His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age 69, to fulfill his spiritual master’s request that he teach the science of Krishna consciousness throughout the English-speaking world. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India’s Vedic literature, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, travelling almost nonstop, Srila Prabhupada moulded his international society into a world wide confederation of ashramas, schools, temples and farm communities. He passed away in 1977, in Vrindavana, the place most sacred to Lord Krishna. His disciples and followers are carrying forward the movement he started.

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Please chant…
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna  Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama  Rama Rama Hare Hare
...and be happy!

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Ascendance to the Personal World of Krishna

A talk given in December 1966 by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, at the Hare Krishna temple in New York City.

yanti deva-vrata devan pitrn yanti pitr-vratah
bhutani yanti bhutejya yanti mad-yajino ‘pi mam

“Those who worship the demigods will take birth among the demigods, those who worship ghosts and spirits will take birth among such beings, and those who worship Me will live with Me” (Bhagavad-gita 9.25).

Some people argue that you can worship the Supreme in whatever form you please and still achieve perfection. This is the mayavada theory: God is actually impersonal, but because we cannot worship or meditate upon something impersonal, let us imagine some form of God and meditate upon that. The impersonalistic yogis have a similar idea: they put a circular design in front of themselves and concentrate upon that.

So here Krishna refutes that theory. The impersonal conception of the Supreme, imagining some form of God—these are not the ways of approaching God. He says clearly, “Those who are worshiping the demigods will go to the demigods.” The demigods have their various places in this material world. There are seven higher planetary systems and seven lower planetary systems. We are living on earth, in the planetary system called Bhurloka, and there are many planets in this system. And above Bhurloka are Bhuvanloka, Svarga-loka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka, Brahmaloka—there are so many planets, with various kinds of living entities and various kinds of comforts. On some of these planets there are very highly intelligent beings, much more intelligent than human beings, who are called demigods (“those who are almost God”).

So here Krishna says that those who are worshiping the demigods will go to the planets of the demigods. Then He says, pitrn yanti pitr-vratah. There is a process of worshipping the forefathers, and there is a particular planet where the worshipers of the forefathers go. And bhutani yanti bhutejya: those who worship earthly beings or earthly things will remain on the earthly platform. But, Krishna says, yanti mad-yajino ‘pi mam: “Those who worship Me will come to Me.” This is very clear.

Now, suppose you have purchased a train ticket for an intermediate station between New York and San Francisco. You will have to get out at that station. How can you expect that if you have purchased a ticket for an intermediate station you can go to San Francisco? If you want to go to San Francisco, you have to purchase a ticket for San Francisco. Similarly, if you worship the demigods you can go to a demigod’s planet, but no higher. In the creation of God there are various arrangements for worship. You have freedom of action, and God awards you the result—whatever you want. But if you want to go to the planet where Krishna lives, which is called Krishnaloka or Goloka Vrindavana, then you have to worship Krishna. That is not unreasonable.

What is the difference between going to Krishna's planet and going to other planets? That is explained in a different part of Bhagavad-gita [15.6]: yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama. The supreme planet is that place from which nobody returns to this material world. yad gatva na nivartante. Na nivartante means "does not return." We have already discussed that even if you go to the highest planets within this material world—the moon planet, the sun planet, the heavenly planets—after exhausting the results of your pious activities you have to come back to earth again. Punar avartinah. So we are sometimes going up and sometimes coming down. Sometimes we might have an Indian body, sometimes we might have an American body, sometimes we may get the body of a hog or a dog, and sometimes we may get the body of a demigod. These changes of bodily dress are going on in the cycle of birth and death, as the soul transmigrates from one form of life to another.

So, this going up and coming down should be stopped. That is the business of an intelligent person. We should try to go to that planet from which there is no more coming back (yad gatva na nivartante). That planet is Krishnaloka. Paras tasmat tu bhavo ‘nyah. Beyond this material sky there is the spiritual sky, Vaikuntha, where there are spiritual planets. And Krishnaloka is there.

Krishna says, yanti mad-yajino ‘pi mam. “Just as others are trying to go to various planets, those who are in Krishna consciousness, those who are exclusively worshiping Me—they will come to Me.” In another place [Bhagavad-gita 8.15] Krishna says, mam upetya punar janma duhkhalayam asasvatam napnuvanti: “Those who once attain to me will never come again to this place of misery [the material world].”

If we always remain in Krishna consciousness, then our transference to the Krishnaloka planet is guaranteed. Yam yam vapi smaran bhavam tyajaty ante kalevaram. We are going to get a body in our next life according to our
mental condition at the time of our death. So if we are constantly engaged in transcendental loving service to Krishna, absorbed in Krishna consciousness, then naturally we shall be thinking of Krishna at the time of death. Then we shall attain a spiritual body and go to join Krishna in Krishnaloka. This is the practice of Krishna consciousness.

