Date: Tuesday 26th Jan 2016

Venue:
Open Air Theatre
Sri Radha Krishna Temple
Hare Krishna Hill, Rajajinagar, Bangalore

Timing: From 10:00AM to 8:00PM

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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 ashrams, schools, temples and farm communities. He passed away in 1977, in Vrindavana, the place most sacred to Lord Krishna. His disciples and followers are carrying forward the movement he started.

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

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The Two Souls in the Body

Although we occupy the body, we should acknowledge that it belongs to someone else.

By His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

“Yet in this body there is another, a transcendental enjoyer, who is the Lord, the supreme proprietor, who exists as the overseer and permitter, and who is known as the Supersoul.”— Bhagavad-gita 13.23

Here are two purushas, or enjoyers. One purusha is the living entity, atma, and the other purusha is the Supersoul, Paramatma. Sometimes the Mayavadi philosophers, or impersonalists, do not distinguish between atma and Paramatma. But here it is distinctly explained by the Supreme Personality of Godhead that there are two purushas. One purusha is enjoying the fruits of his activities, prakrti-sthah. Being influenced by the quality of prakrti, material nature, he is sad-asad-yoni-janmasu: he is taking birth in different types and species of life. And the other purusha is upadrashta, the overseer. He simply sees how the other purusha is working. And according to the living entity purusha’s karma, or work, the overseer gives the result. The overseer is the witness.

If the living entity purusha works piously, then he gets a certain type of body. Janmaishvarya-shruta-shri. He gets a nice body, born in a rich family or a brahma family or a scholarly family. He gets opulence, a beautiful body, a good education. These distinctions are there because the Paramatma purusha is observing the activities of the jivatma purusha. According to the individual soul's karma, and according to his desire, the Supersoul gives different types of body.

In another place it is said, ishvarah sarva-bhutanam hrd-dese ‘rizuna tisthati [Bhagavad-gita 18.61]: the Supreme Personality of Godhead as Paramatma, Antaryami, is situated in everyone’s heart. Bhramayan sarva-bhutani yantrarudhani mayaya [Bhagavad-gita 18.61]: He is directing maya, the illusory energy, to give each living entity a particular type of body, and the living entity is moving with that body.

For example, according to the price, you can get a car. You can get a Rolls Royce, a Chevrolet, a Cadillac, a Ford, an Ambassador, a Jeep. According to your ability to pay for it, you get a certain type of car, and you can travel. Similarly, according to your karma, good and bad, you get a type of body. There are 8,400,000 species of body. You get one of them and suffer and enjoy.

Tatha dehantar-prapth [Bhagavad-gita 2.13]. You have to change your body. Next you can get a cat body or a dog body, a tree body or a demigod body, a Brahma body or an Indra body, a Brahma, an American body, a serpent body, an insect body, a bird body—any. There is no guarantee which body you will get. That will be awarded to you according to your karma. Unfortunately, people do not know this. Just like animals, they do not know how to get a better body.

This is a statement from the Padma Purana. Janma-paryayat: by evolution we come to the human form of body, and in the human form of body we have the chance to develop Krishna consciousness. If we do not do that, then we are missing the opportunity.

You shall get your next body according to your karma. But if you become Krishna conscious in this body, and if you try to understand Krishna, then tyaktva deham punar janma naiti [Bhagavad-gita 4.9]—after giving up this body, you do not accept another material body. That is the purpose of the Krishna consciousness movement. We are trying to educate people to become Krishna conscious so that they may not have to accept another material body.
Soul And Supersoul

The other purusha described here is Paramatma. We are atma, soul, and He is Paramatma, Supersoul. We are ishvara, controller; He is Parameshvara, supreme controller. We are not Parameshvara. We are Brahman, spirit, and He is Parabrahman, supreme spirit.

The word param, “supreme,” is used. But sometimes men with little intelligence cannot distinguish between Paramatma and atma, Parameshvara and ishvara.

Here another phrase is used: bhokta maheshvarah. We are not bhokta, the enjoyer. We are trying to become bhokta, but we are becoming baffled. It is not possible. We cannot become bhokta. We can be the enjoyed, the predominated, but not the predominator. One thing is enjoyed, and the other the enjoyer. The Supreme Lord is the enjoyer. Bhoktaram yajna-tapasam sarva-loka-maheshvaram [Bhagavad-gita 5.29].

Maheshvara, or maha ishvara. Maha means great. Ishvara means controller. We can control a few men, but the name Maheshvara means that God controls all living entities. Nityo nityanam chetanas chetananam [Katha Upanishad 2.2.13]. We may be very proud of controlling a factory, a few thousand workers, but we are not Maheshvara. The Maheshvara is Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who in His Paramatma feature is situated in every body. Paramatmeti capy ukto dehe ‘smin. Asmin dehe means “within this body.”

There are two souls. In this chapter Krishna says, kshetra-jnam capi mam viddhi sarva-kshetresu bharata [Bhagavad-gita 13.3]: “I am also the kshetra-jna.” The body is the kshetra, or field, and the soul is kshetra-jna, one who knows about the body. You have your body, and I have my body. I know it is my body, and you know it is your body, just as you know your apartment or your living room. But there is a partner in our body. That is Krishna, Paramatma. I can take care of my body. I am the owner of this body. But Krishna is the owner of all bodies.

The tenant is the occupier, and the landlord is the owner. Similarly, I am the occupier of this body, and Krishna, Paramatma, is the owner of this body. To understand that is knowledge. I am not the owner of this body. Therefore Krishna’s name is Hrsikesha. Hrsika means the senses, and isa means the controller. We are claiming, “This is my hand,” but this is not my hand. This is Krishna’s hand. The tenant may occupy the room, but he is not the owner of the room. The owner is a different person. Similarly, we may occupy this body or any body, but we are not the owner of this body.

As soon as we know, “I am not the owner of the body; I am the occupier of the body,” that is knowledge. We are falsely claiming that we are the owner of the body. But we are not the owner of the body. I cannot therefore repair anything. If any part or limb of my body goes wrong, I do not know how to repair it. But Krishna can do it because He is the owner, Hrsikesha.

Hrshikena hrsikesha-sevanam bhaktir ucyate. You have to pay the owner of your apartment. Similarly, we have to serve Krishna for allowing us to occupy this body. That is devotion.

All Krishna’s Hands and Legs

It is also explained: sarvatah pani-padam tat. The Supreme Lord has His hands and legs everywhere. How is that? Because your hands and my hands are Krishna’s hands. Therefore they should be used for Krishna.

In ordinary understanding, because I think these are my hands I use my hand for my eating, not for others’ eating. But actually all hands and legs belong to Krishna and should be used for Krishna. That is called bhakti. If you don’t use your hands and legs in that way, that is against the laws of nature.

Krishna, the Supersoul, is anumanta: without His permission you cannot do anything. Because everything belongs to Krishna, how can you use something without His permission? Take, for example, a father and a son, a little child. The child wants to do something and wants permission from the father, and the father gives it. In our childhood I remember that even for going to the privy I wanted permission from my mother. “Can I go?” That is nature. Mother is not restricting me; still, I am asking her permission. “Can I go? Can I go?” I remember it. That is natural. Similarly, we cannot do anything without the permission of the Supersoul within the heart. Therefore He is anumanta.

