Ratha Yatra in Bangalore
sri
Nityananda
trayodashi
Saturday, February 20, 2016
Celebrations at
Iskcon,
Hare Krishna Hill, Bangalore
6:00 pm onwards

For more details visit:
www.iskconbangalore.org/nityananda-trayodashi
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

Cover pages-4  Text pages-32

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Saved From Death

The remedy for the fact of life most of us don't like to think about


ksudrayusam nṛnām āṅga
martyānām rtam icchātām
ihopahuro bhagavan
mrtyuḥ samitra-kārmanī

"O Suta Gosvami some human beings, though short-lived, desire to learn the truth and attain eternal life. To save them from the slaughtering process, the controller of death, Yamaraja, has been called to this assembly." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.16.7)

The word ksudrayusam means "very short duration of life." For example, an ant's life or a germ's life would be called ksudrayusam. They are living entities, but their duration of life is very short. There are many flies who live their whole lives in one night. They take birth in the evening, and the whole night they are busy eating, sleeping, begetting offspring, and fearing their enemies. In India they are called diwali insects. In the evening, before sunset, you will see one, two, or three of them. By midnight they have increased to thousands and millions. And in the morning, at the end of the night, you will find heaps of dead insects.

This material world is called mṛtyu-loka, "the place where everyone dies." But there are different durations of life. One creature lives for four minutes, another for ten minutes, another for a hundred minutes, another for a hundred days, and human beings for at most a hundred years. But on other planets there are higher living entities, demigods, who live much longer than human beings. For example, from the scriptures we understand that the people on the moon planet live up to ten thousand years, according to heavenly calculation. In each planet the calculation of time is different. On the moon, one day is equal to one of our years. So, since the living beings on the moon live for ten thousand of their years, just imagine how many of our years they live!

But Bhagavan Sri Krishna informs us that wherever you may go, Yamaraja, the controller of death, is ready. He is a representative of Krishna, just as a magistrate is a representative of the government. So Yamaraja is ready to judge you as soon as you finish your term of life.

Generally, at the end of life people become disgusted. They do not wish to live anymore. The body is old, always diseased, rheumatic pains . . . there is no life, or an old man there is no material enjoyment. He wants to enjoy, but he cannot.

In this regard there is a nice story about a Mogul emperor who lived in India in the fifteenth century. He had very intelligent ministers, and they would reply to whatever inquiries he made of them. Once he inquired, "My dear minister, how long does sex desire last?"

The minister replied, "Up to the point of death."

The emperor said, "No, no. How can it be?"

"Yes, an old man has sex desire, but he cannot satisfy it because his instrument has become dull and useless. But the desire is there."

"I don't believe it," said the emperor. "I am not satisfied with this answer."

"All right sir, I will satisfy you."

So, one day the minister came to the emperor and said, "Sir, please come with me immediately, and bring your young daughter with you."

The emperor immediately prepared to go with the minister, taking his young daughter with him. He asked, "Where are we going?"

The minister said, "You will come to know."

As they approached a house where a very old man was on his death bed, the minister requested the emperor,
"While entering the room, kindly try to see the face of the dying man." The emperor was very intelligent and when he looked at the old man's face, he noticed that the man was looking toward the young girl, not the emperor. So he said, "Yes, I have your answer."

So, the desire to enjoy is the root cause of our coming to this material world. Enjoyment is there in the spiritual world, but there the enjoyer is Krishna, and everyone else is enjoyed by Him. Here everyone wants to be the supreme enjoyer, and therefore they must come to this material world, mrityu-loka, and suffer repeated birth and death. The aim of life is to stop this repetition of birth and death. But the so-called scientists do not know this.

Here it is said that human beings are ksudrayusam, "having a short duration of life." Although human beings have a short duration of life in comparison to that of beings on other planets, still they have a mission to fulfill in this life. In animal life the consciousness is not developed, but in the human form of life, although it is perishable (adhruvam), it is full of meaning (arthadam). As Prahlada Maharaja says,

\[
\text{kaumara acaret praajno} \\
\text{dharman bhagavatani iha} \\
\text{durlabham manusam janma} \\
\text{tad apy adhruvam arthadam}
\]

"From childhood one should practice bhagavat-dharma, or Krishna consciousness. That is the mission of this human form of life, which is very difficult to attain and temporary. Just become Krishna conscious. Chant Hare Krishna." Narada Muni had taught Prahlada Maharaja, so he was convinced that his only business was to make advancement in Krishna consciousness by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra.

Prahlada Maharaja was the son of the demon Hiranyakashipu. Hiranyakashipu did not appoint any teacher to instruct Prahlada Maharaja about Krishna consciousness, but when Prahlada was in the womb of his mother, Narada Muni instructed her about Krishna consciousness. She had to live for some time in the care of Narada Muni when her husband was out being defeated by the demigods. So the woman was in anxiety about when her husband would come back. At that time the child Prahlada was within her womb, so she begged a benediction from Narada:

"Sir, kindly arrange it that as long as my husband is absent I will not give birth to this child." Narada Muni said, "All right" Then, although Narada Muni taught her about Krishna consciousness, her mind was absent because she was thinking of her husband. But the child within her womb heard the instructions. This is stated in Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Later, a friend asked Prahlada Maharaja: "My dear Prahlada, we are being taught by the same teachers as you are. Where from have you learned all this nice instruction?" Prahlada replied, "This instruction was given by Narada to my mother, but since she is a woman, she has forgotten it. But I remember."

So, people should be taught that the real problem of human life is how to stop janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi—birth, death, old age, and disease. This is real education. For example, here we are speaking on the Srimad-Bhagavatam. The subject matter is how one can transfer himself from this material world to the spiritual world and thereby stop birth, death, old age, and disease. This is the whole subject matter.

People should consider. "I do not wish to die. Why is death forced upon me?" This is the question of an intelligent man. People do not like to think of death, but sometimes they are forced to. Suppose there is some natural disturbance. I have experience: recently when I was in the front room, there was a little trembling of an earthquake. People were crying; especially the ladies were screaming. And as soon as there will be a big earthquake, everyone will become afraid: "Oh, now we are going to die! We have to die!" Everyone is afraid of death, but nobody thinks about how to make a solution to the problem of death.

Here in the present verse it is said that Yamaraja was called in order to save the persons present in the assembly from death. But ordinarily, only those who are sinful see Yamaraja at the time of death. after the body is finished. Yamaraja is there when we are sinful; he is not for the devotees.

In this regard there is an account in the Srimad-Bhagavatam concerning Ajamila. Ajamila was a greatly sinful man, but he was fond of his youngest child, who was named Narayana. At the time of death Ajamila saw four very fierce and odd-looking creatures. They were the Yamadutas, messengers of Yamaraja. Ajamila was very much afraid: "Who are they!" And because he was very affectionate to his youngest child, he called out, "Narayana, please come here! I am very much afraid!"

Immediately, four messengers of Narayana came and stopped the Yamadutas. Just see the power of chanting the name of Narayana! Ajamila immediately became eligible to go to Vaikuntha. Apparently, he did not even mean
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Lord Narayana when he chanted the name of his son. But Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura, with reference to the context, comments that Ajamila must have remembered Lord Narayana when he called out the name of his child.

In his boyhood, Ajamila was a very sincere devotee of Lord Narayana, being the son of a brahmana. But he fell under the clutches of a prostitute. And after mixing with the prostitute, all his spiritual activities stopped. That is natural. He became a drunkard, a thief, a gambler, a meat-eater, and a debauchee. All these qualifications he acquired by the association of one prostitute. In the present age people's only business is to mix with prostitutes. Just see their position! How fallen they are! There is an open market for prostitution. This is modern civilization.

So, Ajamila was a brahmana's son, very regulated, following all the rules and regulations. But as soon as he associated with a prostitute, he became fallen. Still, at the time of death this man remembered Lord Narayana. According to Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura, if he had simply called the name of his son, that wouldn't have been sufficient. He actually remembered Lord Narayana. But according to shastra [scripture], even if one chants the holy name of the Lord neglectfully, one gets the chance of being liberated. That's a fact.

The shastra tells how once a Mohammedan was attacked by a wild boar. While the boar was killing the Mohammedan with its tusk, the man uttered, "Harama! Harama!" Harama is an Urdu word that means "condemned" or "abominable."

The Mohammedans do not eat the flesh of pigs, just as the Hindus do not eat the flesh of cows. To the Mohammedans, pigs are harama, condemned. So when the man cried out "Harama!" he meant "This boar is condemned!" Still he got the result of chanting ha rama, ha rama. "O my Lord Ramachandra!"