Unless you practice you cannot achieve success. Suppose you want to perform on the stage. So you have to practice for many years. Or if you want to pass some examination, then you have to prepare yourself for the sort of questions you may be asked. Similarly, if we at all want to transfer ourselves to the Krishnaloka planet, then we have to practice. We have to practice Krishna consciousness in this life. The human form of life is meant for this practice. “My disciples are just like apprentices, but here even apprentices are already liberated. In Krishna consciousness the student who is preparing himself nicely—he has already passed the test. In other words, he's preparing himself in such a nice way that his passing of the examination is guaranteed. So if we take the trouble to become always Krishna conscious, then our transference to Krishna’s planet is guaranteed.

Now, the next question is, How do we perform Krishna consciousness? That is explained by the Lord in the next verse [Bhagavad-gita 9.26]:

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patram puspam phalam toyam yo me bhaktya prayacchati
tad aham bhakty-upahrtam asnam pratyatatmanah
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"If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water, I will accept it." You have to make friends with Krishna. If you want to see somebody very great, somehow or other you have to make some connection with him. You have to introduce yourself in a friendly way, in a loving manner, and then it is possible to make a connection with a great personality. So, if we want to transfer ourselves to that supreme planet, Krishnaloka, then we have to prepare ourselves by learning how to love Krishna, God. If we are intimately in touch with God by love. He will take us back to His supreme planet. But we cannot conquer Him by force. Unless we are in love with God, we cannot claim any favour from Him.

So, there are six principles of loving exchange. What are they?

