Vaikuntha Ekadashi
SRI GAURA PURNIMA
Glorious Appearance Day Of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

SUNDAY MARCH 12, 2017

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

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

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

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A Relationship Everyone Can Relish

Above Hypocrisy and Anxiety

A lecture by
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

veda-sastra kahe 'sambandha,' 'abhidheya,' 'prayojana'
krsna' prapya sambandha, 'bhakti' praptyera sadhana

"The Vedic literatures give information about what the living entity's eternal relationship with Lord Krishna is, how the living entity can revive this relationship and act accordingly, and how he will live when he has returned home, back to Godhead—which is the ultimate goal of life." (Chaitanya-charitamrita, Madhya-lila 20.124)

The Vedic literatures are not manmade. Rather, they are coming down to us through the traditional process, through hearing. For example, we accept the identity of our father by hearing. A child is born, and when the child hears his older brothers and sisters calling a gentleman "Father," he also begins to say "Father." There is no question of studying. He learns simply by hearing. Others are calling "Father," so he also calls "Father." There is no need at all for evidence or studying.

Similarly, the Vedic knowledge has come down to us through the process of hearing. Before five thousand years ago, there was no need of having the Vedic knowledge in book form, because the spiritual master would speak it, his disciple would hear it, and the disciple would speak this knowledge to his disciple, who would in turn hear it and hand it down—and so forth, through the generations. But when the Kali-yuga (this present age of hypocrisy and confusion) began five thousand years ago, all of the Vedic knowledge was systematically recorded.

Earlier there had been only one Veda, the Atharva Veda. But to make it more clear and understandable, Vyasadeva divided the one Veda into four and entrusted four of his disciples to take charge of the four Vedas. Later he wrote the Mahabharata and the Puranas (histories) just to make the Vedic knowledge still more understandable to the common man in different ways. But the principle is the same. Veda-sastra kahe-'sambandha.' Sambandha: we have to find out how to reestablish our lost relationship with Krishna, or God.

And what is that relationship? As the Vedanta-sutra says, janmady asya yatah: our relationship is that all beings—including ourselves—are born of the energy of God. Therefore we call God "Father." This is accepted in every religion. There is no argument. So what is the relationship between father and son? Is the relationship only to exact from the father? No. There is duty.

If a son is sensible and grown up, he knows, "I have a duty to love my father." That is a very simple thing—to love the father. "My father has done so much for me. I am going to inherit the estate of my father, and I am already enjoying the earnings of my father. So is it not my duty to show respect to my father?"

Therefore those who are against God's principles, those who are not God-minded—they're the lowest of creatures. Na mam duskrtno mudhah propadyante naradhamah. Anyone who does not recognize God—he is the lowest of the low. These terms have been used. Mudhah—ass. Duskrtnah—miscreant. And naradhamah—the lowest of mankind. Mankind is meant for recognizing God. This is real human life. In animal life one cannot recognize that there is a God, and that everything is coming from God. Animals cannot read the Vedic literatures. They cannot take any instruction. These Vedic literatures exist simply for the benefit of human beings. Therefore any so-called human being who does not accept the authority of the Vedic literatures and does not accept the existence of God is actually just an animal, only on two legs instead of four. Bhagavad-gita very nicely describes them: naradhamah, the lowest of mankind. So our civilization is being governed by the lowest of mankind, even though we may try to advertise ourselves as "advancing."

Yesterday some boy came and said, "Who is God? I am God." He was speaking like that. You see? And yet from his manner and dress it appeared that he was educated. So this is the education that is going on: everyone is being trained to be the lowest of mankind. The purpose of education is to make a man the highest of mankind, but modern education is teaching people to be the lowest of mankind. And if some of the students are taught to be the highest of mankind, their guardians become disturbed. "Oh, my son is going to be the highest of mankind? Swamiji is teaching dangerous things."

Just see. The spiritual master is saying, "No, don't smoke, don't take intoxication, don't have any illicit connection with women. Be upright; be a devotee of the Lord."
"Oh, Swamiji is dangerous."

But if somebody teaches, "My dear boys, take LSD, become mad, and go to the lunatic asylum," he will be very popular. What can be done? This is the situation. So we are situated in a society of the lowest of mankind. Always remember this.

I am not just speaking about the United States, but all over the world. Even in India, where so much culture is available for understanding God, their foolish leaders are also teaching this gross materialism. You see? It is because of the age we are living in. Don't think that I am criticizing some particular country or community. This is the age of Kali, the age of hypocrisy. Simply hypocrisy.

So we have to be very careful. Daivi hy esa gunamayi mama maya duratyaya: the illusory, material energy is very strong. At any moment, if we become a little slack and inattentive, we can forget our relationship with the Supreme. The Supreme Cause is Krishna, or God, but somehow we have forgotten that. Therefore these literatures—the Vedas, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavad-gita—are reminding us, "Your relationship with Krishna is eternal."

Bhayam dvitiyabhinivesatah syad isad apetasya viparyayo 'smrth: we are put into anxiety because we have taken an opposite position—" Who is God?" Viparyayo 'smrth. This very word is used. Viparyayah means "topsy-turvy." Our memory has become topsy-turvy, and therefore we are suffering. But people will not admit it. "No, we shall adjust. We shall make better laws. We shall offer higher education. We shall form big political parties. We shall go on defying God. And we shall be happy in this way." So this godless civilization is now generating the Communist party, bringing us to a dangerous situation. But one who takes shelter of Krishna will not be put into danger. Rest assured.

Vasudevah sarvam iti sa mahatma sudurlabhah: We have to become great souls by reviving our eternal relationship with the Supreme, by surrendering unto God. That surrendering process is bhakti, or devotional service. For so long we have been disobedient. Now we have to become obedient. That's all. As soon as the people of this so-called advanced world become obedient to God, then there will be discipline, and there will be peace.

There is no discipline now. No one is agreeing to follow any spiritual rules or regulations. Everyone has become God. "We can do anything—whatever we like." That means that everyone has become dog. But bhakti-yoga, devotional service, means that we follow a disciplinary pattern in our lives, so that automatically we can revive our lost relationship with the Lord. And then we will become happy. We will realize love of God, the real goal of life.

Why practice discipline? Suppose we don't revive our relationship? Then we'll be disturbed. We are searching after peace and prosperity. So what is the basis of peace? The basis of peace is love. Do you think that you can go without loving anyone and still become peaceful? No. How is it possible? But if you love God, then you can love everyone. And if you don't love God, then you cannot love anyone. Because He's the center.

Take this example. Say a girl belongs to a certain family. But when she marries, she becomes a member of her husband's family. Because the husband and wife are now related, at once she becomes related to the husband's brother. She becomes related to the husband's mother and the husband's father. She becomes related to everyone in the family. At once. Of course, the central point is the husband. Before that—before any connection with that central point—that boy's mother, father, and brother had no relation with this girl. You see? So the central point must be there. If you can love God, then you can love everything in relationship with God. You can love everyone. You can love your country. You can love your society. You can love your friend. Everyone. That is the point.

People are thinking in a different way: "Why shall I love God only? Why shall I love God? I shall love my family. I shall love my country. I shall love my ..." But no, you cannot love all of these things. It is not possible, because you are missing the central point. These are facts. Harav abhaktasya kuto mahad-guna. However materially or academically qualified he may be, one who does not love God cannot have any good qualifications. Why? Manorathenasati dhavato bahih—because he'll simply speculate on the mental plane and fall under the spell of the material energy.