When we do something wrong, why has Krishna as Antaryami, as Paramatma, given permission? That question may be raised. Because I cannot do anything without His permission, He must give permission for me to do something wrong. That has already been explained.

purushah prakrti-stho hi bhunkte prakrti-jan gunan
karanam guna-saogo ‘sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu

“The living entity in material nature thus follows the ways of life, enjoying the three modes of nature. This is due to his association with that material nature. Thus he meets with good and evil among various species.” [Bhagavad-
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Krishna can give you permission, but you will have to take the enjoyment and suffering. You insist on getting permission: "I want to do this." And without permission, you cannot do it. Therefore Krishna gives you permission: "All right, do it, but at your risk." Krishna does not want that you should do it, but you want to do it. Therefore He gives permission. Krishna wants us to surrender to Him: sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam [Bhagavad-gita 18.66]. That is His demand. But our demand is different.

"I shall not surrender, Sir. I want to do this."

"All right, do it at your own risk."

But if you follow the instruction of Krishna, then He takes charge of you. Aham tvam sarva-papebhyo moksayisyami. So you do sinful or pious acts and enjoy the effect, but when you follow the instruction of Krishna, there is no such distinction. Your actions are transcendental. That is called Brahman, and it is above the gunas, the three modes of material nature.

mam ca yo 'vyabhicarena bhakti-yogena sevate
sa gunan samanityaitan brahma-bhuyaya kalpate

Krishna says, “Anyone engaged in rendering service unto Me is not affected by the activities. He is immune from the result of all activities.” [Bhagavad-gita 14.26] The same point is made in many places.

If you want to act for your satisfaction, Krishna will give you permission, but you will have to enjoy or suffer the effects. It is very simple to understand. So therefore Krishna is called anumanta, the one who gives permission: "Yes, you can take. You can do it."

Two Birds in a Tree

It is figuratively explained in the Upanishads that there are two birds [souls] in this tree [the body]. One is observing, and the other is enjoying. The observing bird is the Paramatma, Krishna. He is upadrashta: He is simply seeing your activities and giving you the effect. And He is anumanta. What you are doing now, Krishna does not want it. But because you wanted persistently to do it, He gives permission—because without His permission, you cannot do it. That is the conclusion.

He is the maintainer. You cannot get anything without His mercy. There may be ample supply of the necessities of life by the grace of Krishna, and there may be scarcity. People are now complaining about overpopulation. There is no question of overpopulation. Krishna is quite competent, able to maintain everyone. But as you become godless, as you become disobedient to the laws of God, there will be restriction. You cannot have the full supply of the necessities of life.

That time has already come. All these rascals, godless rascals, are now suffering. The only remedy is to become a devotee. Krishna is bharta: He can maintain many millions. There is no question of overpopulation. He can maintain. But nature will not supply. Nature will restrict supply if you become godless. Nature is very strong, strict. Daivi hy esa gunamayi mama maya duratyaya [Bhagavad-gita 7.14]. Krishna will restrict the supply.

In this age, Kali-yuga, people are becoming degraded, and the supply will be reduced. There will be no supply of milk. There will be no supply of sugar. That is stated in the Srimad-Bhagavatam. There will be no supply of rice, no supply of wheat. Now you can get these things, either on the black market or on the white market, but the time is coming when there will be no supply. You will be forced to eat beef. Now it is opening here—beef shop, big, big beef shop. The time has already come, gradually, and it will increase, unless you take to Krishna consciousness.

kaler dosa-nidhe rajann asti hy eko mahan gunah
kirtanad eva krishnasya mukta-sangah param vrajet

Kali-yuga is a time of suffering. Being godless, people cannot get a comfortable life in Kali-yuga. And Kali-yuga means godlessness. Mandah sumanda-matayo manda-bhagya hy upadrutah [Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.1.10]. Therefore everyone should take to Krishna consciousness to save himself from the onslaught of Kali-yuga, which will increase day by day.

Thank you very much.
Education Means to Know God

Here we continue a conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and the mother of one of his students, along with a Jesuit priest. It took place in the garden at Bhaktivedanta Manor, near London, England, on July 25, 1973.

Mother (to Srila Prabhupada): Yes, Father, I understand you are educated on a different platform, as you say—no doubt a most sublime and spiritual platform. But aren't you still drawing upon your basic educational background for translating your books?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. That's all right.

Mother: Isn't that a great joy to you?

Srila Prabhupada: For translating of books, it does not require so much education. Of course, that is required when the purport of the translation is given. Otherwise, the real thing is culture. The essence of education is culture. Simply money-making education for maintaining this body—that education will not satisfy any more. Just as I told you: Despite all arrangements for education, why are the young men turning out to be hippies? That is my question.

Mother: Oh, but not your followers. Your followers are not being hippies—people who follow you. Therefore, you've got the people whom you could help to become cultured like you.

Srila Prabhupada: So my father educated me in a different way. Therefore, I have come to this stage. My father never allowed me even to drink tea.

Mother: Well, I'm disappointed in you. I came to
see you because I felt that, being so cultured, you would want all your boys to have this culture and to have this, to have the best . . .

Disciple: Thanks to Srila Prabhupada, we’ve got this culture.

Mother: Oh, but you haven’t, you see. You’re all young boys.

Disciple: No. Your culture we don’t have.

Mother: But you’re not mature yet.

Disciple: But the culture that Srila Prabhupada has—this culture he’s giving to us.

Mother: Yes. But you’re not mature. It takes years to become mature. Hurt, pain, happiness, everything together. You find God? Yes, I’ve found God. We all... I feel very close to God, and I feel very happy. But I would also still wish to be educated. And fortunately, I was given the chance to have an education, and I don’t misuse it.

Srila Prabhupada: Education means to know God. That is education. In our Vedic culture, the high-class man is called a brahmana.

Mother: Yes.

Srila Prabhupada: Brahmana. You know that.

Mother: Brahmana. Yes.

Srila Prabhupada: So who is a brahmana? One who knows God—he is called a brahmana. Therefore, the culmination of education is to understand God. That is education. Otherwise, to get education about how to nicely eat, how to nicely sleep, how to nicely have sex life, and how to defend—this education is there even in the animals. The animals, also—they know how to eat, how to sleep, how to have sex life, and how to defend.

Mother: Yes. It seems to worry you—this sex life. I mean . . . we don’t take . . .

Srila Prabhupada: No, no, no. I’m not worried.

Mother: . . . any notice if . . . It fits into its place.

Srila Prabhupada: This is also necessary. This is also necessary. But these four types of branches of education are not sufficient for a human being. A human being—above all this education, he must have the knowledge of how to love God. And that is the perfection of life.

Mother: Yeah. Well, Michael was taught that when he was very small. The Jesuits saw to that.

Srila Prabhupada: Knowing how to love God—that is perfection.

Mother: The Jesuits certainly did.