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dadati pratigrhnati guhyam akhyati prcchati 
bhunkte bhojayate caiva sad-vidham priti-laksanam
```

(Upadeshamrita 4)

How can one person understand that another person loves him? By these six kinds of exchange, or reciprocation. First are dadati pratigrhnati: you must give something to the one whom you love, and you must accept something from him. Then guhyam akhyati prcchati: you must disclose your mind, and you must also hear him. If your beloved is in some difficulty, you must listen when he discloses his mind. And finally, bhunkte bhojayate: you must give your beloved something to eat, and you must accept what he gives you to eat. So, we have to deal with God in this way.

Now, the beginning is offering something. We must offer something to Krishna. But suppose a poor man wants to offer something to God. What has he to offer? Here is a description, given by the Lord Himself, of things that can be offered even by the poorest man. Patram puspam phalam toyam: a small tulasi leaf (or any leaf), a little flower, a small fruit, and a little water. Now, these four things are available universally. Nobody is so poor that he cannot collect a leaf or a small fruit or a small flower or a little water. They are universal; they are not expensive. So anyone, in any country, in any place, can offer Krishna these four things. There is no bar. A small leaf you can get anywhere—there are so many trees. Even if you are forbidden, when you say, "I am going to offer this leaf to God," anyone will allow you to have it.

So the Lord says, "If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water, I will accept it." The real thing is the love. When one brings these four things with love and devotion, then. God says, tad aham . . . asnam: "I eat the offering." God is purnam, full in Himself. We should not think, "Oh, God is depending upon my little flower and fruit. He is very hungry, and when I offer Him this fruit He'll feel satisfied," No. He's purnam. So our offering should be made with love and devotion; that is its only qualification. That He accepts—your devotional love.

Anybody can worship Krishna with these four things: a leaf, a flower, fruit, and water. But we should not think, "Oh, Krishna wants only patram puspam phalam toyam, so let Him have this patram puspam phalam toyam, and for myself let me eat very sumptuously, the best thing." That is cheating. Krishna can understand. This patram puspam phalam toyam is for the poorest man, but if you have very nice things to offer Krishna, you must offer them. If you love Krishna you should offer Him the nicest, the choicest, the best things, because everything belongs to Him. So when you offer Krishna the best and the choicest, that is proof of your love.
Suppose you offer a fruit to Krishna. Can you manufacture the fruit? No, it is manufactured by Krishna; it is God's gift. But if you place before Him some choice fruit, some choice flower, then that is a token of your love. This process is already going on within the material world. Suppose there is a nice rose flower. Somebody picks it and thinks, "Oh, it is a very nice rose flower. I shall offer it to my girlfriend." That is sense gratification. But if you take the same flower and think, "Oh, it is a very nice flower; I shall offer it to Krishna," that is your service to the Lord. In either case the flower is there, you are there, and the offering is there. You simply have to change your consciousness. That's all. You have to change your consciousness to Krishna consciousness. If you utilize things for sense gratification, then you go to the darkest region of this material atmosphere, but if you take the same things and offer them to Krishna, you go to Krishnaloka, the spiritual world.

Now, when you offer something to Krishna, Krishna does not take it away. He leaves the remnants of the offering, and then we can partake of the prasadam ["the Lord's mercy," i.e., spiritual food]. The whole process becomes spiritual—the preparation, the offering, and the partaking. In this way we can spiritualize the whole world, simply by changing our consciousness.

We're anxious for peace. This is the process for attaining peace: change your consciousness to Krishna consciousness; don't accept anything for your sense gratification. Everything is supplied by the Supreme Lord, and therefore everything is the property of the Supreme Lord. You are falsely claiming that you are the proprietor. How can you be the proprietor? Suppose you have taken your birth in America. Before your birth the land was there, and after your death the land will be there. Therefore the land is God's property. Why do you claim that this is your land? The earth belongs to God. Everything belongs to God.

This consciousness should be adopted if you at all want peace. If you encroach upon God's property and take it as your own and try to use it for your sense gratification, you cannot expect any peace. Suppose you have stolen something from somebody and you want to enjoy it. You are always in anxiety, because you know that the police will search for you and that as soon as you are caught you will be in trouble. Similarly, nature is God's police agent. As soon as you want to gratify your senses by utilizing God's property, you're in trouble. Nature will inflict misery upon you. This is the law of nature.

Krishna clearly states in Bhagavad-gita [7.14],

*daivi hy esa guna-mayi mama maya duratyaya*  
mam eva ye prapadyante mayam etam taranti te

This material nature is guna-mayi, a combination of the three modes of nature—the mode of goodness, the mode of passion, and the mode of ignorance. So Krishna says this material nature is duratyaya, most difficult to overcome. You cannot surpass the stringent laws of material nature. That is not in your power.

You are just like a prisoner. However stout and strong you are, when you are under police custody no amount of strength will help you. You'll be offered all kinds of tribulations. Similarly, nature is very strong. As long as we go on utilizing God's property illegally, encroaching upon His possessions, there cannot be any peace. If you want peace at all, you have to accept that everything belongs to God. We can use things, but only after offering them to Him. We should think, "I understand that this belongs to You, God. You have sent me all these things for my subsistence. So first of all You taste this food; then I shall take Your prasadam." This is Krishna consciousness.