But it is clearly stated in the Srimad-Bhagavatam, yasyasti bhaktir bhagavaty akinchana—as a person becomes advanced in devotional service, automatically he develops all good qualities.

The Chaitanya-charitamrita gives a list of twenty-six qualities of a devotee: (1) He is very kind to everyone. (2) He does not make anyone his enemy. (3) He is truthful. (4) He is equal to everyone. (5) No one can find any fault in him. (6) He is magnanimous. (7) He is mild. (8) He is always clean. (9) He is without possessions. (10) He works for everyone's benefit. (11) He is very peaceful. (12) He is always surrendered to Krishna. (13) He has no material desires. (14) He is very meek. (15) He is steady. (16) He controls his senses. (17) He does not eat more than...
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required. (18) He is not influenced by the Lord's illusory energy. (19) He offers respect to everyone. (20) He does not desire any respect for himself. (21) He is very grave. (22) He is not required. (18) He is not influenced by the Lord's illusory energy. (19) He offers respect to everyone. (20) He does not desire any respect for himself. (21) He is very grave. (22) He is not required.

After all, what is the meaning of Krishna consciousness? Is it just some kind of sentiment or fanaticism? No. It is a science. If you follow the rules and regulations, then automatically all these good qualities develop. You can actually see. And as soon as these qualities are there, then you actually become a lover of your country; you become a lover of your fellow man. You become a friend to everyone, a lover of God—everything. So just imagine if each and every person became like that....

Of course, it is not expected that each and every person will become like that. However, if only ten percent of the world's population becomes Krishna conscious, then it is guaranteed that we will have peace in the world. Why? Because ekas chandrah—we do not require many moons in the sky. One moon is sufficient to drive away the darkness. Varam eko gu ni putro nirguna satena kim. Chanakya Pandita says that it is better to have one qualified son than to have hundreds of fools. The modern civilization is going on in that way—godless civilization. But if some percentage of the civilized human beings become Krishna conscious, that will bring world peace. Otherwise it is not possible. Krishna consciousness is therefore a necessity.

When Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya appeared in India five hundred years ago, He based His teaching on this principle: prema pum-artho mahan—He stated that the objective of human life is to attain love of God. That's all. That makes one's life perfect. Nothing more. One of the great spiritual masters, Srinatha Chakravarti, has described the mission of Lord Chaitanya. Aradhyo bhagavan vrajesa-tanayas: Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is aradhyo, or worshipable. He's the only worshipable personality. Tad-dhama virdavanam: and as Lord Krishna is worshipable, similarly His place of pastimes, Vrindavana, is also worshipable.

And what is the best kind of worship for Krishna? Ramya kacid upasana vraja-vadhu-vargena ya kalpita: the highest kind of worship is what was demonstrated five thousand years ago by the cowherd damsels of Vrindavana village. They were always thinking of Krishna. When Krishna went walking outside of the village, they were at home thinking, "Oh, the soles of Krishna's feet are so soft. How can He wander in the forest, where there are so many particles of stone? He must be hurting Himself. Krishna was in the forest, and they were at home. But they were thinking of Krishna—how He was walking, how His soft feet might have been suffering. In this way they were always absorbed in Krishna consciousness.

The cowherd damsels were not Vedantists, they were not brahmanas, they were not educated—they were cowherd girls. But their love of Krishna was so intense that Lord Chaitanya stated, "There is no better worship than what was demonstrated by the damsels of Vrindavana. Then what is the source where we can gain an understanding of Krishna? Srimad-bhagavatam pramanam amalam: if you study Srimad-Bhagavatam, then you attain all these things. You attain perfect love of Krishna, life's highest success. So here is the book—Srimad-Bhagavatam. And here is the ideal worship—that of the damsels of Vrindavana. And the worshipable object—Krishna. And the prime necessity of life—to attain love of God. Sri-chaitanya-mahaprabhor matam idam: this is the sum and substance of what Chaitanya Mahaprabhu taught.

Dharma: every civilized nation has some sort of religion, or dharma, because unless we become religious there is no possibility of artha, lasting peace and prosperity. Dharma-artha: if all people are religious, then their economic condition will be better. And why is a better economic condition desirable? Kama. Kama means that the necessities of your life will be fulfilled nicely. Dharma-artha-kama. Then, what is the ultimate goal? Moksha. If you live peacefully within society, then you can cultivate knowledge for your liberation. Dharma-artha-kama-moksha.

So, generally these four principles are the aim of human society. Lord Chaitanya says, "Yes, these are not bad" But prema pum-artho mahan—"You may have all these things, but if you have no love of Godhead, then it is all nonsense. All nonsense. Therefore try to love God, and everything will be all right." Lord Chaitanya says that we should understand our relationship with God and act accordingly. That means serving Him with devotion. Then we shall have the highest perfection of life—love of God—and our mission of human life will be fulfilled.

Sri Prabhupada, the founder-acharya of ISKCON, has delivered more than 1500 lectures on Vedic scriptures like Bhagavad-gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Chaitanya-charitamrita. The audio recording of his lectures are available in ISKCON centers. You can also hear some of these lectures in www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada-lectures

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Beyond Sexism, Beyond Tokenism

This exchange between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and a reporter took place in Philadelphia during July of 1975.

**Reporter:** The Krishna consciousness movement has been what some would consider sexist, because certain propensities for women have been defined, by the devotees or the Vedic scriptures—I’m not sure which—and I wondered if you would comment on that. The allegation is not necessarily that the movement is against women, but that it defines inferior roles for them by their natural traits.

**Srila Prabhupada:** We give equal roles spiritually. Materially, one person is an assistant, another person is a manager. How can you avoid this? Everyone will be a manager, nobody will be an assistant? Can you achieve equality materially? Materially one person is a parent, another is a child; one is an assistant, another is a manager; one is a woman, another is a man. How can you stop this? But spiritually they are all equal.

**Reporter:** So then what is happening materially is unimportant?

**Srila Prabhupada:** The thing is that when you come to the spiritual platform, when you see the spirit soul within everyone—then that is equality. For instance, you are differently dressed, in a red blouse, and I am differently dressed. This difference must be there. There are so many
men and women—and they are differently dressed. You cannot say they are equal with respect to their dress. But within the dress—as spiritual beings—they are all the same. In Bhagavad-gita Lord Krishna says that through spiritual vision, we can see a learned scholar, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and even a dog-eater as equals. And yet materially, how can they be equal?

If I invite a learned scholar and ask him, "Please sit down with this dog," will he be pleased? He will feel insulted. I may see that within the dog there is a spirit soul and within the learned scholar there is a spirit soul. But if I say, "Oh, you may be a learned scholar and you may think the dog is just a dog, but I see you as equals," that will be an insult. So the fact is that we cannot disturb the divergent material situation, but at the same time we have to understand what the situation is spiritually.

Artificially, on the platform of the material body, you may make man and woman equal, but actually it is not a fact.