Srila Prabhupada: So to understand how to love God, there must be a religious system. In every civilized human society—it doesn’t matter whether the system is Christianity or Hinduism or Muhammadanism or Buddhism—the religious system is there, along with the education about eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. That other education is there in the animal society. So a human being is distinct from the animal when he has education about how to understand God and how to love Him. That is perfection.

So that is now wanting. Our Krishna consciousness movement is not depriving people of their education. You get education about how to eat, how to sleep, and that’s all right. But side by side, you take education about how to know God and how to love Him. That is our proposition.

Mother: Yes. I agree with you.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Mother: Yes, I agree with you every time.

Srila Prabhupada: We don’t say that you stop all this education. No.

Mother: No, I don’t agree with you there. No, Father. No, no. No, no.

Srila Prabhupada: We don’t say.

Mother: No, I think these young men here must . . .

Srila Prabhupada: You can go on with your industries. You can go on with your university. But side by side, you become competent to know what is the nature of God and how to love Him. Then your life is perfect.

Mother: I could mention a lot of persons that are still very close to God and brilliant men in science. Where would we be without our scientists, without our doctors, medicine? They all have to go to university and get a degree before they . . .

Srila Prabhupada: That I say. You get a degree.

Mother: Yes, but we need them.

Srila Prabhupada: You get.

Mother: Yes. Well, then some of your boys could be doctors.

Srila Prabhupada: But simply becoming a doctor of medical science will not save me. Unfortunately, these men do not believe in the next life.

Mother: Oh, yes they do. I go to . . . I had a doctor who came to church—and Michael knows him—every Sunday. A very good man.

Srila Prabhupada: Mostly. I have spoken with many educated persons. In Moscow I was talking with Professor Kotofsky. He said, “Swamiji, after this body is finished, everything is finished.” But he’s a big professor. Generally, even if they do believe in the next life, they do not believe in it very seriously. If we actually
believe there is a next life, then we must be prepared: "What kind of next life am I going to have?"

**Mother:** Yes. Well, Father . . .

**Srila Prabhupada:** Because there are 8,400,000 forms of life. The trees are also forms of life. The cats and dogs—they are also forms of life. And there are higher, more intelligent persons in the higher planetary systems. They are also forms of life. The worm in the stool—that is also a form of life. So, calculating all of them, there are 8,400,000 species of life. So I am going to have a next life. Tatha dehantara-praptih—we have to change out of this body and go to another body. So our concern should be, "What kind of body am I going to get next?"

**Mother:** I agree for some people to—you especially—to think of this, because you are a leader of your Vedic religion. But for everybody to do that—where would we be? We couldn't all sit down and think all the time.

**Srila Prabhupada:** But where is that education?

**Mother:** But we . . . you can also work and think.

**Srila Prabhupada:** No. We work. I mean to say, where is that education in the university to prepare the student for the next life? 😊
We have guided missiles and misguided men.” This poignant remark by Martin Luther King, Jr., about the state of the modern world rings strikingly true. In recent times there has been an amazing increase in human ability to control the outer world through science and technology. But with that has come an alarming decline in human ability to control the inner world. The resulting variety of irrational passions lead to immorality and corruption at best, and terrorism and brutality at worst.

The current state of the world rests on the search for happiness, a quest that, Lord Krishna tells us in Bhagavad-gita, lies at the heart of all human endeavours. While asserting that happiness is our inalienable right, the Bhagavad-gita provides a clear pathway for its achievement. The fundamental teaching of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-gita is that our current existence has two dimensions—material and spiritual; we are spiritual beings residing in material bodies. (2.13) Modern scientific studies in fields such as past-life memories, near-death experiences, and consciousness also strongly suggest a spiritual part of our being that exists after bodily death.

Furthermore, Lord Krishna explains that just as the soul animates the body, the Supersoul, the Supreme Being, animates the entire cosmos. Lord Krishna tells us that material existence is temporary and troublesome because of an existential disharmony: human beings tend to neglect the spiritual dimension of their lives and focus only on material ambitions and achievements. This imbalance stunts their ability to partake of the fullness of life. The resulting dissatisfaction appears individually as stress, depression, anxiety, irritability, and so on, and socially as disunity, violence, and war. This disharmony also results in the universal and inescapable evils of birth, old age, disease, and death (13.9).

Our innate longing for immortality in a world subject to death suggests that we belong to an immortal world. Lord Krishna posits a higher-dimensional world beyond the pernicious effects of time (8.20). That realm is characterized by a sweet harmony of divine love between the innumerable subordinate souls and the Supreme. There, the Supreme Person, being all-attractive, is the pivot of all relationships and is therefore best known as Krishna, “The All-Attractive One.” There, all souls enjoy an eternal life of full awareness and bliss, provided they are in harmony with Krishna’s will. If they rebel, they fall to the realm of matter, where they can see the results of disharmony and eventually decide to reform themselves.

Suffering and its Solution

During their exile in the material realm, souls occupy different bodies according to their desires and activities. Each body, whether human or subhuman, imposes on the soul the demands of eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. The soul struggles hard to try to fulfill these bodily demands, whose repetitive nature makes life a continuous hardship, with only momentary relief whenever the demands are satisfied.

Suffering, however, is good, because it provides the necessary impetus to return to harmony, just as fever provides the impetus to accept a cure. Among the 8.4 million species that inhabit the cosmos, the human form is specially gifted: only in a human body does the soul have the requisite intelligence to question his suffering and attempt to remedy it. Bhagavad-gita addresses such intelligent human beings.

Asserting that material nature is endlessly mutable (8.4), Lord Krishna advises the seeker of true happiness to not be disturbed by the dualities of heat and cold, pain and pleasure, and so on, that result from the inevitable changes in the material world (2.14).
But Krishna does not recommend a life of inane fatalism; He exhorts us to direct our energies in a fruitful direction. Because our anomalous condition results from a disharmony with our spiritual nature, Krishna recommends that attempts for improvement be directed not in the material realm but in the spiritual.

The Relevance of the Bhagavad-Gita

It is here that we can see the relevance of Lord Krishna's teachings to the modern state of affairs. Over the past few centuries modern man has performed immense intellectual labour in an attempt to decrease the miseries of material existence. But all these efforts have been directed within the realm of matter, resulting in an improved ability to control material energy through science and technology. Modern man has, with almost a religious dogma, avoided applying his intellectual faculties to understanding the spiritual dimension. But all the cherished human qualities—love, compassion, honesty, selflessness—spring from the soul, the spiritual aspect of our being. Therefore negligence of spiritual life has had disastrous consequences, including a marked decline in human virtues. Hence Dr. King’s observation that we live in a time of guided missiles and misguided men.

Lord Krishna systematically explains the difference between matter and spirit and provides a practical method for spiritual elevation. Lord Krishna thus helps us understand how ignorance and neglect of the spiritual dimension is the bane of modern civilization.