There are hundreds and thousands of names of Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and if you chant any of them you will get the result. That is the instruction of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu: nam-nam akari bahudha nija-sarva-saktis tatrapita niyamitah smarane na kalah. The Supreme Personality of Godhead and His name are identical. That is Krishna's absolute nature. Krishna and His form are also nondifferent Krishna's form on the altar can give you the same result as you would get if He were personally present That is Krishna's absolute nature. So in the name of Krishna there is complete potency, just as there is in Krishna personally. Therefore it is so important to chant His name.

In this age, we are so fallen that it is not possible to associate with Krishna as He is. But if we associate with Krishna's name, then that is also association with Krishna. This is the advantage of chanting His name. And as you associate with Krishna in His sound form, you become purified: srnvatam sva-kathah krishnah punya-sravana-kirtanah hrdy antah-stho hy abhadranid vidhunoti suhrt sitam. This is the advantage of chanting the holy name of Krishna.

Therefore everyone's duty is to solve this birth-and-death problem by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra. That is the primary duty of human life. And this should be taught from the very beginning of life. Just see these pious children who are dancing here, taking part in this meeting. This path of Krishna-realization is so nice that even a child can take part in it. These young children have no education, they have no knowledge, but the method is so nice that they can also take part. They can enjoy dancing and chanting with their fathers and mothers. There are many yoga systems, but this bhakti-yoga system is so perfect that both the grandfather of the child and the child himself can take part in it. The children are dancing here, and sometimes they are chanting, and all these things are going to their spiritual credit.

The Deity worship has been introduced for the general public. Anyone can come and see the Deity, chant the Hare Krishna mantra, dance a little, play the karatalas—somehow or other, if somebody engages in Krishna's service, that will be credited to his account. Krishna will consider. "Yes, this living entity has advanced so much." Therefore, in the Bhagavad-gita Krishna says, svalpam apy asya dharmasya trayate mahato-bhayat: "Even if you do very little of this process of bhakti-yoga, it can save you from the greatest danger in life."

The perfect example is Ajamila. In the beginning of his life Ajamila executed some service to the Lord under the instructions of his father. That was to his credit. So when he became a first-class sinful man and was dying, somehow or other he chanted the name of Narayana and was saved. As soon as he uttered the name Narayana, he became eligible to be transported to Vaikuntha. Immediately Narayana sent his men, the Vishnudutas, saying, "Go and save this man. He is being harassed by the Yamadutas." The Yamadutas were taking Ajamila away, but the messengers from Vaikuntha said, "No, you cannot take this man."

The Yamadutas were surprised: "Oh, who are these beautiful persons?" The Yamadutas were very odd-looking, and they had never seen such fine-looking men. The Vishnudutas had four arms and looked very nice. In Vaikuntha the people look exactly like Narayana. We find a perverted reflection in this world: just as the president has two arms, we also have two arms. In Vaikuntha the "president" is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And since He...
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

This is to notify all donors and members of public that Sri Bhadra Rupa Krishna Dasa a.k.a. Basavaraju A M has discontinued his services in the temple as a full-time missionary. Hence he is not authorized to collect donations on behalf of the ISKCON temple and Akshaya Patra Foundation or represent them in any capacity.

Issued by: Governing Council of ISKCON Bangalore.
The Philosophy of the Soul

This conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and some of his disciples took place during a morning walk in Honolulu on May 15, 1976.

Srila Prabhupada: God created everything. He created both the soul and matter.

Disciple 1: The individual soul.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Disciple 1: Srila Prabhupada, someone might ask, "You say that God created the soul. How is the soul eternal if it is created, if it has a beginning?"
Srila Prabhupada: No, the soul has no beginning. Just as God has no beginning, so the soul has no beginning.

Disciple 1: No beginning.

Srila Prabhupada: Na jayate na mriyate va: as Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita, “For the eternal soul there is neither birth nor death.” That is the distinction between matter and soul.

Disciple 2: Some people may counter that if God is all-powerful, He can do anything. So couldn’t it be that God creates a soul at a point in time—and this soul is then eternal from that point? According to the Bible, some say, you have only one lifetime in this world. Of course, they cannot explain why some people are born in a pious setting and some are born in an impious setting.

Srila Prabhupada: They do not know the law of karma. Karman daiva-netrena: according to one’s past activities, pious or impious, he gets his next birth. That is quite reasonable. But people do not believe in karma.

When I was a student at Scottish Churches College, we had to attend a class for half an hour on the Bible. So Doctor Urquhart gave the argument that “If karma exists and I am suffering for my karma, who is the witness?”

But they do not know that the witness is God. The witness is Paramatma, the Supersoul. The Christians say “Holy Ghost.” He is seeing what you are doing. So according to your actions, the Holy Ghost gives you another birth. But the Lord is present in everyone’s heart, and He is observing. Bhramayan sarva-bhutani yantra-rudhani mayaya: “The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone’s heart and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine made of the material energy.”

Disciple 2: Srila Prabhupada, many Christians say that if a person doesn’t become fully aware of God in this life, then he doesn’t have another chance.

Srila Prabhupada: How can you say “one life”? That is a defective theory. Therefore, this philosophy cannot be accepted. Anything which is defective is not to be accepted.

Disciple: It is simply dogma.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. Mere dogma is rejected. That is the Vedic process.

Disciple 1: Actually, Christ never said that. He never said you have only one life.

Srila Prabhupada: So that is real philosophy. That is real philosophy.

Disciple 1: This idea of having just one life came from the Church fathers. Perhaps it was a way of applying pressure. “You get only one life, so follow our direction.”

Srila Prabhupada: That is all defective. Unscrupulous.

Disciple 3: Sometimes people say. “You cannot be successful unless you accept Christ, like us.”

Srila Prabhupada: We accept. Rather, you do not accept. Jesus Christ said. “Thou shalt not kill.” We strictly observe that, but you kill animals. You are not a Christian.

Disciple 4: But they may say, “The Ten Commandments are just an ideal. You’re not expected to follow them perfectly.”

Srila Prabhupada: No. That is your explanation. That is your concoction. As soon as you disobey the Ten Commandments, you are not a Christian. You are a heathen.

And the thing is that we should not discuss mere religious faith. Everyone has got his own concocted faith. That is not philosophy. Faith is different. “I believe,” “You believe,” “I don’t believe”—that is not philosophy.

In Bhagavad-gita, Lord Krishna explains, dehi ‘smi yatah dehe: “As the embodied soul continually passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change.”

Religion without philosophy is sentiment, and philosophy without religion is mental concoction. So religion should be combined with the philosophy of the soul. Then it is perfect.

Disciple 3: Srila Prabhupada, some people argue, though, that too much philosophy takes the joy out of life. They say God has put the world here for us to enjoy, so we will please Him by enjoying it.

Srila Prabhupada: You go at four A.M. to your place of work and come back at ten P.M. Is that enjoyment?

Disciple 3: But on the weekend we can go to the beach. And we can eat whatever we want.

Srila Prabhupada: No, no. You can go to hell, also. Janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi-duhkha-dosanudarsanam: think of the miseries of birth, death, old age, and disease. Those are there. If you are suffering from disease, where is the enjoyment? Mental discomfort, bodily discomfort—you are taking pills thrice daily for tranquility. Is that enjoyment?

Disciple 3: They say you have to take the good with the bad.

Srila Prabhupada: This is nonsense enjoyment. Fool’s paradise. For keeping the mind in tranquility, one is taking pills. For sleeping he is taking a pill. Does he enjoy that?

Disciple 3: By suffering you can get a deeper appreciation of your enjoyment

Srila Prabhupada: Then what is your enjoyment? Suffer. Then what do you call your enjoyment?
I considered myself a sort of Renaissance man in my own right. But through reading Srila Prabhupada’s profound works, I came to understand what I really wanted to pursue.

**by Satyaraja dasa**

July 10, 1975. It was a beautiful summer day. Although I was an exuberant twenty-year-old. I had no qualms about staying indoors on this occasion. I was being initiated into the ancient tradition of Krishna consciousness by my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the founder-acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

I had been working toward this for some time. When I joined the movement in 1973, my intention was to make a short experiment. I had just read Mahatma Gandhi’s autobiography. Experiments With Truth, and I romanticized how I would experiment in a similar way. Also, just before joining the movement, I had read Irving Stone’s Agony and the Ecstasy, a fictionalized account of Michelangelo’s life. I was fascinated by the great Renaissance man’s resolve to paint the Sistine Chapel upon the request of Pope Sixtus IV. Michelangelo’s work as a painter for the Pope necessitated a mood of surrender, for he considered himself primarily a sculptor.

