Dasara at ISKCON Mysore
Dasara celebrations at ISKCON Mysore

Dasara was celebrated on a grand scale at ISKCON Mysore. On Vijayadashami, the day Lord Rama slew the demon Ravana, an evening of festivities dedicated to glorifying this extraordinary feat of the Supreme Lord was organised.

The *utsava vigraha* of Sri Sri Krishna Balarama, adorned as Sri Rama and Lakshmana, rode on the Gaja Vahana.

Fifty feet high effigies of Ravana and Kumbhakarna were burnt, marking the victory of truth over evil.

Artists from Nadavidyalaya® Academy of dance and music performed *Dharma Vijayam*, a dance drama depicting pastimes of the Lord to establish dharma in each yuga.
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 ashrams, 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.

To know more about Srila Prabhupada visit www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada

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New York City—April 9, 1969

How to Receive Krishna's Message

Lord Krishna Himself sets up the system by which His teachings find their way to us.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

sri-prahrada uvaca
daurlabham manusam janma tad api adhruvam artha dam

Prahlada Maharaja said: One who is sufficiently intelligent should use the human form of body from the very beginning of life—in other words, from the tender age of childhood—to practice the activities of devotional service, giving up all other engagements. The human body is most rarely achieved, and although temporary like other bodies, it is meaningful because in human life one can perform devotional service. Even a slight amount of sincere devotional service can give one complete perfection. —Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.6.1

Today I shall explain the importance of Krishna consciousness as it was conceived by one of the greatest devotees in this disciplic succession. You know we are under disciplic succession. We do not manufacture anything by mental concoction. We do not approve that method. We receive knowledge from the authorities, and out of many such acharyas, or authorities, who have appeared and disappeared, Prahlada Maharaja is one.

We don't say “born” and “died,” but “appear” and “disappear.” This is the explanation: None of us, neither Krishna nor we living entities, are born or die; we appear and disappear. In the Bhagavad-gita, Lord Krishna says on the battlefield, “My dear Arjuna, don't think that you or Me or all the kings and soldiers who have assembled on this battlefield did not exist in the past and will not exist in the future.” That means they existed in the past and they're existing at present and they would exist also in the future. That means we are all eternal.

The body is changing, and the final change, when you transmigrate from one body to another, is called death. But actually, there is no death. Na jayate na mriyate va kadacit [Bg. 2.20]. In the Bhagavad-gita you'll find that the living entity is never born and never dies. Na hanyate hanyamane sarire. One may say, “I see that he is dying.” But he is not dying; he is finishing this present body.

An example is given: vasamsi jirnani yatha vihaya [Bg. 2.22]. Just as one changes his dress, when the present body is unworkable he changes to a new body. When the eyes cannot see, there is blindness. Similarly, when the hand cannot work, the leg cannot work, the tongue cannot work—because at the last stage these mechanical arrangements of this body will stop functioning—that is called death. Try to understand: If I cannot see, that does not mean I am dead. Similarly, when the senses of the body cannot function, that also does not mean that I am dead. This is to be understood with a little intelligence and a cool head.

Prahlada Maharaja, a great devotee, is in the line of disciplic succession. He’s considered one of the great acharyas, authorities. Who is an acharya? An acharya is one who knows the intricacies of Vedic knowledge, behaves in terms of that knowledge, and teaches his disciple in terms of that knowledge. The word acharya means a person whose behaviour is to be followed—we don't just follow someone according to our taste—and that acharya comes in the standard disciplic succession.

Twelve Great Authorities

We are discussing the instructions of Prahlada Maharaja because he happens to be one of the stalwart acharyas. The names of such authorized acharyas are mentioned in Srimad-Bhagavatam. Who are they? Svayambhur naradah sambhu... [Srimad-Bhagavatam 6.3.20]. Svayambhu means Brahma. Brahma is born without any material father and mother. Therefore he is called svayambhu, “self-manifested.” He is the only living creature within this universe born without a father and mother. That means without a material father and mother. But he has his father. His father is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayana. Brahma is born out of the lotus flower grown from the abdomen of Narayana. Therefore he's called svayambhu. Before him there was no existence of material creation.

Next is Narada. Narada is born from Brahma. Then Shambhu, who is also born of Brahma. Shambhu is Lord Shiva. He is also one of the acharyas.

Next are the Kumaras, who are also sons of Brahma. The word kumara means brahmachari, celibate. When they were born, Brahma wanted to create living entities to fill the universe, so he wanted many sons and grandsons.
Brahma requested his four Kumara sons, "My dear boys, get yourself married and increase the population."

But the Kumaras said, "My dear father, we are not going to marry. We are not going to be entangled in this material way of life. We shall remain as brahmacharis and cultivate Krishna consciousness."

Oh, the father was very angry.

"Oh, you are refusing my order?"

From his anger Lord Shiva was born. Lord Shiva's name is also Rudra because he was crying (rudra) from the very beginning of his birth. He too is one of the authorities.

Kapila, another acharya, is the son of Devahuti, and He's considered an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Next is Manu, the father of mankind. From manuh, the word "man" is derived.

Now Prahlada's name comes. Then Janaka, the great king whose daughter, Sita, was married to Lord Ramachandra. Therefore, Sita's name is also Janaki, "the daughter of Maharaja Janaka." He is also a great authority.

Then Bhishma. You have heard the name of Bhishma, the grandfather of Arjuna. He is also one of the authorities.

Then Maharaja Bali, a king. He was a grandson of Prahlada Maharaja. All these persons became authorities by their exemplary character for advancing in Krishna consciousness. Therefore they are considered authorities.

Next is Vaiyasakih, which means "the son of Vyasadeva," or Sukadeva Gosvami. He's also an authority. And the verse ends with the word vayam, "we," meaning Yamaraja, the controller of sinful activities and the speaker of the verse. He is like the superintendent of police, appointed by Krishna. He is also one of the authorities. How can you deny the superintendent of police as an authority? As the superintendent of police is an authority in the state, so Yamaraja is an authority.

An Atheist's Saintly Son

Today we are speaking about the instructions of one of the authorities, Prahlada Maharaja. What is the history of Prahlada Maharaja? He was born in the family of a great atheist. His father was a great atheist, Hiranyakashipu. Hiranya means gold, and kashipu means enjoyment in soft bedding. He was concerned with two things: money and sense enjoyment. That was his business, and he wanted to train his boy in that way. But fortunately, the boy happened to be a great devotee by the instruction of Narada. He was born in the family of atheists—his father was a great atheist. But because he was blessed by a great devotee, Narada, he became a great devotee.

Now, Prahlada took the opportunity of spreading Krishna consciousness. Where? In his school. He was a five-year-old boy, and as soon as he would get the opportunity, he would spread Krishna consciousness to his classmates. That was his business.

And so, many times Prahlada Maharaja's father called in the teachers: "What education are you giving to my child? Why he is chanting Hare Krishna? [Laughter.] Why are you spoiling my boy?" [Laughter.]

You see? So don't think that I am spoiling these boys and girls by teaching them Hare Krishna.

So the teacher said, "My dear sir, I teach your son very nicely about politics, economics, and, as you want, to become a very clever man in the material world. But unfortunately I do not know wherefrom your son has learned this Hare Krishna. So please excuse me. I am trying to make your son forget this nonsense Hare Krishna, but I do not know how. By nature, he chants Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, and not only is he spoiling himself, but he's spoiling my whole school. [Laughter.] Because as soon as he chants Hare Krishna, all the boys join with him, and they clap and they dance. So this is going on."

The Gaudiya Vaishnava Succession

Now, this edition of the Srimad-Bhagavatam here on the table is a great, grand edition. Each verse contains eight commentaries by great stalwart devotees. They represent different disciplic successions of devotees. There are four authorized disciplic successions. As I have already mentioned, Brahma is one of the authorities. He has a disciplic succession: from Brahma to Narada, from Narada to Vyasadeva, from Vyasadeva to Madhvacharya, from Madhvacharya to—I am making a shortcut—Madhavendra Puri, from Madhavendra Puri to Ishvara Puri, from Ishvara Puri to Lord Chaitanya, from Lord Chaitanya to Svarupa Damodara, from Svarupa Damodara to the six Gosvamis, from the six Gosvamis to Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, the author of Chaitanya-charitamrta, and from him to Narottama Dasa Thakura, from Narottama Dasa Thakura to Vishvanatha Chakravarti from Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura to Jagannatha Dasa Babaji, from Jagannatha Dasa Babaji to Bhaktivinoda Thakura, from Bhaktivinoda Thakura to Gaurakishora Dasa Babaji Maharaja, and from Gaurakishora Dasa Babaji to my spiritual
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master. And then we are descended.

In this way, the disciplic succession is coming. What is the significance of the disciplic succession? If you receive knowledge from the descendants of these authorities, then you get perfect knowledge. Perfect knowledge is imparted by the supreme perfect, God, and it is received by Brahma. And the same knowledge is handed over to Narada. Narada hands it over to Vyasa, Vyasa hands it over to Madhvacharya, and so on. If a ripe fruit on the top of the tree falls down all of a sudden, it is destroyed. But if it is handed over from up to down, down, then it comes as it is, and you can enjoy the undamaged fruit. Similarly, when knowledge is handed down by disciplic succession, then you can enjoy the reality.

That is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gita. In the fourth chapter you'll find that Krishna says, *imam vivasvate yogam proktavan aham avayayam* [Bg. 4.1]. “First of all, I spoke this yoga system to Vivasvan.” Vivasvan is the name of the controlling deity in the sun planet. As we have got many presidents, each higher planet has a president. According to Vedic language, they are known as the moon-god or the sun-god or Varuna, and so on. You also can occupy such posts if you become qualified. Just as you can become the President, you can also occupy the predominating post in the sun planet, in the moon planet, and in all the other planets. That is also confirmed in the Bhagavad-gita [7.23]: *devan deva-yayo yanti*. Anyone who aspires to be elevated to the planetary system inhabited by the demigods can go there.

So Krishna says, “First of all, I narrated this yoga system to Vivasvan.” Vivasvan is the predominating deity of the sun. He was taught the Bhagavad-gita. And Krishna says, *vivatsvan manave praha*: “And Vivasvan, this gentleman, spoke the truth about Bhagavad-gita to Manu.” I have already mentioned the name of Manu. Manu means the father of mankind. That means that from the sun planet, the message of Bhagavad-gita was handed down to the chief man of this planet, the father of mankind, Manu. And Manu handed over this knowledge to his son named Ikshvaku.

Ikshvaku is a great king. He happens to be the original king in the family in which Lord Ramachandra appeared. It is called *surya-vamsa*, the descendants from the sun. There are two classes of *kshatriyas*, or rulers. One is coming from the sun planet, and the other is coming down from the moon planet. According to the Mahabharata, those of Indo-European stock also belong to the *kshatriya* family.

Krishna says in the next verse, *evam parampara-praptam imam rajarsayo viduh* [Bg. 4.2]. In this way, this knowledge was received by disciplic succession of rajarshis. Rajarshi means a monarch who is just like a sage. In the history given in the Mahabharata there were many kings who were like sages. In name they were monarchs, but they were always thinking of the welfare of the citizens. Maharaja Yudhisthira is an example.

Then Krishna says, *sa kaleneha... yoga nastah parantapa* [Bg. 4.2]: “Now this parampara system, or disciplic succession, has been broken by the influence of time.” Just imagine. It was coming down from the sun planet, so there is every possibility of that occurring. Suppose I hand over some knowledge to you and you hand over to some other person, in succession. There is the possibility that there may be some deviation from the exact knowledge I delivered at the beginning. That is called the breakage of the parampara system. Krishna says, “That parampara system, by the force of time, is now broken; therefore I again begin that parampara system with you, Arjuna.”

Therefore if we understand the Bhagavad-gita as it was understood by Arjuna, then we get real knowledge. That is the way to understand parampara. Although we are not present before Krishna, if the message of Krishna is received through the parampara system as it was understood by Arjuna, then we get the message from Krishna directly. This is the system. But if I interpret in my own way, then the parampara system is broken.

I gave an account of our parampara system from Lord Chaitanya. We do not manufacture any knowledge by our fertile brain. We accept knowledge as it is coming down from the supreme authority. That is perfect knowledge. For example, we receive knowledge from our parents: “This is a lamp, this is a table, this is called a book.” If you protest, “Why shall I call it a book? I may call it something else” you can do that, but that is a deviation from the knowledge.

The parampara system is considered the perfect system of knowledge. I may be imperfect or my disciple may be imperfect, but if we stick to the knowledge coming down from the parampara system, then we are perfect.

This is such a simple, nice thing. The parent teaches the child, “This is called a watch or a timepiece.” If he accepts it, he hasn’t got to make any research—“Why is it called a timepiece?” It is a very easy system. “My father has told me this is a timepiece. I accept it as a timepiece,” and everyone will understand that this is a timepiece. But if I manufacture some name out of my fertile brain—“This is this” oh, people will call me crazy. “What are you saying?” So the parampara system is very nice.
Srila Prabhupada, the founder-acharya of ISKCON, has delivered more than 1500 lectures on Vedic scriptures like Bhagavad-gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Chaitanya-charitamrita. The audio recording of his lectures are available in ISKCON centers. You can also hear some of these lectures in www.iskconbangalore.org/lectures-and-conversations

Take the phrase “Man is mortal.” You have learned from your parents or teachers that man is mortal. Now, if you want to research whether or not man is mortal, it will take a long, long time. But if you accept it from the authorities— "Man is mortal" your knowledge is perfect.

The parampara system of knowledge is given in the Vedas. This system of knowledge is followed by the great acharyas, and Prahlada Maharaja is one of the great acharyas.

Prahlada’s Advice

Try to accept what Prahlada Maharaja is advising to his classmates. What is he advising? Kaumara acaret prajno dharman bhagavatan iha [Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.6.1]: “My dear friends, Krishna consciousness should be practiced from childhood.” Why childhood? Because if one is intelligent he can understand, “There is no certainty whether this is my childhood or my old age.”

Generally we think that we die when we are old. But who can say that I’m not old enough to die in the next moment? If I have to gain something supernatural which will give me the ultimate benefit of my life, then why shall I wait for old age? Immediately let me begin. If Krishna consciousness is a very nice thing, and if it will give me the highest benediction of life, then if I am intelligent I must begin it immediately, without any delay. But generally people think that childhood or youth should be enjoyed.

In one verse, Shankaracharya laments that boys, youths, and old man are very happy in their materialistic way of life. A spiritualist like Shankaracharya, or Lord Jesus Christ, is unhappy, “Oh, what foolish things are they doing.” That is the thankless task of persons who are spiritually enlightened. They can see plainly how others are spoiling their valuable life simply for sense gratification.

Prahlada Maharaja is teaching the same thing. He says that one should practice dharman bhagavatan from the beginning of life. Dharma means occupational duty. “Religion” is not a perfect translation of the Sanskrit word dharma. Religion is a kind of faith. That we can change. But dharma means your occupational duty, which you cannot change. You have to execute it. What is our dharma? What is our compulsory duty? I have several times analyzed this fact. Our compulsory duty is to serve. Every one of us is serving, and all the boys and girls present here can know it. Nobody can deny that he or she is serving. Everyone is serving. That is our compulsory duty. I may change myself to become a Mohammedan or a Christian or a Hindu, but my real occupational duty is to render service to others. That cannot be changed. That is the real enunciation of “religion.”

Therefore in the Vedic system it is called sanatana-dharna, the eternal occupational duty you cannot cease. Prahlada Maharaja is advising, dharman bhagavatan. Bhagavata means “pertaining to Bhagavan.” And Bhagavan means the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Bhagavata is the adjective form of the noun Bhagavan. The real form of the word is bhagavat. Vat means possessing, and bhaga means opulences. One who possess all the opulences is called bhagavat. And from bhagavat this word has come: bhagavata.

So bhagavata means pertaining to God and His devotees. This book is called Bhagavata because it deals only with the subject of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, nothing more. And you’ll find described in this book the dealings between Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His devotees. There are two kinds of bhagavatam: the devotee bhagavatam and the book Bhagavatam. Prahlada Maharaja advises that from childhood, if one is very intelligent, then his duty is dharman bhagavatan—he should engage himself in the execution of the occupational duties in relationship with devotees and the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Thank you very much.

Srila Prabhupada, the founder-acharya of ISKCON, has delivered more than 1500 lectures on Vedic scriptures like Bhagavad-gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Chaitanya-charitamrita. The audio recording of his lectures are available in ISKCON centers. You can also hear some of these lectures in www.iskconbangalore.org/lectures-and-conversations
“What Is This Civilization—Killing Our Mother?”

Here we conclude a conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and Professor John Mize. It took place in Los Angeles on June 23, 1975.

Professor Mize: And if the Lord has all qualities, does this mean He even has jealousy?

Srila Prabhupada: Everything.

Professor Mize: It's difficult to imagine Krishna jealous.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Professor Mize: What could He possibly envy or be jealous of?

Srila Prabhupada: You can speak of whatever quality, whether anger or whatever you have got—God has got it in a bigger quantity and in a perfect quantity. That is the conception of God—without any... what is it called?

Professor Mize: Imperfection?

Srila Prabhupada: Imperfection, yes.

Professor Mize: I hope He doesn't have my ignorance in such a huge quantity.

Disciple: But ignorance is not a positive existence.

Professor Mize: Well, is anger or jealousy?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. Sometimes anger acts. Unless you become angry, you cannot fight.

Disciple: In the Vedic literature there are so many stories of Krishna's anger, all the way from His babyhood to His later life.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Disciple: Krishna's activities are always for the good.

Professor Mize: Righteous anger.

Disciple: Yes, spiritual anger.

Srila Prabhupada: Everything has got its proper use. In the material condition we do not know that. Therefore, Narottama Dasa Thakura has made a list: how to use your anger, your greediness—like that. He says, kamah krishna-karmarpane: we are lusty for doing something for our sense gratification, but the same desire, the same propensity, can be utilized for serving Krishna.

For instance, I am writing books—staying up at night, the whole night. So for an old man like me, it is tedious. But I am doing it for Krishna. So similarly, another author may be writing the whole night to produce some sex literature. So the labour for producing sex literature and the labour for producing Bhagavatam is the same. It may be the same ambition: "Let me become a big author. My name will be very popular." But one thing is being done for Krishna; the other thing is being done for sense gratification.

So that propensity of becoming a reputed author, or the labour to do so—it is the same, but it is being utilized for different purposes. Similarly, you can take any other quality. For instance, Hanuman became angry at the demon Ravana. He set fire in his city. Destroyed the whole city. Hanuman showed his anger, but not for his personal sense gratification—he wanted to serve Lord Rama. Rama's consort, Sita, had been stolen by Ravana, so there was an arrangement for fighting, and Hanuman set fire. To set fire in your home or your country is not good, but he did it for the satisfaction of Lord Ramachandra.

So everything has its proper use when it is utilized for serving Krishna. That is Krishna consciousness. We
are living beings. We are conscious. We can not give up anything. But we are being trained up in how to utilize everything for Krishna. That is Krishna consciousness.

**Disciple:** Srila Prabhupada has written a book on the various philosophers. Prabhupada is discussing where their ideas connect with Krishna consciousness and where their ideas fall short.

**Professor Mize:** I look forward to seeing it.

**Disciple:** Srila Prabhupada, in this book do you speak about Kant's philosophy? As you know, he's very popular.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Yes, Kant is very popular. I was also a student of philosophy. In my student life, my professors were all Europeans. I was a student at Scottish Church's College, in Calcutta. So Dr. W. S. Urquhart was our professor for psychology and metaphysics. Later on, he became the vice-chancellor of the University of Calcutta. A very nice gentleman.

**Disciple:** Srila Prabhupada, Professor Mize finds that he's chanting Hare Krishna a little in the shower now. When he takes a shower, he chants a little.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Yes, it is so nice and so easy.

**Disciple:** ... that you get the highest philosophical realization—just by chanting Hare Krishna.

**Professor Mize:** Your Divine Grace, thank you.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Take this nice prasada.

**Professor Mize:** [Begins eating.] This is delicious.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Now you can take. Krishna has given us so many nice things. Why should we kill the poor animals? That's not good. Because there is no spiritual vision: samah sarvesu bhutesu—the sense that every other being is my equal, as a spirit soul, part and parcel of God. But now the average man is not a brahmana. He'll give the dog a bad name and hang it. "The animal has no soul." What is this—the animal has no soul?

**Disciple:** But, Prabhupada, sometimes people argue that vegetarians are also killing the vegetables.

**Srila Prabhupada:** That's all right. The vegetables also have life. But we are not killing them. When you pluck a blossom, the bush is not killed. When you take a fruit, the tree is not killed. When you harvest grains, they have already died. Only then can you take the grains. There is no question of killing. But even if it were killing, it would not be as murderous as killing a cow.

Why does the state hang a man when he kills another man? The man can plead, "So many animals are being killed every day—if I kill one man, what is the wrong there?" The punishment is there because "You have killed a very important animal."

Therefore, in the Bhagavad-gita we find krsi-go-raksya: the cow should be protected, because she is a very, very important animal. In fact, Lord Krishna does not speak of other animals. Nor does He say "all animals." He says "cows," because the cow is so very important. She's supplying you milk, such an important food. She is your mother—and you are killing your mother? Is that your civilization? Killing your mother?

"My mother is old; my mother is no longer supplying milk. Kill." Is there any such sanction? Rather, our old mother should be given more protection. But what is this civilization—killing our mother? In the morning we require milk immediately, and our mother the cow is supplying. And when she cannot supply—"Kill her." What is this philosophy?

**Disciple:** Srila Prabhupada, during a talk at a university, I was explaining this simple idea, and one man said, "This is just your sentiment. You just have some sentiment." So I asked him if he had a dog. And he said, "Yes." So I asked him, "When your dog becomes old, will you kill it?" And he said, "No. Why shall I kill it? It's a good dog."

**Srila Prabhupada:** In this civilization, the dog is good, the cow is bad. The dog is always creating nasty things, while the cow is so pure that it has been scientifically demonstrated that even her stool is pure and antiseptic—and yet she has to be killed.

So, learned scholars and philosophers should understand the importance of this movement and how it is beneficial. People are suffering for want of knowledge of the spirit soul. They are keeping themselves on the animal platform with their so-called education. Unless there is spiritual understanding, people's so-called education has no value. Harav abhaktasya kuto mahad-guna manorathenasati dhavato bahih: they will remain on the mental platform, and since their mind is now materially contaminated, they will remain on the material platform. They cannot make any advancement. One has to come to the spiritual platform. That is required.

**Disciple:** Srila Prabhupada, what is the symptom that you have reached the spiritual platform?

**Srila Prabhupada:** That I have already explained. Prasannatma na socati na kanksati, samah sarvesu bhutesu: you are joyful, without hankering or lamentation, and you see, "All other living beings are spirit souls, equal to me." These persons who are on the mental platform—they will argue, "The animal has no soul."
The Song Goes Ever On
A brief look at Uddhava and the Uddhava Gita
by Satyaraja Das

At a recent academic conference, I found myself engulfed in a discussion about the Bhagavad-gita, the battlefield dialogue between Krishna, or God, and his dedicated devotee Arjuna, the heroic warrior.

"The Gita gives us the most profound philosophy," I said to one of the scholars. "It shows us how Krishna interacts with His loving devotees."

A nearby eavesdropper, hearing only the barest details of my discussion, queried, "Oh, are you talking about Gita-govinda, where Krishna shows His love for Radha?"

“Well, no, I...”

Another scholar, standing only a few feet away, chimed in: “I think he was talking about the Anugita, a summary of the Bhagavad-gita found later in the Mahabharata.”

At an academic conference of scholars who specialize in India’s religious texts, my reference to “the Gita” turned out to be a careless one—India is full of Gitas, the Bhagavad-gita being one among many.

When I returned home, I decided to look at Srila Prabhupada’s books to see which Gitas he considered important. To my surprise, in the Third Canto of the Srimad-Bhagavatam (3.4.32, purport), Prabhupada says something interesting about the Uddhava Gita: "Undoubtedly, the Bhagavad-gita was spoken by the Lord on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra just to encourage Arjuna to fight, and yet to complete the transcendental knowledge of Bhagavad-gita, the Lord instructed Uddhava. The Lord wanted Uddhava to fulfill His mission and disseminate knowledge which He had not spoken even in Bhagavad-gita."

It is not that Srila Prabhupada is here minimizing the importance of the Bhagavad-gita, which elsewhere he praises as the most profound philosophy known to man. But he is saying something about the unique importance of the Uddhava Gita.

Krishna’s Other Gita

The Uddhava Gita is found in the Eleventh Canto of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, Chapters 7-29. It is one of many Gitas associated with the worship of Krishna. Though the Bhagavad-gita is arguably the most famous of these Gitas, the tradition offers us Gita-govinda, Gopi Gita, Venu Gita, Bhramara Gita, and several others. Gita means “song,” and within the context of sacred literature, it refers to particularly mellifluous and blessed songs of divine truth, uttered by great devotees or by the Lord himself. The songs include both philosophical and devotional outpourings.

Uddhava Gita is among the most important of the genre, for it focuses on Krishna’s final instructions before leaving the earthly plane. More, these instructions are delivered to Uddhava, recognized by the tradition as a mahabhagavata, or “greatest among the devotees,” and as mukhyam krishna-parigrhe, “foremost of those who are intimate with Krishna.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.4.24) He is also Krishna’s cousin, and practically His twin in appearance.

For these reasons and others, it is curious that the Uddhava Gita has never enjoyed the fame of its sister text, the Bhagavad-gita, with which it shares several verses in common. In certain ways, the Uddhava Gita goes further than the Bhagavad-gita, as Prabhupada tells us, illuminating the Bhagavad-gita’s central teaching of devotion to Krishna and emphasizing the importance of seeing Krishna everywhere, in everyone, and at all times.

Who Is Uddhava?

The Srimad-Bhagavatam introduces Uddhava in the Third Canto. Uddhava meets the Pandavas’ uncle Vidura, who asks Uddhava about his conversation with Krishna (Uddhava Gita) and about Krishna’s associates and family members. The Bhagavatam (3.2.2) informs us at this point of Uddhava’s single-minded devotion—from the age of five he was absorbed in Krishna and nothing more. It also reveals the depth of Uddhava’s love for Krishna. On remembering Him, “Uddhava had all the transcendental bodily changes due to total ecstasy, and he was trying to wipe away tears of separation from his eyes.” (3.2.5) Clearly, Uddhava is no ordinary player, even in this most transcendental of plays.

Uddhava begins to answer Vidura’s questions by poetically telling him, “The sun of the world, Lord Krishna, has set, and our house [the Kuru dynasty] has now been swallowed by the great snake of time.” (3.2.7) He recounts Krishna’s pastimes in Vrindavana, many of which took place near the Yamuna River, where Vidura and Uddhava now sit. He then describes the many events that took place in Mathura and in Dwaraka, in the latter part of Krishna’s manifest pastimes.
Though Vidura, at this point, wants Uddhava to be his spiritual master, Uddhava is concerned about etiquette. Vidura is senior to him, and so, ultimately, he sends him to Maitreya, a sage in whom Uddhava has great confidence. Maitreya was present while Uddhava received instructions from Krishna, and so Maitreya, too, heard truth directly from the lips of the Lord. Hence Uddhava’s certainty that Maitreya could ably guide Vidura.

In this portion of the Bhagavatam are two significant verses about Uddhava from the lips of Lord Krishna himself: "Now I shall leave the vision of this world, and I see that Uddhava, the foremost of My devotees, is the only one who can be directly entrusted with knowledge about Me. Uddhava is not inferior to Me in any way because he is never affected by the modes of material nature. Therefore he may remain in this world to disseminate specific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead.” (3.4.30-31)

**A Taste of the Uddhava Gita**

The setting of the Uddhava Gita is the last night of Krishna's manifest pastimes on this planet. He is planning to leave at a predetermined time, and His loving devotee Uddhava, knowing Krishna’s plan, approaches Him: "O Lord Keshava, my dear master, I cannot tolerate giving up Your lotus feet even for a fraction of a moment. I urge You to take me along with You to Your own abode.”

Krishna, of course, is naturally inclined to comply with His devotees' wishes. Still, He has a higher mission for Uddhava: to stay and sing His glories again and again. Krishna explains the importance of detachment and tells Uddhava to roam the world as a renunciant, specifically to go to Badarikashram, high in the Himalayas, and to tell the sages there of His life and teachings.

Just to be clear on what these teachings are, Krishna explains in great detail the philosophy summarized in the Bhagavad-gita. He begins by saying that the material world is ephemeral and that God and the soul are eternal. He explains the distinction between the body and the self, the soul, just as He does in the Bhagavad-gita. But here He adds scriptural references and analogies to enhance His argument.

Uddhava asks Krishna how one can realize the truth of the soul, since the material world and its illusions are so immediate, so alluring. How can one relinquish attachments and control the mind?

Krishna explains that the human intellect is capable of cultivating spiritual knowledge. Krishna stresses the importance of approaching a guru, but He also says that one can observe many truths by heeding the "spiritual master" known as nature. He enumerates for Uddhava twenty-four teachers of the true spiritual seeker, including the earth, the air, and the sky. From the air, for example, one can learn to come in touch with sense objects while remaining unaffected by them.

Krishna next explains the complexities of karma, giving vivid examples of just how entangling karma can be. He recommends only pure works, done on His behalf.

Krishna then explains the three modes of material nature—goodness, passion, and ignorance—and how to become free from their influence. He points out the importance of keeping company with devotees, giving elaborate details on how to identify who is truly advanced in spiritual life, and who is not.

Krishna also conveys to Uddhava the art of meditation, explaining that meditation reaches its perfection when one learns how to meditate on Him. He then points out the importance of deity worship and delineates the specifics of formal worship of installed deities. This leads to an elaborate discussion of bhakti-yoga, the science of devoting oneself to God.

Krishna then outlines the yogic siddhis, or the mystic powers one may develop through yoga. He explains that such powers can be an asset but are more often a deficit, distracting practitioners from the path of devotion.

Uddhava asks Krishna to list His divine attributes, so that devotees will have substance for meditation and contemplation. Krishna is pleased by the request, praising Uddhava as expert in asking appropriate questions: "On the Battlefield of Kurukshetra," Krishna says, “Arjuna... asked Me the same question that you are now posing.” After this reference to His conversation with Arjuna, Krishna explains how He can be seen in the world and, nearly echoing His own words in the Bhagavad-gitas Tenth Chapter, enumerates His opulences as the Absolute Truth: "I am the ultimate goal... I am the Gayatri mantra... I am the three-lettered omkara... I am the Gayatri mantra... I am the Himalayas,” and so on. He adds several that are not in the Gita, such as “Among jewels, I am the ruby, and among flowers the lotus.”

The next two chapters of the Uddhava Gita detail the ancient social and spiritual system known as Varnashrama Dharma. Krishna makes it clear, as He does in the Bhagavad-gita, that one fits into this system according to quality and work, not birth (as in the modern-day caste system). The original system is meant to help practitioners use their God-given talents and inclinations to gradually become God conscious.

**Different Instructions for Different Students**

As the Uddhava Gita comes to a close, Krishna again emphasizes the importance of bhakti-yoga, or devotion to Him, and makes two additional points: (1) He asks
Uddhava listens to their outpouring of love: he hears separation from their beloved. Before speaking to them, first time, they are struck by his resemblance to Krishna, gopis see him for the. When the message to the living beings. The next day, Uddhava delivers a similar them, and within them; He dwells in the hearts of all representing them that Krishna is eternally present with Uddhava speaks first with Nanda and Yashoda, is known as Uddhava Sandesha ("Uddhava's Message").

Him. Uddhava's message to the people of Vrindavana to console His devotees, who are pining for in the Tenth Canto. There, Krishna sends Uddhava to destroy His devotees' fear of material existence, like a bee He has collected this nectarean essence of all destroying His devotees' fear of material existence, like a bee. The teachings of Krishna consciousness, as delivered in both the Bhagavad-gita and the Uddhava Gita, take each person's unique psychophysical make-up into account, celebrating the diversity of creation and the special way in which each of us is meant to serve God.

In the last verse of Uddhava Gita (11.29.49), Sukadeva Goswami, the narrator of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, feels intense love for the Lord and utters the following words:

I offer my obeisances to that Supreme Personality of Godhead, the original and greatest of all beings, Lord Sri Krishna. He is the author of the Vedas, and just to destroy His devotees' fear of material existence, like a bee He has collected this nectarean essence of all knowledge and self-realization. Thus He has awarded to His many devotees this nectar from the ocean of bliss, and by His mercy they have drunk it.

The Uddhava Sandesha

In addition to his brief appearance in the Third Canto of the Srimad-Bhagavatam and his elaborate role in the Eleventh (Uddhava Gita), Uddhava is also prominent in the Tenth Canto. There, Krishna sends Uddhava to Vrindavana to console His devotees, who are pining for Him. Uddhava's message to the people of Vrindavana is known as Uddhava Sandesha ("Uddhava's Message").

Uddhava speaks first with Nanda and Yashoda, reminding them that Krishna is eternally present with them, and within them; He dwells in the hearts of all living beings. The next day, Uddhava delivers a similar message to the gopis. When the gopis see him for the first time, they are struck by his resemblance to Krishna, both in his physical features and in his apparel. This resemblance, of course, increases their sense of separation from their beloved. Before speaking to them, Uddhava listens to their outpouring of love: he hears them lament with aching hearts, bemoaning their intolerable position, their vacant world in Krishna's absence. (10.47.4-21).

Overtaken by their unmotivated and uninterrupted devotion, Uddhava praises them as the best of all devotees. He conveys the Lord's message: He is all-pervasive, and so the gopis are always united with Him in love. But these words ring hollow in the presence of the gopis' passionate longing for the love of their lives. Still, Uddhava tells them that they must cultivate the ability to see Krishna spiritually, in their heart of hearts. It is for this reason that He remains separate from them—so that they might develop a deeper vision, understanding Him to be always united with them in a love whose intensity cannot be shaken by mere physical absence.

Though the gopis accept all that Uddhava says as philosophically accurate, they are still adamant that union is better than separation, and they ask whether Krishna still remembers them, His faithful Vrindavana companions. While their pain is somewhat assuaged by Uddhava's presence, they are ultimately insensible in their unrequited love.

Uddhava is amazed by their unwavering devotion, and he again praises them as true models for all Krishna devotees. So moved is he that he prays to be reborn as a shrub, creeper, or herb in Vrindavana, so that he might catch the dust kicked up by their feet. (10.47.61-63)

Uddhava's Gratitude

Sukadeva Goswami said: Hearing the words spoken by Lord Krishna, and having thus been shown the entire path of yoga, Uddhava folded his hands to offer obeisances. But his throat choked up with love and his eyes overflowed with tears; so he could say nothing.

Steadying his mind, which had become overwhelmed with love, Uddhava felt extremely grateful to Lord Krishna, the greatest hero of the Yadu dynasty. My dear King Parikshit, Uddhava bowed down to touch the Lord's lotus feet with his head and then spoke with folded hands.

Sri Uddhava said: O unborn, primeval Lord, although I had fallen into the darkness of illusion, my ignorance has now been dispelled by Your merciful association. Indeed, how can cold, darkness, and fear exert their power over one who has approached the brilliant sun?

In return for my insignificant surrender, You have mercifully bestowed upon me, Your servant, the torchlight of transcendental knowledge. Therefore, what devotee of Yours who has any gratitude could ever give up Your lotus feet and take shelter of another master?

—Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.29.35-38
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Located some eight kms from Nagapattinam in a small serene village is the lovely temple of Lord Krishna, Thirukkanangudi Damodara Narayana Perumal temple.

The Pastime

The pastime of this temple is closely associated with one of the sapta rishis. In the present Manvantara the sapta rishis are Kashyapa, Atri, Vasishtha, Vishwamitra, Gautama, Jamadagni and Bharadvaja. One of the most important of these sapta rishis is Vasishtha.

Vasishta was born to Lord Brahma. Lord Brahma created Vasishta with the intention to provide a relief for the people from the sorrows of ignorance. Owing to his ascetic qualities, Vasishta was gifted the divine cow Kamadhenu and her daughter Nandini. Vasishta is one of the nine prajapathis created by Brahma. A whole set of verses in the Rig Veda is dedicated to Sage Vasishta (Rig Veda 7.33). He is distinguished by the fact that he is the only mortal besides Bhava Rishi to have a Rig Veda hymn dedicated to him. He had his hermitage on a forty acre property on the banks of River Saraswathi.

Vasishta was married to Arundhathi, daughter of Sage Kardama and Devahuti. This is the same Arundhathi who appears as a star in the sky. Arundhathi is the symbol of virtue and devotion. Couples pray to her for a grihastha life filled with devotion to the Lord. In the Vedic system, immediately after a marriage ceremony it is imperative to see the Arundhathi star and seek her blessings.

A few of the distinguished sons of Vasishta are Chitraketu, Surochi, Mitra, Ulban, Vasubhradyan and Shakt. Vasishta was awarded with the title of Brahmari. In the Vedic system, if a teacher teaches more than ten thousand students then he is called Kulapathi or chief preceptor and Vasishta was awarded with this title. He was a man of tranquility and had conquered all forms of material sense gratification.
There is an interesting part of history which forms the crux of the appearance of The Lord in Thirukkannagudi. Vasishta was not only a great saint but an exemplary devotee of the Supreme Lord. He was the teacher of Sri Ramachandra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. After Sri Rama avatara, Vasishta was immersed in the prayers of Lord Krishna and never failed to perform worship to Him by the abundant supplies given to him by his wish fulfilling cow Nandini.

On the banks of River Cauvery, Sage Vasishta took his bath and performed his Gayatri japa. He took his shaligrama shilas out of his deer skin bag. Since he was a renunciant and did not have any worldly possessions, he meditated that he had arranged for a gorgeous simhasana made of gold and bedecked with jewels for the pleasure of the Lord. He then invoked waters from the holy rivers, Cauvery, Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Sarasvathi, Narmada and Sindhu and bathed the Supreme Lord. His cow Nandini supplied him with milk, curd, honey and ghee by which he performed his usual panchamrita abhisheka to the Lord. After this he dressed the Lord with cloth and offered a tulasi garland. His devout wife Arundhathi gave him freshly made butter which is a favourite of the Supreme Lord. Sage Vasishta made a small Deity of Krishna with the butter and started worshiping it as well. Even the tropical climate of South India could not melt the butter. Then all of a sudden Lord Krishna appeared in the disguise of a small boy and ate the butter. Angered by this act of the boy, Vasishta went to reprimand him. The boy started running and Vasishta chased him. The boy came to a bakula tree and hid there. Some rishis who saw this came and took a rope to tie the boy to the tree. However they tried to tie him up. the rope was two inches short.

Sage Vasishta immediately remembered the Damodara pastime of the Supreme Lord. Damodara is a name for Lord Krishna. Dama means “rope,” and udara means “belly.” So Damodara means “one who is bound around the belly with ropes.” Sage Vasishta remembered the pastime of how Mother Yashoda tried to tie up the Supreme Lord to a mortar.

Mother Yashoda once caught Krishna stealing butter so she chased Him and eventually caught Him. She then decided to punish Him by tying Him up to a wooden grinding mortar. But when she tried to bind Him, she found that the rope she was using was too short—by two inches. She gathered more ropes from the house and added to it, but at the end she found the same shortage. In attempting to bind her son, she became tired. She was perspiring, and the garland on her head fell down. Then Lord Krishna appreciated the hard labour of His mother, and being compassionate upon her, He agreed to be bound up by the ropes. Krishna, playing as a human child in the house of Mother Yashoda, was performing His own selected pastimes.

Sage Vasishta remembered the verse from Bhagavatam (SB 10.9.13-14) (from Srila Prabhupada’s Srimad Bhagavatam translation)

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead has no beginning
and no end, no exterior and no interior, no front and no rear. In other words, He is all-pervading. Because He is not under the influence of the element of time, for Him there is no difference between past, present and future; He exists in His own transcendental form at all times. Being absolute, beyond relativity, He is free from distinctions between cause and effect, although He is the cause and effect of everything. That unmanifested person, who is beyond the perception of the senses, had now appeared as a human child, and mother Yashoda, considering Him her own ordinary child, bound Him to the wooden mortar with a rope."

Sage Vasishta remembered another verse from Sri Damodarashtaka:

\[ \text{iti drk sva-lilabhir ananda-kunde} \\
\text{sva-ghosam nimajjantam akhyapayanta} \\
\text{tadiyesita-jnesu bhaktair jitatvam} \\
\text{punah prematas tam satavrtti vande} \]

"By such pastimes He is drowning the inhabitants of Gokula in pools of ecstasy and revealing to those devotees absorbed in knowledge of His supreme majesty and opulence that He is conquered only by devotees whose pure love is imbued with intimacy and is free from all conceptions of awe and reverence. To this Supreme Lord, Sri Damodara, whose belly is bound not with ropes but with His devotee’s pure love, I offer my humble obeisances."

Realizing the boy was the Supreme Lord Himself, Sage Vasishta paid obeisance to Him. He begged pardon and realizing his folly, begged for Krishna prema. Vasishta knew for sure that only love can bind Krishna. He requested the Lord to reside in that place. That very spot where the Lord appeared to Sage Vasishta is the temple of Thirukannangudi and the Lord of this temple is called Damodara Perumal or Lokanatha Perumal.

The Temple

This is one of the pancha Krishna temples of India (the others being Thirukkanapuram, Thirukkannamangai, Thirucherai, Nachiyar Kovil). This temple of Thirukannangudi Damodara Narayana is located in a remote village untouched by the calamities of modern cities. Free from the honking of cars and motorbikes, this temple is very serene and tranquil. As we enter the temple, the huge five-tiered rajagopuram stands with impressive proportions. The temple has two prakarams. The main balipeetha where the prasadam of the Lord is offered to the demigods to feast on welcomes the devotees with its intricate carvings on stone. The colossal
deities of Jaya and Vijaya, the gatekeepers of Vaikuntha, guard the temple. A beautiful pond called Nithya Pushkarani adorns the temple. In the main sanctum santorum under the utpalavaktha vimanam stands the majestic, blissful Lord Damodara Narayana. He holds the conch, discus and mace in His hands and is flanked by His consorts Sridevi and Bhoodevi. He faces east. The festival Deity, Lokanatha Perumal, stands on a peetha in front of Damodara Narayana Perumal. A small Deity of baby Krishna sucking His toes is seen next to the main Deity. In the second prakara of the temple is the small shrine of the consort of the Lord, Aravindavalli Thayar. There is a separate shrine for Sri Ramachandra, Lakshmana and Sita Devi. Unlike other divya desams where Garuda is seen with folded hands, he is seen here with his hands around his body. Thirumangai Alwar enjoys a special status here. The same bakula tree where Krishna was about to be tied up is seen here in the temple complex.

Festivals

Apart from the ten day Brahmotsavam, other festivals of this temple are Pavitrotsavam in the month of September when silk threads of different colours are offered to the Lord. Vasantotsava is conducted in the month of June, when the Lord is offered a cooling festival in the hot summer month. Sri Krishna Janmashtami is another magnificent festival of this temple. On Sri Rama Navami, the Deity of Sri Rama is taken out in procession on the streets. People of the village welcome the Lord with fruits and flowers. Their house fronts are decorated with rangoli patterns depicting various pastimes of the Lord and the Lord receives a magnificent welcome during festivals.

Thirumangai Alwar

Thirumangai Alwar enjoys a special status in the temple due to the following pastimes:

Tree as devotee

Thirumangai Alwar, a great devotee of the Supreme Lord, was building huge walls for the grand temple of Srirangam. A merchant donated a pot of gold for this service of Thirumangai Alwar. Thirumangai Alwar accepted the gold and was on his way back to Srirangam. He took darshana of Damodara Narayana Perumal in this temple and decided to rest in the temple for the night. Thirumangai Alwar placed his bed underneath a tamarind tree. He requested the tamarind tree to wake him up early in the morning so that he could...
make his morning ablutions. Thirumangai Alwar was skeptical about burglars and warned the tamarind tree about it. He instructed the tree to keep a vigil. The next morning the tamarind tree woke up Thirumangai Alwar by nudging him with its branches. Thirumangai Alwar was happy and blessed the tree.

The Lord quenches Thirumangai Alwar’s thirst

Once, Thirumangai Alwar was very thirsty and begged for water in the houses nearby. The ladies of the houses thought Thirumangai Alwar was there to mobilize funds for the Supreme Lord’s temple work and shut their doors. Thirumangai Alwar cursed those households which did not give him water. Then suddenly the Lord of Thirukkannagudi came to the completely exhausted Thirumangai Alwar and presented him with water and food. Thirumangai Alwar was so fortunate to get food and water from the Supreme Lord Himself. But he was so exhausted that he could not recognise the Lord. Once he regained his consciousness after taking the nectar from the Lord, he tried to focus on the personality who gave him the food. The Lord just gave the Alwar one glimpse and ran away, just like baby Krishna.

To this day these households near the temple have dried up wells that never get filled even when there is torrential rainfall. This pastime confirms the gravity of even small offences to the great devotees of the Lord. The Lord may tolerate offences to Him, but can never forgive the offences committed to His beloved devotees. Thirumangai Alwar sings about the Supreme Lord: “He lies on a milk ocean. His body is brilliant. Oh! I see the huge lotus from where Brahma emanates. You took the form of a fish! Sometimes He would swallow all the water in the scales of the fin, Sometimes He would release the water and play in it. Where brahmanas reside and recite the four Vedas, Where young brahmanas perform yaga, There my Lord Damodara stays. The city that He resides in is beautiful, with plenty of lotus ponds. Oh! Lord of Thirukkannagudi, I fall at Your feet !!”

Photo Courtesy: Santhanakrishnan, Srirangam

The temple of Thirukkannagudi

To read online visit: www.goo.gl/cXrqSi
Union Bank of India donated four food distribution vehicles to The Akshaya Patra Foundation as a part of its CSR activities. Sri Arun Tiwari, Chairman, Union Bank of India, handed over the keys of the vehicles to Sri Stoka Krishna Dasa, Vice President, ISKCON-Bangalore.

V E D I C   T H O U G H T S

Who, other than one who is not a human being, can exist in this world and not be interested in the ultimate goal of life? Who can refuse the nectar of narrations about the Personality of Godhead's activities, which by itself can deliver one from all material pangs?

Maitreya Rsi
Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.13.50

By knowledge of the Absolute Truth, the sober practitioners realize that blissful, immortal, all-pervading Supreme Lord.

Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.7

The Vedic mantras explain that the all-powerful Absolute Truth possesses a spiritual form and although He remains in the spiritual sky, He is simultaneously present everywhere. He personally appears within the heart of the perfect devotees who constantly meditate upon Him.

Baladeva Vidyabhushana,
Prameya Ratnavali 1B

O my tongue, since my mouth has become like a lotus by dint of the presence there of these eloquent, ornamental, delightful syllables, you are like the swan that plays there. As your foremost pleasure, always articulate the names Govinda, Damodara, and Madhava.

Srila B. ilvamangala T hakura,
Govinda-damodara-stotram 9
Early Miracles of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

Though Lord Chaitanya is known as Krishna’s hidden incarnation, His biographers have preserved accounts of His displays of divinity.

by Amala-bhakta Dasa

Lord Chaitanya, unlike ordinary human beings, was not conceived in His mother’s womb by seminal discharge. Rather, by His own free will, twelve months before His advent He miraculously entered His father’s heart; from there He transferred Himself to His mother’s womb, just as He had done about 4,500 years earlier when He appeared as Lord Krishna. And on February 18, 1486, in Mayapur, West Bengal, India, during a full-moon eclipse, Lord Chaitanya appeared in this world.

He was named Vishvambhara, which means, “one who protects and maintains the universe.” But He was also nicknamed Nimai and Gauranga—Nimai, because He was born under a neem tree, and Gauranga (which means “golden limbs”) because He had a golden complexion. The name Krishna Chaitanya (“all-attractive living force”) was awarded to Him when He became a renunciant monk at age twenty-four.

Lord Chaitanya’s horoscope clearly showed that He would be an intellectual genius, an amazing teacher of religion, and a world saviour. And, according to Vedic astrology, the unique markings on His feet—flag, conch, disc, fish, thunderbolt—doubtlessly signified that He was an incarnation of God. These markings had also been visible on Lord Krishna’s feet. Besides, Lord Chaitanya’s entire form—His nose, arms, chin, eyes, knees, skin, and so on—like Lord Krishna’s, showed all thirty-two symptoms of a great or divine personality.

Tricking Adults into Chanting

Even as a baby, the Lord intimated that His mission would be to help people become God conscious. For example, He would often cry loudly, but when His
mother's friends would begin chanting God's names and clapping. He would stop crying and begin smiling. But when they would think He was fully pacified and stop chanting, He would again begin crying. So they would again chant God's names, and He would again stop crying and begin smiling. That was His cute way of tricking them into chanting God's holy names throughout the day and blessing them with divine bliss. After a while, this sacred activity became a regular fun-filled game that brought laughter, delight, and wonder to those affectionate ladies.

**Why the Lord Hides His Identity**

Even to His parents, who were great devotees of God, Lord Chaitanya rarely revealed who He was. He wanted to bless them with a relationship with Him full of informality and familiarity rather than awe and reverence. This closer relationship gives God more pleasure and satisfaction because it is more intimate and affectionate. But He reserves such closeness for His extremely surrendered and devoted servants.

Thus Lord Chaitanya's parents did not regard Him as God but rather as their little, dependent, lovable child. They considered themselves His protectors and caretakers, even though He protects and cares for the entire world. As we will soon see, though the Lord enjoys playing the part of a helpless, innocent toddler, He can, when He so wishes, instantly reveal His divine nature and power.

**Baffling the Thieves**

One day Lord Chaitanya, wearing golden ornaments, was wandering alone near His home. Two thieves ambled into the area and spotted the child. Attracted by His glistening ornaments, they decided to steal them. Since there were people on the street, the thieves resolved to abduct the boy in a way that would appear as if they were playing with Him.

One of the thieves asked, "Son, where have you been all this time?"

And the other thief said, "Come on, son, let's go home."

The Lord smiled and said, "Yes, let's go home."

One of the thieves placed the Lord on his shoulders, and the other gave Him some candy. Then they walked toward their own house, where they hoped to steal the ornaments and kill the child.

After the thieves had gone some distance from the Lord's neighbourhood, the Lord's family members realized He was not near the house. Extremely anxious, they began searching for Him and calling, "Nimai! Nimai!" When they couldn't find Him, they became frantic. They felt as if their very life had been stolen away.

As the thieves carried the Lord, something mystical happened. The Lord playfully clouded their minds. First, He made them walk on the wrong path, which led back to the Lord's house. Then, when they reached His house, they thought they were at their own house.

"Okay, son," one of the thieves said, "we're home."
“Yes, we are,” replied the Lord. “So you can put me down.”

As the thief lowered the Lord to the ground, the Lord saw His family members in the distance desperately searching and calling out for Him. He ran away to His father, who picked Him up and hugged Him. Seeing Him, all the family members felt immensely relieved and blissful.

Then, by the Lord’s will, the thieves suddenly realized they weren’t at their home at all. Indeed, they were right where they had started. How, they wondered, had they become so thoroughly deluded? Seeing the boy’s family members coming and fearing arrest, they fled from the area as fast as they could.

Revealing His Divine Form

One day an itinerant pious brahmana, who was on pilgrimage and always chanting Krishna’s name, wandered near Lord Chaitanya’s house. When the Lord’s father, Jagannatha Mishra, saw this effulgent devotee, he invited him in and properly honoured him.

Jagannatha Mishra asked, “Would it be all right if I arranged for you to cook?”

“As you wish,” replied the holy man.

Jagannatha Mishra brought him a variety of foodstuffs, and the holy man proceeded to happily cook them. When the food was ready, the brahmana began offering it to the household Deity of Lord Krishna. Just then, Lord Chaitanya, the child, entered the room. Smiling at the brahmana, He took a handful of the rice and ate it.

“Oh, no!” cried the brahmana. “This restless boy has stolen Krishna’s food!”

Since food is supposed to be offered first to Lord Krishna, the child, by eating it first, had apparently made it unfit for Krishna.

Jagannatha Mishra entered the room and noted his son’s offense. Angry and embarrassed, he wanted to strike his son to teach Him a lesson. But the brahmana stopped him and philosophically opined, “I guess it’s not my destiny to eat food that Lord Krishna has eaten today.”

The family members persuaded the brahmana to cook again. But to make certain the Lord would not again interfere with the offering rite, they confined Him to His room. His father not only guarded the door, but also bolted it from the outside.

When the devotee finished cooking, he again offered the meal to Lord Krishna. At that moment, Lord Chaitanya caused everyone else in the house to fall asleep. Then He mystically entered the kitchen and appeared beside the food offering.

Seeing Him, the holy man exclaimed, “Oh, no!”

But the Lord replied, “As you were offering the food, you asked Me to come and eat it. So I have come. You always want to see Me, so now I’m revealing Myself to you.”

Suddenly the child manifested Himself as the youthful Lord Krishna in a wonderful eight-armed form—holding a disk, a club, a conch shell, and a lotus flower in four hands, holding fresh butter in one hand, putting butter in His mouth with another hand, and playing the flute with His remaining two hands. He further manifested the beautiful Vrndavana forest—the place of His most intimate pastimes—with its lovely birds, trees, milkmaids, and cowherds. Seeing all this, the brahmana swooned in ecstasy. When the Lord touched him, he regained consciousness.

Lord Chaitanya said, “O brahmana, you’ve been My servant for many births. When I appeared as Krishna in Nanda’s home, I revealed this same form to you and ate the food you offered Me. But you don’t remember

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this. Birth after birth you've been My servant. Persons who are not My servant cannot see My form. What I have told you is a secret. Please don't tell anyone. If you reveal it during My present incarnation, I'll destroy you. In this incarnation, I will begin the sankirtana movement—the congregational chanting of Krishna's holy names. In every country I will preach sankirtana and initiate pure loving devotional service in every home."

Having given comfort and mercy to the brahmana, Lord Chaitanya ate the offering, returned to His room, reassumed His child form, and lay down on His bed. Everyone else in the house remained asleep.

The brahmana then ate the Lord's remnants, wept, danced, sang, laughed and cried out, "Victory to Krishna!"

This woke up everyone. When they all came and saw the brahmana eating peacefully, they became happy. The brahmana wanted to reveal that Lord Chaitanya was Lord Krishna. But remembering the Lord's dreadful warning, he restrained himself.

### Defeating the Pandita

Lord Chaitanya was a Sanskrit prodigy and began teaching when He was only eleven years of age. Struck with wonder by His intellectual precocity, hundreds of students studied under Him. He became known as the greatest savant of Sanskrit grammatical literature, of the nyaya system of philosophy, and of the Vedic scriptural knowledge. Whoever challenged Him to a debate in learning was always sorely defeated.

One evening while Lord Chaitanya was sitting on the bank of the Ganges River with some of His students, the famous Keshava Kasmiri approached Him. He had traveled around the country to various learning centers, debated numerous Sanskrit experts, and defeated every one of them. The undisputed world champion, he was known as D DIGvijayi ("the conqueror of everyone in all directions"). Keshava Kasmiri spoke in a proud, patronizing way, minimizing the scholarly accomplishments of the Lord. Unaffected by such arrogance, Lord Chaitanya humbly asked the scholar to show his poetic expertise by instantly composing original Sanskrit verses glorifying the Ganges River.

The goddess of learning, Sarasvathi, had blessed Keshava Kasmiri, her devotee, to always remain invincible in debates. Thus, quite confident of his intellectual prowess, he quickly composed and recited one hundred verses. Lord Chaitanya, having instantly memorized each of them, repeated the sixty-fourth verse and asked the Digvijayi to explain it.

Keshava Kasmiri, astonished by the Lord's feat of memory, elucidated on the verse. The Lord next asked him to cite its virtues and faults. But the Digvijayi was reluctant because he felt that such subject matter was well beyond the range of Lord Chaitanya's poetic knowledge.

But the Lord said, "I can find in this verse many faults and many virtues."

He then critiqued it, noting five virtues and five faults. The faults concerned redundancy, improper composition, and contradictory meanings. The virtues related to purpose, analogy, and alliteration. The Lord said that His analysis of the verse was based only on the obvious.

"But if we consider it in detail," He said, "we will find unlimited faults."

The Digvijayi was surprised and impressed by the Lord's comments. But when he tried to respond to them, he found himself unable to speak. His pride humbled and his confidence shaken, he felt helpless and defeated. Filled with insecurity, he wondered whether he had offended Goddess Sarasvati, and whether such an offense had led to this debacle.

That night Keshava Kasmiri worshiped the goddess. Later, she appeared in a dream and informed him that Nimai Pandita was none other than the Lord Himself.

The next morning the poet hastened to Lord Chaitanya and surrendered at His feet. In return, the Lord bestowed His mercy on Him, gave him spiritual guidance and instruction, and freed him from the bondage to material attachment.

The poet thereafter renounced his pomp and position and became a simple, humble servant of the Lord.

### Starting His Mission

When Lord Chaitanya was sixteen, He traveled to Gaya with some students. There He performed a ceremony (called shraddha) for the benefit of the soul of His deceased father. Afterwards, He visited Chakraveda to view Lord Krishna's footprints in the Gadadhara temple.

As He gazed at them, brahmana priests sang praises glorifying God's love. The Lord then, for the first time, exhibited devotional ecstatic symptoms publicly: His hair stood up, tears flowed from His eyes continuously, and His entire body trembled.

He next met the great devotee Ishvara Puri, accepted him as His spiritual master, and was initiated into the chanting of Lord Krishna's holy name. Actually, since Lord Chaitanya was the Lord Himself, He did not require a guru. But in this incarnation, playing the role of the Lord's perfect devotee, He wanted to show by example that a sincere seeker must be initiated into the chanting of God's holy names by a bona fide spiritual master, one in an authorized disciplic succession. Otherwise, the chanter may experience only very limited benefits.

At this point, Lord Chaitanya discarded His persona of the "great pandita" and replaced it with the character of the pure devotee of Lord Krishna. He often swooned or became entranced upon hearing or reciting Krishna's
Punishing an Offender

Lord Chaitanya at first engaged in sankirtana with His intimate devotees at Srivasa Thakura’s house. Only the most sincere devotees were admitted inside. The envious—the scoffers and the scorners—had to stay outside. Nonetheless, they could hear the tumultuous singing and music. Consequently, out of vengeance, Gopala Chapala, a brahmana, tried to compromise the distinguished reputation of Srivasa Thakura, who was learned in all the scriptures.

One night Gopala placed the worship paraphernalia of Goddess Durga outside Srivasa Thakura’s door—a red flower, a plantain leaf, a pot of wine, and reddish sandalwood paste—so that he might appear to passersby to be her devotee instead of Lord Krishna’s. Krishna devotees do not eat meat, fish, or eggs or imbibe any kind of intoxicants. But the Durga worshipers are often meat-eaters and wine-drinkers. Thus Gopala Chapala tried to make Srivasa Thakura appear like a hypocrite—outwardly noble but secretly ignoble.

Lord Chaitanya did not appreciate this offense against His devotee and decided to punish the offender. So, three days later, He arranged for Gopala Chapala to contract leprosy, in which blood oozed from sores all over his body. Moreover, as germs and insects bit him everywhere, he felt unbearable pain. He then went to Lord Chaitanya and asked Him to save him from his illness.

“You sinful person!” the Lord angrily replied. “Not only will I not save you, but you will be bitten by these germs for millions of years! For your offense, you will have to fall down into hellish life for ten million births.”

Some years later, when Lord Chaitanya visited the town where Gopala Chapala was still suffering, Gopala took shelter of the Lord and begged for His grace.

Changing His mood, the Lord advised Gopala Chapala, “First, go to Srivasa Thakura and beg for his mercy. If he gives it to you and you don’t commit such sins again, you will be freed from your sinful reactions.”

Gopala Chapala followed this instruction, and Srivasa Thakura forgave and blessed him, freeing him of his insconsolable misery.

Thus we can see how caring and protective the Lord is of His devotees and how angry and retributive He can be towards mischievous non-devotees. Yet when these non-devotees become genuinely repentant, He can become equally forgiving and kind. The Lord sees all beings as His children but treats each according to his or her behaviour.

Revealing His Universal Form

One day Advaita Acharya, an intimate devotee of Lord Chaitanya, asked the Lord to reveal to him the universal form He had kindly shown to Arjuna, as described in the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavad-gita. Lord Chaitanya agreed and showed him that magnificent form. Advaita saw in the body of the Lord everything in existence—the sun, moon, planets, oceans, rivers, gods, human beings, demons—a wondrous, brilliant, unlimited, all-expanding form. It is said that if hundreds of thousands of suns were to rise at once into the sky, their radiance might resemble the effulgence of the Lord in that universal form.

The Instant Mango Tree

Once, after Lord Chaitanya and His devotees had performed vigorous sankirtana, they were greatly fatigued and sat down. The Lord then sowed a mango seed in the yard, and the seed fructified at once into a tree and began to grow. As people watched, the tree became fully grown, with ripe fruit. Everyone was astonished. The Lord then picked about two hundred mangoes, and after washing them, offered them to Lord Krishna to eat.

The mangoes were completely red and yellow, without a seed or skin. Noting the quality of the mangoes, Lord Chaitanya was greatly satisfied. After eating some first, He distributed the rest to the devotees. The mangoes were full of delectable juice and so sweet that a person would be fully satisfied by eating just one.

Mangoes grew on that tree every day throughout the twelve months of the year, and the devotees would eat them to the Lord’s great satisfaction.

Dispelling the Rain

One early evening, while Lord Chaitanya was performing kirtana with His devotees, dark rain clouds gathered overhead. As they thundered threateningly, the devotees became afraid. But the Lord banged His hand cymbals, chanted the Hare Krishna mantra, and gazed at the sky, as if to order the rain-making gods. Immediately, all the clouds dispersed, the sky became clear, and as the moon rose, Lord Chaitanya danced ecstatically with His jubilant and satisfied devotees. Because of this miracle, that place is still known as Meghera Chara (“The Place Where the Clouds Were Moved”).

These accounts represent only some of Lord Chaitanya’s early miracles. Throughout His presence on earth, He continued to reveal His divinity, especially to devotees with purified vision, and sometimes even to ordinary people.
The trout is caught by the fisherman's lure, the mouse by cheese. An irony of the struggle for existence is that living beings are often destroyed by what they desire. But at least the fish and the mouse have excuses: the bait and the cheese look like sustenance. And the fish and the mouse don't know they'll be trapped. Human beings seldom have either of these excuses. The temptations that wreck their lives are quite often pure inducements known to be dangerous. For example, no one has to smoke for survival, and any half-awake person knows that smoking is dangerous.

Consider the following statistics from the World Health Organization:

- Tobacco kills nearly 10,000 people worldwide every day.
- It is predicted that by 2020 tobacco use will cause over 12% of all deaths globally. This is more deaths worldwide than from suicide, homicide, HIV, tuberculosis, maternal mortality, and motor vehicle accidents combined.
- Half of those who start smoking in adolescence will die in middle age, losing around 22 years of normal life expectancy.

Add the facts that an average cigarette contains 401 poisons and 43 cancer-causing chemicals, and that there are around 1.1 billion smokers in the world (about one-third of the global population aged 15 and over), and we have quite a sobering picture of the world around us. The statistics about other self-destructive behaviours—alcoholism, substance abuse, suicide—are equally, if not more, alarming. And even among so-called normal people, practically everyone is victimized by some form of self-destructive behaviour—unwarranted expressions of anger that turn out to be disastrous, unintentional use of caustic words that break hearts and ruin lives, and so on.

A question naturally arises: How does an intelligent human being embark on such a destructive course? Most people know that when they start, say, smoking, they are treading into a danger zone. But the media, friends, and peddlers persuade them to experiment just once. Seeking a break from the humdrum daily life with its inane pleasures, they acquiesce. The impression of instant pleasure gets embedded in their mind, and whenever they face a reversal, they tend to seek immediate relief through smoking. Every successive experience of smoking reinforces the earlier impressions, strengthens the tendency to seek momentary relief, and weakens the voice of intelligence and conscience. Smoking becomes an irresistible demand, a compulsion, an addiction. Smokers turn into helpless victims, driven again and again to the irresistible.

**Current Solutions**

Here are some methods now in use for breaking addictions:

1. **Knowledge**: It would seem that if people knew about the dangers, that would deter them from indulgence. Sometimes. But not generally. Knowledge can have the opposite effect. For example, after governmental regulations made it mandatory to display "Cigarette smoking is injurious to health" on every cigarette ad and pack, cigarette sales increased; the warning seemed to evoke a dare-devil spirit in young people.

2. **Emotional Support**: People often turn to addictions when emotionally let down or betrayed by loved ones. Emotionally neglected adolescents are especially susceptible to addictions. Providing emotional support through personal counseling is a potential solution. But professional counseling often leads to chronic dependence on the counselor. And for many, professional guidance costs too much. Friends can help, but in our fast-paced modern life few people can invest the time and energy needed to consistently provide intensive emotional support.

3. **Sublimation**: Sublimation involves replacing a gross physical drive with a more refined substitute. For example, an alcoholic might seek refuge in music instead of alcohol. But this can work only if he has a strong liking for music and if his addiction to alcohol is not overpowering. Another problem is that the mental impressions of indulgence in alcohol make it seem far more attractive than its substitute.

4. **Willpower**: Seeing the physical and emotional pain he is inflicting upon himself and his loved ones, an addict may sometimes by sheer determination decide to give up his perverted habit. Unfortunately few people are able to muster the necessary willpower. Even if successful, they face the grim prospect of an entire lifetime of constant inner struggle, with the fear of succumbing at any moment. And failure often brings with it intolerable feelings of guilt, making living itself an agony.

5. **Religion**: Statistical surveys have shown that the
religiously committed are less likely to succumb to seeking perverted pleasures. Adopting religious principles rigorously also sometimes helps addicts to free themselves. Dr. Patrick Glynn writes in his book *God: The Evidence*, "It is difficult to find a more consistent correlative of mental health, or a better insurance against self-destructive behaviours, than a strong religious faith."

6. *Substitution*: Addicts often try to switch their addiction to a less harmful substitute—smokers try a nicotine patch or nicotine gum, heroin addicts try methadone, and so on. While this may make the addiction less debilitating, the addict is still not free of emotional craving and mental dependence on external substances. And the substitute drug continues to take its toll on the health and the wealth of the addict. Thus substitution leads at best to lessening of the evil and at worst to its perpetuation, rarely to its elimination.

While each of these methods has had some small degree of success, the real solution to self-destructive behaviour lies in understanding its roots. Let's consider the problem from the Vedic perspective.

**The Vedic Paradigm**

In the *Bhagavad-gita* (3.36), Arjuna asks Lord Krishna, "By what is one impelled to sinful acts, even unwillingly, as if engaged by force?"

Lord Krishna replies (3.37), "It is lust only, Arjuna, which is born of contact with the mode of passion and later transformed into wrath, and which is the all-devouring sinful enemy of this world."

The background of this dialogue is the fundamental teachings of the *Bhagavad-gita*: The source of life, the actual self, is a non-material particle of spirit, known as the *atma* or the soul. The essential need of the soul is to love and be loved and to experience unbounded happiness through loving exchange. Being spiritual by constitution, the soul belongs to a higher dimensional milieu, the spiritual world. There the loving propensity of the soul finds complete fulfillment in the supremely lovable all-attractive person, who reciprocates with the soul's love.

The Vedic texts state, *eko bahu syam*: the Supreme has expanded into infinite subordinates for loving reciprocation. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* (2.7.1) explains, *raso vai sah*: the Supreme is the reservoir of all divine loving emotions. The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* confirms that the Supreme Person is all-attractive and is therefore best known by the name "Krishna," which means all-attractive in Sanskrit. In the spiritual world Krishna is the pivot of all relationships, and there the soul continually relishes ever-intensifying and ever-expanding ecstasies of love in relationship with Him.

Love necessitates freedom; only when the object of love freely chooses to reciprocate one's love does the experience of love becomes truly satisfying and fulfilling. The soul is therefore endowed with a minute free will to enable him to feel the joy of loving the Supreme Person, Krishna. But when the soul misuses his free will and becomes unwilling to love Krishna, he has to find a substitute in whom to repose his love. Of course, there can be no substitute for the Supreme, and by constitution the soul cannot find happiness in loving anyone other than the Supreme. But for those souls who insist on making that attempt, the world of matter (where all of us currently reside) provides the necessary arrangement for experimentation and rectification.

**The Enemy Within**

As soon as the soul comes to the material world, his love for Krishna becomes perverted into lust. Lust is a formidable illusory force that offers the soul various surrogate objects of love to experiment with. Lust creates
Modern civilization with its media, culture, social environment, and overall values aggravates lust. The celluloid promises of unending sexual bliss especially provoke wild erotic fantasies. But sexual enjoyment is heartbreakingly brief; dreams cherished for years vanish within moments. Even though what people experience is so pathetically little compared to the hype, the media blitz goads them on.

Sexual enjoyment, especially illicit, is a complicated matter, involving time, money, intense emotions, relationship dynamics, risk for prestige, and so on. And the attempt for such enjoyment, even if somehow successful, leaves one feeling disappointed and cheated—and craving for more. If unsuccessful, it creates great anger. Either way the victims are soon so enslaved by lust that the more they try, the more they get frustrated—and yet the more they become impelled to keep trying. Eventually the accumulated enormous frustration makes instant relief a desperate necessity. Frustrated people easily fall prey to the lure of quick pleasure offered by intoxicants.

Lust is thus the internal enemy at the root of all self-destructive behaviour. The Gita (18.38) describes vividly the nature of all perverted pleasures: they appear at first to be like nectar but in the end are poison. Elsewhere Prabhupada comments, “While one enjoys sense gratification, it may be that there is some feeling of happiness, but actually that so-called feeling of happiness is the ultimate enemy of the sense enjoyer.” Why? Because it reinforces the illusion that true happiness can be found in this world.

Lust is present in everyone in varying degrees. That is why everyone, no matter how materially successful he may be, has some tendencies toward self-destructive behaviour. People generally become concerned about such tendencies only when they exceed socially acceptable limits. But actually lust throttles the ability of everyone to make meaningful contributions to society and even their own future; the difference is only in degree. From the spiritual point of view, lust is inherently self-destructive; it strips the soul of the unlimited spiritual happiness that is his birthright and forces him to labour for paltry material sensations of pleasure that can never satisfy his immortal longing.

The Only Way to Conquer Lust

Lust, being a perversion of our original, essential nature, cannot possibly be annihilated, suppressed, repressed, or even sublimated. But it reverts to its original nature if we direct our loving propensity back to Krishna through the scientific process of devotional service. Action on the spiritual platform is what Lord Krishna recommends to Arjuna as the key to overcoming lust: “Thus knowing oneself to be transcendental to the material senses, mind, and intelligence, O mighty-armed Arjuna, one should steady the mind by deliberate spiritual intelligence [Krishna consciousness] and thus—by spiritual strength—conquer this insatiable enemy known as lust.” (Bhagavad-gita 3.43) The channeling of consciousness from matter back to Krishna is most easily and effectively executed through the medium of divine sound. The Supreme Person, Krishna, being omnipotent, is fully present in His holy names. Chanting the holy names therefore connects one immediately with Krishna, the supreme pleasure principle. Regular meditation on the holy names enables one to taste happiness streaming down from the spiritual dimension. This spiritual pleasure is so satisfying that it soon frees one from the craving for perverted mundane pleasure like drugs and alcohol.

 Millions of people all over the world have discovered the purifying potency of the holy names of God. During the period of the counterculture in the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s, Srila Prabhupada spread the congregational chanting of the holy names and saved thousands of young people from a condemned life of drug addiction. All over the globe ISKCON devotees who practice mantra meditation everyday for about two hours—chanting the maha-mantra, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare — are easily able to eschew all forms of intoxication, gambling, meat-eating, and illicit sex, the main self-destructive activities impelled by lust. The ability to give up these four activities is not necessary to begin chanting, but because they greatly obscure the original consciousness of the soul, abstaining from them helps accelerate the purifying effect of the chanting. While many people today are so captivated and enslaved by lust that they consider life without these activities an impossibility, devotees lead lives that are natural, peaceful, satisfying, meaningful, and constructive, protected as they are by their mantra meditation.

The benefits of chanting do not stop with freedom from addiction, nor is chanting meant only for those victimized by self-destructive behaviour. Chanting the holy names of God is a universal, time-tested, nonsectarian method of bringing about the blossoming of consciousness to its highest bloom of pure love for God and all living beings. Chanting frees one from selfish desires, which throttle the flow of the fullness of life. It enables one to find continuous happiness, independent of the state of the body and the external world. Chanting thus heralds the advent of a life of selfless spiritual service to God and all His children. Only this selflessness within individuals can form the basis of lasting world peace and harmony. Srila Prabhupada summarizes: “Without the awakening of divine consciousness within the individual, there is no use of crying for world peace.”
Featured Article: Nava-kalevara

Nava-kalevara literally means new body. It is an ancient ritual associated with the temple of Jagannath in Puri. The Deities of Jagannath, Baladeva, Subhadra and Sudarshana are made of special neem wood and are replaced during the Nava-kalevara. The last Nava-kalevara ceremony happened in the year 1995. The next ceremony will be held in the year 2015. The Nava-kalevara ceremony takes place when two months of Ashada fall in a single year. The Hindu calendar based on the movement of Sun has 365 days a year whereas the lunar year has only 354 days (29.5 days x 12 months).

Hare Krishna World

Go-raksha
Cows are an integral part of temples in India. Their upkeep is one of the prime activities. According to Vedic scriptures, the cow is considered as the mother of the human being.

Timeless Wisdom

Godhead and His Potencies
Krishna’s energies are innumerable and immeasurable. His many potencies can be grouped under three divisions: internal potency, marginal potency.

Krishna Katha

Demons Killed by Krishna
When Krishna was young, Kamsa sent many demons to kill him. However Krishna killed all the demons. In the kaumara stage, Krishna killed Putana, Trinavarta, Aghasura.

Pilgrimage

Introduction to Vrindavana
‘Vrindavana’ means the forest of Vrinda or Tulasi. It was in Vrindavan that the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, passed the childhood of His earthly pastimes fifty centuries ago.

Temple Reviews from Trip Advisor

John, Bangalore: I’ve seen a billion temples in India, and I’m honestly getting a little tired of it. It’s all the same. Except for ISKCON - I’ve actually been here several times, and I enjoy it every time. It’s very beautiful and you cannot help being humbled by the greatness of this. Definitely worth a visit.

Neelam G: I visited the temple on 30th Sept in the evening. It is really worth being here. Kirtan in the hall was mind soothing & freshening. Educative literature was also on display. Eating shops were nicely managed. One likes to eat. Rates are also very reasonable. Book store is also worth for buying the holy books. Concluding, one must visit this temple.

Nagnish, Manipal: A visit to this place will purify one from all the stress. This is on a hill and is accessible through simple large steps. Temple is beautiful from inside and outside.

Gaihwad Ravindra, Mumbai: If you want some tranquility please visit this place to rid yourself of all your sins done in the present life. If you’re in Bangalore and you don’t visit this place, you are definitely missing something big.

Priyanka, Bangalore: This place is a must visit. The main arati in the evening shall not be missed. Loved their hospitality. Place is very peaceful and calm.

To write a review visit: http://goo.gl/gx1BKj

Sri Rajadi Raja

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Narada Muni Bhajan - Video
ISKCON Mysore Dasara

ISKCON, Mysore celebrated its 5th annual Dasara festival on Oct. 4 at its centre. Sri Krishna Balarama, the presiding Deities of the temple were bedecked as 'Sri Rama Lakshmana' in a special decoration for the occasion. There was a performance by a renowned dance troupe followed by Their Lordships having a majestic ride on a Gaja Vahana within the temple premises. Special attraction of the festival was the burning of 50 ft. high effigies of Ravana and Kumbhakarana. Thousands of devotees gathered to watch this spectacular event accompanying colourful fireworks.

http://www.iskonbangalore.org/news/mysore-dasara/

Hyderabad to introduce Re 1 breakfast scheme

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation's (GHMC) Rs. 5 meal scheme in association with The Akshaya Patra Foundation is already popular in the city. Subsidised meals are being provided at nine centres at Nampally, Charminar, Sanathnagar, Gudi Makkapur, Mehdipatnam, Koti, GHMC Head Office, L.B. Nagar and Secunderabad Clock Tower. Now GHMC Standing Committee approves introduction of breakfast at Re.1 at these centres in association with Akshaya Patra. The breakfast menu would rotate each day with upma, idly, puri and so on.

www.akshayapatra.org

Hare Krishna Movement, participates in Metropolis meet at Hyderabad

Hare Krishna Movement, Hyderabad (HKM-HYD) participated in the XI Metropolis World Congress, organised by GHMC (Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation) in coordination with the Telangana state government. GHMC partnered with HKM-Hyderabad to implement the Rs. 5 meal for the urban poor as part of the state government’s food security plans. As part of this scheme, HKM had set-up 13 centers across the city which feeds about 4000 people every day. GHMC had requested HKM to put-up a stall in its central air conditioned Hitex indoor stadium where only the dignitaries with a special invitation are allowed.

http://goo.gl/F1WGRT

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