Returning to Harmony

Lord Krishna recommends yoga as the means to spiritual emancipation. Contrary to the general notion, Lord Krishna states that mere physical postures and breathing exercises do not constitute yoga; they are just the beginning of one type of yoga. Actual yoga involves harmonizing all energy—material and spiritual—with the original source of energy, the energetic Supreme. Lord Krishna states that meditation (dhyana-yoga), philosophical speculation (jnana-yoga), detached action (karma-yoga), and devotional service to the Lord (bhakti-yoga) are means by which a soul can advance on the path back to harmony. But ultimate success comes only by devotional service (11.53-54); other paths are only stepping stones to the attainment of that devotion (6.47, 7.19, 3.9).

The best method of devotional meditation for the current period in the cosmic cycle (Kali-yuga) is mantra meditation (10.25), especially the chanting of the mahamantra: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. A person moving forward on the path of harmony discovers in time a decrease in mental agitation from irrational passions, an unshakable inner tranquility, and finally an eternal ecstasy of love coming from the spiritual stratum (6.20-23). Lord Krishna therefore concludes with an unequivocal call for loving harmony with the Supreme (18.66).

Lord Krishna declares the higher realities of life to be pratyakṣa avagamam, directly perceivable within (9.2). Thus we see that Lord Krishna's approach to the study of the cosmos is not at all dogmatic; rather it is bold and scientific. He presents the postulates logically and systematically and provides the entreprising spiritual scientist with a practical method to verify those postulates.

Srila Prabhupada's Gift to the World

Lord Krishna's explanation of the truths of life is so cogent, coherent, and profound that, for most modern Western scholars who studied Bhagavad-gita for the first time in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was love on first reading. The remark of the famed American writer Henry David Thoreau is a sample: "In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavad-gita, in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial."

Unfortunately with the passage of time, imperial biases among Western scholars obscured the wisdom of the Bhagavad-gita from enlightening the whole of humanity. And Indian intellectuals, afflicted by feelings of cultural inferiority from prolonged foreign subjugation, did not give the Bhagavad-gita the importance it deserved. It was only when His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada carried the wisdom of Bhagavad-gita to the West in the 1960s that the world started recognizing the glory of this philosophical masterpiece once again. Srila Prabhupada's Bhagavad-gita As It Is soon became the most widely read English edition of the Gita. Now translated into dozens of languages, Bhagavad-gita As It Is has transformed the lives of millions from confused despair to enlightened happiness.

East-West Synthesis

Srila Prabhupada has been acknowledged as the greatest cultural ambassador of India to the modern world. His vision was a global East-West synthesis. If a blind man carries a lame man, they can both move forward. Similarly, Srila Prabhupada understood that if the materially prosperous but spiritually blind West and the spiritually gifted but materially impoverished India joined forces, the combination would usher in an era of peace and prosperity all over the world. ISKCON is working tirelessly at the grassroots level to make this vision a reality.

The West has embraced a hedonistic way of life. And the East, especially India, enamoured by the glitter of Western culture, is casting away the treasure of Vedic wisdom that is its priceless heritage. It behooves all intelligent and responsible students of Bhagavad-gita to understand, assimilate, and distribute to their fellow human beings the gift of the wisdom of Lord Krishna.©
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Through the Vedic Lens

A drama enacted in the natural world inspires higher thoughts.

By Ben Saikin

Recently a devotee said to me, “Just try to see through the Vedic lens.” At the time I remember thinking how nice it would be to see the world in that way, but I knew I couldn’t force such a vision. I thought that if I wanted to understand what he meant by “Vedic lens,” I had better keep chanting.

A few days later, I was seated typing at my computer. It was dusk, and the soft evening light fell gently into the room. I turned toward the window as the last rays of daylight faded, and the tiny silhouette of a moth caught my eye. He was trapped between the window and the screen.

About a week ago, some children were playing with a ball outside my first-floor apartment. Their ball struck my window, knocking the screen to the ground. When I tried to replace it, I ran into some difficulty. The old clip that holds the screen in place no longer allowed the screen to fit snugly against the window. As best as I could manage, I secured the screen so that three of its corners fit within the grooves, allowing only a tiny opening at the bottom where the screen was not properly fastened.

It seemed that this moth had flown in through the small opening and was now trapped. In the upper left-hand corner, also between the window and the screen, was a thick, sticky web—and a fearsome-looking spider. Silhouetted in the darkness were the discarded remains of the unfortunate creatures that had floundered into the web.

Not more than an inch separated the window and the screen, and in this tiny space the moth buzzed around, searching for a way out. He made his way to each side of the sealed screen, his antennae probing here and there for an exit. Oblivious, the moth wandered treacherously close to the web, arousing the spider, who bounded gracefully across his silken fortress. The moth, suddenly aware of the danger, buzzed frantically, just beyond the spider’s reach.

I felt the slight twinge of disappointment, deprived of the firsthand experience of nature’s wrath, but it was soon replaced by a piercing shame, and an even greater embarrassment.

The moth continued his burning search for liberation. He made three laps around the top half of the screen, groeping for some escape. Each time he wandered, he came precariously close to the spider’s web, and each time he avoided death by a hair’s breadth.

Finally, in a frantic attempt to force his way to freedom, the moth began to beat his wings and hurl himself into the screen. He was so desperate. All he had to do was search near the bottom. There, the screen was not fastened snugly to the window . . . but this never occurred to him.

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Then, unbelievably, as I watched the moth throw himself madly at the screen, I saw through the Vedic lens. A tiny sliver of Prabhupada’s transcendental vision refined my sight, acting like a lens put in front of a patient’s eyes during an eye examination. No longer was I merely looking at a moth struggling behind a window; I was seeing the helpless plight of the living entity in the material world.

Allured by some promise, the soul has flown into this world, and now he is trapped. Frenzied, he searches in all directions, recklessly trying to be happy, but it is all in vain because he is caught within the stringent laws of material nature. All around him, his endeavours meet with frustration, and above him, death personified waits patiently. If only he would turn toward Krishna. But, bewildered by illusion, he never considers the possibility. Now it was only a matter of time until the helpless moth stumbled into the spider’s web, to be entangled, in this life, for the final time. Still, the moth thrashed about, wildly launching himself into the wire screen, again and again. Finally, an even more profound and fundamental realization arose in the forefront of my consciousness: the moth could not free himself.

Determined, I hurried outside. At the window, I found the moth still buzzing furiously and the spider silently striding his web. Slowly, I lifted the screen several inches from the window, and like a child released from school, the moth burst from his cage. He danced jubilantly around me for a moment, and then soared away into the night.

As I stood there trying to replace the screen, my thoughts drifted to Prabhupada. Previously I could not begin to appreciate the position of the spiritual master, or the precious gift he gives to the helpless conditioned soul. But now I understood. We are all moths caught in a screen, and despite our feverish endeavours, we can never free ourselves. This rare experience allowed me to see, if only for a few moments, how merciful Krishna is. He sends saints like Srila Prabhupada to deliver the entire world from the clutches of cruel illusion.