I had fancied myself something other than a devotee of God. I was a musician, an artist, and somewhat of a scholar. So I considered myself a sort of Renaissance man in my own right. But through reading Srila Prabhupada’s profound works—translations of and commentaries on the ancient Vedic literature—I came to understand what I really wanted to pursue: God’s mission in this world.

Before coming to Krishna consciousness. I had read that religion originated in the East. Yoga groups and meditation centers back in America, while popular, did not satisfy my urge for a way of life that was completely spiritual. I took a short trip to India but returned dissatisfied. Traditional Hinduism seemed too dogmatic, with its many gods and family-based caste distinctions. Nonetheless, I knew that Hinduism had its roots in the Vedic literature and I became interested in this source of spiritual truth.

Knowing that the Vedas were written in Sanskrit I decided to enroll in a Sanskrit course at Queens College in New York. If I could learn the language, I reasoned, then I could interpret the texts for myself, and I wouldn’t have to rely on the commentaries of popular yogis and swamis.

My professor was using Srila Prabhupada’s Bhagavad-gita As It Is. I had read many editions of the Gita, but only after reading Srila Prabhupada’s version was I aware that Krishna is God Himself and that the plurality of gods for which Hinduism is so infamous is a fairly recent innovation. For me, this was an important revelation: the religion upon which Hinduism rests is strongly monotheistic!

I was also surprised to learn that caste distinction as interpreted by the British—and most modern Hindus—has little to do with what is actually taught in Vedic texts. While the popular misconception holds that one fits into a specific caste according to birthright, the Vedas—and especially Bhagavad-gita—teach that one’s quality and work determine one’s social position. A person is considered a brahmana, for instance, by virtue of his being an intellectual, not because he is born to a brahmana father. This is clear from the Sanskrit texts themselves. So my Sanskrit course helped me see the logic of the Vedic literature and the accuracy of Prabhupada’s translation and commentary.

More important for me, however, was the realization that Prabhupada was not only delivering Bhagavad-gita “as it is,” but was indeed espousing original Vedic culture as it is. I knew this was what I had been looking for.

As I became more familiar with the Sanskrit language and the ancient Vedic tradition to which it belongs, I became convinced of Srila Prabhupada’s authenticity. I felt compelled to visit his Hare Krishna center in New York City, which was listed in the back of my Bhagavad-gita.

Luckily, on a rainy spring day in 1973, Srila Prabhupada was lecturing at the Henry Street temple in Brooklyn. It was my first visit to the temple, and although Srila Prabhupada was always traveling, he was there on that day. I understand now that this arrangement was Krishna’s mercy on me, because, being quite a skeptic, no one short of Srila Prabhupada himself could have convinced me of the validity of Krishna consciousness.

Although I came with a battery of questions regarding metaphysical reality and ontological truth, I didn’t walk away disappointed. I was astounded by Srila Prabhupada’s lecture. Without my asking, he had answered all my questions—and then some!

Still, I maintained a healthy skepticism. The scriptures advise that one apply logic and reason in the pursuit of truth. So for a full year I studied Srila Prabhupada’s books closely, visited the temple, and asked questions. I adopted the basic practices of Krishna consciousness:
I started chanting the Hare Krishna mantra on beads every day, and I avoided meat-eating, illicit sex, intoxication, and gambling.

Seeking happiness, I had formerly indulged in all of these activities. But somehow, I knew, true happiness was eluding me, no matter how successful I was in enjoying my senses. In retrospect, I think that my prior indulgence served to reinforce my resolve, for despite my sensual gratification, I was becoming less and less happy. Although I was engaging in sinful life to numb the pain of material existence, it just wasn't working. Rather, I was becoming more and more entangled. The very activities I thought were bringing me pleasure and freedom were actually the source of my misery and bondage. I was embracing as the cure that which causes the disease.

In the beginning I faltered quite a bit. But as I became more steady in following the basic rules, I could feel my consciousness becoming purified. It gradually became easier to lead a purer life. Nonetheless, although things were becoming “easier,” they were still a challenge, and I didn't know if I had what it takes to make a lifetime commitment. Despite this period of uncertainty, however, my experiments became more and more serious.

In 1974, I saw Srila Prabhupada lecture at the Ratha-yatra (Festival of the Chariots) in San Francisco. After the lecture, Srila Prabhupada sang and danced with the devotees in glorification of God. He was happy, and everyone who watched him knew it. Here, I thought is someone who practices what he preaches. This event solidified my faith in the process of Krishna consciousness. I knew then and there that Srila Prabhupada was my spiritual guide and that I would one day be initiated by him. Whatever my reservations, I knew I had to make a commitment. If I didn’t I would be selling myself short.

As I became a more dedicated follower, I went out and distributed Srila Prabhupada’s books on a daily basis. I wanted to share this treasure that had somehow been bestowed upon me. To this end, I joined the Sri Sri Radha Damodara Sankirtana Party, a team of devotees who were absorbed in distributing his literature and message to the world.

***

February 28, 1975, was a cold day in Atlanta, Georgia. We had traveled there to meet with Srila Prabhupada, who was arriving from a successful lecture tour of Caracas and Miami. I was one of some three hundred enthusiastic devotees—both old and new—who were there to greet Prabhupada. Although many of us were uninitiated, we had made a serious commitment and there was talk that initiations would be forthcoming, perhaps six months away.
For the next four days, we heard Srila Prabhupada lecture every morning, expounding the basic philosophy of Krishna consciousness with unexcelled clarity and precision. Prabhupada knew that his explanations of the fundamentals would help his young novices preach to those whom they would meet on book distribution. By hearing Prabhupada explain the fundamentals in such a masterful way, I developed confidence in my own ability to convey the same truths to others.

During those early-morning winter lectures in Atlanta, an interesting phenomenon would occur on a daily basis: As I wanted to develop a more intimate relationship with Srila Prabhupada, I would plan out several deep philosophical questions before his lecture. I had hoped that after his talks I would have the opportunity to ask these questions and revel in the spiritual exchange. Without my asking, however, he would invariably answer my questions during his lecture. Sometimes I would even purposely think of questions that had no relation to the daily topic. But the questions were always answered.

By the fourth day, I was certain that this was more than mere coincidence. I was confident that, as my spiritual master, he knew my mind even better than I. As if in confirmation of this, after his lecture, he turned to me (I was sitting only a few feet away!) and said, "Are all questions answered?"

In response, I sat there with my mouth hanging open. Of course, it was not uncommon for him to say this at the end of his lectures, but in this instance he looked right into my eyes. It was fully appropriate, and for me it had very special meaning.

Before Srila Prabhupada was to leave Atlanta and we were to continue our travels throughout the country distributing his books, Tamal Krishna Goswami, the leader of our party, asked Srila Prabhupada if he would like to meet each of us. Wanting to give us special encouragement, Srila Prabhupada agreed.

Though I had seen Prabhupada on several occasions, regularly listened to his tapes, and carefully studied his books, this would be the first time I would actually meet him. I was nervous and excited. While this meeting would be important and certainly pleasurable in many ways, I knew that it would deepen my commitment to the spiritual path. That prompted a sense of fear. Was I ready? The "agony and the ecstasy" motif entered my mind. Michelangelo wanted to sculpt, but in surrendering to the will of the Pope, he had sculpted a new life for himself as a painter.

My eternal spiritual father, whom I had acknowledged as such for a mere two years, was now going to enter my life in a more intimate and personal way. As our Radha Damodara Party danced through the door to his room singing the names of Krishna, I felt our relationship...
A cement that keeps your home strong, safe and together for generations to come.
deepen—all of us as Godbrothers under our spiritual father, Srila Prabhupada.

One after another we were introduced to Prabhupada. We each offered him a fragrant flower, which he graciously accepted, and then we offered our prostrated obeisances. Prabhupada smiled with great delight as Tamal Krishna Goswami explained to him our respective services.

“This is Tom,” Tamal Krishna Goswami said. “He fixes the buses in which the devotees travel.” Prabhupada nodded approvingly. “This is Danny. He does the cleaning. Mike assists with the cooking. Bob distributes your books ...”

“Oh?” Prabhupada interrupted. “This is very nice!” It was clear that Prabhupada had a preference for seeing his books distributed. All other services were valuable in that they assisted this one service of transmitting transcendental knowledge and love of God.

I was up next. Also a book distributor, I felt somewhat confident that Prabhupada would be pleased with my service. “This is Steve.” said Tamal Krishna Goswami, “and he distributes your books as well.” No reaction. As I went to offer him the flower, I realized that the same phenomenon had occurred again. Since he had just expressed his delight with the previous book distributor, there was no need to say anything new to me. It was just like his answering my questions before I asked them.