The Lord is supplying you everything you need. He'll not take away what He has given you. It is for you. But you must simply acknowledge, "God, you have given us such nice things for eating. Please, You take first." A small child is provided with everything by his father. But while eating, the child may offer the father something: "My dear father, this is a very nice thing. You take it." How pleased the father will be! Just imagine. The father knows that he has supplied everything to his child, but if the child offers something to the father, the father says, "Oh, it is very nice? All right. I shall eat it." This is love.

So, here Krishna is explaining how you can offer your love to Him. Patram puspam phalam toyam yo me bhaktya prayacchati. And if God accepts your things and eats them, then what more do you want? He becomes your most intimate friend. If you can make God your intimate friend, then there is nothing else wanted (yam labdhva caparam labham manyate nadhikam tatah). Also, you will remain undisturbed, even in the greatest difficulty (yasmin sthito na duhkhena gurunapi vicalyate).

When we become convinced that Krishna is our intimate friend and protector, how happy and peaceful we will be! So just be in love with Krishna. Then you will see how much tranquility you feel, how you are protected by Krishna, how you avoid insufficiency, how you become pure, and how you make progress in spiritual life. Thank you very much. 😊
Guest: Can you explain subordination?

Srila Prabhupada: Subordination? Yes, it is simple. Everyone must be subordinate to somebody else. Are you not subordinate to somebody?

Guest: Yes, in a material sense. But in the spiritual sense, I don’t feel subordinate to anyone.

Srila Prabhupada: When you understand what spiritual life is, you will see that in the spiritual sense also you are subordinate, because your nature is to be subordinate. What do you mean by spiritual and material?

Guest: Well, for example, at my job I'm subordinate to my boss, but in my real being, my spiritual being, I don’t feel I am subordinate to my boss or anyone else. In other words, I don’t feel that I have to bow down to anybody, and I don’t feel that anybody has to bow down to me.
Srila Prabhupada: Why do you not want to bow down?
Guest: Because I don't feel that I owe anyone anything, or that anyone owes me anything.
Srila Prabhupada: So, this is the material disease. We are forced to bow down, yet we think that we do not have to bow down. This is the disease.
Guest: No one can force me to bow down.
Srila Prabhupada: Just try to understand. You say that you do not want to bow down—is that right?
Guest: That's basically true, yes.
Srila Prabhupada: Why?
Guest: Because I don't feel that I'm inferior to anyone.
Srila Prabhupada: This is the disease of material existence. You have diagnosed your own disease. Everyone is thinking, "I want to be the master. I don't wish to bow down." Everyone is thinking like this. This is not only your disease; everyone has this diseased mentality: Why shall I bow down? Why shall I become subordinate?" But nature is forcing me to become subordinate. Now, why are people dying? Can you answer this question?
Guest: Why are people dying?
Srila Prabhupada: Yes, nobody wants to die, yet everyone is dying. Why?
Guest: Well, death is biologically determined.
Srila Prabhupada: That means biological force! You are subordinate to biology. Then why do you say that you are independent?
Guest: Well, I feel that I'm—
Srila Prabhupada: You are feeling wrongly. That is my point. You are subordinate, and you must bow down to biological force. When death comes, you can't say, "Oh, I don't obey you." Therefore, you are subordinate.
Guest: I am subordinate to God, yes.
Srila Prabhupada: No, forget God for now. God is far away. Now we are speaking of the material nature. Just try to understand that although you do not want to die, you are forced to die because you are subordinate.
Guest: Oh, yes, that makes sense.
Srila Prabhupada: Then you understand your position—that you are subordinate. You cannot declare, "I am free; I am not subordinate." If you are thinking that you don't wish to be subordinate, that you don't have to bow down, then you are diseased.
Guest: O.K. But who or what should I bow down to?
Srila Prabhupada: First of all try to fully understand your disease. Then we shall prescribe your medicine. You are bowing down to death, you are bowing down to disease, you are bowing down to old age—you are bowing down to so many things. You are forced to bow down, yet still you are thinking, "I cannot bow down; I don't like to bow down." But you have to bow down. Why do you forget your position? That forgetfulness is your disease.

The next step is to understand that since you are being forced to bow down, now you have to find where you shall be happy even by bowing down. And that is Krishna. Your bowing down will not be stopped, because you are meant for that, but if you bow down to Krishna and Krishna's representative, you become happy. That's the difference. If you don't bow down to Krishna and His representative, you'll be forced to bow down to something else—maya [Krishna's material nature]. That is your position. You cannot be free at any moment. But if you bow down to Krishna and His representative, you'll be happy. For example, a child is always bowing down to his parents, and he is happy. His mother says, "My dear child, please come and sit down here." "Yes," says the child, and he is happy. This is the nature of the child's relationship with his mother. Similarly, Krishna and His representative are like loving parents, and we are like helpless children in the clutches of maya. But if we bow down to them we shall be safe and happy. So you cannot stop your bowing down—that is not possible. But you simply have to seek out the proper persons to bow down to. That's all. If you artificially think, "I am not going to bow down to anyone—I am independent," then you suffer. You simply have to bow down to the right person—and that is Krishna, or Krishna's representative.

### Fasting

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### Festivals

- Feb 16 Ratha Yatra in Chennai
- Feb 17 Sri Advaita Acharya - Appearance
- Mar 2 Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura - Appearance
HUMILITY

A poem translated from Sharanagati,
a book of Bengali poetry by
Bhaktivinoda Thakura (1838-1914)

I forsook You, O Lord,
And came to this world of pain and sorrow.
Now I submit my tale of woe
At Your lotus feet.

While still in the unbearable fetters
Of my mother’s womb,
I saw You before me.
You revealed Yourself but briefly
And then abandoned this poor servant of Yours.

At that moment I swore to worship You
After taking birth.
But birth came, and with it
The network of worldly illusion,
Which robbed me of all good sense.
As a fondled son in the lap of relatives,
I passed my time smiling and laughing.
My parents’ affection helped me forget

The pangs of birth,
And I thought the world a very pleasant place.