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**Akshaya Patra News**

Smt & Sri Chitra and Arvind Sonde donated a vehicle to Akshaya Patra Foundation. He handed over the keys of the food distribution vehicle to Sri Chanchalapathi Dasa, Vice-Chairman, The Akshaya Patra Foundation.
At an interreligious conference, I happened to mention that we devotees of Krishna are vegetarian, and in the midst of the discussion, I referred to the Sixth Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." A prominent Christian scholar, who was part of the discussion, asked what the commandment had to do with vegetarianism. "It has everything to do with it!" I responded. "If you eat meat, you either directly or indirectly kill animals, and killing is what the commandment expressly forbids, isn’t it?"

Well, my Christian friend sharply disagreed. He said that the commandment applied only to human beings. Though he insisted that this was so, he was at a loss for words when I asked him to explain his rationale in this regard. And that got me thinking... Srila Prabhupada says:

But when you’re actually on the platform of love of God, you understand your relationship with God: "I am part and parcel of God—and this dog is also part and parcel of God. And so is every other living entity." Then you’ll extend your love to the animals also. If you actually love God, then your love for insects is also there, because you understand, "This insect has got a different kind of body, but he is also part and parcel of God—he is my brother." Samah sarvesu bhutesu: you look upon all living beings equally. Then you cannot maintain slaughterhouses. If you maintain slaughterhouses and disobey the order of Christ in the Bible—"Thou shalt not kill" and you proclaim yourself a Christian, your so-called religion is simply a waste of time... because you have no love for God.

Prabhupada frequently uses the "Thou shalt not kill" motif in his presentation of Krishna consciousness. It is one of the most persistently recurring themes in his books, and the attentive reader can find reference to it in nearly every one of them. His insistence on its importance is clear not only from the number of times he refers to it, but from the force and intensity with which he does so. Some examples:

It is not that national leaders should be concerned only with human beings. The definition of native is "one who takes birth in a particular nation." So, the cow is also a native. Then why should the cow be slaughtered? The cow is giving milk and the bull is working for you, and then you slaughter them? What is this philosophy? In the Christian religion it is clearly stated, "Thou shalt not kill." Yet most of the slaughterhouses are in the Christian countries. (From The Quest for Enlightenment, "The Mercy of Lord Chaitanya")

They should have been ashamed: "Lord Jesus Christ suffered for us, but we are continuing the sinful activities." He told everyone, "Thou shalt not kill," but they are indulging in killing, thinking, "Lord Jesus Christ will excuse us and take all the sinful reactions." This is going on. (From Perfect Questions, Perfect Answers, Chapter 6)
As far as the Christian religion is concerned, ample opportunity is given to understand God, but no one is taking it. For example, the Bible contains the commandment "Thou shall not kill," but Christians have built the world's best slaughterhouses. How can they become God conscious if they disobey the commandments of Lord Jesus Christ? And this is going on not just in the Christian religion, but in every religion. The title "Hindu," "Muslim," or "Christian" is simply a rubber stamp. None of them knows who God is and how to love Him. (From The Science of Self-Realization, "What Is Krishna Consciousness?")

Jesus Christ taught, "Thou shalt not kill." But his followers have now decided, "Let us kill anyway," and they open big, modern, scientific slaughterhouses. "If there is any sin, Christ will suffer for us." This is a most abominable conclusion. (From The Science of Self-Realization, "Jesus Christ Was a Guru")

If we look at all of Prabhupada's proclamations on the subject, the ones that stand out are found in his conversations with two Christian clerics of some renown: Cardinal Jean Danielou, from Paris, and Father Emmanuel Jungclaussen, a Benedictine monk from West Germany. While there is hardly enough space to reproduce these classic talks here, the reader is advised to look through Prabhupada's book The Science of Self-Realization, where both interviews are reproduced. Briefly, Prabhupada's main argument is that the commandment should be taken at face value—it is wrong to kill, plain and simple.

**Biblical Allowances for Killing**

But, those familiar with the Bible might ask, what about self-defense and capital punishment? Or when killing occurs by accident? The Bible makes allowances for these things and thus excludes them from the demands of this commandment. According to the Bible, enemies of Israel can also be killed. So where do we draw the line? If the command does not even include all humans, what hope is there to include animals in its scope?

Given the culture and context in which the commandment was revealed, in all probability it originally meant, "You shall not kill unnecessarily," for, as noted, the Bible clearly permits certain forms of killing. And it probably focused on human concerns rather than those of animals. However, given the ideals of peace and compassion espoused by the Judeo-Christian tradition, it would be natural to extend this command to include the lesser creatures, for modern science—especially the nutritional sciences—indeed teaches that we don't have to kill animals, even for food. Such foods are no longer deemed necessary for humans to maintain proper health.

Mark Mathew Braunstein, a scholar of some renown, is among those who see in the command a clear ordinance against harming any living beings. He writes, "Moses the messenger brought down the decree 'Thou shalt not kill.' Period. While coveting refers specifically to a neighbour's spouse, or honouring to one's parents, prohibition against killing is not specific: it says simply and purely not to kill."

This is an important point—the other commandments tell us exactly who falls within their jurisdiction, or who might be deemed their beneficiaries. But here we are simply told not to kill, without any such qualifying considerations.

This, too, is Prabhupada's argument: If the commandment doesn't specify whether it is referring to both humans and animals or merely to humans, then why should we interpret it? Why not just understand it in its most simple and direct way? But people do insist on interpreting, and for this reason we will look at the words in question to see if we can find some reasonable resolution to the dilemma.

**A Closer Look at the Commandment**

If we are to understand Prabhupada's insistence on "Thou shalt not kill" as a basis for universal compassion and vegetarianism, it is imperative to look at the Sixth Commandment (Exodus 20.13) more closely.

According to Reuben Alcalay, one of the twentieth century's great linguistic scholars and author of The Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary, the commandment refers to "any kind of killing whatsoever." The original Hebrew, he says, is Lo tirtzakh, which asks us to refrain from killing in toto. If what he says is true, we can analyze the commandment as follows: "Thou shalt not" needs no interpretation. The controversial word is "kill," commonly defined as (1) to deprive of life; (2) to put an end to; (3) to destroy the vital or essential quality of. If
anything that has life can be killed, an animal can be killed as well; according to this commandment, then, the killing of animals is forbidden.

The problem is that not all manuscripts of the Bible are the same. Of the numerous references to this same command in the Old and New Testaments, some of them are nuanced in slightly different ways. Modern scholarship now leans toward “Thou shalt not murder” as opposed to “Thou shalt not kill.” How do scholars come to this conclusion, and what really is the distinction between the two?

First, let us examine what the Bible actually says. The Hebrew word for “murder” is ratzakh, whereas the word for “kill” is haroq. The commandment, in the original Hebrew, indeed states: “Lo tirtzakh” (a form of ratzakh), not “Lo taharoq.” In other words, it is “Thou shalt not murder,” as opposed to “Thou shalt not kill.” Why, then, does Reuben Alcalay say that tirtzakh refers to “any kind of killing whatsoever”?