In one place in the Bhagavad-gita, the Supreme Personality of Godhead says that one who has spiritual vision sees everyone as equal. And yet in another place the Supreme Lord says, strisu dustasu varsa-carah: unless you protect women, low-class men will seduce them, and society will be burdened with unwanted children. Just take this "women's liberation"—it is simply a trick by the men. Now the men can have free prostitutes, that's all. And once a man makes a woman pregnant, he can go away and let her choose between begging support from the government or killing her child... abortion. You may not like to hear it, but "women's liberation" means that the men have tricked you. So to make progress toward the end of spiritual realization, we must make some slight material distinction: women must be protected.

If we were actually discriminating against women, then how could it be that in our temple we are enjoying together? We are enjoying because actually we are equal—on the spiritual platform. We do not say, "You are a woman. Oh, you cannot become a devotee." No. We welcome everyone. We request everyone, “Come to the spiritual platform. Then everything will be nice.” When one is spiritually realized, he knows that spiritually there is no distinction between himself and anyone else—and so he becomes happy. In the material conception, one person is always trying to take another person’s position. But in the spiritual conception there is no more hankering and no more lamentation, because everyone understands that spiritually we are one.

Here at our temple you can see it practically: the boy is dancing, the father is dancing, the black is dancing, the white is dancing, the young are dancing, the old are dancing. You can see it practically. The woman is dancing, the man is dancing—everyone is dancing. They are not dancing artificially, like dogs. They are dancing out of spiritual ecstasy. This is the spiritual platform, the "dancing platform." They are dancing naturally, spontaneously, because they are realizing God, because they are in relationship with God. They are feeling the ecstasy that “we are all servants of Krishna.”

And this is despite any material distinctions. A man’s bodily structure and a woman’s bodily structure are different. How can you say they are equal? If a man and a woman are equal materially, then why doesn’t the man also become pregnant? The distinction is there by nature. Sometimes people think that I am making the distinction, but the distinction is already there. But despite this distinction, when the man and the woman think in connection with Krishna—"I am a spirit soul; my function is to serve God"—then they are equal.

Our proposition is that artificially we should not try to make equality. That will be a failure. It is already a failure. For instance, in London I saw a woman police officer. So I was joking with her: "If I capture your hand and snatch you, what will you do? You will simply cry. So what is the use of your being a police officer?" A police officer requires bodily strength. If there is some hooligan, he can give him a slap or catch him; but what will a woman do? So we say, "Be practical." Artificial equality will not endure.

We are all equal, undoubtedly, because we are all spirit souls. Asmin dehe: within everyone’s material body there is a spirit soul. That we have to understand first of all, and then if we cultivate knowledge and understanding on that platform of spirit soul, then we shall feel equal and there will be no disturbance. Everyone will be peaceful. That is wanted. We are stressing this point—that if you say artificially that we are equal, it will not have any effect. But when you understand that we are equal spiritually, that will be beneficial. That will bring peace and happiness all over the world.

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Krishna Voice, February 2017
About 74 km south of Madurai, in the district of Virudhunagar of Tamil Nadu, is a town known as Srivilliputhur where Lord Vishnu resides as Vatapathrashayi. It is the birth place of the Vaishnava saint Andal, the incarnation of Goddess Bhoomi.

The Pastime

Andal is one of the most extraordinary personalities in religious history. She is known in her native tongue of Tamil as an Alwar, one who is immersed in the depths of enjoyment of God, the omnipresent Supreme Personality of Godhead. Between the fifth and ninth centuries, in the Tamil-speaking region of South India, these saints revitalized the Indian religious environment, sparking a renewal of devotional worship throughout the subcontinent. Traveling from place to place, from temple to temple, from holy site to holy site, they composed exceedingly beautiful poetry to their Divine Beloved, Vishnu, as an expression of their love for Him. Anyone can see why their poetry was so attractive; at once both impassioned and philosophical, their words cut across all barriers of caste and class, attracting all to their faith. In doing so, they created a new religious heritage of intense love of the Divine, whose impact is still felt today in Indian religious life.

Rajagopuram

Tradition reckons twelve Alwars, of which Andal is the only female. Andal, whose life and poetry are celebrated every day by staunch Sri Vaishnavas, is the most visible contributor to this heritage. A peep into her wonderful life would not be out of context because she was born in Srivilliputhur and most of her pastimes took place there.

While Lord Vishnu rests on the Ocean of Milk, Bhoo Devi (the Earth goddess) visits Him with a floral garland. He tells her that He would like her to offer Him garlands of songs. The goddess asks Him for such a boon and accordingly, she is born on Earth.

The life of Andal is remarkable in its romantic simplicity. Vishnuchitta or Perialwar, a devout brahmana and one among the twelve Alwars, lived in Srivilliputhur, a town near Madurai. He was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu and he dedicated his life to the service of Lord Vatapathrashayi (the divya desam Lord of Srivilliputhur). His daily duties included procuring flowers for the worship of the Lord at the local temple. One morning, as he went about his business, he discovered a baby girl lying under a tulasi plant in his flower garden. Having no family of his own, Vishnuchitta felt it was God’s grace that gave him this child and he named her Goda or one who has beautiful hair. Filled with joy, he took her home and raised her as his own.

Goda grew up in an atmosphere of love and devotion. Vishnuchitta doted on her in every respect, singing songs to her about his beloved Krishna, teaching her all the stories and philosophy he knew, and sharing with her his love of Tamil poetry. The love
Vishnuchitta had for his beloved Lord intensified further in his daughter, and before long she was passionately in love with Lord Krishna. Even as a child, Goda made up her mind to marry none but the cowherd boy of Vrindavana and refused to think of any human being in similar terms. She imagined what it would be like to be His bride, playing the role of His beloved, enjoying His presence. Unknown to her father, she adorned herself daily with the flower garland he prepared for the Lord at the temple. After admiring her reflection and thinking of herself as His ideal bride, she would put the garland back for her father to take to the temple and offer to the Lord.

One day, when the garland was taken to the temple, the priest noticed that there was a hair strand in the garland and returned the garland to Vishnuchitta with a warning not to bring such garlands. Shocked and saddened by this desecration of what was meant only for the Lord, he scolded Goda for her misuse of the garland and discarded it. He carefully prepared a new one and offered it to the Lord, begging His pardon all the while. But no matter how much the priest tried to offer the garland to the Lord, it would not simply fit the Lord and broke up into pieces immediately. Upset at this, Vishnuchitta returned home with a heavy heart. That night, the Lord appeared to Vishnuchitta in a dream and asked him why he discarded Goda’s garland instead of offering it to Him. He told Vishnuchitta that He missed the scent of Goda’s body in the flowers, and that He preferred them that way. Would he please continue to give the garlands once worn by Goda? Overcome with emotion, Vishnuchitta awoke and cried tears of both joy and remorse. It dawned on him that his daughter was someone whose love of God was so intense and pure that even he had not comprehended its extent. Her spiritual greatness was such that the Lord Himself wished to share her presence. From this day on, she became known as Andal, the girl who ruled over the Lord. (Even today, the pastime of exchange of garlands with Andal and the Supreme Personality of Godhead happens in every Vishnu temple in South India. The Lord demanded this.)