Still, after a few, moments. Prabhupada looked up at me with folded hands and said, “Thank you very much.” I immediately felt a spiritual reciprocation I had never felt before. He appreciated my service. And I appreciated his encouragement. In that moment I realized that I was in the presence of my spiritual father.

* * *

Four months passed. We were traveling throughout the U. S. delivering the message of Krishna consciousness. It was early July, and we were told that Prabhupada would meet us in Chicago to formally initiate those of us who were true to our vows. Seventy-five young devotees would now strengthen their link with the Vedic tradition through the holy rite of initiation, and then we would all attend the 1975 Festival of the Chariots in Chicago.

Again we spent many mornings listening to Prabhupada lecture from Srimad-Bhagavatam. This time several hundred devotees gathered in the huge hall of the Evanston temple. Prabhupada took this opportunity to expound on the life of Ajamila, a sinful person who at the time of death had saved himself by calling out the name of God: "Narayana! Narayana!"

Prabhupada enjoyed telling this story, for here the power of the holy name is evident. Ajamila had named his son Narayana, a name for God, and at the time of death Ajamila called out for the boy with full sincerity. Because he called the name of Narayana, he was saved from
death and was given the chance to attain spiritual perfection. “Just see,” said Srila Prabhupada. This is the potency of the holy name. Even if chanted inadvertently, it has tremendous effect

On the fourth day of Prabhupada’s Chicago lectures, another miracle occurred. After repeating Narayana’s name many times in telling the story of Ajamila, Srila Prabhupada fell into trance. This was something he rarely did in public. An intense silence engulfed the room. We all felt blessed to witness this transcendental phenomenon. Through purely calling out Narayana’s name. Prabhupada was seeing Narayana face to face. His trancelike state and his inability to speak lasted two minutes. Although I had read about the ecstatic symptoms of a pure devotee. I was amazed to see them. Those of us who were in the room will never forget his spiritually uplifting expression.

After two seemingly eternal minutes, Srila Prabhupada said, “All right. Thank you very much.” He then gestured that kirtana should begin, and one of the most intense chanting sessions I had ever experienced permeated the large hall.

Then came the initiation. Anticipation filled my heart. My imagination went wild. I pictured sages in ancient times taking part in similar ceremonies on the banks of India’s holy rivers. Now I would have the good fortune to follow in their footsteps. I looked forward to the exotic and colourful initiation ceremony, which includes a purificatory fire sacrifice. I had imagined this in my mind’s eye for many months. The room would be filled with smoke from the flames of the ancient Vaishnava ceremony. I was familiar with the initiation procedure, for I had several months earlier been to the initiation of my senior Godbrothers. Each initiate would come before Srila Prabhupada, who would give him or her a set of chanting beads and a spiritual name. This name is usually one of the names of Krishna (or of one of His eternal associates) followed by the word dasa (for men) or devi-dasi (for women), both of which mean “servant.” The name reminds the disciple that he or she is a servant of God.

Now my own initiation was about to take place. Srila Prabhupada started calling devotees one by one. There were seventy-five of us, so my fear was alleviated by the fact that I was not alone. Still, the agony-and-the-ecstasy concept ran through my mind as I thought of the sacrificial fire soon to be ignited. My entire life up to the point of initiation ran before my eyes. Knowing that in Sanskrit the fire is called the agni-hotra, I started to play mental word games: “The agni and the ecstasy.” I thought this was not a time to play games, however, and I made an internal promise to be more serious.

The fire at such sacrifices is always a marvelous thing to behold. In this particular situation, however. I had mixed feelings. On the one hand. I could hardly wait for Srila Prabhupada to call my name, so we could get on with the beautiful fire sacrifice. On the other hand, I was nervous as hell! The commitment of life-long dedication is frightening. But I knew that one can get out of Krishna consciousness only what one is ready to put into it. I had made up my mind.

To ease my tension. I had enjoyed watching several of Prabhupada’s senior disciples spread coloured dyes over the dirt mound in decorative crisscrosses just prior to the sacrifice. “What is actually being sacrificed?” I began to ask myself. Surely it was mainly my false ego, my false sense of proprietorship. I was now acknowledging that I am not God but, rather. His blissful servant

“Ah, to be a servant of God,” I thought, “—this is no ordinary thing.”

No sooner was I thinking in this way than I heard someone call out my name. It was Tamal Krishna Goswami. He was calling me forward to be initiated by Srila Prabhupada. I took a deep breath and approached Prabhupada’s seat. As he handed me the beads, he said, “Do you know the four rules?”

“Yes,” I answered. “No intoxication, no illicit sex, no meat-eating, and no gambling.” I had been practicing what to say so I wouldn’t muffle it.

“Correct.” Prabhupada said. “Follow these four principles and chant a minimum of sixteen rounds on your beads every day. Hare Krishna.” Then the moment I had been waiting for: “Your name is Satyaraja.”

I immediately looked over at one of my traveling mates who knew Sanskrit better than I. “It means ‘king of truth.” he said. I looked back at Prabhupada with a sense of pride. Yes, this is me—I am the king of truth! Prabhupada looked me squarely in the eyes and revealed the handy little affix: “Dasa!”

I felt two inches tall. Here I was trying to remember that the real sacrifice was the sacrifice of my false ego, and Prabhupada had shown me. by pausing before saying “ dasa,” that I was still anxious to think of myself as something special. In short, I was inadvertently trying to be an imitation God. Prabhupada had lectured many times explaining that this in fact is the very reason for our material existence: the endeavour to replace the Lord and be the central enjoyer of all we survey. Prabhupada taught me a valuable lesson at the initiation by reminding me that I was merely a humble servant of “the king of truth.”

As I walked away from his seat with my beads and new name—Satyaraja dasa—I also walked away from the agony-and-the-ecstasy concept. The agony. I realized, was merely a product of my rebellion against God. Now, through Prabhupada’s grace. I realized that I am constitutionally a servant of God. So the agony was gone. As I watched the sacrificial fire burn away. I knew all that was left was ecstasy. 🌺
The enchanting feminine beauty

Thirumogur Kalamegha Perumal Kovil

by Sampathkumara Ramanuja Dasan (Adv. Ashwin S.)

Ten kilometers from Madurai is the temple of the Supreme Lord in a fortified city called Thirumogur.

The Legend

The demon named Vrka, a son of Shakuni, once met Narada in the sky. The wicked asura asked which of the three chief gods could be pleased most quickly. Narada told him, “Worship Lord Shiva and you will soon achieve success. He quickly becomes pleased by seeing his worshiper’s slightest good qualities. It is said that Lord Shiva is easily pleased (Ashutosh) and he is called Bhola, bhola meaning innocent or child-like. A person who dropped vilwa leaves on the lingam from a tree top to keep awake and from falling down on a Shiva Rathri day is blessed to be in Shivaloka. The rat which unknowingly caused the lamp in a Shiva temple to light up with its tail became the great Maha Bali. Kannappa brought Shiva meat which was chewed by himself to ensure good taste and he poured the cherished water from his very mouth and Shiva accepted it all whole heartedly, as he just wants pure devotion.

Way up in the Himalayas, in the holy town of Kedarnath where the snow never melts, there sat Vrka performing severe penance. He became a devotee of Lord Shiva and had spent many, many hundreds of years with no thought for food or clothing, heat or cold, sun or snow, with his mind fixed on Lord Shiva. “Shiva-Shiva, Shiva-Shiva, Shiva-Shiva.” As Shiva did not appear before him despite these austerities, Shiva appeared out of the sacrificial fire, looking like the god of fire himself, and grabbed both arms of the demon to stop him from killing himself, just as we would do. By Lord Shiva’s touch, Vrka once again became whole.

Vrka saw Lord Shiva shining like the morning sun. He was the supreme ascetic, dressed in deer skin, body smeared with ashes, locks matted, snakes dangling around his neck and arms, his hand holding aloft the divine Trishul. Ah, what a magnificent sight he made in all his ascetic glory! The demon’s eyes were dazzled. He was speechless with wonder at this beautiful form: “Shiva-Shiva, Shiva-Shiva, Shiva-Shiva.”

Shiva spoke gently to the awe-struck Vrka. He said, “I am pleased with the severe penance you have performed. Ask of me any boon you desire. Ask of me whatever you want, and I will bestow that boon upon you. Alas, you have subjected your body to great torment for no reason, since I am pleased with a simple offering of water from those who approach me for shelter.” Vrka said, “I must indeed be a great tapasvi, as Lord Shiva has granted me a boon.” He said aloud, “Lord, grant that whatever object I touch with my right hand will be immediately reduced to ashes. Shiva Shiva!”