The Words “Kill” and “Murder” in Biblical Tradition

The difference between these two words—“kill” and “murder” has more to do with modern usage than original texts: the demarcation between these words may have been different in biblical times. Indeed, the Bible appears conflicted in this regard, as do Bible translators. The HarperCollins Study Bible, which is the New Revised Standard Version and the rendition used by the Society of Biblical Literature, interprets the commandment as “Thou shalt not murder,” but it then includes a footnote saying “or kill.” The New Oxford Annotated Bible does the same.

The King James Version of the Bible, and others too numerous to mention here, translate the verse as “Thou shalt not kill,” while others keep going back and forth, changing from “kill” to “murder” and, every few years, back again.

Perhaps the most important version to use the word “kill” instead of “murder” is The Holy Bible: From Ancient Eastern Manuscripts. This work is based on the earliest editions of the text, making use of rare Aramaic fragments. Here we find that the Exodus verse is unequivocally rendered as “Thou shalt not kill,” though a lengthy Introduction explains why well-meaning translators might choose otherwise.

Rabbi Joseph Telushkin writes about one of the many dangers of interpreting the word as “kill”:

If the commandment had read “You shall not kill,” it would have suggested that all killing is illegal, including that in self-defense. Indeed, certain religious groups such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses take this position, and insist that their members refuse army service (during World War II in Germany Jehovah’s Witnesses refused to fight for the Nazis while their American co-religionists refused to fight against them).

These are very real concerns for biblical translators and commentators, and while they may have diverse opinions on whether to use “kill” or “murder” while addressing any number of complex issues, one thing is certain: In current usage, the two words carry different meanings. According to Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, “killing” is straightforward, and its definition is given above. But “murder” is more complicated. Webster defines it in legal terms. Its first definition as a noun is “the unlawful and malicious or premeditated killing of one human being by another”; as a verb, it is defined as “to kill (a person) unlawfully and with malice.” These are first-entry definitions. If we look at secondary ones, we find “to kill inhumanly and barbarously, as in warfare,” or “to destroy; to put an end to.”

Prabhupada admits in his conversation with Father Emmanuel that “murder” refers to humans, and this is borne out by the primary definitions given above. But who defines these words? Because animals do not have the same rights as humans, at least in contemporary Western society, they are omitted from the definition of murder—and so it is not considered unlawful to take their lives. But if we look at murder practically—at what it really is, beyond mere legalistic formulas—we are confronted with the secondary definitions of “murder” given above, both of which can certainly be applied to animals.

Literalists might tightly cling to the primary definitions, saying that murder refers only to humans, and that this is where the argument should end. But, as if anticipating this response, the Bible tells us, “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man.” (Isaiah 66.3). Perhaps this suggests a closer link between “kill” and “murder.”

A Broader Definition of “Murder”

Moreover, traditional biblical commentators viewed “murder” in a way that expands on the formal definitions of today, with subtle nuances infused with heartfelt compassion. In commenting on Exodus 20.13, early Jewish scholars write as follows: “Sages understood ‘bloodshed’ to include embarrassing a fellow human being in public so that the blood drains from his or her face, not providing safety for travelers, and causing anyone the loss of his or her livelihood. One may murder by the hand or with the tongue, by tale bearing or by character assassination. One may murder by carelessness, by indifference . . . ” Thus, rabbinical interpretation of the commandment includes more than just the literal taking of life. Or, to put it another way, accepted Jewish definitions of murder go beyond the word’s standard boundaries. It would not be unreasonable, then, to include the killing of animals—which necessitates the taking of life—under the general...
rubric of murder, for this would in some ways be less of
a stretch than other interpretations traditionally found
in conventional Jewish definitions of the word.

But there is more. When Prabhupada refers to the “Thou
shalt not kill” commandment, he generally refers to it
as “the commandment of Jesus Christ,” or he will preface
it by saying, “Jesus says.” This is quite telling. In fact,
the New Testament reading of this commandment seeks
to expand on its original definition: Luke (18.20), Mark
(10.19), and Matthew (5.21) all exhort followers to go
beyond conventional understandings of this command.
To give but one example, let us look at Matthew: “You
have heard that it was said to those in ancient times,
‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be
liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that if you are angry
with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment;
and if you insult a brother or sister . . .”

In other words, we are no longer talking about “murder”
but of inappropriate treatment. True, these statements
address human interaction, first and foremost. But given
biblical ideals about the original diet of man, which was
vegetarian (see Genesis 1.29), and the ultimate vision
of Isaiah (11.6-9)—that all creatures will one day live
together in peace—it is clearly desirable that man begins
to treat his co-inhabitants of the planet with dignity and
respect. He can begin by not killing them.

Common-Sense Compassion

This is Prabhupada’s main point: In whatever way the
original Jewish prophets and their modern
representatives interpret the word “kill,” a religious
person should be able to invoke common sense and
inborn human compassion—it is wrong to unnecessarily
kill any living being. Prabhupada believes that a practicing
religionist, especially, should have the good sense,
character, and purity of purpose to know that taking life
is not in our charge: We cannot create the life of an
animal, and so we have no right to take it away.
Prabhupada’s understanding of “Thou shalt not kill” is
thus clearly legitimate—especially in light of the
commandment’s restructuring as found in the New
Testament. This is so because modern slaughterhouses
go against the very spirit of the entire Judeo-Christian
tradition—of religion in general—which seeks to abolish
wrongful killing and to establish universal harmony and
love throughout the creation.

This article was adapted from the author’s book Holy

As oil stays in sesame seeds, as fire stays in wood, as butter stays in milk,
and as fragrance stays in flowers, so I, the Supersoul,
stay in the hearts of all living creatures.

Lord Vishnu,
Vasudeva Upanishad

One who actually satisfies the Supreme Personality of Godhead during
one’s lifetime becomes liberated from the gross and subtle material
conditions. Thus being freed from all material modes of nature,
he achieves unlimited spiritual bliss.

Svayambhuva Manu
Srimad Bhagavatam 4.11.14

Devotional service alone is the eternal supreme occupational duty. It is
applicable to and beneficial for everyone. Nondevotional activities, such
as karma, jnana, yoga, austerity, and vows are known as inferior
religious principles because they are temporary. Sectarianism and
narrow-mindedness are the two trademarks of these inferior
religious systems. The Supreme Lord is the only object
of worship; therefore He delivers everyone by manifesting
His various pastimes. This is His unique quality.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura
Sri Chaitanya bhagavata, Madhya-khanda 10.78, Commentary
Located 8 kilometers from the town of Sirkali is the serene temple of Lord Ranganatha, Thiru Thetri Ambalam. It is home to the Supreme Lord Vishnu lying on the serpent bed as Ranganatha.

The Pastime

Lord Vishnu incarnated as Varaha (wild boar) in Satya Yuga to help Mother Earth. One day Lord Brahma's four sons: Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanandana and Sanatkumara came to meet Lord Vishnu at His abode – Vaikuntha. Since Lord Vishnu was resting on Adisesha at that time, the two gatekeepers of Vaikuntha, Jaya and Vijaya, stopped them from entering the inner chambers. Lord Brahma's sons were very angry and they cursed Jaya and Vijaya to be born as humans on earth. The guards pleaded with them but to no avail.