Andal blossomed into a beautiful young woman as she came of marriageable age. When asked to marry, however, she stubbornly refused, saying that she would only agree to marry Sri Ranganatha, the Lord at the great temple town of Srirangam. Vishnuchitta despaired, wondering what was to become of his daughter. One night, Lord Ranganatha appeared in his dream and asked him why he refused Andal’s garlands. Vishnuchitta awoke with a heavy heart and realized that he had not comprehended the depth of his daughter’s love for the Lord. He was overjoyed at this and accepted Andal’s decision to marry the Lord. From that day on, Andal became known as the girl who ruled over the Lord.
asked that Andal be sent to Him in all her wedding finery. Simultaneously, the Lord appeared before the priests at Srirangam and asked them to prepare for the coming of Andal. Vishnuchitta once again was filled with both joy and sadness; joy that his beloved daughter would attain her goal, but sadness at losing her. He made all the wedding preparations and arranged for Andal’s journey in a palanquin to Srirangam. Andal waited with excited anticipation as the wedding party approached Lord Ranganatha’s shrine. As they entered the temple, she jumped out of the palanquin, unable to restrain herself any longer. Running into the temple sanctum, she embraced Lord Ranganatha and disappeared in a blaze of glory, having joined her Lord. She was only fifteen at the time.

Andal is now one of the best loved poet-saints of the Tamils. Pious tradition reckons her to be the veritable descent of Bhoomi Devi (Mother Earth) in bodily form to show humanity the way to His lotus feet. She is present in all Sri Vaishnava temples, in India and elsewhere, next to her Lord, as she always desired.

According to legend, Srivilliputhur was known as Varahakshetra. There was a dense forest named Champaka where the sages Bhrigu and Markandeya were performing penance and had their hermitages. A demon named Kalanerai was troubling the sages and they prayed to Vishnu to relieve them from the demon. Vishnu was pleased by their devotion and appeared there to slay the demon. He chose to remain in the forest, reclining on Adishesha, His serpent bed, on the leaf of a banyan tree, and is therefore He is lovingly addressed as Vatapathrashayi, the one who is lying down in a banyan tree. The place thus came to be known as Vadaveshwarapuram or Shenbagaranyam (meaning beautiful forest, in Tamil). Shenbagaranyam was a small part of the large kingdom ruled by a Queen Malli whose sons were Villi and Puttan. They liked hunting and used to hunt animals in Shenbagaranyam. One day, while Villi and Puttan were in the forest on a hunt, they spotted a tiger. They tried to kill the tiger and Puttan vigorously chased it while Villi lost track of his brother. However, after some time the tiger managed to kill Puttan by hiding behind a tree and pouncing on him at an opportune moment. Villi came searching for Puttan and on seeing Puttan’s dead body, he was overcome with grief. Sad and tired, Villi drifted off to sleep. While sleeping, Villi had a dream. Lord Vishnu appeared in his dream along with His consort and said, “O Villi do not grieve. Puttan will get back his life.” The Lord then mentioned about His previous appearance as Lord Vatapathrashayi in lying posture under the foot of the banyan tree in Shenbagaranyam. The Lord indicated to Villi that there was a cave near the huge banyan tree, where His Deity had been lying for a long time. There were also lots of gold coins and jewels near Andal in sitting posture and Sri Rangamannar lying down on her lap.
that place. The Lord instructed Villi to use the money to deforest the place and build a village. He wanted Villi to construct a temple for His Deity in the cave. Villi woke up to find his brother Puttan alive and narrated his dream to him. He then built a small town and a temple for Lord Vatapathrashayi. As a forest full of snake mounds was converted into a town by Villi it came to be known as Villiputhur. Later with the advent of Sri Andal, it got the name Srivilliputhur (the prefix Sri representing Mahalakshmi).

During the reign of Thirumalai Naikar (1623 – 1659) and Rani Mangammal (1889 – 1706), this city became very popular. Thirumalai Naikar organized a lot of renovation in the temples of the city. From 1751 to 1756 A.D., Srivilliputhur came under the rule of Nerkattucheval Jamindar Pulithevar. Then it fell into the hands of Mohammed Yousoof Khan. Until 1850, the temple was under the care of the king of Travancore. Formerly, Srivilliputhur was a part of Madurai district. Later it was annexed with Thirunelveli district in 1838 and in 1910 with Ramnad district. When Ramnad district was divided into three, Srivilliputhur, significantly called the city of temples, came under Virudhunagar district. In this renowned city, there are many heritage temples. The temple of Sri Andal and Sri Vatapathrashayi are located in the heart of the city. This temple is also called by the names Vanpudhuvai, Sri Dhanvipuram, Thiruvilliputhur Andal Kovil, Thiruvilliputhur etc. Towards the west of this city lies the Western Ghats.

The Temple

Srivilliputhur finds mention in the Brahmakaivatsa Purana and the Varaha Purana. The Varaha Purana foretells the existence of Srivilliputhur and the consequent visit of Bhagavan during the Varaha avatara which have been discussed in detail above. The Brahmakaivatsa Purana mentions the location of Vatapathrashayi temple in Srivilliputhur.

The temple has two sections - one of Andal located in the southwest and the other of Vatapathrashayi in the northeast. A granite wall surrounds the temple, enclosing all its shrines, the garden where Andal was found and two of its three bodies of water. The 196 ft. high temple tower is second only to Srirangam’s rajagopuram (236 ft) among the divya desams. The nine-tier temple chariot is said to be the biggest in Tamil Nadu. The tower is believed to have been originally built by Periaiwar with the prize money he obtained from religious debates in the court of Vallabha Pandya in Madurai (refer Krishna Voice article on Koodal Azhagar temple). The Andal shrine houses the Deities of Andal and Rangamannar. Garuda, who brought Ranganathar, the divine bridegroom from Srirangam, is also housed in the same shrine. The walls around the shrine have paintings on the life of Andal. The second hall from the entrance towards the sanctum, the Kalyana Mantapa, houses
life-size sculptures of Mohini, Rama, Kamadeva, Rati and many other deities. The sanctum sanctorum is two-tiered. The sanctum in the second level, approached through a flight of steps, houses the Deities of Vatapathrashayi in a reclining posture and His consorts, Lakshmi and Bhudevi attending on Him at His lotus feet, all under the vimalakrithi vimanam. Sage Bhrigu stands near His head and Sage Markandeya is also near His lotus feet. The Lord is in sudhai (brick and mortar) and no daily thirumanjanam (sacred bath) is performed to Him. In front of the sanctum sanctorum is a rectangular hall known as Gopala Vilasam where araiyar sevai is performed during Pagal Pathu utsavam. History has it that the hall with a wooden roof or canopy over it was built with the remains of the temple's big car which was partially damaged in a fire nearly 200 years ago. A new car was presented to the temple by the then Jeeyar Swami of the Nanguneri-Vanamamalai Matha, over 150 years ago, as an inscription found in one of the big rings with the words "Kollam year 1025, Sowmya year, Avani month, 14th day", corresponding to August 28, 1849, testifies. The wooden carvings on the roof contain scenes from Ramayana and other stories, such as the slaying of Hiranyakashipu by Narasimha and Andal being carried in a palanquin to Srirangam.

