in action. The core group consists of Prathna, Subhadra, Yamuna, Nikita, Ashvir, Nivashin, Nandapriya, and Avinash. The book distribution team is co-ordinated by Nanda Maharaj Das and Bhakta Vinesh.

Initially when we started, we were a “green” (no knowledge or experience) team in book distribution but the devotees, earnestly wanting to please Srila Prabhupada, persevered with book distribution.

The strategy was that we cover every inch of the map. Slowly but surely the team systematically covered the area street by street. The community was attracted by the *harinam* and were happy to buy books.

Jagannath Singh: “The initial idea of *harinam-sankirtan* came from the Kartik programme last year. We would go to people’s homes and set up an altar and show

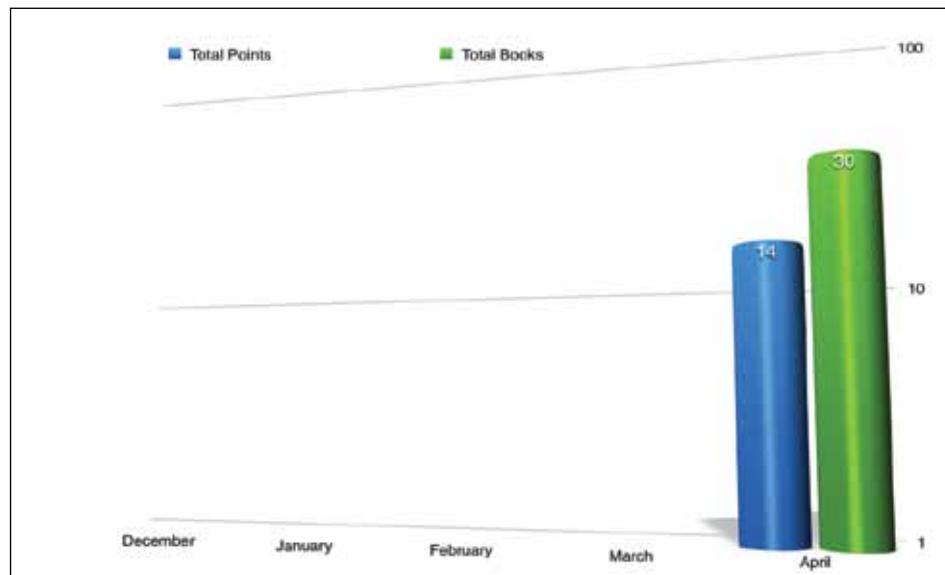
them how to offer a lamp to Lord Damodar. This was the spark that ignited the devotees to continue. Being involved in book distribution and *harinam-sankirtan* has been a privilege which has proven to be enjoyable and worthwhile. Through these activities, I have met with people from different walks of life. Many of these individuals have shared their own spiritual experiences and some have expressed how Srila Prabhupada’s books have assisted in the planting and watering of their own spiritual seeds. I wish to continue rendering this service as I find it beneficial to my spiritual endeavour, and also because I have started to see the impact that Krishna consciousness is having on others’ lives. The devotees who are involved in this service are inspiring and I have witnessed how they too, are experiencing increased spiritual growth and renewed determination. Through these activities, it is my sincerest hope that the message of Srila Prabhupada could reach and truly penetrate even just one heart; whilst allowing for the continued transformation of my own.”



ISKCON Pretoria

By Bhakta Joel

I have been training the boys on book distribution over the last three months. We recently got a vehicle, which makes going out to different places so much easier. We are distributing about twenty books a week. I would like to implement a programme of going to the townships and do house programmes every Saturday. I have distributed over one hundred books in this time.



Hooked By A Book

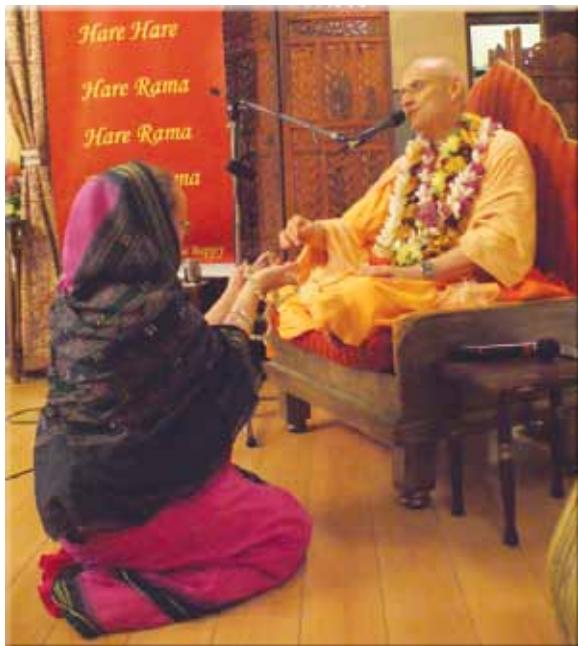
By Rukmini Devi Dasi

“That book was the key. That book sat on my table as a constant reminder beckoning me to heed its call. That book was a manifestation of pure mercy which I will always treasure and for which I am grateful for beyond words.”