Day by day I grew
And soon began playing with other boys.
Before long my powers of intellect emerged,
And I studied my lessons incessantly.

Travelling from place to place,
Proud of my education,
I grew wealthy and maintained my family
With undivided attention.

O Lord Hari, O Krishna, I forgot You !

Now, in old age,
I, Bhaktivinoda, weep sadly.
I failed to worship You, O Lord,
And instead passed my life in vain.

What will my fate be now ?
Kedarnatha Datta Bhaktivinoda led a life of devotion to Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He wrote nearly one hundred books on the science of bhakti-yoga (devotional service to the Supreme Lord), established several major places of pilgrimage, checked the rampant growth of unauthorized, pseudo devotional practices across India, and paved the way for the transmission of Krishna consciousness to Western shores.

Despite numerous titles and responsibilities—court magistrate in the city of Puri, manager of the huge Jagannatha temple, husband, and father of thirteen children—Bhaktivinoda Thakura remained throughout his life dedicated to reviving the movement of devotion to Sri Krishna begun in the late fifteenth century by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. In his poetry, the Thakura reveals this dedication through verses filled with the humility and philosophical insights of a pure devotee of God.

The word sharanagati means “complete surrender to the Supreme Lord.” In this poem Bhaktivinoda Thakura describes the journey of the conditioned soul from birth and entanglement in the false promises of material affection, to liberation in sharanagati. He humbly takes on the role of the subject of this journey, which begins with the decision to leave the eternal spiritual world and pursue the fleeting pleasures of material life. As a yet unborn child in the womb, the conditioned soul realizes his error and vows to again take up devotional practices. But the shock of birth wipes out all memory of this vow, and the soul finds himself progressively entangled in family affairs, mundane education, marriage and wealth. The poem ends with Bhaktivinoda lamenting the loss of his loving relationship with Lord Krishna and contemplating the consequences he must now face, namely rebirth in another material body.
For the Sri Vaishnavas, the Srirangam temple is the first and foremost of the eight self manifest (swayam vyaktha) temples of Lord Vishnu. It is the first among the 108 Vishnu temples called divya desham. Srirangam is the largest temple in the world where worship is still performed. The temple complex covers 156 acres. It has 7 prakaras or enclosures. These enclosures are formed by thick rampart walls which run around the main sanctum sanctorum. The total length of these walls is 10,710 feet or 4 kms!

There are 21 intricately carved, magnificent gopuras or gateways.

HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE

According to Sriranga Mahatmya, a Vedic treatise which describes Srirangam, the vimana (altar with presiding Deities) sprang as a result of penance by Lord Brahma. When Brahma was given the altar with moola vigraha of Lord Ranganatha and the utsava vigraha of Ranganatha and His consorts Sridevi and Bhooodevi, the Lord put forward one condition: that Brahma should perform a unique festival in the month of phalguni on the uttara asterism which commemorates the day when the Lord and His consort are seen seated on the same throne and offered special worship. To this day, the Lord can be seen together with His consort only on that day.

Brahma carried the altar to his planet, Satyaloka, and installed it on the banks of River Viraja. He appointed the sun god to do the daily worship. After Surya, Manu worshipped the Lord. When Manu’s son, Ikshvaku, became the king of Ayodhya, he wanted to install the vimana at Ayodhya, so he entered into penance which lasted for many years. At the end he was permitted by Brahma to take the vimana to Ayodhya. Thus, the vimana came to Ayodhya. After Ikshvaku, his descendants continued the service with uninterrupted performance of uttara phalguni festival.

After King Dasharatha’s time, his eldest son, Rama, the Supreme personality of Godhead, worshipped the Lord. On His triumphant return from Sri Lanka, at the coronation held in grand style, Lord Rama gave the Sriranga vimanaas a gift to King Vibheeshana for worship, on the condition of uninterrupted performance of uttara phalguni festival. When Vibheeshana was travelling south towards Sri Lanka where he was he was returning, to resume his kingly rule, it was uttara phalguni day and thus he decided to perform the ceremony and placed the altar on the islet of Cauvery. After the festival, when Vibheeshana decided
to take the vimana, it could not be moved. The Lord expressed His desire to remain there. To this day we find the deity of Vibheeshana next to the altar of Sri Ranganatha.

WORSHIP OF THE SUPREME

Srirangam is blessed with many specialties and exclusiveness. It is the temple where worship is performed according to the pancharatra bhagavat shastra. Strict rules and regulations were laid down by Sri Ramanujacharya. The Lord is woken up at 5.30 am while devotees sing His glories. A cow and an elephant are bought before the Lord so that His first glance for the day is cast on auspicious creatures. Except during puja timings, the altar is kept open till 8.45 pm, when the veena and other musical instruments are played for the pleasure of the Lord, before He takes rest for the night.

LORD AS A CHILD

Ranganatha, Ranga or simply Namperumal (our lord), as He is called by His devotees endearingly, is treated as a child in Srirangam. The uniqueness of this temple is that on specific days the Lord is given a grand abhiseka but only with warm water mixed with sandalwood paste. Whenever the Lord comes out of the temple for festivals, it is only well before sunrise or after sunset, to avoid His being exposed to the harsh sun rays. Likewise the Lord is always fanned with silk fan and chamara (yak tail whisks) on both sides. When He is taken in procession in the evening, He is always covered with a silk blanket for protection from the cold weather. The Lord wears only the Kaustubha jewel on normal days, to provide Him with maximum comfort without the burden of their weight on His body. On festival days, specific ornaments are offered to Him, all at least 500 years old. Many musical instruments are played for the pleasure of the Lord at specific times as instructed by Sri Ramanujacharya. The songs of the Alwars (12 Sri Vaishnava saints of south India) are sung before the Lord in specific raga by a family called arrayal.

SRI CHAITANYA MAHAPRABHU IN SRIRANGAM