The banyan tree whose leaf is known as vatapathram, on which Vishnu is said to rest in the form of a baby during the pralaya, is at His head, behind Bhrigu. Deities of Panchamurtis - Tumburu, Narada, Sanatkumara, Kinnara Mithuna, the Sun god and the Moon god are all around Rangamannar, as well as representations of Villi and Puttan at His feet. The sanctum has three doorways from which the presiding Deity can be seen. The hall leading to the sanctum, Bhopala Villam, has a hall with detailed teak wood carvings depicting incidents from the Puranas and the Dashavatara. There are carvings that decorate the ceiling. The temple houses some rare Vijayanagara sculptures. Darshana of Lord Lakshminarasimha is on the lower tier of the sanctum sanctorum. Vatapathrashayi is known by other names like Pallikonda Paramaswamy, Vataperunkoil Udayan and Periya Perumal. The temple is situated just adjacent to the Andal temple. Connecting them is the garden of Andal’s guardian parent Perialwar and her birthplace.

**Special status to Garudadeva**

One finds Lord Garuda, the carrier of Lord Vishnu, alongside the main Deities. In all other temples, one finds Garuda standing opposite the main Deity. It is believed that Garuda brought Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam to Srivilliputhur faster than expected and hence he was accorded the special status here.

**Architecture**

There are over a dozen monolithic pillars with exquisite images in the dwajasthamba (flagstaff) mandapam of the Andal temple. The first is that of four-handed Lord Venugopala who appears playing the flute with two hands, while the other two hands are holding the sacred disc or Sudarshana and Panchajanya or the conch.
is rather rare to find Krishna in this posture. Vishwakarma or Mayan, the divine sculptor, with the hammer in his right hand and chisel in his left appears with four arms, which according to scholars, represents Vishnu amsha, a version unique to this temple. Another marvelous work is the figure of Jalandarasura (demon king to annihilate whom Lord Vishnu assumed His form). In the Eka
dashi Mantapa, which is on the northern side of the dwajasthambha, are pillars containing images of Manmatha (Cupid), Rathidevi, Oordhvamuka Veerabhadra, Guha, Arjuna, Karna and Sathyaki, Lord Krishna’s charioteer. The mantapa at the entrance to the Andal temple is described in her pasuram as muthudai thamam niraithaazhntha panthal, is the place where Andal's marriage is celebrated on the Panguni Uthiram day every year. One can see frescoes depicting scenes from the Ramayana on its ceiling. Interestingly, in Sita Kalyanam the images depicted are those of Lord Rangamannar and Andal and not of Sri Rama and Sita.

The manimantapam in front of the mahamandapam is marked for its fine workmanship in stone and wood. The stone palahanis providing light and fresh air to the mahamandapam and manimandapam are not mere windows but fine works of art. The statues of Thirumalai Nayak and his consorts in the sukkiravara kuradu, where the Deities used to be worshipped every Friday in a decorated oonjal (swing) are very attractive. On the walls one can find pictures from Andal’s life as depicted in her Naachiyaar Thirumozhi and Thiruppavai. The Thiruppavai Vimanam over the sanctum sanctorum with the sudhai images describing the scenes visualized in her great work is unique, as a similar structure is not found in any other holy place. The two temples contain over 60 inscriptions in Vattezhuthu in the tower, dwajasthambha, walls of the central shrines and mandapams. They date back to the 10th century or even earlier during the reign of Pandya kings. Most of the inscriptions speak about the lands and other gifts made to the two temples. Srivilliputhur is mentioned as Malli Valanadu and they provide lot of information about the divisions and sub-divisions made by kings and administrators, the names of the Deities and the rulers and chieftains. The temple possesses numerous jewels and vast landed property, but the income that it gets from them is nil or negligible.

**Festivals**

Aadi Pooram Festival (Sri Rangamannar and Goddess Andal are taken in decorated palanquins to the car) – July / August, Aani Alwar Utsavam – June /July commemorates the birth anniversary of Periya Alwar, Thiruvadipooram Festival – August celebrates the birth anniversary of Andal, Ennaikappu Festival – December / January in which the Deity is clad with medicated oil for 30 days, Pagal Pathu Adhyayana Utsavam – December /January is a 20 day festival in dedication to Nammalwar, Unjal Thavam Festival – October/ November when the Deity is gently rocked in a swing, Vaikuntha Eka
dashi Festival – December /January where the Supreme Lord appears at the Vaikuntha door. Special mention goes to the Garuda Seva of five different Lordships on the birth day of Andal in the Tamil Calendar month of Aadi, when one witnesses Garuda Sevas of Venkatachalapathy, Thiruthangal Appan, Vatapathrashayi, Rangamannar and Kaatu Azhagar Sundararajan mounted on golden Garudas taken in procession on the streets of Srivilliputhur. During the Chitra Festival in Madurai, Kallazhagar (of Azhagar Kovil, check last issue of Krishna Voice) makes an important stop at Thallaakulam Perumal Kovil to collect the garland sent by Andal of Srivilliputhur. Only after wearing the garland, does Azhagar get into the Vaigai River. During the Aadi Thiruvadi Pooram festival, marking the birthday of Andal, Lord Azhagar of Thirumaalirun Cholai sends His attire to Srivilliputhur as a return gesture to her.

**Ariyar Sevai – a big attraction**

A big attraction at the Srivilliputhur temple is the Ariyar Sevai, the visual song and dance enactment of the pasurams (4000 Divya Prabandham verses) that has been performed at divya desams for over 1000 years.
Srivilliputhur remains one of the three divya desams in Tamil Nadu where Araiyar Sevai is still being performed, the other two being Srirangam and Azhvaar Thirunagari (near Tirunelveli).

The famed Araiyar Sevai is said to have originated from Thirukkurungkudi, the divya desam about 40kms from Tirunelveli. Araiyars (kings of music) are descendants of Nathamuni, who is believed to have introduced the Araiyar Sevai. It is believed that Lord Ranganatha Himself gave the Araiyars the right to perform the unique musical chanting at the temples and presented them with the cone-like red cap, two cymbals and the sacred garland (which they wear around their neck when they perform). The Araiyars first recite the verse, then explain its inner meaning and finally perform the abhinayam, a unique art/dance performance with their hands and legs, explaining the Pasurams with special musical effect. This special explanation (vyakyaanam) requires a deep knowledge and understanding of the verses and their inner meaning. It is not an easy art, as it takes one nearly 20 years to learn and perfect the abhinayam. Legend has it that the Lord used to listen to the Araiyars' abhinayam, hiding behind a wall in Bashyam Street (South Mada Street).

Story of Andal through Araiyar Sevai during Margazhi

One of the Araiyar Sevai occasions that is of particular significance is during Vaikuntha Ekadashi - the Paghal Pathu (10 days) and the Era Pathu (10 days) - when one is treated to a real spectacle with the Araiyars enacting the story of Andal growing into a young beautiful girl, through their abhinayam. Thousands of people from across the state arrive every year to crowd Srivilliputhur on this festival, and to witness the annual car festival at the Andal temple. This event is the highlight of the 12-day Aadi Pooram Festival at the temple. It is one of the biggest festivals in the entire Virudhunagar district. After early morning special pujas, the presiding Deities, Sri Rangamannar and Goddess Andal are taken in decorated palanquins to the car. The festival marks the adoption of the presiding Deity, Sri Andal, by Perialwar after he had found her near a tulasi plant in the Nandavanam of Vatapathrashayi temple at Srivilliputhur, on the eighth day of the Tamil month of Adi.