Although he had performed such rigorous penance, the demon still had a demonic mind. What a boon it was to be able to touch anything in the universe and instantly reduce it to ashes. What a boon it would be to have the power to instantly destroy all the asuras! What a boon it would be to have such a powerful boon! Vrka thought, “I must indeed be a great tapasvi, as Lord Shiva has granted me a boon.”

Thus Vrka came to be known as Bhasmasura (or the asura whose ability is to reduce his opponents to ashes).

To test Lord Shiva’s benediction, the demon then tried to put his hand on the Lord’s head. The wicked demon thought that once he burns up Lord Shiva’s head there would be nobody greater than himself.

Panic arose in Shiva’s heart. He knew that if he complied with Bhasmasura’s request he would surely turn to ashes. And if he was no more, the world would come to a chaotic end. Yet, once having granted a boon, how could he take it back? There was only one way out of his sticky situation - he would have to run!

And run he did. Clutching his trident, Shiva ran as fast as his legs would carry him. He ran over mountain and down valleys, he crossed rivers and lakes, he ran across vast plains and fields, he passed peaceful asramas and huts, he ran through dark, dense forests and light, cheerful woods—why Bhasmasura never far behind!

As the demon pursued him, Lord Shiva fled swiftly to his abode in the north, shaking with terror. He ran as far as the limits of the earth, the sky and the corners of the universe. The other great demigods could only remain silent, not knowing how to counteract the benediction.

What a strange sight it was - the lord of the material universe running for his life, pursued by an evil-minded Rakshasa! The hearts of the birds fluttered as they twittered away from tree-tops. The animals stared with huge startled eyes as they scampered away out of the way. And the chase went on - Shiva, panic stricken, panting ahead; Bhasmasura, thirsty to test his unintelligent boon, close on his heels!

Shiva was now getting out of breath. The chase had been long and tiring. Yet, what could he do? He had to press on. But he was beginning to feel that unless something happened soon, Bhasmasura would have his way.

Then Lord Shiva reached the luminous realm of Vaikuntha, beyond all darkness, where the Supreme Lord Narayana resides. That realm is the destination of renunciants who have attained peace and given up all violence against other creatures. Going there, one never returns.

At this time in Vaikuntha, Vishnu was watching this unusual occurrence with amused interest. He thought that Shiva had been sufficiently punished for carelessly granting such a boon. It is said that Lord Shiva does not see pros and cons when granting boons, and that he suffers sometimes because of this. It was time now to go and help him - after all, Shiva is the greatest devotee of the Supreme Lord Hari.

Shiva had just turned round the shoulder of a mountain and Bhasmasura had not yet reached the bend. Vishnu transformed himself into a delightful maiden, shy and beautiful and stood at the bend. As Bhasmasura came panting up, on Shiva’s pursuit, this girl Mohini, gently caught his hand and said, “Maharaj! You look very tired indeed. Why are you running so fast? Come! My father’s asrama is not far away. Rest there a bit, take some refreshment and you will feel rejuvenated to start with renewed vigour.”

Bhasmasura shook off her hand impatiently and said, “O, let me go! That wretched Shiva will get away! I want to touch his head with my right hand so he will be burnt to ashes and I can then become lord of the three worlds.”

He was about to run ahead when he beheld Mohini properly. Her form filled his sight - lovely black tresses, smooth fair brow, large doe-like eyes and small delicate mouth - he looked at the shapely wrist and fingers resting lightly on his arm, lissome body, fair feet with tinkling anklets and he forgot all about Shiva and his boon. He looked Mohini up and down, not twice, but over and over again. Desire welled in his heart for this stunning beauty.

He lunged forward to catch her, but Mohini quickly stepped back. Then Bhasmasura said, “You are so very beautiful, Mohini. I want you to be my bride. Will you marry me?”

Mohini started walking from Vaikuntha to Bhuloka slowly. The asura was so mesmerised with the beauty of Mohini that did not notice that they reached the holy town of Thirumogur in Bhuloka.

The demon heard Mohini’s rippling laugh. She said, “Maharaj, how can I trust you? The man I marry must never have another wife. Once he marries me, he should never marry again. But you asuras have so many, many wives. No, it cannot be.” Saying this, she let out a long,
wistful sigh.

Bhasmasura, now crazy with desire, said, "Mohini, I promise you that if you become my wife I will not so much as look at another woman. Please, please consent to marry me."

Mohini looked at Bhasmasura and then looked modestly away. "O, you men. I know you are all the same. None of you are to be trusted. Promises! Promises! But you never stick to them. No, I shall not be satisfied till you place your hand on your head and swear that you will not marry again if I become your wife."

Bhasmasura now thoroughly caught up in this net of maya, quickly said, "Mohini, I swear-" he began and touched his head. But he never lived even to complete his sentence. For, the moment he placed his right hand on his head, he burnt to a heap of ashes.

Meanwhile, Shiva was still heaving and panting as he ran along. He looked nervously over his shoulder to see how close Bhasmasura was. But for quite a distance behind did not see the demon.

So he retraced his steps and reached that very bend. There he saw a huge heap of ashes and the most beautiful girl standing next to it. He asked her if she knew what had happened to Bhasmasura. Very modestly, she narrated all that had happened.

Shiva was very pleased with her timely assistance. Above all he was pleased with the way she praised him, "Shiva, I saw you running and sensed your distress. I saw you were in need of help. Had Bhasmasura caught up with you and placed his hand on your head, where would have been the poor creatures of this earth? Therefore, I tricked him into placing his hand on his own head by asking him to swear that he would never marry anyone else if I agreed to marry him."

Shiva beamed. He tried to embrace her. But she slipped from his arms. He was bewildered. There was no sign of Mohini anywhere! Instead, there stood the beautiful resplendent form of the four-armed Lord Vishnu, the corners of His mouth turned upwards in a gentle smile.

Shiva smiled too, as he realized that once again the Supreme Protector of the Universe had run to the aid of the good and maneuvered the destruction of the evil. The Supreme Personality of Godhead then addressed Lord Shiva, who was now out of danger, “Just see how this wicked man has been killed by his own sinful reactions. Indeed, what living being can hope for good fortune if he offends exalted saints, what to speak of offending the lord and spiritual master of the material universe?” Lord Hari is the directly manifest Absolute Truth, the Supreme Soul and unlimited ocean of inconceivable energies. Anyone who recites or hears this pastime of His saving Lord Shiva will be freed from all enemies and the repetition of birth and death.

This pastime of the Supreme Lord of killing Bhasmasura took place in the holy town of Thirumogur. Lord is seen here as the incarnation in deity form of He who came to the rescue of Lord Shiva.
The Temple

The temple is in a calm and serene village. There is an impressive 5 tiered gopuram with statues of the sentinels of the Supreme Lord along with many pastimes of Srimad Bhagavatam.

The temple is situated on 2.5-acres. It is more than 2000 years old and has been referred to in the Bhavishya Purana as well as the Tamil sangam literature work Silapathikaram.

Past the five-tiered rajagopuram, there is a pillared hall leading to the Garuda hall, which has a small gopuram. There are four prakarams or closed precincts inside the temple. Each of the prakarams has many shrines. Under the Kethaki vimanam is the main sanctum sanctorum. The main Deity, Kalamegha Perumal, is bewitchingly beautiful and seen in a standing posture. He holds five weapons: Sudarshana disc, Panchajanya conch, Gomodaka mace, Sarga bow, and Nandaka sword. The sanctum houses the shrine of the utsava with Bhudevi and Sridevi. The major feature is that the unlike other temples, the Devis do not touch the feet of the presiding deity. Mahalakshmi is housed in a separate shrine and she is affectionately referred to as Moghavalli Thayar. The beautiful utsava or festival deity of the Supreme Lord is lovingly called Sri Thirumogur Apthan by devotees as. A vast temple pond, Kshirabdi Pushkarini, is seen next to the temple. In this temple, the lord is seen in another shrine, lying on His Adishesha couch. This unique form is called Prarthana Shayana form .The Prathana Shayana appearance of the main Deity is not found anywhere else in 108 divya desam temples.

The most important sub-shrine in the temple is dedicated to Sudarshana, the discus of the Supreme Lord. Sudarshana is a great devotee of the Supreme Lord. This Sudarshana Chakra at Thirumogur is famous. Referred to locally as Chakkarathalwar, He has 16 hands with 16 weapons, feet in running posture and 154 holy mantra letters. He has three eyes glowing like fire. This is the only temple where the Sudarshana deity has all these special aspects. Although there are Sudarshana shrine in other famous Vaishnava temples as Srirangam, Kancheepuram and Srivilliputhur, this is the only shrine where He appears with such holy letters. On the same deity form, behind Chakrathalwar, is yoga Narasimhar known as Narasimha Sudarshanan.