In 1510 A D, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu spent the four months during the rainy season (chaturmasya) in Srirangam. He stayed at the house of the chief priest, Venkata Bhatta. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was ecstatic to see the Lord on the altar and He fainted in ecstasy. The beauty of the Lord was unmatched and the wonder of Him enjoying His own beauty as His greatest devotee was even more magnificent, as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is none other than the Supreme Lord.
Himself, who appeared as His devotee to teach the fallen people of Kali yuga how to worship Him. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was served personally by the son of Venkata Bhatta, Gopala Bhatta. Several years after this, when Gopala grew up, he left home and travelled to Vrindavana in search of Sri Chaitanya and dedicated his life to spreading His mission. He is now considered one of the foremost disciples of Sri Chaitanya and is one among the renowned Six Goswamis of Vrindavana.

At the house of Venkata Bhatta, near the Sri Ranganathas temple, which is now called the Jagannatha Mutt, one can have darshana of the Deities of Lord Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra that Sri Chaitanya Himself carved out of wood, for Venkata Bhatta’s worship.

Festivals at Srirangam

Festivals commemorate various lila or pastimes of the Lord or His Deity at the temple and recharge the spiritual atmosphere of the temple. Festivals are held throughout the year at Srirangam. Some of the major festivals are listed below.

**Chittira festival**

This festival takes place during April/May. This is one of the three Brahmotsavas celebrated in Srirangam. During this festival, Lord Ranganatha is carried in procession on different vahanas or vehicles like Anantha, Simha, Garuda, swan, yali, Hanumantha, elephant, and palakki which are gorgeously decorated. The Lord rides through the streets of Srirangam just like a king would, to meet his subjects. On the ninth day of this festival, the Lord comes in a magnificently decorated ratha or chariot which is pulled by huge crowds of devotees.

**Vasantotsava or Spring festival**

The season of spring is a time for joy, the spring festival is celebrated in a spectacular manner in Srirangam. Vasantotsava starts exactly nine days before the full moon day of the Tamil month of Vaikasi. Every evening for nine days, the Lord is taken to a beautiful pond surrounded by gardens and orchards. Fountains of various shapes add to the cool ambience of the mandapa on which He rests, in the middle of the pond. Devotees sing in praise of Lord. Parrots and cuckoos offer their prayers in form of chirping. Lord Ranganatha is gently given choornabhiseka (turmeric powder sprinkled over the Lord’s garland) on all the days of the festival.
Jyestabhisekam

During this festival, holy water is brought in gold and silver pots from the sacred rivers Cauvery and Kollidam. They are used for the abhiseka of the Lord. Darshana of the lord is restricted during these days.

Navaratri

The nine days of Navaratri are celebrated in a grand manner in the Ranganayaki temple where the consort of the Lord resides. The temple elephant offers chamara seva to Srimati Ranganayaki during these days, fanning Her with yak tail whisks.

Teppotsava

This is the boat festival of the Lord. The Lord is taken on various vahanas to the teppakulam or the pond for the Teppotsava. He enjoys a ride on a huge boat with His consorts. This festival extends over nine days.

Unjalutsava or Swing festival

The Lord is gently rocked on a beautifully decorated swing. Songs are sung and musical instruments are played for His pleasure. This festival lasts nine days.

Vaikuntha Ekadashi

The Vaikuntha Ekadashi festival is celebrated for 21 days in Srirangam! For the first ten days Lord Sri Ranganatha is seen in the Arjuna mandapa adjacent to the Vishwakrsena altar. For the next eleven days, He gives audience in the thousand pillared hall. Vaikuntha Ekadashi falls exactly in middle of this festival. On this day, Sri Ranganatha comes out through the Vaikuntha dwara (door) which is otherwise closed throughout the year. The Lord is seen in various jewels and armour. Mortals wear jewellery to enhance their own beauty, but the jewels worn by Lord Ranganatha have their beauty enhanced because He wears them. On the twenty first day, the Lord gives special audience to His beloved devotee Nammalwar and grants him moksha.

Kaishika Ekadashi

On this day, Lord Sri Ranganatha hears the Kaishika Purana sung by a devotee called Parashara Bhattar. Lord Ranganatha is offered 365 dresses and 365 aratis on this day.

Uttara Phalguni festival

Only on this day Lord Sri Ranganatha is seen with His consort Srimathi Ranganayaki. It is celebrated as Brahmostava for eleven days. This is the oldest festival in Srirangam.

OTHER TEMPLES

Apart from the presiding deity, Lord Ranganatha, the temple complex at Srirangam comprises of many other sanctums and over fifty smaller sanctums.

The other sanctums (sannathis) in the temple are: Thayar Sannathi dedicated to Srimathi Ranganayaki, Chakkarathazwar Sannathi dedicated to Sri Sudarshana, Udayavar Sannathi which houses the samadhi form of Ramanuja, Garudalwar Sannathi where a massive deity of Garuda is seen sitting with hands folded in reverent submission to Lord Ranganatha, Dhanvantari Sannathi dedicated to Lord Vishnu's Dhanvantari avatara and Hayagriva Sannathi dedicated to Lord Vishnu's Hayagriva avatara.


A stunning north-south view of a row of multiple gopurams of the six prakarams of Srirangam temple.
An Expanding Ocean of Bliss

In a poetic stanza of seven metaphors, God Himself tells us the benefits we can enjoy by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra.

by Dravida dasa

"Hare Krishna!" You've probably heard these two words at least once in the last few years, either by themselves or as part of the longer Hare Krishna mantra. But chances are you had only a vague idea of what they meant or why the Hare Krishna devotees chant them over and over again for hours at a time. No, the devotees aren't practicing autohypnosis at the behest of some demoniacal cult leader; they're practicing the chanting of the holy names of God, a method of self-realization taught five hundred years ago in India by an incarnation of God named Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Lord Chaitanya chose to teach this process of self-realization primarily through oral instruction and personal example. Yet He did write eight seminal Sanskrit verses describing the glories of chanting the holy names of God, especially in congregation. In a series of seven metaphors, the first of these verses sets forth the inestimable benefits we can attain through this sublime process: "All glories to the chanting of the holy names of Lord Krishna, which cleanses the mirror of the mind and extinguishes the blazing fire of material existence. That chanting is the waxing moon that causes the white lotus of universal good fortune to blossom. It is the life and soul of all transcendental knowledge, and it expands the ocean of spiritual bliss. It enables one to taste full nectar at every step and gives a cooling effect to everyone" (Shikshastaka 1).