Andal gives us valuable advice through Her Thiruppavai. She talks of the importance of taking along everyone when one goes to worship. In one of her verses, she requests Lord Narayana to analyse why she has approached Him with her friends, and to then act accordingly.

(To be continued in the next issue: Nectar of Thiruppavai of Andal)

Photo courtesy: Santhanakrishnan, Srirangam
My Impressions of Srila Prabhupada

A historical and personal view by Dr. J. Stillson Judah.

Dr. J. Stillson Judah retired from the faculty of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, where for many years he was Professor of the History of Religions and Director of the Library. After an exhaustive study of the Krishna consciousness movement in the late 1960's and early 1970's he published Hare Krishna and the Counterculture, still considered the definitive scholarly study of the Krishna consciousness movement. In the course of his research, Dr. Judah several times met and conversed informally with the Hare Krishna movement's founder and spiritual preceptor, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. In the following discussion between Professor Judah and Subhananda dasa Brahmachari, a member of the Hare Krishna movement, Dr. Judah speaks in a personal and revealing way about Srila Prabhupada the scholar, the religious leader, and the saintly person.

Subhananda dasa: When did you first meet Srila Prabhupada?

Dr. Judah: Well, the first time I met him was in Berkeley, in 1969, when the ISKCON temple was on Durant Street. This was right after I'd decided to write a book on the Hare Krishna movement. I'd been attending kirtanas regularly for quite some time, and when Prabhupada came there for a visit I was, of course, quite anxious to meet him. There were various theological and philosophical questions that I was concerned about. I don't recall at present precisely what questions I had, but we talked principally on the philosophy of the great sixteenth-century Bengali saint Sri Chaitanya, and that of Shankaracharya, who taught Advaita Vedanta, nondevotional monism. And I was rather impressed with Prabhupada at that particular time, impressed by the comprehensive philosophical knowledge which he obviously had. I was particularly impressed by his knowledge of Sanskrit, since I had studied Sanskrit myself for about six years in college. I was rather awed by the fact that about half of his part of the conversation was in Sanskrit, followed, always, by his English translation, which was something I wasn't able to do. Although I was able to read Sanskrit, I certainly had never been able to memorize great quantities of Sanskrit and call it up at will to punctuate particular philosophical or theological points appropriately the way he did.

Subhananda dasa: You're referring to his citation of scriptural texts?

Dr. Judah: Yes. This certainly impressed me very greatly. I was impressed not only by his Sanskrit scholarship, but by his exhaustive knowledge of Indian philosophy, particularly the philosophy of Gauḍiya Vaishnavism, about which we talked quite extensively. And so I had a very favourable impression, certainly, of his knowledge at that particular time.

Subhananda dasa: What impressions did you have, during that first encounter, of Srila Prabhupada as a person?

Dr. Judah: I have to say that I was struck by his humility. Although I wasn't a devotee, I did not at all get the feeling that he was speaking down to me. Although he certainly was worthy of my reverence, not only for his scholarship, of course, but for his obvious holiness, he treated me, you might say, on an equal level, with gentlemanly respect. Although I had had a relatively extensive education in Indian philosophy, I came, eventually, to understand that it is ultimately only through the eyes of faith produced by serious and prolonged spiritual discipline that spiritual philosophy can be clearly discerned. In spite of my academic training, therefore, I was not really a proficient conversation partner for Srila Prabhupada. In spite of this, however, he treated me with brotherly respect and affection. His humility was very apparent.

Subhananda dasa: Any other impressions?

Dr. Judah: I was also very much impressed, even at that first meeting, and have been subsequently impressed, that he lived his life in the same way that he expected his disciples to. This is quite different from so many other gurus who come to the West and take up drinking a few cocktails and the like. Prabhupada really lived a strict life. He was the perfect example for his disciples. And I think this is certainly part of the great power of the man—that he did preach a very severe disciplined life, but he followed it himself, right down to the letter. His popularity among his disciples owes much to the fact that his own life was so truly exemplary, to the highest degree of the holy and disciplined life he demanded of them.

Subhananda dasa: Could you elaborate?

Dr. Judah: Although he certainly was exalted by his disciples, he did not put himself on a plane above them. He ate what they ate, lived in the same kind of building. He didn't want a palace to live in. He followed the same life as his disciples, strictly. The example he gave was a very good one, one that certainly impressed the devotees. I too was very impressed.

Subhananda dasa: Those disciples who, for brief or long periods, were in proximity to Srila Prabhupada consistently vouch for the fact that he was very strict in his personal habits and practices, that he fully practiced what he preached. Even dedicated skeptics could not detect any hypocrisy.

Dr. Judah: That's very true.

Subhananda dasa: How would you view Srila Prabhupada's achievements from a historical point of view? What was his unique contribution?

Dr. Judah: Although Dr. Judah retired from the faculty of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, where for many years he was Professor of the History of Religions and Director of the Library. After an exhaustive study of the Krishna consciousness movement in the late 1960's and early 1970's he published Hare Krishna and the Counterculture, still considered the definitive scholarly study of the Krishna consciousness movement. In the course of his research, Dr. Judah several times met and conversed informally with the Hare Krishna movement's founder and spiritual preceptor, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. In the following discussion between Professor Judah and Subhananda dasa Brahmachari, a member of the Hare Krishna movement, Dr. Judah speaks in a personal and revealing way about Srila Prabhupada the scholar, the religious leader, and the saintly person.
Dr. Judah: In reality, he was the first to bring devotional, theistic Hinduism—Vaishnavism—to the Western world. Until that time, the West had become acquainted with Hindu philosophy mainly through Emerson and Thoreau and the other nineteenth-century Transcendentalists, whose reading of the Vedic literatures had been limited to nondevotional translations and commentaries representing the nondualistic, pantheistic interpretation. This limited, one-sided Western view of Vedic culture was further solidified by Swami Vivekananda when he visited America in 1893 and spoke at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Since that time, there have been countless gurus that have come to the West representing the pantheistic, nondevotional side of the Indian tradition.

In studying the history of Indian philosophy and religion, one has to distinguish between this Advaita [“no-difference-between-God-and-man”] philosophy and the religion practiced by the mass of people. One of the things that one is impressed with when one goes to India is the extraordinary number of temples there. And these temples are not built to an impersonal God. They’re constructed for the glorification and worship of a personal God. So the theistic side of worship is very important in India, predominantly so. But you never get that impression from the teachings of Vivekananda and other impersonalist teachers. In this context, I recently came across an interesting reference to an article published in a popular religious journal in India in the 1890’s, in which the author said that it was a shame that Vivekananda is bringing to America this Advaita philosophy, instead of the actual religion that India itself believes and practices. The writer of this article goes on to suggest that Vivekananda should be teaching the Americans the religion of Sri Chaitanya—devotional service to the Supreme Lord—and that that would be a real contribution to the American people.

Actually, it's interesting . . . when I interviewed one of Srila Prabhupada’s Godbrothers, he told me that he had visited America in the 1930’s.

Subhananda dasa: Where did you interview him?