Hearing the commotion, Lord Vishnu arrived at the spot and requested the sons of Brahma to forgive His gatekeepers, saying they were just doing their duty. But the Kumaras said that the curse could not be taken back. Lord Vishnu then addressed his gatekeepers and said that the curse could be lifted if they both would meet death in His hands, as humans. The gatekeepers had no choice but to agree to this. Both the guards were born as brothers named Hiranyakashyapu and Hiranyaksha.

Hiranyaksha was a great devotee of Lord Brahma. He worshiped him for millions of years and in return Lord Brahma gave him a boon. According to the boon, no demigod, human being, demon or animal would kill him. Hiranyaksha started torturing the people on earth as he was assured of his immortality. His powers grew by the day. He was such a giant that Mother Earth trembled when he walked and the sky cracked when he shouted.

He started harassing demigods and invaded Indra's palace in Svargaloka. Fearing for their lives, the demigods took shelter in the caves of mountain ranges on earth. To harass demigods, Hiranyaksha also began to terrorize the universe. By his name, Hiranyaksha, he was deemed to always look for gold. Because of his desire to acquire...
more and more gold, he dug up most of the earth and created some instability in the earth planet, resulting in it falling into the bottom of the Garbhodaka Ocean.

Mother Earth sank to the bottom of the ocean. At that time Manu and his wife Shatarupa ruled over earth. Seeing the condition of the earth, they came to Lord Brahma, bowed down and said, “Father tell us how we may serve you and ensure our happiness in this world and the next. Where should we live, as Mother Earth is submerged in the ocean?”

Brahmaji became worried and thought that Mother Earth should be rescued. He said, “Hiranyaksha will not be destroyed by me because I have granted him a boon. Let’s take help of Lord Vishnu!”

Lord Vishnu decided to incarnate in His boar incarnation, Varaha. As He was leaving with Lord Brahma, Mahalakshmi, His consort, and Adisesha, could not bear the separation of their beloved Lordship and requested to accompany Him in the pastime. The Supreme Lord refused and asked them to meditate in the temple Thiru Thetri Ambalam, saying that He would personally come there after killing Hiranyaksha and bless them with His intimate service.

As Brahma meditated on Lord Vishnu, a tiny boar appeared from his nostrils. Wondering what the creature was, Brahma was astonished to see that it grew and grew till it was a size of a large mountain. This was Lord Varaha and He said, “I will enter into the ocean to lift Mother Earth out of it and duly marry her!”

With a terrifying roar, Lord Varaha took one mighty leap into the air and tore the clouds with His hoofs. He dived to the bed of ocean in search of Mother Earth. Discovering her in the depths, He dug His tusk into the ocean bed and lifted Mother Earth onto it, to rise to the surface, balancing her on His mighty tusk.

Meanwhile Hiranyaksha, who liked to challenge people and show off his prowess, went everywhere, looking for a suitable person to fight with. He had gone on one occasion to meet Varuna, the god of the sea. But Varuna declined to fight with Hiranyaksha. He told Hiranyaksha, “I am too old now. I won’t be able to give you a good fight. But don’t worry, you should find Lord Vishnu who will certainly give you a good combat! And when Lord Vishnu is finished with you, you will find that your body is surrounded by dogs. You will become food for the dogs and vultures. You can be sure of this.”

Hearing these words from Varuna, Hiranyaksha was very eager to find Lord Vishnu.

Suddenly Narada Muni arrived there. Hiranyaksha asked him, “Do you know the whereabouts of Vishnu?” Narada told him that Lord Vishnu was in the ocean, rescuing Mother Earth. Angry Hiranyaksha charged towards the ocean bed. He saw Lord Varaha just emerging to the surface with Mother Earth balanced on His tusk. Hiranyaksha rushed towards Him with a mace in his hand calling out, “Oh! You amphibious beast! Where are You carrying away the earth conquered by me? Stop or I’ll crush Your head with this mace!”
Hiranyaksha challenged Lord Varaha to battle with him but Vishnu ignored all his warnings and continued rising to the surface. Seeing this Hiranyaksha gave chase, but the boar did not even look back.

Hiranyaksha said, “Wait! You impostor! I know You can defeat all with Your magical power but at present You are near me and I’ll surely defeat You.” The boar proceeded to put Mother Earth in a safe place, unaffected by the jibes of the demon.

This incensed him even more and Hiranyaksha shouted, “How can You run away like a coward? Return me my earth!” The earth, already frightened, on seeing Hiranyaksha, began to tremble even more.

Lord Varaha brought Mother Earth over the surface of the ocean and placed her gently on her axis. He blessed her and married her. He then turned to face Hiranyaksha. The demon threw his mace at the boar but the boar stepped aside and raised His mace. They fought for a long time with their maces.

Then Brahmaji warned Vishnu, “You’ve only an hour before the sunset. Destroy the demon before it’s dark so that he gets no opportunity to resort to his black magic, since demons get more power after sunset.” Hearing Brahma’s word’s Hiranyaksha hurled his mace towards Lord Vishnu but the latter flung it away. Having lost the mace, Hiranyaksha began hitting out with his fists on the chest of the boar. Lord Varaha hit Hiranyaksha, punched the demon hard on his face with His fist and tossed him in the air. The demon landed on his head and died instantly. Manu got his earth back and the demigods, their heaven.

In this way Lord Vishnu in Varaha avatar slew Hiranyaksha and saved Mother Earth from harm.

dadarsa tatrabhijitam dhara-dharam
pronnyamanavaninim agra-damstraya ’20
munsnantam aksna sva-ruco ‘runa-sriya
jahasa caho vana-gocaro mrgah
Srimad Bhagavatham 18 canto chp3

“He saw there the all-powerful Personality of Godhead in His boar incarnation, bearing the earth upward on the ends of His tusks and robbing him of his splendour with His reddish eyes. The demon laughed: ‘Oh, an amphibious beast!’”

The earth, Bhumi, and Lord Varaha have a very intimate connection. In the Vaishnavism, the practice is to worship the Lord along with His two shaktis, bhu and sri. So this is Bhumi, the deity of the earth planet. When Lord Varaha picked up the earth planet from the bottom of the Garbhodaka Ocean, we are told that she became pregnant and gave birth to a son called Naraka. At the beginning of his life, Naraka was a good devotee of the Supreme Lord Vishnu. He served the brahmanas, he was very pious and very religious. But due to bad association he gave up devotional service. He associated with a demon called Bana. And after that, he became offensive against the devotees and gave much trouble to the brahmanas. Ultimately Naraka was killed by the Lord. This shows that a pure devotee should refrain from all relationships with non-devotees especially demon-like humans.

There are two different Varaha incarnations mentioned in the Srimad Bhagavatam: white or Shvetaka Varaha and red or Raktha Varaha. They appear at different times; one appears during the Svayambhuva Manu millennium and the other during the Chakshusha millennium. The Varaha who appeared to fight Hiranyaksha was Raktha Varaha.

The pastime of Lord Varaha shows us how the Lord can take any form He likes as He is not limited. The form of a boar was particularly appropriate for His function to pick up the earth which had fallen into the bottom of the Garbhodaka, as in order to pick up an object from the bottom of some dirty place it is appropriate to have the body of a boar.