Prarthana Shyanam

Festivals

There are weekly, monthly and fortnightly festivals performed in the temple. The major festival is the ten day Vaikashi Brahmotsava celebrated during May-June. The other festivals are Vaikuntha Ekadashi (December-January), Gajendra Moksham during the Masi Purnima day in February-March, two day Panguni Thirukalyanam (March-April) and Krishna Jayanthi.

Thirumangai Alwar and Nammalwar have sung about the Supreme Lord here.

Nammalwar expresses his devotion in the following lines:

The whole place of Thirumogur is filled with paddy fields; and these fields are situated next to very many beautiful lotus ponds. Such a lovely beautiful fertile place is Thirumogur. At this divine place, Kalamegha Perumal is permanently present on His own desire and happiness. He is the one who killed asuras. This Kalamegha Perumal- with those four strong capable shoulders, black curly long tresses, beautiful red lotus-like eyes and mouth- there is no one for us except Him for support and refuge.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead- the one who wears cool, fresh tulasi garland, the one who has thousands of great names- is permanently present at Thirumogur. There, Vedic scholars (of all four Vedas) live. There is no other refuge for me except the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead who shows Himself at Thirumogur as Kalamegha Perumal. There is no asylum for me in this birth except the shade of His lotus feet.

Brahma and Shiva, along with other demigods, went to Srirman Narayanan and prayed many times saying, “There is no shelter for us except You,” and requested
Him to destroy asuras. He destroyed asuras and saved all three worlds. The Supreme Personality of Godhead who considers the destruction of asuras as His duty, is present at this place Thirumogur. To get rid of all our problems, sorrows, pains, and sins, let us reach this Supreme Personality of Godhead at Thirumogur and get saved!

Demigods and rishis go to the Supreme Personality of Godhead who reclines on Adhishesha as His bed, pray to Him requesting Him to bless them to alleviate their sorrows and hurdles. The brightest light of the Lord also most willingly blesses them and He presents Himself at Thirumogur for earthly people like us. Let us praise and pay obeisance to His feet.

Oh Devotees! Come one! Come All! Get your sins and sorrows removed and be saved by holding tightly to the feet of Kalamegha Perumal!

The unparalleled, unmatched, peerless Supreme Personality of Godhead is supremely unequal to any one; He is the cause for everyone and everything; He takes beautiful illustrious forms for us; He is the one who measured the entire universe! Oh servants of that Supreme Personality of Godhead! Come here! Let us all dance and sing, paying obeisance to Him! This divya desam is the most beautiful fertile place. All of you come to this place to worship Him. Let us get ourselves immersed in our bhakti and dance with unalloyed bhakti for the supreme personality of Godhead.

Lord Krishna is the dancer and is the one who saved the cows; He is the Yama For the adhamic asuras; He is the same one who grants us happiness for us, demigods and rishis who pay obeisance to Him and worship Him. This Supreme Lord is showing Himself willingly for us at Thirumogur. Except for His lotus feet, there is nothing else that can protect and safeguard us.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the primordial chief who created the waters everywhere and created Brahma and all the worlds. This greatest, most wonderful master is of such gentle nature that He presents Himself for us at Thirumogur. We should visit this divya desam and all our sins will simply vanish. There is no better safer place for us than here.

Oh bhagavatas! Worship Thirumogur Kalamegha Perumal. That Supreme Lord Sri Rama, who was born as the beautiful pond of emerald stone as the son of King Dasharatha, and who killed various asuras of effortlessly. He who appeared as Rama is here (very much in our midst) as a Deity in this divya desam of Thirumogur. If you pay obeisance to Him, all your sorrows will automatically disappear.

The Supreme Lord has the most beautiful feet similar like a clear cut pond. That Lord of ours has flower- like eyes, red coral lips, and beautiful broad shoulders. The omnipotent, most capable Lord- who can destroy asuras at any time under any circumstances (Narasimha, Hayagreeva, Krishna, Yamana – all these lilas are unique and amazing!) - that Lord is presenting Himself permanently at Thirumogur so beautifully and so gracefully which is so easily accessible.

When the cruel asuras trouble demigods, the terrified demigods approach the Supreme Lord and pray to Him with folded palms saying, “Oh Lord! You are a massive rampart to us and protect us. Please save us!” He takes the form out of His desire, and destroys the asuras and saves the demigods. Such a merciful Lord who rushes to protect all those who surrender to Him (for any help whatsoever)- is here at Thirumogur gracefully. Hence, Oh my dear ones, devotees! Learn to utter Thirumogur Lord’s name and praise Him openly, by paying obeisance to Him.

“Oh my dear ones, praise Me!” said Krishna, and danced! About this Dancer, the Supreme Personality of Godhead- in praise of this Lord of Thirumogur, Nammalwar of Thirukkurugoorn has sung 1000 pasurams. Out of those 1000, those who read and learn these ten (which are equal and identical to performing service to the Lord Himself) will be able to get all their sorrows destroyed completely.

Photo courtesy: Santhanakrishnan, Srirangam
Let Go and Let Krishna

Because the origin of all fear and anxiety is separation from Krishna, the cure is to take shelter of Him.

by Archana-siddhi Devi Dasi

I remember as a child climbing up the metal ladder of what seemed like a towering playground slide. With each step up, my legs quivered uncontrollably and my heart beat rapidly. When I reached the top rung, I stared down at the ground, feeling dizzy and overwhelmed with fright. What had started out as excitement now turned to panic. My father, standing at the bottom of the slide, urged me to slide down, but fear paralyzed my muscles, and I stood frozen. I thought of climbing back down, but several children were now perched on the rungs, anxiously waiting for me to take my turn. They began to shout tauntingly, hoping to make me move. Feeling trapped by overpowering fear, I began to cry.

My father, realizing that I was beyond prodding, crawled up the slide and rescued me. Relieved but embarrassed, I looked back at the slide, which seemed an insurmountable mountain. This was one of my first recollections of being consumed by the irresistible power of fear.

Now, over forty years later, I often work with clients whose quality of life is greatly diminished by fear or anxiety. Sometimes the fear is circumscribed by a single object or event, such as elevators, flying, snakes, or dead bodies. But in many cases, the anxious feelings pervade their lives, making even the simplest tasks difficult. Afraid of making the wrong decision, of saying something inappropriate, of being judged, they weave a cocoon of anxious strands around their subtle bodies, restricting their ability to live happily and peacefully.

Physician, Heal Thyself

Many self-help books target this most debilitating disorder. One of the most popular is The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook, by psychologist Dr. Edmund Bourne. Having suffered from a severe anxiety disorder, he compiled this workbook of techniques ranging from relaxation to desensitization. Readers found varying degrees of relief, and Dr. Bourne became a well-known authority on the subject.

Some time after his popular book came out, Dr. Bourne himself became incapacitated by anxiety. All the practices he prescribed in his book did little to help him find respite from his scorching psychic pain. Finding no material solution, he sought relief from spiritual practices. In his latest book, Freedom from Fear, he shares his journey to his partial recovery. In essence, he recognizes that the underlying cause of anxiety is lack of trust in a higher power.

His realization is corroborated in all the major scriptures of the world. In the Vedic scriptures the eternal spiritual world is called Vaikuntha, “free from anxiety.” All the residents there act for the pleasure of the Lord. Their every action is motivated by their deep love for God. Having no separate interest from His, they experience freedom from all worry.

In the material world, most of us are focused on gratifying our own senses. We act independent of our creator and try to enjoy separately from Him. This separation is the origin of our anxiety.

Recently I was watching a toddler assert his independence from his mother by running away from her. He was laughing and enjoying his newfound power. But when she hid from his view, he became very anxious and started to cry. The mother, seeing his anguish, appeared before him and assuaged his fears.

In many ways we are like that small child; we have tried to become independent of God and in the process have become lost from our very source of solace and comfort. But unlike the child, who knew he wanted to find his mother, we don't know what we have lost or what to look for. In our distress, we look for other solutions, many of them destructive and against our real self-interest. When we realize the futility of all material solutions, we can turn to the Lord for shelter.

Seeing the Positive

Krishna has expertly designed the material world to rectify our separatist mentality. If we decide to live in line with the purpose of the creator, then we'll see the environment as favourable for our spiritual progress. We'll see things, good or bad, as coming from the Lord, and we'll understand how to use them in ways that will assist us on our path of self-realization.

Much of the anxiety we experience is unnecessary and obstructs our emotional well-being and spiritual progress. But anxiety and fear can also help us navigate this temporal existence. Had I not felt some anxiety about failing in college, I might never have gone to my classes and obtained a degree. Fear of dangerous situations has helped to protect me from an untimely death. Most important, my anxiety about finding meaning and purpose in my life and my fear of death and beyond brought me into the association of devotees.