The first metaphor is ceto-darpana-marjanam: "The chanting of the holy name of God polishes the mirror of the mind." Krishna consciousness is technically known as bhakti-yoga, and as in any yoga system, the mind is the crucial element. If our mind is absorbed in thoughts of family, money, personal pleasures or safety, mundane philosophy, science, or literature, or our own salvation—in short, in any subject other than God and service to God—then our mind will bind us to the world of matter, with all its limitations and suffering. Such thoughts constitute dirt on the mirror of the mind, because they prevent us from seeing our true identity as fully God conscious servants of the Supreme Lord.

The chanting of God's holy names quickly polishes the mirror of the mind and reveals both Him and ourselves. "The face is the index of the mind," Srila Prabhupada was fond of pointing out. And then He would often call attention to the uniquely bright faces of His Krishna conscious disciples. God is by nature full of happiness, and when we become God conscious by chanting His names, we also become full of joy and free from anxiety.

The second of Lord Chaitanya's metaphors is bhava-
the cycle of birth and death is to chant the holy name of God. There is no other way; there is no other way; there is no other way.” Our minds are too disturbed and our bodies too frail for us to practice any process of self-realization other than the easy, blissful congregational chanting of Hare Krishna. By absorbing the mind in the names of God, we become attracted to Him and lose our affinity for mundane things—an affinity, as mentioned before, that keeps us trapped in the cycle of birth and death. Krishna literally lifts us out of the conflagration of the material world and takes us back to the kingdom of God.

That is why Lord Chaitanya says, sreyah-kairava-candrika-vitaranam: “The chanting of Hare Krishna is the waxing moon that causes the white lotus of universal good fortune to blossom.” Just by hearing the devotees chant Krishna's holy names, we begin our spiritual life. The names of God enter into the heart of even the most diffident listener and strike a chord of remembrance. However fleeting, this remembrance of God through the sound of His holy names will never be totally lost and will eventually develop into full God consciousness.

And what’s more, death provides no release from these four miseries. The primary teaching of all Vedic literatures, beginning with the Bhagavad-gita, is that we are not our ever-changing bodies but eternal, immutable spiritual souls within the body. At the time of death, the soul whose mind is full of material thoughts enters a new body to undergo another term of birth, old age, disease, and death. This painful process, extended over countless lifetimes in millions of species (both human and nonhuman), makes being caught in a forest fire seem pleasant.

But there is a way to end this suffering once and for all: by chanting God's holy names. And the Brhan-naradiya Purana, an authoritative Vedic scripture, says this is the only way: “In this Age of Kali [the present Age of Quarrel and Confusion], the only way to attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death is to chant the holy name of God. There is no other way; there is no other way; there is no other way.” Our minds are too disturbed and our bodies too frail for us to practice any process of self-realization other than the easy, blissful congregational chanting of Hare Krishna. By absorbing the mind in the names of God, we become attracted to Him and lose our affinity for mundane things—an affinity, as mentioned before, that keeps us trapped in the cycle of birth and death. Krishna literally lifts us out of the conflagration of the material world and takes us back to the kingdom of God.

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Of course, now we may not think of this as such good fortune. Maybe we think good fortune, “good luck,” means that we have plenty of money and the capacity to enjoy it. Perhaps for us good luck means winning the
state lottery, finding a roomy, affordable apartment in a safe neighborhood, or meeting an attractive mate. Yet all these things are simply ephemeral flashes of light in the overwhelmingly dark and tragic world of material life. They all end, at the latest, at the time of death. They yield no permanent benefit but simply lull us into believing there is some hope for happiness outside the service of the Lord. Genuine good fortune, on the other hand, is to see and hear the devotees of Krishna chanting His names and have our mind turned toward God.

Next Lord Chaitanya says, vidya-vadhu-jivanam: “The chanting of God’s holy names is the life and soul of all transcendental knowledge.” In the Bhagavad-gita (13.3) Lord Krishna says that real knowledge means to know matter, the individual spiritual soul, and the Supreme Soul, God. One who fully understands the nature of these three subjects and the relationships among them possesses transcendental knowledge.

This knowledge is not something that has to be brought from outside; it already exists within us, deep within our subconsciousness. Like amnesiacs, we have simply forgotten who we are, who our father is, and how we should use everything we have in His service. The chanting of the Lord’s holy names acts as a powerful reminder. As mentioned before, the holy name “cleanses the mirror of the mind” and reveals the truth about God, the soul, and matter. So when the devotees shout “Haribol!” they are calling upon all of us to chant God’s names and awaken our innate transcendental knowledge.

Anandambudhi-vardhanam, says Lord Chaitanya next: “The chanting of Hare Krishna expands the ocean of transcendental bliss.” We are all searching for pleasure; that is our nature. But where to find unlimited, unending, ever-increasing pleasure—that we do not know. The chanting of Hare Krishna reveals that source of unlimited pleasure to us because it reveals Krishna Himself. This is the great mystery of the holy names of God: they are identical with Him in every respect. In other words, by chanting and hearing Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare, one associates directly with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the source of infinite pleasure. The pleasures of sex, drugs, mundane music, and so on are like drops of water compared to the ocean of bliss we can enjoy by chanting the names of God.