Dr. Judah: In Vrindavana, India. He told me that he had been here in the 30’s and had traveled around the United States, but he spoke only to the university crowd, in university classes. He never got down, you might say, to the grassroots, to the people themselves. So his attempts at spreading Krishna consciousness, the teachings of Sri Chaitanya, had absolutely no impact at all. It was just a lecture, and then he was gone. He was not able to start any actual movement. When Srila Prabhupada came to America he went directly among the people, especially the people who needed him the most—the countercultural protesters on the Lower East Side of New York and in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. And from there the movement grew and expanded all over the world. So, in effect, Srila Prabhupada introduced theistic Hinduism, Vaishnavism, which has always been very popular in India, to the West for the first time.

Subhananda dasa: I appreciate what you said about Srila Prabhupada’s liberality in going among the people, as you put it, to teach Krishna consciousness. Ultraconservative, caste-conscious brahmanas in India have sometimes criticized Srila Prabhupada’s transplantation of traditional Vedic culture to the West, whose inhabitants they feel are unfit for brahminical life.

Dr. Judah: This is an important point. This is another important achievement of Srila Prabhupada’s from the historical point of view: he introduced Sri Chaitanya’s highly liberal view of varnashrama, the so-called caste system. While recognizing natural distinctions between people on the basis of social occupation, it cuts through discriminatory distinctions based on birth. In Sri Chaitanya’s teaching, anyone, regardless of his station by birth, is not only capable of reaching the highest spiritual position—even to that of a spiritual master—but also can practice his faith with all others in one community, regardless of birth, social position, creed, or colour. Krishna calls all alike, without distinction, to seek Him.

Subhananda dasa: Dr. Judah, in the context of your comments concerning Srila Prabhupada’s scholarship and his introduction of theistic Hinduism to the West, could you comment on the significance of his writings?

Dr. Judah: I certainly honour Srila Prabhupada as one of India’s pre-eminent scholars. As a translator of many of India’s important religious texts, he gave special attention to the spirit and beauty of the texts. I have seen, of course, many self-consciously literal translations of Indian philosophical and religious classics. These very literal translations are generally very barren—void of the intended religious sense of the text. But Srila Prabhupada, in his translations, really captured their essential spirituality. A literal translation which lacks sympathetic reverence for the text itself can obscure rather than elucidate its profound inner meaning. I find that Srila Prabhupada’s translations bring these works to life.

The Bhagavad-gita is widely acknowledged as essentially a devotional, theistic work. The Gita has, unfortunately, been commented upon almost exclusively by advocates of the nontheistic school who have obscured the deeply devotional nature of the work. So I feel that Srila Prabhupada’s translation and interpretation represent the true meaning and intention of the Gita. Due to his unstinting and diligent labours, the whole world now has been made aware of the devotional essence of the Indian spiritual tradition, as well as of one of India’s great saints, Sri Chaitanya, and of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, whereas before they were scarcely known outside India except by specialists in Hindu religious traditions.

Subhananda dasa: Besides that first encounter with
Sri Prabhupada that you've already spoken about, did you have any subsequent meetings?

**Dr. Judah:** I met Prabhupada again in Berkeley at the time of the Ratha-yatra festival in 1971. I had a brief interview with him at that time. Our discussion was more in connection with the book I was working on, Hare Krishna and the Counterculture. I had some questions, but it was a brief meeting. The third encounter, which took place in 1974, was perhaps the most significant. This was after my book was published and I'd sent him a copy of it.

**Subhananda dasa:** Wasn't this the same occasion as when I accompanied you to see Sri Prabhupada in his private quarters at the L.A. temple?

**Dr. Judah:** Yes, I believe it was. He had written me a very nice letter about my book, praising it very highly. And I thought it rather amazing that he would feel this strongly about the book, because although it turned out sympathetic to the movement, it was written not from a devotional but from a critical-objective historical and sociological viewpoint.

**Subhananda dasa:** I vaguely recall the dialogue, but perhaps you remember better than I.

**Dr. Judah:** Well, we just talked mostly about the book at that time. But the more significant thing is that the next morning he invited me to go for a walk with him on Venice Beach at around 6 a.m. During our conversation, while strolling on the beach, he revealed something very important to me—something that clarified a confusion I had had. In my research on the Hare Krishna movement, I could not understand at first the answers some devotees had given to one question in my questionnaire. It concerned the age at which they felt their natal religions had lost their meaning for them. Although some gave precise years when that had occurred, many others answered that they had not given up their Christianity and still considered themselves to be Christians. Needless to say, this seemed rather strange to me. As we were walking together by the seashore with the tide rushing in, he was speaking of Christianity and of its belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He said this was a belief which he also held. Mindful of the orthodox Christian belief in the Trinity, he questioned me: “If Jesus Christ is the Son of God, then who is the Father?” And of course he was referring to Krishna, God, the Father.

Then it dawned on me. Of course! Being unable to identify with the mainline churches because of their association with a culture they had opposed as materialistic, Prabhupada’s disciples had been given by him instead a culture and way of life that were consonant with their protests. He taught them the Vedic tradition of India, which underscored their antimaternalistic views and confirmed that material pleasures are fleeting and illusory. Prabhupada taught his disciples to adopt the view of the sixteenth-century saint Sri Krishna Chaitanya, whose message has roots in the Bhagavad-gita and thus predates Christianity. For those devotees who still profess their Christianity, this meant not only acceptance of the Vedic culture as taught by Prabhupada, but also the identification anew of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, while God the Father was revealed to them as having the personal name of Krishna. According to their view, the Holy Spirit is identical with the Paramatma, the Supersoul, the form of Krishna that resides in each person as the divine witness and guide.

**Subhananda dasa:** Do you see the devotees’ transfer of interest from Christianity to Krishna consciousness as a negative step, that is, one of mere rejection of the apparent materialism they find in modern Christianity, or as a positive step, one of spontaneous attraction to the teachings and the life-style of Krishna consciousness?

**Dr. Judah:** Both, of course, but I’d say the move was motivated by mainly a positive interest in Krishna consciousness. Sri Prabhupada taught a pure Vaishnava philosophy which emphasizes so many things that Jesus taught, but which so many of us Christians have either forgotten or ceased to practice in our search for materialistic pleasures. Certainly few Christians today would be willing to really take up the cross of Jesus, to follow Him in a sacrificial life that places the love of God and His service above material pleasures rather than to lay up impermanent the injunction of Jesus to the rich young ruler in Matthew 9:21—to give up all one’s possessions and to follow Him. Nor would many care to abide by Christ’s command in Matthew 6:19–21—to seek spiritual treasures rather than to lay up impermanent material ones. In their search for a tangible, vital spiritual life-style, many devotees came to reject the hypocrisy of much of contemporary Christianity and search further and eventually find Krishna consciousness, where they felt they discovered a life of genuine renunciation and spiritual discipline.

**Subhananda dasa:** Why did Sri Prabhupada’s teachings appeal primarily to young people, as evinced by the relative youth of most of his disciples?