This pastime is glorified in Jayadeva Goswami’s Dashavatara Stotra. He describes how the Lord appears in the form of a boar and picks up the earth planet from the bottom of the Garbhodaka Ocean.

After killing the demon and with his newly wedded wife Bhumidevi, Lord Vishnu proceeded to Thiru Thethi Ambalam, to rest on the couch of Adisesha. Here He is seen with Mahalakshmi pressing His lotus feet and Bhudevi serving Him.

The Temple

The temple is a simple structure with a small gopuram. It is in a quiet, sleepy village, peaceful and abundant with Nature’s beauty.

In the main sanctum sanctorum the Lord is seen as Sengamala Ranganatha, resting on Adisesha couch and served by Bhudevi and Sri devi. There are separate sanctums for Mahalakshmi as Sengamalavalli Thayar. There is a separate shrine for Sudarshana and Gopalakrishna. The Lord is seen resting under Veda vimana. There is a small pond called Surya Pushkarani here. The festival Deity is known as Lakshmi Narayana.

Festivals

The Garuda Seva in February, during which the Lord comes in a Garuda carrier is the most important festival, besides the Brahmostava and Pavitrotsava.

Thirumangai Alwar has sung ten beautiful songs in praise of the Supreme Lord of Thiru Thethi Ambalam. The author is a disciple of Thondanur Nambi and hails from a Sri Vaishnava family. He is an Assistant Professor in Law and resides in Bangalore.

Photo courtesy: Santhanakrishnan, Srirangam
Abhisheka is offered to Lord Srinivasa Govinda

The utsava vigraha of Sri Radha Krishnachandra in Lakshmi Narayana alankara at the Vaikuntha dwara
Kalyanotsava is offered to utsava vigraha Sri Krishna Rukmini Satyabhama

Laksharchana is offered to Sri Srinivasa Govinda
Devotees throng the temple to walk through the Vaikuntha dwara and have darshana of the Lord.

Devotees offer bhajan seva to the Lord.
At ISKCON Hubli, Lord Krishna is adorned in special Narayana alankara, riding on Garuda (above), devotees offer Laksharchana to the Lord (right).

At ISKCON Mysore, Sri Krishna and Sri Balarama are adorned in special alankara (left), devotees queue up to enter the Vaikuntha dwara (below).
Vraja Parikrama 2015

Karthik (Oct-Nov) is the auspicious month when Krishna devotees travel to different places of His pastimes in and around Vrindavana. This area, called Braj, extends to about 3800 sq. kms, and encompasses places where Krishna was born (Mathura), the home of Nanda Maharaja (Gokul), the river Yamuna, and the twelve forests where Krishna performed different pastimes, until He left to Mathura to kill Kamsa.

About 65 devotees from 15 temples of the ISKCON Bangalore group travelled to some of these holy places - sometimes by walk, sometimes on vehicles and sometimes on boat across the river – during a ten-day pilgrimage that was organized in Karthik 2015.

Devotees carried a deity of Srila Prabhupada to all these places. They performed bhajans and kirtans while they had darshan of the holy shrines associated with these places of pastimes. “Performing bhajans, hearing classes and honouring delicious prasadam - sometimes under the trees, sometimes beside a kunda (pond) or on the cold marble floor of an ancient temple,” reminisced Sridham Krishna Dasa, General Manager & senior devotee of ISKCON Bangalore, “was truly a memorable and spiritually uplifting experience.

Senior devotees like Madhu Pandit Dasa, Chanchalapathi Dasa, Jai Chaitanya Dasa and Stoka Krishna Dasa spoke on the philosophy of Krishna consciousness on different occasions, along with reading of the pastimes connected with those holy places. “Although it was sometimes austere,” said Janardhan Das, Temple President of Guwahati HKM-temple, “it was a transcendental experience to be with so many devotees in a spiritually surcharged atmosphere of remembrance of the Lord’s lila. I look forward to more such pilgrimages.”
Devotees pose for a group photograph on Aditya tila near Kaliya Ghat.

Devotees sing bhajans and walk through the forest to Adi Kedarnath.

Devotees sing and dance at Ram Ghat near Nandagaon.

Devotees gather to hear pastimes of Krishna at Imlitala temple.

Devotees plant a sapling of a kadamba tree at Govardhana.
Gift a Gita during the auspicious month of Gita Jayanti.

“The best gift is one which can give ever-lasting happiness.”

If one properly follows the instructions of Bhagavad-gita, one can be freed from all miseries and anxieties in this life, and one's next life will be spiritual.

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Some of the entries received for the altar photo contest held on Sri Vaikuntha Ekadashi

Sadanandini Devi Dasi, Vrindavan
Suma M, Bengaluru
Vishnu Priya, Bengaluru
Tara Dutt Bhatt, Delhi
Braja Hari Dasa, Bengaluru
Sharandeep Singh, Chandigarh
Chethana M, Hosur
Sumnata Patro, Badakodanda
Rikesh Boodhun, Mauritius
Deepa Prashanth, USA
Harsha B, Bengaluru
Shashikala Srinivasa, Bengaluru
Overwhelming response for free online archana seva on Vaikuntha Ekadashi

Every year on the occasion of Vaikuntha Ekadashi, ISKCON Bangalore offers a unique opportunity to all netizens for a free archana seva to be performed in their name. Those desirous can register online for free archana seva to Lord Srinivasa Govinda on the day of Vaikuntha Ekadashi. This is a once-in-a-year offer which devotees can avail of to seek the blessings of the Lord on this auspicious day.

Archana or Deity worship is one of the nine types of devotional service (bhakti) to the Lord. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita, “Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, offer obeisances and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.” (Bg. 9.34). The Lord is easily pleased even if one makes a humble offering of fruits or flowers, and praying to Him to accept it. As flowers are naturally available they are offered as an integral part of worship.

On the day of Vaikuntha Ekadashi, a special seva called Laksharchana is performed to Lord Srinivasa Govinda at our temple. This involves invoking the Lord in seven kalashas and Goddess Lakshmi in one kalasha and duly worshipping Him by offering fragrant flowers while chanting His one lakh holy names. Two batches of devotees with fifteen in each batch, take turns to perform the archana from 8:00 am to 9:30 pm.

Chanting the holy names of Lord Krishna is the best process recommended for Kali-yuga to seek the mercy of the Lord and progress on the path of spiritual perfection. ISKCON Bangalore is trying to involve people in chanting the holy names of Krishna by various means.

This year, as many as 11219 devotees from 52 countries registered for free archana seva to receive the blessings of the Lord. This facility to register was open from 4th December 2015 to 20th December 2015. In addition to this offer, our temple also facilitated online participation in the free archana seva this year for those who had registered for the same. Each of them were given a registration number. With this number, they could log in to witness the archana which was webcast live and also participate in the seva by chanting the holy names of the Lord.

www.iskconbangalore.org/blog/free-online-archana-seva-on-vaikuntha-ekadashi/
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