After practicing Krishna consciousness for over twenty-seven years, am I free from toxic material anxieties and fears? No, I've made significant progress, but I'm still confronted with situations that test my dependence on
the Lord. Recently my husband and I put our house up for sale after starting to build a home at Prabhupada Village in Sandy Ridge, North Carolina. We planned things so that we would have a smooth transition from our house in Baltimore to our new home. Our house sold on the first day it went on the market, but the buyers were willing to rent it back to us for two months, while our new house was being built. But our new house progressed slowly, and it soon became evident that we were going to be homeless and would have to rely on the generosity of friends and relatives.

My anxiety became intense, and I had trouble sleeping at night. I was able to easily diagnose my problem as a lack of trust in Krishna’s plan for us. In the Bhagavad-gita Krishna tells us to depend on Him in all our endeavours, and I was clearly negligent in following that instruction. As a result, I was suffering from an unhealthy anxiety.

Focus on Chanting

Since I have experienced such lack of dependence on Krishna in many situations, I have had many opportunities to practice reversing my consciousness, and here was another chance.

My initial reaction was to resist the anxious feelings, but experience has taught me to sit with the feelings and allow them to be what they are. Fighting against the nervous energy will generally intensify the feelings. I have learned to breathe deeply, which relaxes my body, calms my mind, and allows me to focus on chanting the Lord’s holy names in a prayerful mood. To chant with attention, I bargain with my mind to allow me to hear the holy name without nagging distractions. In exchange I agree to give my full attention to the problem after I’m done. I generally have to renegotiate this agreement several times throughout the course of my japa meditation.

While the ultimate purpose of our chanting is to free us from material identification, uncover our spiritual identity, and awaken our love for Krishna, we must deal with the immediate problems that impede our progress. A good chanting session has always helped me see things in proper perspective and remember my ultimate purpose in life—to fully trust and depend on my Lord Krishna, a prerequisite to developing pure love for Him.

I also repeatedly tell myself, “Krishna is my dearest friend and well-wisher, and everything He does is for my highest good.” A favourite saying in God-centered self-help groups is “Let go and let God.” This is a high ideal for any practitioner of a spiritual path.

In the Mahabharata we find the famous story of Draupadi and the gambling match. Draupadi was the beautiful and chaste wife of the exalted Pandavas.

In an effort to bring shame and ruin to her spotless reputation, the Pandavas’ envious cousins tried to disrobe her in a public forum. Because of the politics of the time, no one could stop the atrocity.

As the wicked Duhshasana licentiously pulled at her sari, Draupadi, filled with fear, held onto the cloth with one hand and petitioned Krishna with the other. Realizing she had no other shelter than the Lord, she literally and figuratively let go and let God, raising both hands in supplication to Lord Krishna. At the moment she stopped trying to control her situation and fully surrendered to the Lord’s will, He gave her full protection by providing unlimited cloth.

My anxiety about our lack of a home subsided when I took shelter of my spiritual practices and the teachings of the scriptures. I was able to spiritually realign my consciousness and begin to face the problem of finding a place to live. My husband and I generated a list of options, and I tried to see the benefits of the situation. The most attractive benefit was the opportunity to spend more intimate time with friends and family. I also tried to understand what lessons I could learn from this anxiety-provoking situation. An obvious one was to depend on Krishna in all circumstances; another was to be patient—a point I frequently have to revisit.

I find it helpful to keep a journal of situations in which I’ve been worried and fearful about the outcome. In retrospect I often see how ingeniously Krishna orchestrated events to bring about a favourable conclusion. These experiences serve to increase my faith that Krishna loves me and that His actions are directed to bringing me back to Him. And I know that if I practice dealing with day-to-day anxieties in a Krishna conscious way, that will help me face the inevitable problems of old age and death, the ultimate fearful situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fasting</th>
<th>Festivals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>Ekadashi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 19</td>
<td>Fasting till noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 5</td>
<td>Ekadashi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 6</td>
<td>break fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 14</td>
<td>Sri Advaita Acharya - Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 19</td>
<td>Sri Varahadeva - Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 20</td>
<td>Nityananada Trayodishi - Appearance of S Nityananada Prabhu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 27</td>
<td>Ratha Yatra in Chennai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 28</td>
<td>Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura - Appearance</td>
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Fasting till noon
Fasting observed the previous day till noon
Fasting till noon
Fasting till noon
Core of religion is Mysticism — Hon. Former Chief Justice M. N. Venkatachalaiah

BANGALORE, January 10, 2016: The Honourable Former Chief Justice of India Sri M. N. Venkatachalaiah said that “the core of religion is not dogmas, traditions and practices but the mystical experience of going beyond prakriti. Supreme Lord Krishna is the essence of true mysticism of India whom great saints experienced and passed it on generation to generations.” The former chief of apex court of India, known for his erudite scholarship and in-depth understanding of various subjects, was speaking at a seminar organized to analyze various literary aspects of the book Mahasadhaka, a biography of Srila Prabhupada written by Dr. Babu Krishna Murthy, held at ISKCON today. The book is a first-of-the-kind attempt at presenting the life of one the greatest religious reformers of India to the masses in the form of a novel.

Hon. Justice Venkatachalaiah went on to further state that Srila Prabhupada is a great saint who spread the knowledge about Krishna worldwide and he was very happy to read this biographical novel written by Dr. Babu Krishna Murthy and also to write the Preface for the same.

In an age of frivolity and shallowness, author Dr. Babu Krishnamurthy’s book strikes at the core of leadership. It puts forth before its reader, the true essence of leadership. In Mahasadhaka, we find the story of a triumph of transformation of hearts. In an age of unethical triumphs, Dr. Babu’s book narrates to us a life of a tireless saint of spotless character and integrity who calls us back to Bhagavad-gita. In an age that wreaks of manipulative methods, Dr. Babu narrates to us a story of a saint who brought about transformation of hearts of thousands of followers through prayer, dependence on God, and genuine qualities of spiritual leadership. In many ways this book redefines what it means to be a “successful” spiritual leader. In other words, it shows a new way to what is true success when it comes to leadership. Mahasadhaka reiterates through the personal
example of its hero Srila Prabhupada, that the true leader is one who leads by example, one who dedicates himself to the Supreme, and one who is a real servant of the Lord and well-wisher for all.

We are bombarded every day with different benchmarks for successful leadership. We are generally taught lessons on leadership focusing merely on externals without change of character. But through this gripping novel, one is immediately reoriented to the essential aspects of leadership: Lead by example, be true to the word of God and genuinely wish and serve one and all. Thus we see before us an illuminating story of leadership which succeeded not because of outward charisma but due to inherent humility of the leader.

Speaking on the occasion, His Grace Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa, President, ISKCON, Bangalore said “Srila Prabhupada is indeed a true ambassador of Indian culture. When he landed in UK and was asked what have you come here for, he said “I have come here to give you what you could not loot, the true Indian culture”. Thousands of western youth were transformed by Prabhupada, thus he is a true ambassador of Indian culture. True to these words, in a just a few years Srila Prabhupada implanted Indian culture eventually in every important city of the western world. Srila Prabhupada firmly believed that “Humility is the hallmark of the spiritual leader.” He said, “I really pray that God would continue to sow the seeds of humility in me, and not give up until my dependence is truly rooted and grounded in Him.” "Prevailing prayer “Hare Krishna Chant "that moves people is the outcome of a correct relationship with God." That is the essence of influence and the essence of leadership - a heartfelt dependence on God through prayer."

Among others who were present on this occasion to critique on the various aspects of the book were eminent scholars like Mallepuram G. Venkatesh, Dr. V.B. Aarti, Dr. Ashwath Narayana, Dr. Manjunath Belvadi, Dr. G.B. Harish, Dr. H.N. Muralidhar, Dr. S.R. Leela, Dr. Jayanthi Manohar, Sri Belur Ramamurthy and Sri Ishwar Chandra.

Mahasadhaka is an insightful compass that points back to the nature of true leadership - spiritual influence. From understanding the motivating factors to lead and assessing the viability of leading, from giving the essential qualities of leadership to helping count the cost of it, from giving specific essential qualities of leadership to casting the vision of developing the next generation of leaders, Mahasadhaka is a classic guide for any leader who desires to lead spiritually.
BANGALORE:
Dignitaries at the inauguration: (l-r) Sri N L Narendra Babu (Ex MLA), Sri Chanchalapathi Dasa (Vice President, ISKCON Bangalore), Sri Mallepuram G Venkatesh (Former VC, Karnataka Sanskrit University), Sri M A Lakshmi Tatachar (President, Samskriti Foundation), Smt. S P Hemalatha Gopalaiah (Deputy Mayor, Bangalore), Sri K Gopalaiah (MLA, Mahalakshmi Layout, Bangalore), Sri Badregowda B (BBMP Corporator, Nagapura Ward).
MYSORE: Inauguration by Chief Guest Sri Yaduveera Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, Maharaja of Mysore.