“Your name is Vasanti Dasi.” With bright eyes and a beaming smile she clutched the new set of beads, her new name and her new life. The devotees roared to the sound of the tumultuous *mridangas*, offering their blessings. She looked at the hands that passed the beads and remembered the first time she had encountered them...

She really did not want to run the errand her mum was begging her to do. After protesting vehemently she eventually conceded and stormed all the way down town. As she reached the city centre a man in saffron robes caught her attention. She tapped his elbow. “Hare Krishna,” he responded but quickly returned to the person he was already speaking to. She entered the store, mildly chiding herself.

In her childhood Vasanti’s family had been neighbours with the noisy Hare Krishnas. They lived in the now infamous suburb of Hillbrow, Johannesburg. Just

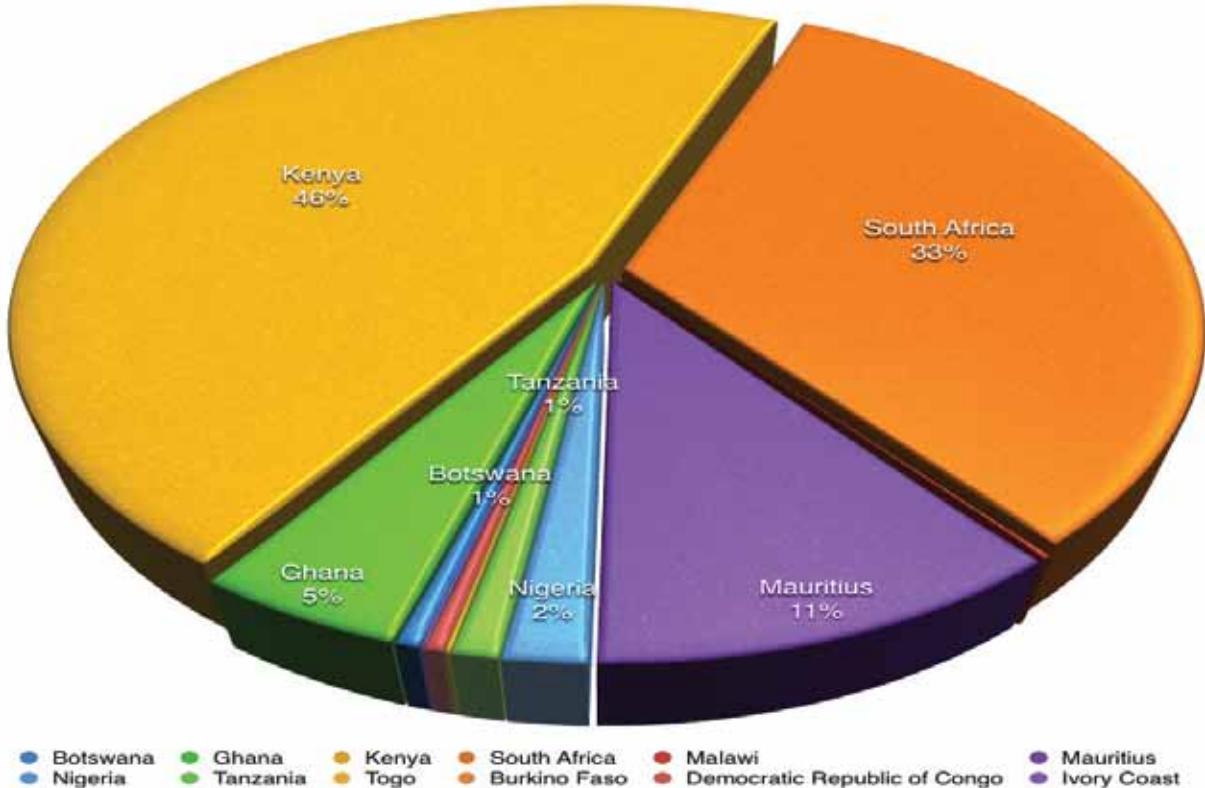


across the street was a pub called, ‘Kali Yuga’. She was spontaneously attracted to the devotees but soon the temple relocated. As a teenager, she drifted from the teachings and would rather not have anything to do with Hare Krishna.

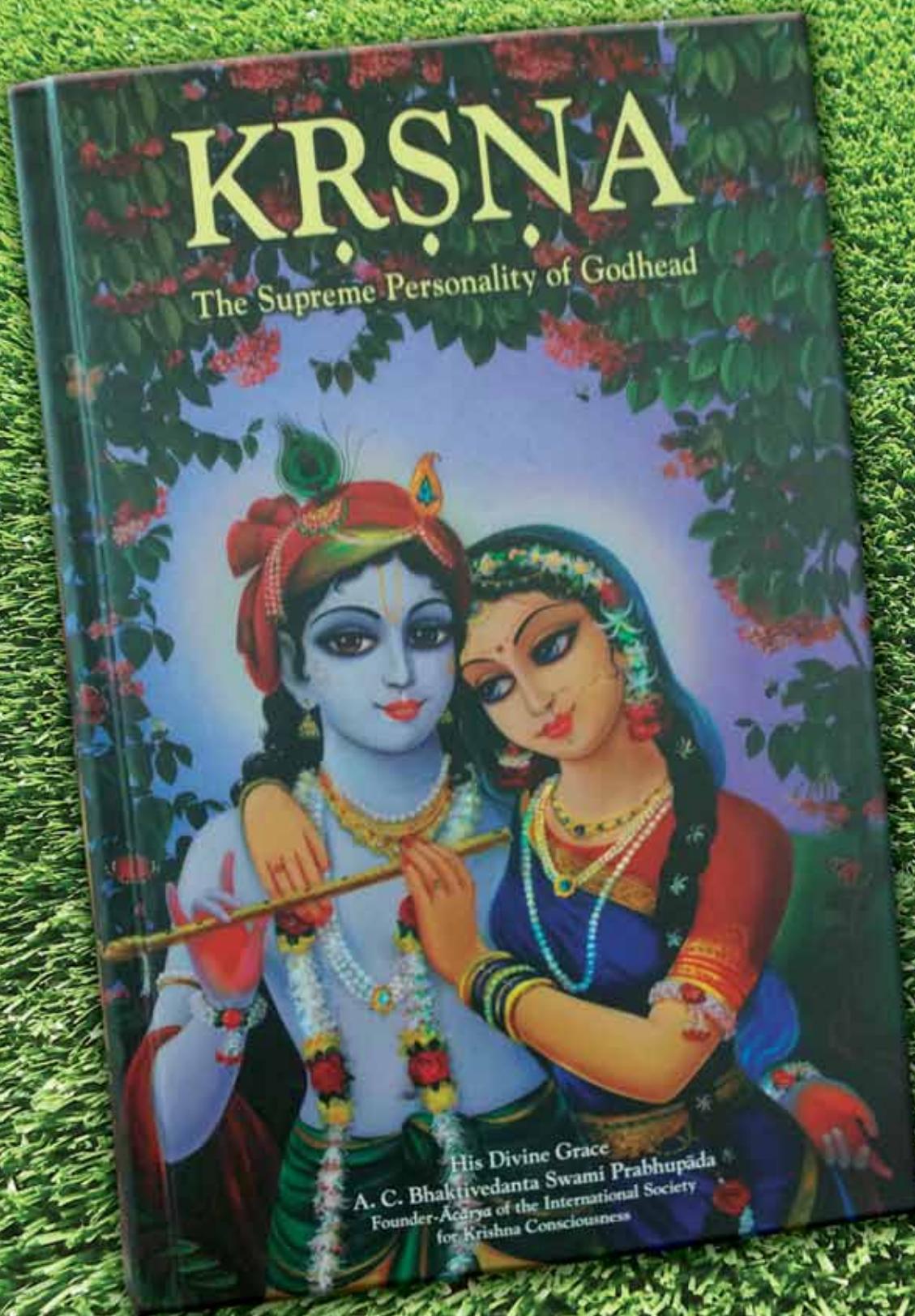
Now, she thought, this saffron robed person would probably want to preach to me. As she exited, she was relieved that she could not see him around and walked off. “Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna,” a voice came carrying down the street. The beaming devotee was behind her.

“So how are you, how is temple life?” She asked, imagining that he must be a *brahmachari*. He spoke to her for a while. She took the Chant and be Happy, book he offered.

She had no idea that the person she met was Kadamba Kanana Swami, a guru who was travelling around the world. As the ambassador of book distribution in South Africa, Maharaja went out that day to inspire the devotees. She had found her spiritual guide on the city’s streets. The same hands that delivered the new sacred beads – had offered her first book.



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