The chief characteristic of spiritual pleasure is that, unlike material pleasure, it is constant. So Lord Chaitanya now says pratipadam purnamrtasvadanam: “Chanting Hare Krishna enables one to taste full nectar at every step.” Anyone who witnesses devotees chanting on the
street will be struck by their sustained exuberance over two, three, or more hours. What keeps their spirits so high? The distinctive quality of the holy name as a reservoir of ever-fresh transcendental pleasure. "Sensual pleasures have a beginning and an end, so wise men do not seek them," says Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-gita (5.16). He also declares that "the self-realized person enjoys unlimited happiness, for He concentrates on the Supreme" (Bg. 5.15). The devotees fully absorbed in chanting and hearing Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare are tapping the source of unending pleasure that lies beyond the limitations of body and mind. On this platform one can enjoy constantly, in any condition of life.

Finally, Lord Chaitanya describes the chanting of the holy name as sarvatma-snapanam: "It gives a cooling effect to everyone." The Vedic literature often describes life without spiritual awareness as beset by tapa-trayi, "threedfold burning miseries." These are the miseries caused by one's own body and mind, such as cancer or insanity; the miseries caused by others, such as war or pestilence; and the miseries caused by natural disasters, such as earthquakes or floods. Everyone in the material world is constantly being burned to some extent by one or more of these miseries, and most of our energy is spent trying to counteract them. But we can never find real relief from the scorching heat of material misery until we chant the holy names of God. Since all misery affects only the body and mind, if we can transcend these and enter into the spiritual realm of existence, we can also transcend misery. This is precisely the effect of chanting the Hare Krishna mantra. Like material pleasures, material pains become insignificant for one who bathes his consciousness in the cooling river of sound called harinama sankirtana, the congregational chanting of Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna. Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

So the next time you hear the words Hare Krishna, you’ll know a little more about the tradition behind them and the wonderful benefits they can give you—and maybe you’ll even feel inspired to join in the chanting yourself.

BHEL Partners with Akshaya Patra

As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has provided five meal distribution vehicles to the Akshaya Patra Foundation, Guwahati, aimed at fulfilling their shared vision of creating a brighter future for deserving children.

Sri B. Prasada Rao, Chairman & Managing Director, BHEL flagged off the vehicles at a ceremony held at Akshaya Patra’s kitchen in Amingaon, Guwahati. On the occasion, Sri Rao said that BHEL is committed to the noble cause that Akshaya Patra has been working towards. Through this support, they hope to lend a helping hand to an organization that satisfies a child’s basic need of a filling meal.
As the work progresses at Vaikuntha Hill, towards the completion of Phase 1 of the Krishna Lila Park, a burst of transcendental activity enlivened devotees between January 25 and 29, 2013. Deities of Sri Sri Sudarshana Narasimha as well as Sri Jagannatha, Sri Baladeva and Srimathi Subhadra, were installed at the newly built temple. This is the shrine that, eventually, visitors will first enter, when the project is completed.

The Deity of Lord Narasimha in yoga posture, is seated on Vasuki, the celestial serpent. Sri Sudarshana, in standing posture, has sixteen arms. Both these Deities are combined, back to back, so the sanctum has two doors, for devotees to have darshana of both Their Lordships from either side. The Deities of Sri Jagannatha with His elder brother and sister are as They appear in Puri, Odisha and are housed in the Narasimha altar.

Priests from Melukote performed the installation ceremonies of Sri Sri Sudarshana Narasimha and priests from Jagannatha Puri performed the installation ceremonies for Sri Jagannatha, Sri Baladeva and Srimathi Subhadra.
The Deities of Their Lordships Sri Jagannatha, Sri Baladeva and Srimathi Subhadra during the first arati offered to Them after installation. Lord Narasimha can be seen above Srimathi Subhadra.

The eyes of Lord Baladeva are opened at the netronmilana ceremony.

The Deities of Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra are carried by devotees into the sanctum, for the prana pratishta ceremony.
BANGALORE: (above) His Holiness Sri Sri Vidya Prasanna Tirtha Sripadaru of Jagadguru Madhavacharya Mahasamsthnam (Sri Kukke Subramanya Matha), Sri N.L Narendra Babu (MLA, Mahalakshmpuram), Sri S Harish (Former Deputy Mayor of Bangalore and Member of Council of Bangalore Municipal Corporation) and Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa (President ISKCON Bangalore) at the inauguration of the Sri Krishna Balarama Ratha Yatra 2013. (below) Devotees pull the ratha through the streets.
Sri Vaikuntha Ekadashi

Vaikuntha Hill, Bangalore

Mysore

Hubli
What's New

January 21, 2013
The spiritual master carries the mercy of the Supreme Lord - Part 2
So if you want to be anxiety-less, without any anxiety, then you must take shelter of the spiritual master.

January 19, 2013
Vedic knowledge is perfect knowledge - Part 1
It is said in the Vedas that one has to approach a self-realized spiritual master who can explain perfectly as it is presented in the Vedas.

January 17, 2013
Perfect knowledge can descend only by disciplic succession - Part 1
We think in our own imperfect way that the Lord is also created

January 16, 2013
The ways of maya are unfathomable - part 2
The process of bhakti - pure devotional service - can very quickly cleanse the heart but hard work is required.
Sri Nityananda Trayodashi
Appearance day of Lord Nityananda

Saturday, February 23, 2013

Celebrations at
ISKCON, Hare Krishna Hill, Bangalore
6:00 pm onwards

Festival Highlights
Theppotsava, grand abhisheka and arati, melodious kirtanas, exclusive video presentation, pallaki utsava, and sumptuous prasadam feast

Lord Nityananda is the expansion of the original Personality of Godhead. No one except Lord Nityananda served the Lord as a companion, a friend, a brother, an umbrella, a bed, and a carrier. Lord Nityananda by His own will serves the Lord in various ways. If Lord Nityananda bestows mercy and qualification on anyone, then he can serve the Lord.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare