Govardhana Puja
SRI VAIKUNUNTHA EKADASHI

January 8, 2017 Sunday

Darshana: 8 am to 11 pm

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

To know more about Srila Prabhupada visit www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada
"We see in the street that the cars are moving at high speed but they're within their 'orbits,' their white or yellow lines of demarcation—because there is some brain, some management. So, similarly, with all these planets."

A talk by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in Tokyo

asatyam apratistham te
jagad ahur anisvaram
aparaspara-sambhutam
kim anyat kama-haitukam

“The demoniac say that this world is unreal, that there is no foundation and that there is no God in control—it is produced of sex desire, and has no cause other than lust.” [Bhagavad-gita 16.8]

This is the traditional atheistic theory. Asatyam: they say that this material world is false. And jagan mithya: jagat means this cosmic manifestation—which the atheists call false because it is always moving, always changing. In the material world it's true that everything is changing—just as in your city you see that the cars are moving from here to there. Very busy. Similarly the whole planetary system is moving, changing. Every planet is going around in its orbit. Even the sun. It has got its orbit. Do you follow what I am saying? The sun is moving many thousands of miles per minute. So this is called jagat—everything in the universe is moving, or changing. But it is moving, changing in a certain way.

For instance, the cars we hear now outside our window are moving at high speed, but they are very careful to pass within the passing lane; otherwise there will be a collision. Similarly, all these planets—they have got their own speed for orbiting. And there are hundreds and thousands and millions—they are orbiting but there is no collision. How have these patterns been made? Who has made these freeway lanes and universal lanes?

The cars are moving at sixty or seventy miles per hour, but they are ordered just to remain within the markings of their own lane. Who has made this arrangement? Hmm? The police department, the government. So how can you say there is no control? This is called upama, an analogy. "Analogy" means that by noting points of similarity, you can conclude some idea. Now, just as we see in the street that the cars are moving at high speed but they're within their "orbits" (their white or yellow lines of demarcation)—because there is some brain, some management—so, similarly, all these planets are traveling at high speed but staying in their orbit because there is some universal management.

Take this planet. It is moving very, very rapidly, is it not? Now, a car may be moving at seventy miles per hour, which may appear to be a very high speed, but the earth is moving much, much faster, though you cannot understand. The arrangement is so nice—it is perfection. We cannot even understand how perfect it is. We can see that morning—day coming—means the earth is moving. Of course, airplanes move, also—but there are so many jerkings, so many noises. Airplanes are imperfect. But here we see that such perfection has been made: the earth is moving so many thousands of miles per hour, and yet there is no jerking, there is nothing of the sort—you are thinking that you are sitting in the same place. And there is no brain behind all this?

Here on this one planet it requires so much brainwork to move the car in an orderly way on the street—so much police arrangement, so much government, so many scientists, this and that. And the universe has not only one planet but many millions. Yasya prabha prabhavato jagadanda-koti. First of all, there are many millions of universes. And in each universe there are so many planets that you cannot count them. And each planet has got a different climate—different varieties. Not that every planet is of the same nature. You will find that every planet has a different atmospheric condition from those of the other planets. Take the sun. It is so fiery; it is full of fire. The temperature is so high that 93 million miles away from the sun we are feeling excessive, scorching heat. Similarly, the moon is very cold. So all the planets have different atmospheric conditions, and they are moving in their orbits—for all these things there is a good arrangement. And are we going to look at all these arrangements and say there is no good brain behind them? How could that be possible?

But rakshasas, demons—they will say, asatyam apratistham te jagad ahur anisvaram: “There is no controller, and it is all false.” False? So minute—all these rules and regulations that are being followed. The sun is rotating in its orbit in such a perfect way that if the sun became a little inclined to this side or that side, the whole world would be frozen or engulfed in a blazing fire. Even the scientists admit this. So the sun must move according to the
diagram given by some controller. That is stated in Bhagavatam. The sun is moving by the order of the Supreme. Yasyajnaya. It is stated also in the Brahma-samhita: yasyajnaya bhramati sambhrtaka-lakacakra. Ajnaya means "by the order."

Now, when there is the question of an order, then there must be an order giver. Otherwise, what is the meaning of order? Yasya ajnaya means "by whose order." "Whose" refers to somebody bigger who is giving the order, and the sun is carrying out the order. So there is an order giver; there is a controller—the Supreme Lord. How can you say there is no controller? Where is your logic? Can anybody give any logical reason for saying there is no controller in the universe? These rakshasas say there is no God, there is no controller—but where is their logic? I ask them, "How can you say this? What is your logic? What is the logic that allows you to say there is no God? Let us discuss." Can anybody explain their logic? Hmm? What is their idea?

I may be a foreigner, but when I see in the street that the cars are moving in order and the police are on duty, I know there must be a government. I may know or not know, but—this is a common-sense affair—there must be a government. And there is a government. Similarly, when I see that the cosmic order is working so nicely, systematically, and reasonably, how can I say there is no controller? What kind of logic is that? Tell me, anyone. Hmm? Can you say, anyone? The scientists will say there is no isa no controller: jagad ahur anisvaram. But what is their logic? [To a devotee] You can tell us—you sometimes argue on their side. [Laughter.] What is their logic?

Devotee: Well, no controller is ever seen.

Srila Prabhupada But you have not seen who is the Japanese governmental head. So how can you conclude there is a governmental head? You have not seen the president or the supreme head—how can you say there is one? But you conclude that there must be a governmental head—otherwise, how is everything going on so nicely? You may or may not see so many things, but this is not good logic, that "I have not seen": I have not seen the car passing outside our window, but the sound is coming, and so I know the car is there. There must be somebody there—even if you do not see, you have to conclude like that. The sound tells us there must be a car, and the car—there must be a driver. But you have not seen all this. How can you conclude there is a driver?

You stress your seeing power. What is the power of your seeing? You cannot see. Now you cannot see the car. It is beyond your seeing range, beyond the wall. Then how will you conclude that there is a car and, if there is a car, that there is a driver? If there is a driver, there may be passengers, also. So how can you conclude all this? This is a childish reason: "I cannot see." You cannot see; therefore the driver and passengers don't exist. That is not good logic.

Devotee: They say that it all happened by chance, that ...

Srila Prabhupada More foolishness—“chance.”

Devotee: If given enough time, then everything—all these natural patterns—will work out like this.

Srila Prabhupada No. Everything in the universe is already working very nicely. There is no question of giving time. Everything is already working.

Devotee: Well, you point to the fact that the earth isn't too hot or too cold, but they say that just by chance it came into existence this way.

Srila Prabhupada No, no. A child will say, “By chance it has come.” That is childish. You must give a solid reason. Take anything, and you can say, “It's chance.” Anybody can talk like that. That is not reason. When you bring in “chance,” that is not logic. That is not knowledge. If somebody says, “By chance I've come into this world,” that is not logic. I must have my father, I must have my mother, and on account of my father and mother being united, I have come. This is scientific. “By chance I have dropped here from the sky”—this is not logic. This kind of “logic” has no value. Do you give any value to this nonsensical logic? No sane man will accept “by chance”

When you are caught in a crime and convicted, can you say, “By chance I was convicted”? “By chance”? No. If you commit theft, you are arrested and the judge gives you a punishment—you must suffer. This is not “chance.” You may say, “By chance I was convicted,” but that is not chance. There is no question of chance. That is false logic. Nothing takes place by chance—this is sound reasoning. “Chance” means ignorance. One who does not know—he says “chance.” This is ignorance, not knowledge. Knowledge is different.

So the scientists are rascals, you can say. This kind of logic—“I have not seen it,” “It has come about by chance,” “There was a chunk”—these are all nonsensical propositions. There is a controller: this is sound knowledge. Just as you conclude by seeing the arrangement in the city of Tokyo that there is a government, similarly, if you are
APARTMENT

GRAND WEST

INDEPENDENT HOMES, BUT IN THE SKY
intelligent enough, then you can understand there must be a supreme controller. That is theism. That is knowledge. Now, these foolish so-called scientists are simply studying—they want “time to find out.” But actually, if someone is wise, if he’s searching out the answers earnestly, even if it takes him many lifetimes of research he’ll at last come to this conclusion that there is a God. Vasudevah sarvak iti sa mahatma sudurlabhah. Then he becomes a first-class man, a mahatma. But that is very rare.

Most people are duratma—cripple-minded. Anisvaram—"There is no controller; this is a false manifestation." It is not false. You study everything—you study even one leaf—and you can see so many arrangements, so many fine fibers and veins that are so minutely interworking, one with another. Even in a small vegetable or piece of fruit, you will find there is so much craftsmanship. You cannot say it is "chance." You cannot do it. That means there is a brain behind it. And who is the brain behind that brain? And who is the brain behind that one, behind that one, behind that one? Bahunam janmanam ante: after searching out the ultimate brain for many, many births, then you come to the conclusion that vasudevah sarvak iti. You come to the conclusion that Krishna is the cause of everything. Of course, that is already concluded: Isvarah paramah krishnah—“The Supreme Controller is Krishna.” [Brahma-samhita 5.1]

There are so many subordinate controllers. For instance, this city is being controlled by the police commissioner or somebody else. So above him, above him, above him there is a controller—and above all, the supreme controller is Krishna. That is the conclusion.

isvarah paramah krishnah
sac-cid-ananda-vigrahah
anadir adir govindah
sarva-karana-karanam

"Krishna is the cause of all causes. He is the primal cause, and He is the very form of eternal being, knowledge, and bliss." [Brahma-samhita 5.1] Krishna is the cause. And He is not alone. Krishna has got so many energies.

Even a tiny person like me—here, Bhaktivedanta Swami—I am not alone. I've got so many assistants. So many, all over the world. So even if you take the founder of the Krishna consciousness movement, he is not alone. Similarly, as I've expanded through disciples in so many ways and so many places, then just imagine how Krishna can expand—just imagine. He’s the Supreme Lord. Advaitam acyutam anadim ananta-rupam. Ananta-rupam: although He's only one person, He can expand Himself in unlimited numbers of forms. And that is how He's doing everything. Just as I am dictating answers to dozens of letters from all over the world and my assistants are typing and mailing out my replies, similarly, Krishna is also managing alone through ananta-rupam, through unlimited assistants. Parasya saktir vividhaiva sruyate: the Supreme Lord has innumerable potencies. You have to understand that. Although He's alone, He has ananta-rupam—unlimited expanded forms.

For instance, Krishna is giving direction to everyone. Isvarah sarva-bhutanam hrd-dese ‘juna tisthati: there are millions and trillions of living entities, and in each one's heart He is sitting and providing remembrance, knowledge, and forgetfulness. He is managing like that. So if we think that He's a controller like us, that is our misconception. He is a controller—but a controller with unlimited knowledge, with unlimited assistants, with unlimited potencies. That is how He's managing.

These atheists, these so-called scientists—they cannot conceive that a person can be so unlimitedly powerful; therefore they become impersonalists. They imagine that if the controller is a person, "He's a person like me: ‘I cannot do this. Therefore He cannot do it.” And so Bhagavad-gita calls them mudha—fools. Avajananti mam mudha: these fools and rascals cannot understand Krishna, because they are comparing Krishna with themselves. They suppose that Krishna is a person like them. The Vedas inform us that although He is a person, He's maintaining unlimited numbers of persons. But this point the impersonalistic scientists don't know—eko bahunam yo vidadhati kaman—that one single person is maintaining many trillions of persons.

Each and every one of us is a person. I am a person, you are a person, the insect is a person, the trees are persons—everyone is a person. Everyone is a person. And there is another person—that is God, Krishna. Nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam eko bahunam yo vidadhati kaman [Katha Upanishad]: one person is maintaining all these millions and trillions of varieties of other persons. This is Vedic information. And Krishna also says in the Bhagavad-gita [10.8], aharm sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravarto: "I am the source of all beings; from Me everyone and everything emanates." Therefore when someone understands thoroughly that "here is one Supreme Person and He is the leader, He is the controller, He is the maintainer of everything," then that someone surrenders unto Him and becomes His devotee, you see?
We, Krishna's devotees, are not fools and rascals. We have got our reason. We have got our philosophy. When we know that Krishna is actually the Supreme Controller, the Supreme Person, the Supreme Maintainer—then we surrender, then we become Krishna's devotees. It is not blind. We are strongly convinced that this one person is the Supreme Person. Therefore we surrender. We are not blind followers.

\[
aham sarvasya prabhavo \\
mattah sarvam pravartate \\
itimatva bhajante mam \\
budha bhava-samanvitah
\]

As Krishna says, "I am the source of everything; from Me everything and everyone emanates. One becomes My devotee when he understands this thoroughly." Budha means one who has understood thoroughly.

The atheistic scientists' theory is aparastara-sambhutam: everything has taken place by mechanical attraction. Kama means lust. A man and a woman become lusty, and there is sex and production of offspring. So the scientists talk like this. They say that the production of the universe is causeless lust, mechanical attraction—that there is no other plan. But there is a big plan they don't know. In fact, part of the plan is ...

\[
yada yada hi dharmasya \\
glanir bhavati bharata \\
abhyutthanam adharmasya \\
tatmanam srjamy aham
\]

"Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice and a predominant rise of atheism, at that time I descend Myself." [Bg. 4.7] There—that is the plan. These rascals—this atheist class—they say, kim anyat kama-haitukam: "Lusty desires are the only reason, the only cause for the universe:" "This infant is going to take birth due to our lusty desires, but we do not want to take the responsibility. Then kill him—what is wrong with that?" Therefore they are making abortion—murdering the child—legal. Kama: "We had some lusty desire, we got a child, but we don't want him—kill him." This is going on; this is atheism.

But these are all foolish theories—"by chance," "by causeless lust." No. There is a great arrangement. It is just like the traffic control—there is a very great arrangement behind all of this. It is not by chance. By chance have we gotten traffic lanes? No, it is not by chance. How can you say "chance"? So these theories are made by the demons. These demoniac conclusions will not help us. We shall remain in ignorance, with no knowledge.

Any question? Any of our Japanese friends here?

Guest: Yes, I have one question. You mentioned that we can hear a car outside, but that we can't see the car...

Srila Prabhupada No—we can see the car, except that we are sitting here. So we do not see the car. But the sound is there, and you conclude that there is a car. Therefore, relying on seeing is not always solid reasoning. Even without seeing, we can conclude there is a car. That is my point.

Guest: I don't know if I have ever seen God or not...

Srila Prabhupada No. You have not seen Him, but what is your desire? You want to see Him?

Guest: I want to at least hear God in this world, and I was wondering what is...

Srila Prabhupada So God is speaking Bhagavad-gita. You are reading and Krishna is speaking. So here it is—God is speaking. And you can also chant Hare Krishna. That is God. Sabda-brahma, spiritual sound vibration—the sound is God. This is the way.

And if you want to see God, you can see Him also. That is prescribed here in Bhagavad-gita. For instance Krishna
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/srila-prabhupada-lectures

"O son of Kunti [Arjuna], I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the syllable om in the Vedic mantras; I am the sound in ether and ability in man." [Bg. 7.8]

Don't try to see Krishna in your own way; then you will never find Him. Why do you say, "We have not seen God," when God is represented in so many ways? You take God's advice and try to see Him as He advises, and then you'll see God. That's a fact. I do not understand—why do they say, "We have not seen God"? You are always seeing God. You are seeing the sunlight, you are seeing the moonlight, you are smelling the good fragrance of a flower. If you are a scholar you are reading the Vedas: pranavah sarva-vedesu—"In the Vedic mantras, "Krishna says, "I am the sound of om." And paurusam nrsu: any wonderful, intelligent work somebody has done—that is Krishna.

So you have to see Krishna in this way, as Krishna advises. Then very soon you will see Krishna. There is no question of not seeing. You will see Krishna at every moment. Premanjana-churita-bhakti-vilocanena santah sadaiva: you will see Him twenty-four hours a day. Those who are actually Krishna's devotees are seeing Krishna; they are seeing nothing but Krishna. There is no question of not seeing Him. But you have to adopt the method for seeing Him.

If you study this Bhagavad-gita minutely—this is the science of God—you will see God, you will see Krishna and understand everything. Therefore we have presented it. But if you misinterpret—if you pollute it by your own interpretation—then you'll not see Him. These rascals, these scientists and bogus yogis, they are simply polluting. Because they have not linked themselves with the authorized disciplic succession that comes from Krishna, even though they may try to become very learned scholars and very learned leaders, they are simply rascals. Actually they are rascals, because they cannot see Krishna in the things around them. But all the acharyas, the great spiritual masters—they have accepted Krishna. In the Gita Arjuna accepted Krishna as the Supreme Person: sarvam etad rta m mayya yan mam vadasi kesava—"I totally accept as truth all that you have told me, O Krishna. Only the demonic cannot comprehend Your personality."
This conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and a university student took place in Los Angeles, in January of 1974.

Student: In your books you say this world is like a dream.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. It is a dream.

Student: How is it a dream?

Srila Prabhupada: For example, last night you had some dream, but now it has no value. It is gone. And again, tonight when you sleep, you'll forget all these things and dream. You won't remember, when you are dreaming tonight, "I've got my house; I've got my wife." You'll forget it all. So all of this is a dream.

Student: Is it true, or is it not true?

Srila Prabhupada: How could it be true? At night you forget it. Do you remember when you sleep that you've got your wife and you're sleeping on a bed? When you have gone some three thousand miles away and seen something totally different in your dream, do you remember that you've got a place to reside in?

Student: No.

Srila Prabhupada: So this is a dream. Tonight, what you are seeing now will become only a dream, just as what you saw last night—now you know it was only a dream. So both are dreams. You are simply a visitor, that's all. You are seeing this dream and that dream.
You, the spirit soul, are factual. But your material body and the material surroundings you are seeing—this is a dream.

**Student:** But I have the impression that this experience is true and my dream is not true. What is the difference—

**Srila Prabhupada** No. This experience is all untrue! How could it be true? If it were true, how could you forget it at night? How could you forget it, if it were true? At night do you remember all this?

**Student:** No. I don't remember.

**Srila Prabhupada** Then—how could it be true? Just as you don't remember the dream you saw last night and so you call it a “dream,” similarly this experience—because you forget it at night—this is also a dream....

**Student:** But I have the impress—

**Srila Prabhupada** This is a daydream; that is a night dream. That's all. When you dream at night, then you perceive that as being real. Yes. You think that is real. It is a dream, but you are crying, "There is a tiger! Tiger! Tiger!" Where is the tiger? But you are seeing it as fact—a tiger. "I'm being killed by a tiger." But where is the tiger? ... Or you dream you are embracing some beautiful girl. Where is that beautiful girl? But actually it is happening.

**Student:** It is happening?

**Srila Prabhupada** In one sense it is happening, because there is discharge of semen. Nocturnal emission. But where is that girl? Is it not a dream? But similarly, this so-called real-life experience is also a dream. You are getting the impression of factuality, but it is a dream. Therefore it is called maya-sukhaya, illusory happiness. Your nighttime happiness and your daytime happiness are the same thing. At night you are dreaming you are embracing a nice beautiful girl, and there is no such thing. Similarly, in the daytime also, whatever "advancement" you are making—this is also like that. Maya-sukhaya: you are dreaming, "This process will make me happy" or "That process will make me happy," but the whole process is only a dream. You are taking this daydream as reality because the duration is long. At night when you dream, the duration is just half an hour. But this daydream lasts for twelve hours or more. That is the difference. This is a twelve-hour dream, and that is a half-hour dream—but actually both of them are dreams. Because one is a twelve-hour dream, you are accepting it as real. That is called illusion.

**Student:** Illusion.

**Srila Prabhupada** Yes.... You are making a distinction between an animal and yourself, but you are forgetting that just as the animal will die, you will also die. So where is your advancement? Will you remain forever? You will also die. So where is your advancement over an animal? That is stated in the Vedic literatures. Ahara-nidra-bhayaa-maitunam ca' samanam etat pasubhir naranam: this business—eating, sleeping, sex life, and defending—this is also the animal's business, and you are doing the same. So how are you distinct from an animal? You will die; the animal will die. But if you say, "I will die after one hundred years, and this ant will die after one hour," that does not 'mean that you are in reality. It is a question of time. Or take this huge universe—it will all be destroyed. As your body will be destroyed, this universe will also be destroyed. Annihilation. Dissolution. Nature's way—the whole thing will be dissolved. Therefore, it is a dream. It is a long-duration dream, that's all. Nothing else. But the advantage of having this human body is that in this dream, you can realize the reality—God. That is the advantage. So if you don't take advantage of this dream, then you are missing everything.

**Student:** So I'm half-asleep?

**Srila Prabhupada** Yes. This is the situation. Therefore, the Vedic literatures say, uttistha: "Get up! Get up! Get up!" Jagrata: "Become awakened!" Prapya varan nibodhata: "Now you've got the opportunity, utilize it." Tamasi ma jyotir gama: "Don't stay in darkness, come to the light." These are Vedic injunctions. And we are teaching the same thing. "Reality is here—Krishna. Don't remain in this dark place. Come to this higher consciousness."
The Krishna consciousness movement is part of an important and distinctive tradition of devotional faith, the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, which began in the sixteenth century with the great saint Sri Chaitanya, but which participates in a much older movement of devotion dating back to at least the second century B.C.

This devotional faith is called bhakti, which means devotion to God or the love of God. The word bhakti comes from a Sanskrit root which means “to love, to be devoted, to share.” Bhakti expresses the relationship between human beings and the Lord. It is a relationship of shared being and of mutual love.

The bhakti tradition found a full expression in the ancient Bhagavad-gita, "The Song of the Lord." The Lord is Krishna, the Supreme Lord, who manifested Himself as the charioteer of the warrior Arjuna in the ancient era of the Mahabharata war. The Bhagavad-gita is the dialogue of Krishna and Arjuna at the edge of the Battlefield of Dharma (Right; Duty; Sacred Order) just as the battle is about to begin. It is an existential dialogue on some of the most deeply significant human questions, raised in this dramatic limit-situation: What is human life? What is transcendence? How can one be actively engaged in the world without being ensnared by it?

Krishna gradually reveals Himself to Arjuna as teacher, as friend, and finally as Lord. The Gita has been heard and told and cherished by generations of Hindus, who have seen Krishna as the Supreme Godhead: one who is utterly and awesomely transcendent and who is, at the same time, personal, loving, and intimately related to human beings.

Like the New Testament, the Bhagavad-gita is a gently revolutionary treatise. It picks up and redefines many of the major terms of the ancient Vedic ritual tradition, making religious life accessible and meaningful not only to the elite few—the brahmana priests, the gurus, yogis, and monks—but also to the common people in the context of their ordinary lives of relationships and duties.

What is sacrifice? It is not the complicated and expensive ritual fire sacrifice described at length in the ancient scriptures and performed infrequently by dozens of priests. Rather, all of one's ordinary actions, done in an attitude of surrender to God, can be called “sacrifice:"

What is renunciation? It is not leaving the world behind to become a wandering monk or a hermit. Rather, it is active participation in the affairs of the world, renouncing only what is hardest to renounce: egotistical attachment to the fruits of one's labours.

What is worship? It is not elaborate ritual which only a few can afford, but simple offerings to God, made with a pure heart. As Krishna explains to Arjuna: "Whoever offers to Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water with devotion [bhakti], that person's offering of love made with a pure heart do I accept." (Bg. 9.26)

What is yoga? It is discipline. That to which one "yokes" oneself is one's yoga. It is not only the spiritual discipline of those adepts who seek liberating wisdom (jnana-yoga). It is also the discipline of action without attachment to the personal rewards of action (karma-yoga). And it is also the discipline of devotion to the Lord in all one's activities (bhakti-yoga).

Who is the yogi? Who is the priest? Not just the privileged few may follow the path of yoga or make acceptable offerings in the temple. Everyone, men and women,
high caste and low, may be a yogi of devotion or may offer the simple fruits of action to the Lord.

Among the many religious ideas which the Gita shapes for the later tradition, *bhakti* is one of the most significant: the love of God which gives life and meaning to all one does—ritual, spiritual discipline, the search for truth, and ethical action.

The tradition of devotional piety that began in India with the Gita is long, varied, and rich. The life of the incarnate Lord Krishna is told in some of the great scriptures, particularly the Bhagavata Purana. He was born of a royal family—and rescued at birth from His uncle, the wicked king Kamsa, who wanted to kill the baby Krishna.

He grew up in the care of foster parents in the village of Vrindavana in rural north India. In His life among these simple villagers, Krishna’s devotees have discovered meaningful paradigms for the human-divine relationship. Krishna was the child who grew up in their midst, and people loved the child Krishna with the spontaneous love of parents who delight in the playful exuberance of their children. Krishna was the heroic youth who conquered many a demon and protected the people of the land of Vraja. His companions loved Him—with the trusting, admiring love of friend for friend. To the young women of Vrindavana Krishna was the enchanting lover. Here one sees one of the most dramatic paradigms of human-divine love: the risking, serving, fervent, and sometimes anguished love of lover for beloved. Krishna and Radha are the divine pair, lover and beloved.

One of the most vigorous and vibrant periods of devotional piety on the Indian subcontinent began about five hundred years ago, when a new wave of this ancient bhakti tradition broke across north India as virtually a Protestant Reformation of the Hindu tradition. The love of Krishna was an important part of this movement, which produced a burst of devotional poetry, not in the Sanskrit of the elite, but in the vernacular languages of the people. In their songs and hymns these poets repeated many of the themes of the Gita: the supremacy of devotional faith rather than ritual; the affirmation of
human equality rather than hierarchy; the importance of simple acts of praise—making offerings of flowers or singing the name of the Lord.

There were many poets, saints, and theologians who contributed to this era of exuberant devotion. Among them was the Bengali spiritual leader Sri Chaitanya, who may be called the founder of the Hare Krishna movement. He was born in Bengal in 1486 and at a young age became an adept Sanskrit scholar. In 1508 on a pilgrimage to Gaya, he encountered a teacher of the devotional Vaishnava school named Ishvara Puri. From this time on, he gave himself fully to the devotional worship of Krishna, popularizing and developing a form of worship called kirtana, the chanting and singing of the holy names of the Lord to the accompaniment of small brass hand cymbals and long cylindrical drums.

Sri Chaitanya traveled throughout India and attracted many followers. He made one pilgrimage to the heart of the Vaishnava South, and according to his biographers he left the entire South chanting the name of Krishna. More important to the Chaitanya movement, however, were his travels in the North, where he is said to have converted great nondualist philosophers as well as some of the world-renouncing sannyasis of Banaras to the love of Krishna.

Chaitanya’s devotion to Krishna was both intense and magnetic. According to his immediate followers, Chaitanya revealed himself as Krishna and Krishna’s beloved Radha manifest together in one body.

Sri Chaitanya himself left only eight written verses. After he passed away, however, he was followed by a group of six inspired disciples and scholars called Gosvamis who settled in Krishna’s ancient homeland of Vrindavana and contributed a tremendously rich body of literature to the emerging Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition. Among them, Sanatana Gosvami wrote the famous Hari-bhakti-vilasa, a manual of ritual still utilized by the Hare Krishna movement. His brother Rupa Gosvami wrote one of the principal theological works of the movement, the Bhaktirasamrita-sindhu, translated into English by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada as The Nectar of Devotion. Rupa Gosvami, the author of Sat-sandarha; was the chief philosopher of the movement. A somewhat younger contemporary was Krishnadasa Kaviraja, who, at the request of the Gosvamis, wrote the biography of Sri Chaitanya, the Chaitanya-charitamrita, in Bengali.

From this first generation of disciples both in Vrindavana and in Bengal, the great teachers of this devotional tradition emerged, one after another, passing their insight from one generation to the next. They have followed in succession to the present day, and Vrindavana continues to be the spiritual heart of this bhakti tradition.

In 1933 one of the leaders of the Gaudiya Vaishnava movement, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami, initiated a new disciple: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, whose special task was to bring the message of Krishna-bhakti to the English-speaking world. In 1944, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami began to publish in Calcutta an English semimonthly magazine called Back to Godhead, which is published in the United States today under the same name. During the fifties he retired to Vrindavana, where he lived a very simple life in the temple of Radha-Damodara and began to translate into English the voluminous Bhagavata Purana. In 1965, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami came to the United States, arriving by freighter, with little money and no contacts. In time, with difficulty, he established the first Krishna temple in the United States, a Second Avenue storefront on the Lower East Side in New York. Before long, one could hear the name of Krishna in Tompkins Square Park or on Fifth Avenue. Within a decade the International Society for Krishna Consciousness—the American strand of the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition—spread to most major American cities. It became known by the very words with which the saint Chaitanya praised the Lord some five hundred years ago: “Hare Krishna!” “Praise Krishna!”

Among the recent projects of those who have devoted themselves to Krishna is the establishment of a farming community in the hills of West Virginia named after the homeland of Krishna—New Vrindavana. Meanwhile, in the original Vrindavana, the worship of Krishna flourishes, and the new Krishna-Balarama temple, built by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, has become one of the favourites of Hindu pilgrims to the holy land of Krishna.

In the summer of 1978 while I was doing my own research in north India, I was approached by a number of Hindus who assumed, because I wore a sari and spoke Hindi, that I was a Hare Krishna devotee. Without exception they praised the work of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in India, both in Vrindavana and in the birthplace of Chaitanya at Mayapur in Bengal. I remember especially one old woman who came up to me in a temple in Banaras, and touched my feet in a gesture of respect, and said to me in Hindi, “The temple you have built to Lord Krishna in Vrindavana is splendid, so splendid, and I want to thank you.”

Surely the greatest affirmation of the authenticity and significance of the Hare Krishna movement has come from Hindus themselves. In Boston the ISKCON temple has become a gathering place for many of the Indians who live here as professional people or as students. There on Commonwealth Avenue, together with American devotees, they worship Krishna and celebrate the great festivals of the Hindu year. And in Vrindavana, Hindus crowd into the new Krishna-Balarama temple and sing “Hare Krishna” with those young Americans who have become new participants in their ancient tradition.
Smt & Sri Amrit Sagar Chopra donated a food distribution vehicle to The Akshaya Patra Foundation.

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Vijayawada: GBR Group donated a food distribution vehicle to The Akshaya Patra Foundation.
Govardhana Puja

It was during the auspicious month of Karthika that Lord Krishna saved the Vrajavasis from the wrath of Indra. The Vrajavasis were preparing to offer Indra his annual worship and sacrifice when Lord Krishna told them to direct their offerings to Govardhana Hill instead, as the hill provided the villagers with all that they needed - fresh green grasses for their cows, water from lakes and streams, fruits and flowers from the groves and forests that covered the hill. While the Vrajavasis circumambulated the hill after their worship, keeping their cows in front of them in procession, Lord Krishna appeared from the hill in a gigantic form to accept all the offerings, thus revealing that Govardhana Hill is non-different from Himself. Soon after, when he heard the news of this worship of Govardhana Hill, Indra was furious and sent torrential rainfall to inundate Vrindavana and destroy the villages and people. The Vrajavasis sought Krishna's protection and He saved them by easily lifting Govardhana Hill on the little finger of His left hand, and holding it up as an umbrella from the storms. Indra's pride was defeated and he surrendered in submission to Lord Krishna, realizing that the little boy whose instructions the Vrajavasis had followed was none other than his own Supreme Master.

Devotees celebrate Govardhana Puja every year to commemorate this amazing pastime of Lord Krishna. In ISKCON temples around the world, devotees offer a mound of food stuffs or annakoota to the Lord and also perform go-puja on this auspicious day. Here is a photo feature of the celebrations of Govardhana Puja in some of the temples of the Hare Krishna Movement.
Vrajabhoomi originally inherited its name from the Sanskrit word 'Vraja', which is closely linked to pastimes or *lilas* of a Lord Krishna, the eternal and complete manifestation of God or the 'Purna Avatara' with His cows, cowherd boys (*gopas*), cowherd girls (*gopis*) and divine consort Sri Radha. This land, full of groves, hills, lakes, forests is described as Vraja. Vrajabhoomi has solely witnessed the pastimes of Sri Krishna, and thus is called the land of the Supreme Lord Krishna. Along with the Yamuna river, around 137 sacred groves and 1000 kunds have been the centers of the pastimes of Lord Krishna from childhood till youth.

Sri Vraja Mandal Parikrama, inaugurated by Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself 501 years ago, was re-established in October 1932 by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur. Then our dear spiritual master Sri Srimad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, continued this tradition.

The purpose of the Vraja Mandala Parikrama is to pay homage to the holy *dhama*, by circumambulating the twelve sacred forests of Vraja bhoomi, just as Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had done five hundred years ago. The word ‘parikrama’ is derived from the word ‘pradakshina’ which means to circumambulate or walk ‘in a circular motion to the right’ around a holy place of worship. The performance of *pradakshina* or *parikrama* is an important act of self-purification as well as an offering of devotion to the Lord. The goal of performing *parikrama* around Vraja is to increase one’s *smaranam* or remembrance of Lord Sri Krishna, while seeing all the holy places where He performed His transcendental pastimes five thousand years ago. By performing *parikrama* around the sacred forests of Vrindavana, one’s faith in the lotus feet of the Lord automatically increases with every step.

Vraja Mandal Bhoomi is covered with 12 principal forests and several other sub-forests which were the venue for Lord Sri Krishna’s sweet pastimes on this planet Earth, 5000 years ago. In the eighty-four kosas of Vraja Mandal, there are forty-eight different forests (*vanas*), which includes *upavanas* (sub-forests), *prativanas* and *adhivanas*. According to the Padma Purana, there are twelve principal forests in Vraja Mandal situated east and west of the Yamuna. They are (1) Mahavana, (2) Kamyavana, (3) Madhuvana, (4) Talavana, (5) Kumudavana, (6) Bhandirvana, (7) Vrindavana, (8) Khadiravana, (9) Lohavana, (10) Bhadravana, (11) Bahulavana and (12) Bilvavana.

"Those who visit the twelve sacred forests of Vrindavana will no longer suffer the pangs of hellish life." —*Adi-varaha Purana*. "Those who, with firm faith and devotion to Lord Krishna, perform the *parikrama* of Vraja Mandala - are freed from all sins and go back to Godhead at the time of death." — *Mathura Mahatmya*. "The supreme abode of the Personality of Godhead, Krishna, is described in *Brahma-samhita* as the abode of *chintamani*: *chintamani-prakara-sadmasu kalpa-vriksha-lakshavritesu surabhir abhipalayantam. —BS. 5.29. The Vrindavana-dhama on this earth is a replica of that same abode." —*SB 10.1.1*

‘Prabhupadanugas’ - the followers of Srila Prabhupada from different parts of India, participated in this year’s Vraja Mandala Parikrama, organised by ISKCON Bangalore Group from Oct 19 to 25, 2016.
"My exposure to the young devotees and to Swami Bhaktivedanta as well as the chanting of Hare Krishna has brought me moments of inner peace and has enabled me to live a little more spiritually with my family and in my profession. My two older children also spent some beautiful moments with the Swamiji—times we will always treasure.

“It is not necessary to shave your head and to become fully absorbed in the teachings to absorb some of the spiritual vibrations which flow from the devotions and activities of the Krishna consciousness movement. Chanting and feasting in the woods behind my house here in White Plains has brought joy and bliss to our neighbours from all walks of life.” —from a letter by Stephen J. Goldsmith, attorney-at-law, White Plains, New York.

KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS is also known as bhakti-yoga, which means attaching or linking oneself to the Supreme Lord through divine love. Love is the highest, most exalted state of consciousness, and of all kinds of love the most satisfying is love of God, or Krishna.

When love is reposed in Krishna, that love will automatically extend to all His creatures. Krishna consciousness, therefore, is total love.

Krishna consciousness provides the enlightenment by which to understand who one is, what the world is, and who God is. One achieves this consciousness by performing various scientific spiritual disciplines recommended by great authorities in the past. These disciplines assure progress in spiritual life and result in happiness in both this life and the next. The various yoga practices of Krishna consciousness are natural, they cost nothing to learn, and one can perform them in one’s own home. To begin Krishna consciousness one does not have to suddenly leave home, renounce everything, and become a brahmachari monk. Rather, while remaining at home, one can perform the recommended spiritual practices, preferably with the other members of one’s family, and in this way advance very quickly in Krishna consciousness.

The idea is to make Krishna consciousness, or bhakti-yoga, the spiritual center of one’s life. When the radio was first introduced, it became so popular that families
all across America gathered around it in the evenings. Then came television, and that has now become central. But through Krishna consciousness, with its singing, dancing, feasting, and philosophy, spiritual life can become the spiritual center of one’s home.

When Srila Prabhupada first began spreading Krishna consciousness in America, he gave specific instructions on how one can become Krishna conscious at home.

First, set up an altar in your home at some convenient place. The altar is a place where you can perform meditation, offer devotion to the Lord, and receive the Lord’s love. The altar can be a small table (this is what Srila Prabhupada first used). Or you may even want to set aside an entire room as a “meditation room” for added sanctity and serenity.

On the altar, place a picture of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Krishna’s incarnation as a perfect devotee. Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is one, but because He is unlimited He is also many. Krishna has incarnations and expansions as numerous as the waves in the ocean, yet Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is a very special manifestation. It is the special mercy of Krishna that He comes as His own devotee, just to show us how we can best worship Him. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, being Krishna, is all-perfect, and so He perfectly showed how to worship Lord Krishna—by chanting the Hare Krishna maha-mantra.

Also on the altar should be a photo of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the founder and spiritual preceptor of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, who introduced Krishna consciousness to the West. Between 1965, when he came to America from India, and 1977, when he passed away from this world, Srila Prabhupada conveyed the fullness of spiritual life through his lectures, letters, books, recordings, and the example of his own life.