HUBLI: Inauguration address by Chief Guest Sri Pralhad Joshi, President, Bharatiya Janata Party, Karnataka.
“Bhojanamrita” – Telangana’s first centralized hitech kitchen. Adding a feather to its feeding activities Hare Krishna Movement (HKM) has established a centralized Hitech Kitchen at Narsigi, Kokapet, RR Dist. to provide hot and nutritious meals to the beneficiaries. This hitech kitchen was inaugurated by Sri K T Rama Rao, Hon’ble Minister for IT and Panchayat Raj.

The special guests for this programme were Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa (Chairman of Akshaya Patra and President of ISKCON Bangalore), Sri Mahender Reddy (Hon’ble Minister for Transport), Sri Vishweshwar Reddy (Hon’ble MP of Chevella), Sri Prakash Goud (Hon’ble MLA of Rajendranagar), Sri Janardhan Reddy IAS (GHMC Commissioner), Sri Raghunandan Rao IAS (RR Dist Collector), Sri Vinod Agarwal IAS, Sri Ravi Kiran (Addl. Commissioner GHMC), Smt Prasanna Ashok Yadav (Sarpanch of Narsingi), Sri Nityananda Reddy (Vice Chairman of Aurobindo Pharma), Sri Shiva Shankar Agarwal (President of Sri Krishna Goseva Mandal) and Sri Satya Gaura Chandra Dasa (President of Hare Krishna Movement and Akshaya Patra Hyderabad).

To cook meals for all of these varieties of beneficiaries, a highly mechanized hi-tech kitchen has been setup, which can cook meals for about 50,000 people in few hours giving utmost priority to hygiene and taste at the same time. In this noble task we are supported by the Aurobindo Pharma Ltd & Sri Krishna Goseva Mandal. This hitech kitchen uses the latest of technologies to cook food by which within 15 min we can cook rice for 1,000 students and within 2 hrs we can make tasty sambar for about 5,000 students. Further the kitchen uses the bio waste that is produced during the process for making bio-gas, the water used for cooking is treated in RO Plant and also there is a boiler plant & gas bank etc. To ensure that the food cooked is not only hot and hygienic but also tasty, Hare Krishna Movement has designed varieties of menus for every single day.

Sri K T Rama Rao in his inaugural address said that with such a kind of hitech kitchen in place definitely HKM will be able to provide nutritious and hot meal to everyone and assured of all possible support from the Govt. and applauded the charitable activities of the trust. As part of the inauguration the ministers served the meal to some of the beneficiaries and also shared a meal with them.
Featured Article: The First Automated Hi-Tech Kitchen of Telangana

Bhojanamrita is a project initiated by the Hare Krishna Movement (HKM), Hyderabad to provide free meals to underprivileged attendants of inpatients on a daily basis at government hospitals. A five course meal comprising of rice, vegetable dal, sabji, buttermilk and pickle is provided. Presently free meals are served to 5,000 in-patient attendants at 18 Government & Trust-run hospitals on a daily basis. To expand its operations further, HKM, Hyderabad has set up a fully automated centralized Bhojanamrita kitchen at Narsingi, Kukatpally, Hyderabad to cook food for more than 50,000 underprivileged people.

Read More: https://goo.gl/5aVbz2

Hare Krishna World

Seminar on Mahasadhaka
A seminar was organized on January 10, 2016 at our temple on Mahasadhaka, a Kannada novel on the biography of Srila Prabhupada written by Dr. Babu Krishnamurthy. Read More: https://goo.gl/uffqgD

ISKCON Mysore’s Ratha Yatra parade draws huge crowd
Thousands of devotees took part in the Sri Sri Krishna Balarama Ratha Yatra organized by ISKCON Mysore on Saturday, 9th Jan, 2016 Read More: https://goo.gl/KwVrqa

Pilgrimage

Thirukovilur Thrivikrama Perumal temple
Located in the town of Thirukovilur in Villuppuram district of Tamil Nadu is the temple of Vanamadeva, known here as Thrivikrama Perumal.

Read More: https://goo.gl/1ZKc8A

Timeless Wisdom

Chant and experience the freshness
For chanting the Hare Krishna mantra there are no rules and regulations; because this Hare Krishna mantra is food for the soul, not for the body.

Read More: https://goo.gl/LSbh3O

Download the February 2016 e-Calendar at
www.iskconbangalore.org/desktop-calendar

Reviews from Trip Advisor

surbanjana2015
Great Temple to visit
We loved this place located close to Yesvantpur railway station. Amazing temple, greatly maintained and with thousands of pilgrims every day. Sandhyaarati is recommended.

chitranjani2015
Visited ISKCON, Very Graceful experience
Good Temple in City with all amenities like Theatre, Restaurant, Food Court, Book Stall etc., and for senior citizens there is facility of wheel chair and lift also.

tavel2exp
Beautiful Temple and Deities
It’s a beautiful place and so are the Deities. It was really hard to take my sight off the Deities as they were mesmerizing and can make anyone feel that they are in eternal life...

Hari269
Krishna’s abode
Discipline at every step makes this temple unique from others. They make you chant the Hare Krishna mantra which you will start repeating unconsciously and I guess that’s when you feel the Krishna Consciousness...

somakid
Best tourist attraction of Bangalore
Beautiful temple with divine deities. The mangala aarti and shayana aarts are beyond material experience. The temple is well managed, clean and located on a small hillock called Hare Krishna hill. Can be crowded during weekends and special days. Please visit for divine darshan of Radha Krishnachandra.

To write a review visit: www.tripadvisor.in

Top YouTube Picks

https://youtu.be/aeGxh3dGtG8
Former Chief Justice of India Dr M N Venukatachalliah on Mahasadhaka

https://goo.gl/7yT1lH
Hare Krishna Kirtan and Dance at Cubbon Park
For more videos visit youtube.com/iskconworld
Please participate in this seva with your generous contribution.

The giver of food is the giver of life, and indeed of everything else. Therefore, one who is desirous of well-being in this world and beyond should specially endeavour to give food.

— Mahabharata, Ashwamedha Parva

“Simply by liberal distribution of prasadam and sankirtana, the whole world can become peaceful and prosperous.”

— Srila Prabhupada

The ISKCON Nitya-Annadana seva provides free lunch *prasadam* every day from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm. This scheme serves thousands of pilgrims who visit the temple. Currently about 2500 pilgrims receive *Annadanam* on a daily basis.
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Cubbon Park comes alive on a Sunday with Harinama sankirtan

ISKCON Bangalore organized Namamrita – a Harinama sankirtan and bhajans event in Cubbon Park, Bengaluru on December 27, 2015.

It was a pleasant morning as the spectators watched the devotees singing bhajans and dancing at the Band Stand in Cubbon Park. Mr. Jagadish, an international artist known for his marvellous paintings accompanied the devotees and made a charcoal drawing whilst they sang the bhajans.

On Sundays, children come to the park in large numbers to play and have fun. While the devotees rendered the Hare Krishna mantra in different tunes, the spectators enjoyed listening to the music and watching the children dance rhythmically to the mantra. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with spiritual vibration and everyone soon got engrossed in the sankirtan.

Harinama sankirtan or the congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord was inaugurated as the yuga-dharma for the present age of Kali by Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who advented in Mayapur, India over 500 years ago. He also predicted that the sankirtan will spread to all villages and towns across the world.

Way back in 1966, Srila Prabhupada, the Founder-Acharya of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), initiated the public chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra in the West. He sat under a tree in New York’s Tompkins Square Park and chanted the mantra which attracted a large number of hippies. They soon joined in the singing and began to dance. Later some of them became his disciples and in this way the movement gradually developed and spread to many other countries all over the world.

The Namamrita event at the Cubbon Park began with a bhajan in the same tune as Srila Prabhupada used to sing in Tompkins Square Park. This was followed by Jaya Radha Madhava, a song by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura who was a spiritual master in the Gaudiya Vaishnava parampara. The devotees then sang another bhajan – Bhajahu Re Mana followed by the chanting of Hare Krishna mantra in Western style. By then, Mr. Jagadish completed his beautiful drawing of Lord Krishna garlanding Srila Prabhupada.

It was a delightful event with singers, dancers and an artist performing simultaneously. This rare combination truly captured everyone’s heart.

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