The altar is the focal point for expressing your love for God. God is everywhere, and because He is everywhere He is also in His picture on His altar. It is not that because He is everywhere He is not in His picture. Nor is God limited to being only in His picture. Rather, He is in His picture as well. So by looking at Krishna’s picture on the altar you can see God, and God also sees you.

The best time to meditate before the altar is in the morning, if possible just before sunrise, and again in the evening, around sunset. These are the best times for spiritual advancement. In the early morning the mind is especially fresh and clear, and by beginning and ending the day with meditation you sandwich the activities of your day between spiritual practices.

In front of the altar, you can perform the purest, most joyful form of meditation, called kirtana. Kirtana means meditating on God by glorifying and praising Him with a mantra, a transcendental sound that cleanses and liberates the mind. The recommended mantra for the present age (the Iron Age of Quarrel) is the maha, or great, mantra: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Chanting the Hare Krishna mantra will reveal to you the essence of all Vedic literatures and instructions. It is a transcendental vibration, nondifferent from Krishna Himself. Krishna is absolute, so He is the same as His name. To chant Hare Krishna, therefore, is to experience Krishna directly.

A yogi of the highest order will never meditate on anything impersonal or void. Only yogis who are stuck on the bodily platform do this. And even if such second-class transcendentalists achieve liberation from the material world, their achievement is temporary, because they fall again to materialistic life. But by chanting Hare Krishna faithfully and attentively, you will come in personal touch with Krishna and get that true transcendental experience you are looking for. While chanting, it is best to fix your mind on the chant by hearing the sound of each word, each syllable of the mantra. This will help pacify your mind and bring it under your constant control, and with a controlled mind you will be able to experience great spiritual pleasure.

There are two ways of chanting. First, you can chant quietly to yourself with the help of meditation beads. This quiet chanting is called japa. Using the beads helps engage your sense of touch in the meditation, as well as your speech and hearing. The second way to chant is aloud. With your family or a group of friends you can sing responsively and play hand cymbals, drums, or other musical instruments, or if you prefer you can just play a record or tape of the kirtana and sing along. It’s really a joyous thing, especially with a group, so why not invite your friends? The more the merrier. And if you feel like getting up and dancing during the singing, well, just go ahead. Enjoy the chanting of Hare Krishna.

After the chanting, the mind and body are clear, and you are ready to give full attention to spiritual subject matters. Now you can read from the Bhagavad-gita As It Is. The Bhagavad-gita was spoken by Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, five thousand years ago in India. Within its pages you will find such diverse spiritual topics as the soul and proof of its existence, the difference between the body and the soul, the nature of God, the choice between work and renunciation, the nature of the world, how to live a godly life, reincarnation (transmigration of the soul), what yoga is, what karma is, how to prepare for death, what happens after death—all this and more, compressed within seven hundred verses. Srila Prabhupada’s purports, his explanations of the verses, elucidate the meaning and guarantee clear understanding of exactly what Lord Krishna spoke. You can read the book little by little, so
as to digest it carefully. Reading out loud, even if alone, sharpens the mind’s attention.

When you finish the Gita you can begin reading the Srimad-Bhagavatam. It is called the Encyclopedia of Spiritual Knowledge, because it can tell you everything you ever wanted to know about spiritual life. So just as you may have a book shelf reserved for the encyclopedia of the material world, you can also have one for the encyclopedia of the spiritual world.

After the chanting and philosophy, you will probably have quite an appetite. So refreshments follow. On the altar you can offer food to Lord Krishna with devotion, and He is so kind that He partakes of the offering, and what is left you can take as His holy remnants, called prasada. You can offer Krishna simple fruits, whatever happens to be in season; you can prepare and offer vegetarian dishes using milk, sugar, butter, vegetables, grains, and spices. The Lord will not accept nonvegetarian offerings. In addition to offering food, you can also offer some flowers and incense on the altar, and this will make for a very nice atmosphere.

After placing the food on the altar, you can recite this prayer: “O Lord, this material body is a lump of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths to death. Somehow I have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world, but You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us, and You have given us this nice prasada, spiritual food, just to conquer the tongue. So we now take that prasada to our full satisfaction and glorify Your Lordships Sri Sri Radha and Krishna and in love call for the help of Lord Chaitanya and His associate Lord Nityananda.”

Now it’s time to partake of the prasada—undoubtedly one of the most enjoyable aspects of Krishna consciousness.

Now that you have had spiritual food that has first been offered to Krishna, you’re ready for your daily work. Whatever it is, you will perform it more efficiently and with definite satisfaction. Naturally, the benefits of bhakti-yoga performed at home will accompany you throughout the day, at your work. Because your consciousness has been cleared, you will be alert about what to do and what not to do. Also, you can directly spiritualize your work by using a portion of its fruits—your wages—for spiritual life, either by purchasing Krishna conscious books and paraphernalia or by donating a portion to spread Krishna consciousness. I, for instance, worked as a teacher for two years while learning Krishna consciousness, and I donated my wages. Often people can dovetail their work with the service of Krishna and do something that assists the Krishna consciousness movement. Take Mr. Goldsmith, for example, who wrote the letter quoted at the beginning of this article. Back in 1966 he used his ability as an attorney to draw up ISKCON’s constitution and formally register ISKCON as a religious organization. Surely that alone has endeared him to Lord Krishna and Srila Prabhupada eternally, making his life as a human being a success. So you see, it’s very easy to begin Krishna consciousness.
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by Rupanuga Dasa

(This article appeared in a 1980 issue of Back to Godhead magazine)

When Lord Krishna speaks in the Bhagavad-gita, He clarifies the ultimate purpose of vegetarianism: "If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water, I will accept it." (Bg. 9.26) In itself, vegetarianism basically means nonviolence, protecting the animals—but offering vegetarian foods to Krishna and later accepting them as his mercy (prasada) means a lot more: bhakti-yoga, or becoming conscious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When combined with the chanting of the Supreme Lord's holy names—Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna. Hare Hare/Hare Rama, Hare Rama. Rama Rama, Hare Hare—strict vegetarianism becomes more than a mere ethical principle or rational, humane way of life; it becomes the simplest, most pleasant means in the world for spiritual realization.

Krishna consciousness, the spiritual reason for vegetarianism, includes all the other reasons—ethical, aesthetic, nutritional, economic, medical—in the same way that a five-hundred-dollar bill includes all the potencies of a hundred-dollar bill or a twenty-dollar bill or a ten- or five- or one-dollar bill. Only the freshest, most succulent, most nutritious, and most aesthetically pleasing kinds of foods are prepared and offered to Krishna. Still, because we are scientifically minded, we should carefully analyze the many advantages of eating Krishna prasada—of being a strict, spiritually-minded vegetarian. We will also examine some of the more important objections to vegetarianism. We can define a "strict vegetarian" as someone who totally abstains from meat, fish, and eggs. Some vegetarians, called "vegans," abstain not only from meat but also from milk, because they fear pesticides and cholesterol. However, fruits, grains, and vegetables contain no cholesterol, so a vegetarian could drink a quart of milk and eat a few ounces of cheese every day without topping the maximum recommended allowance of cholesterol. Without taking milk, one is doomed to consume piles of algae, seaweed, sesame seeds, or pills to obtain essential vitamin B-12 and calcium. As for pesticides, practically everything we eat has some, because of widespread use of chemical fertilizers. The so-called ovo-vegetarians cannot be accepted as strict vegetarians, because they eat eggs, which are, after all, simply calcium-covered flesh, artificially mass-produced under conditions not justifiable in view of the numerous other sources of protein. But the term lacto (milk-drinking) vegetarian is acceptable. Taking milk of cows that may later be slaughtered does not in any way condone cow-killing, and if we had the opportunity, we would close the slaughterhouses immediately.

Objections by Nonvegetarians

One of the strongest objections nonvegetarians raise against vegetarianism is that vegetarians still have to kill plants, and that this is also violence. But it is nonsensical to equate fully sentient animals like cows with lowly vegetables. Besides, we really have to eat plants, fruits, grains, and so on, because the "vitamins and minerals found only in these vegetarian foods are essential to keep body and soul together. Certainly, plants are as alive as cows; modern experiments prove that plants have feelings, **(Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, The Secret Life of Plants (New York: Avon Books, 1974), p. 86.) and the Bhagavad-gita, the essence of all Vedic teachings, confirms that all life forms contain spirit souls qualitatively equal to one another. But still, we have to eat something, and the Vedas also say, jivo jivasya jivanam: one living entity is food for another in the struggle for existence. So from a humane standpoint, the problem in choosing a diet is not how to avoid killing altogether—an impossible proposal—but how to cause the least suffering while meeting the nutritional needs of the body. A well-balanced diet of fruits, grains, vegetables, and milk products meets these criteria, and this diet is recommended in such scriptures as the Bhagavad-gita as most truly human.

Another common objection to vegetarianism is, "Jesus Christ ate meat, so why shouldn't we?" But vegetarian Christians point out that the ancient Greek, from which the New Testament was translated, does not support the contention that Christ ate meat. **(Rev. V.A. Homes-Gore, Was the Master a Vegetarian? (London: The British Vegetarian Society), p. 8.) For example, Greek words like brosimos, prophagion, and trope, all of which mean simply "food, or "nourishment," were loosely translated as "meat. (except in the New English Bible). And, vegetarian Christians assert, where the Bible states that Christ was offered fish and a honeycomb and accepted "it (singular), it means the honeycomb. In the Old Testament a verse predicts this of the youthful Christ: "He shall eat butter and honey, that he may know to refuse the evil and to choose the good." (Isaiah 7:15) The purport would seem to be that to behave otherwise would lead to a brutish mentality, which cannot be accepted in the character of Christ.
When we look for the reasons behind widespread meat-eating, we find that many people have been conditioned to it from childhood (“Finish your plate, dear; there are people starving in India.”), and they feel guilty if they don’t indulge. In addition, myths about the necessity of flesh-eating persist, even in the face of volumes of scientific evidence to the contrary. Even the National Live Stock and Meat Board admits that a vegetarian diet can provide adequate nutrition. **(Meat and Vegetarian Concept, National Live Stock and Meat Board (Chicago, 1977). p. 19.)**

**Protein Percentages Compared**

Meat-eaters argue, “But meat is a perfect, complete protein, while I’d have to spend hours purchasing, cooking, and combining the right vegetables to get enough protein every day.”

First of all, meat is not “pure” or “perfect” protein, but at best 25-30% protein. Its net protein utilization (NPU, the amount actually digested and absorbed by the body) is 67%, compared to 82% for milk, 70% for cheese, 67% for mung beans, and 60% for whole wheat. **(Francis Moore Lappe, Diet for a Small Planet (New York: Ballantine Books, 1975), pp. 96-117.)** By weight the above foodstuffs may have less protein than meat, but because their NPU is high, simply by eating more of them or combining them one can easily meet one’s protein RDA (minimum recommended daily allowance). For example, milk is only 4 to 5% protein, but two cups give about 40% of the average usable protein RDA of 43.1 grams. A two-inch cube of cheese yields about 30%. And the objection that vegetarianism is too time-consuming is ridiculous. Complementarity, the right combination of foods, is as common-sense and natural as bread and butter, and it easily avoids dietary deficiencies. Furthermore, complementarity increases the food value of the combined foods. For example, the NPU of rice alone (60%) and beans alone (40%)
increases by 43% when they are eaten together, and pairing milk with whole-wheat bread increases their combined NPU by 13%.

Besides, protein isn’t everything. Essential nutrients like iron, potassium, magnesium, and calcium, as well as essential vitamins like C, A, riboflavin, niacin, are almost entirely absent in flesh foods. So vegetarian foods are absolutely necessary to maintain good health. What, then, is the reason for killing animals for food (besides habit, or a cultivated blood-lust), especially in American and European countries, which are rich in vegetarian foodstuffs? Even if some few insist upon eating cow carcasses, they need only wait for the animals to die naturally. Connoisseurs, who might object that such flesh would be too tough, should remember that slaughtered cow carcasses are far from fresh, since they are aged up to two weeks to dissipate and soften rigor mortis. Such purely aesthetic reasoning often produces vegetarians.

Many people are vegetarians for ethical reasons, believing that it is not at all possible to condone as “man’s dominion” the slaughter of four billion animals each year. **(Agricultural Statistics, United States Dept. of Agriculture (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Off., 1976), pp. 354, 405.)** Many others would no doubt take up vegetarianism if they visited a slaughterhouse, or if they themselves had to kill the animals they ate. Euphemisms like "sirloin," "brisket," or "cutlets" would then no longer hide the horror of cow butchery, and the visiting shoppers would no longer agree to put the limbs or innards of cow bodies into their mouths. Such visits should be compulsory for all meat-eaters. Some may think, “So what? Who will punish me? The government makes no arrests for cow-killing.” But they are mistaken: they will be punished, as we shall now see.

### Instant Karma, Insane Waste

The meat-rich American diet has been scientifically proven to cause disease. A few examples: Researchers have found that frying meat produces carcinogens, cancer-causing agents. **(Alex Hershaft, “Hazards in Meat? Here’s Why,” The Washington Star (June 1, 1978), p. A10.)** The breast milk of nonvegetarian women contains ten times as much pesticide as that of vegetarians. Many Americans, especially among the more well-to-do, eat almost twice as much protein as they need, and this often tends to leach calcium out of the bones into the bloodstream. This process can produce bone loss and brittleness around the age of forty. Evidence linking the American diet with cancer and other diseases prompted the U.S. Senate to call for an increase in vegetarian foodstuffs in the national diet. **("Diet Related to Killer Diseases," Dietary Goals for the United States, the U.S. Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Off., Feb. 1977), p. 13.)** Sodium nitrate, hormones, and antibiotics, given to animals in huge amounts to fatten and calm them, are thought by many researchers to be prime causes of disease.

Yet all these factors are not the original causes of disease, but are themselves manifestations of subtler
causes—violations of the laws of nature. Humans are meant to eat vegetarian foods, but when their uncontrollable appetites drive them to eat flesh, they must suffer karmic reactions, which are shared equally by all those who participate in the slaughter—from cattlemen to butchers to shoppers to cooks to consumers. This is the real connection between diet and disease: instant *karma*! It may manifest immediately, as in the case of botulism, an often deadly poisoning, or later on, as in the case of bone loss; it may strike individually, as in the personal hell of cancer, or collectively, as in the mass slaughterhouse of the Bubonic Plague. But in any case, there is no escaping karmic reactions. We reap what we sow, in this life and the next, for nature has her justice above the state’s.

The *Bhagavad-gita* reveals how strict vegetarianism, when integrated with *bhakti yoga*, can counteract *karma*: “Devotees are freed from karmic reactions because they first offer their food to the Lord, whereas others, who prepare food only for their personal sense gratification, eat only sin.” (*Bg. 3.13*) In other words, anyone who dovetails his eating with the principles of *bhakti-yoga* becomes transcendental to all karmic reactions, while one who neglects to do so incurs bad *karma*. Moreover, one who acts without *karma* can dovetail his consciousness with God’s and become aware of His personal presence at every step. This is the true benefit of *prasada*.

Economically, the nonvegetarian diet has produced a tragedy. From 1950 to 1970, the grain output in the U.S. increased 50%. *(F. M. Lappe, op. cit., p. 8.)* But how was the grain distributed? Presently, livestock are given 85% of the edible corn, barley, oats, sorghum, and unexported soybeans produced in the U.S. In addition, Americans feed almost half as much wheat to animals as they eat themselves. A large portion of the U.S. continental land surface is used for the grazing of beef cattle—valuable land that might be used to cultivate grain. Most people would agree that wasting food is a sin, yet all this effort and energy produces only about one pound of meat protein for sixteen pounds of grain; the waste alone could cover 90% of the yearly protein deficit of the entire world.

On the other hand, for every pound of grain a cow eats, she produces one pint of milk, from which wholesome cheese, butter, and yogurt can be made. These foods will supply all essential nutrients for the human diet when intelligently combined with grains, fruits, and vegetables. There are at least forty kinds of vegetables, nine kinds of grains, twenty kinds of fruit, twenty kinds of beans and peas, and twelve kinds of nuts available in the market, in addition to the cow’s contribution. What, then, is the need for all the violence and disobedience to the higher laws of humankind, nature, and God? Let us chant Hare Krishna, live as strict vegetarians, and be happy in this life and the next! 😊
Places of pilgrimage yield a special advantage for a devotee in quickly advancing his spiritual life. Lord Krishna lives everywhere, but still it is very easy to approach Him in holy places of pilgrimage because these places are inhabited by great sages. Unless one is very advanced in spiritual life, it is recommended that he live in such holy places and execute devotional service there.

In the material world, the Lord is situated in different arca-murtis (Deities) in the temples just to decrease the material activities of the conditioned soul and increase his spiritual activities. Particularly in India there are many temples throughout the country. Devotees may take advantage of them and go to see the Lord at Jagannatha Puri, Vrindavana, Prayaga, Mathura, Haridwar and Vishnu-kanchi. When the devotees travel to these places and see the Lord, they become very happy in devotional service.

ISKCON pilgrimages are meant to facilitate devotees and aspiring pilgrims to visit such divine and holy places and thereby advance in their spiritual journey.

More than 100 devotees from various parts of India participated in Vrindavana Karthika Pilgrimage 2016 organized by ISKCON Bangalore from November 3 – November 8.


**For more details, contact** – Krishna Ashraya Office, ISKCON Bangalore +91 93791 55555
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Govardhana Puja

ISKCON Bangalore celebrated Govardhana Puja on October 31, 2016. This is one of the important days during Diwali in the holy month of Kartika. A mammoth 840-kg replica of Govardhana Hill crafted with pure vegetarian cake, fruits and cookies was the center of attraction on this occasion.

Read More: https://goo.gl/pnp1UN

The Tallest Temple

A 700-foot skyscraper temple with 70 storeys - the world’s largest religious structure, will be built by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh. It will have a grand temple of Lord Krishna, a theme park and several facilities for social intervention programmes.

Read More: https://goo.gl/JHUK9W

Basil Woods Preschool

Basil Woods Preschool Academy was conceived by the devotees of ISKCON Bangalore this year to deliver world-class pre-primary education by integrating the best practice methodologies including Montessori, Waldorf and Reggio Emilia approaches; with foundational spiritual values from Indian culture and heritage.

Read More: https://goo.gl/Olv15g

Teak Tree Donation

A 70-feet-tall teak tree that was identified after a prolonged search in the forests of Kerala was brought to the ancient Adhikesava Perumal temple in Thiruvattar in Kanyakumari district to replace the temple’s old flag post. The cost of the tree, which works out to Rs. 30 lakh, was borne by ISKCON Bangalore.

Read More: https://goo.gl/krRq0q

Reviews from TripAdvisor®

Must-visit in Bangalore: Very beautiful temple, good architecture, nice Deities of God Sri Krishna, very big temple, must-see in Bangalore. We spent more than two hours.

They also provide lunch, free of cost for pilgrims. idea614354

Best spiritual place in Bangalore: Great place for spirituality, great atmosphere. This place will make you fall in love with beloved Krishna. Good parking facility and ample information about Krishna. The best time to visit is in the evening and don’t forget to attend last Arati. This is called Pallakki Utsav. It is organized every evening around 8:30 to 9 pm. The food is delicious at a reasonable price. PRAFULT

Peace - Eternal: A place where you can actually see your soul dancing to the tunes of ‘Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare’. It’s amazing to see the feeling of eternal peace dawn on you while chanting the above mantra and your soul and heart just feel the lightness and you don’t feel like going back to the worldly affairs. A place just for type of people who want peace and serenity in their life for at least for some time. Jay A

Great spiritual experience: The temple is maintained very neat and the darshan queue process is very organized. The best time to visit is 7 am in the morning and have breakfast after the morning pooja. BhadriAK

Peace of mind: One of the best architectures among country’s best temples. So silent and serene.....Visit the place for recreation, fun and peace of mind. Ankit A

One of the best temples in Bangalore: Without a doubt, this is one of the biggest temples in Bangalore. Its inside environment makes you fall in love with this place. All kinds of Indian sweets are available inside this temple. A very large conventional hall is available inside temple premises for all marriage functions. Parking is provided for two wheelers and four wheelers. If you are visiting Bangalore, you should definitely visit this place. amit k

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Chennai
- Ratha Yatra date: Saturday, Dec 17, 2016
- Tour schedule: Fri, Dec 16 (9.30pm) to Sun, Dec 18 (10pm)
- Amount: ₹4,500/-
- Mode of travel: Travel by AC bus
- Holy places to visit: Kancheepuram, Sholingur, Parthasarathy temple, Jagannath Perumal temple

Last date of enrollment: Dec 12, 2016

Mysore
- Ratha Yatra date: Saturday, Jan 14, 2017
- Tour schedule: Sat, Jan 14 (7am) to Sun, Jan 15 (9pm)
- Amount: ₹3,000/-
- Mode of travel: Travel by AC bus
- Holy places to visit: Biligiri Ranganatha, Srirangapatna, Kaveri, T Narasipura, BR Hills

Last date of enrollment: Jan 9, 2017

Hubli
- Ratha Yatra date: Saturday, Feb 04, 2017
- Tour schedule: Fri, Feb 03 (9pm) to Mon, Feb 06 (7am)
- Amount: ₹3,800/-
- Mode of travel: Travel by AC bus
- Holy places to visit: Yana, Sode Mutt and Tapovan, Manjuguni Venkateshwara Temple

Last date of enrollment: Jan 30, 2017

Dharwad
- Ratha Yatra date: Saturday, Feb 11, 2017
- Tour schedule: Fri, Feb 10 (8pm) to Mon, Feb 13 (7am)
- Amount: ₹3,800/-
- Mode of travel: Travel by AC bus
- Holy places to visit: Ulavi Panduranga temple, Gokarna, Apsarakonda Narasimha temple, Anokala Venkataramana temple

Last date of enrollment: February 6, 2017

Mangalore
- Ratha Yatra date: Saturday, Feb 18, 2017
- Tour schedule: Fri, Feb 17 (6pm) to Sun, Feb 19 (10pm)
- Amount: ₹4,000/-
- Mode of travel: Travel by AC bus
- Holy Places to visit: Udupi, Paiska kshetra, Narasimha temple, Balarama temple, Talakaveri, Belur

Last date of enrollment: Feb 13, 2017

For more details contact: Krishna Ashraya office 93791 55555 / Temple reception 080-23471956
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Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare
RAHAYATRA
come...pull the chariot

rathe ca vamanam drstva
punar janma na vidyate

Simply by seeing the Lord on the chariot,
one makes advancement for stopping
the repetition of birth and death.

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