**Dr. Judah:** Sri Prabhupada gave meaning to many whose lives had become meaningless during the countercultural revolution. In a time of prosperity, many American youth have felt a disdain for the materialistic goals of the established culture. They have not felt that earning more money to spend on sensual pleasures has given an abiding happiness to their parents. They have come to believe that there must be a more valuable transcendental reality which they have yet to find. Therefore, they have not found direction toward a goal in our established culture, nor have they found meaning in the mainline religions that have supported this culture. For these people, Sri Prabhupada has provided a meaningful place which bears witness to quite different objectives, and he has provided a strict discipline by means of which one may achieve them. So this, I think,
India's holy men, he forsook the material comforts of Chaitanya in the West. True to the highest tradition of him to execute—to teach the message of Sri Krishna Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami, had asked guru, full time and energy to the religious mission which his chemical company and who finally decided to give his householder, had raised a family, had managed a raised and educated in India, who had been a Dr. Judah:

Yes ... I was always impressed by the great Prabhupada personally or his achievements? Is there anything else that comes to mind about Srila Prabhupada, either about Subhananda dasa: Those of us who were with Srila Prabhupada in India in the last days preceding his departure were witness to his unyieldingly sacrificial spirit. Even when he had become so physically weak that he was virtually unable to move his own body without assistance, he continued to dictate his translation and commentary on the Srimad-Bhagavatam practically up until his last breath, and with perfect clarity of thought and expression. Dr. Judah: Perhaps he would have lived even longer had he not traveled as extensively as he did. He came to the U.S. every year, to San Francisco for the Rathayatra festival and to many other cities, looking after the management of the movement, traveling back and forth around the world, at his age. Of course, this has to be very tiring and has to take an awful lot of energy out of a person, and yet he still did this right up until the very last, and that's just remarkable.

Subhananda dasa: Generally at that age a person is taking it easy.

Dr. Judah: Yes, taking it easy, that's right, instead of rising early in the morning, working, and doing that prodigious amount of translating. We can see that Srila Prabhupada sacrificed all personal comfort for teaching Krishna consciousness. Leaving India, alone and penniless, he came to America, where he established a new family consisting of thousands whom he loved practically and commentary on the Srimad-Bhagavatam. Unfortunately the world is slow to recognize such contributions. Subhananda dasa: Is there anything else that comes to mind about Srila Prabhupada, either about Prabhupada personally or his achievements? Dr. Judah: Yes ... I was always impressed by the great sacrifices he made. Here was a man who had been raised and educated in India, who had been a householder, had raised a family, had managed a chemical company and who finally decided to give his full time and energy to the religious mission which his guru, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami, had asked him to execute—to teach the message of Sri Krishna Chaitanya in the West. True to the highest tradition of India's holy men, he forsook the material comforts of retiring to his own beloved personal family. Instead, like the Galilean master before him, he was willing to abandon his personal family for a greater mission. He came penniless to America to begin a new life of sacrificial work at an advanced age. And I think that not enough attention has been given to the difficulty that this must have entailed—to come over here without any money at all. This is a tremendous thing, a tremendous sacrifice. Instead of retiring and living with the family and just enjoying life, he gave all that up. You know, that takes an awful lot. And he did this just because he'd been requested to by his spiritual master. As one thinks about this—meditates on it—one sees what a tremendous sacrifice that really is. Without ever going back, without ever retiring and saying, "I've done everything I can do now, the thing is going now; so I'm going to retire and go back to my family," he carried on that sacrifice right to his dying day.

Subhananda dasa: Professor Judah, I want to thank you very much for being so generous with your time and speaking so feelingly and eloquently about Srila Prabhupada.

Dr. Judah: You're quite welcome.
Bhagavad-gītā is famous as a harbinger of peace and good fortune. Mohandas K. Gandhi wrote, "The Gītā has always been my source of comfort. Whenever I was unable to perceive a silver lining on the horizon, I opened the Gītā and found a verse that gave me new hope."

Yet even Gandhi, a great advocate of ahimsa, or nonviolence, found some of the Gītā’s verses puzzling and disagreeable. Lord Krishna explains that killing can be perfectly religious and a form of yoga: “One who is not motivated by false ego, whose intelligence is not entangled, though he kills men in this world, does not kill. Nor is he bound by his actions” (Bg. 18.17). Gandhi comments in his Anasakti Yoga, “The meaning of these verses of the Bhagavad-gītā seems to depend upon an imaginary ideal which one cannot find a practical example of in this world.”

What should we make of this? If Krishna's words, or some of them, do indeed depend upon imaginary ideals that are impractical for life today, we might wonder about Krishna’s overall authority as the “perfect, infallible Supreme Person” (Bg. 15.18). We might consider that Krishna's opinion carries only relative importance, like Gandhi's or anyone else's, and so why should we base our lives upon the Gītā's doctrines?

Srila Prabhupada's purport to the verse in question (18.17) endorses Krishna's statement. Srila Prabhupada writes,

One who knows the instrument of work, himself as the worker, and the Supreme Lord as the supreme sanctioner is perfect in doing everything. Such a person is never in illusion. Personal activity and responsibility arise from false ego and godlessness, or a lack of Krishna consciousness. Anyone who is acting in Krishna consciousness under the direction of the Supersoul or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, even though killing, does not kill. Nor is he ever affected by the reaction of such killing. When a soldier kills under the command of a superior officer, he is not subject to be judged. But if a soldier kills on his own personal account, then he is certainly judged by a court of law.

As a fellow countryman and contemporary of Gandhi, Srila Prabhupada knew well the pros and cons of Gandhi's peaceful noncooperation ideals. He also knew of his American followers' pacifistic ideals during the Vietnam war. But still he always stuck firmly to Krishna's words, convinced that they contain the highest morality and gentility and will remain absolutely true for all time.

Those attached to their own sense of morality will certainly doubt Krishna's conclusions. So let us objectively pursue the issue of violence and nonviolence.
and see whether or not Krishna is giving imaginary and impractical advice.

In our changing world it is not surprising that Krishna’s words often challenge some people’s conceptions. Clinging to whatever threads of peace remain today, they write of Krishna as unethical and immoral in persuading the reluctant Arjuna to fight. They commend Arjuna’s pacifism and condemn Krishna’s bellicoseness. But perhaps such opinions arise from an incomplete understanding.

For instance, if Krishna is actually a bellicose advocate of killing, war, and violence, why does He glorify ahimsa as “an exalted, divine quality stemming from proper knowledge” at least three times in the Gita (Bg. 10.5, 13.8, and 16.2)? Krishna fully supports the Vedic injunction ahimsayat sarva-bhutanam: “Do not commit violence to any living being.”

We should also note that although Krishna’s words and arguments are for everyone, His direction to kill is specifically meant for Arjuna. Not that someone can justify his crimes by pulling out of context a few sentences like “The self slays not nor is slain.”

Duty is the real principle determining what constitutes violence and nonviolence. Perhaps it was Arjuna who was proposing violence in the name of nonviolence—out of a mistaken sense of duty. Let us examine his apparent non-violent refusal to fight.

At first glance it appears that Arjuna had substantial reasons for not participating in the war. Friends and relatives opposed him, even his beloved grandfather, Bhishma, and his guru, Drona. If he won the war, he would be miserable without his friends, and he would suffer the sting of retribution from their wives and families. He foresaw that the women, bereft of their husbands and fathers, would be unprotected, and their bastard children would wreak havoc, the reactions to their sins resting upon his head. He reasoned that war is always wrong for those who see, and that blind men cannot be blamed. Why should he fight? Better the “nonviolent” path.

Lord Krishna gave a piercing reply to Arjuna’s arguments: “You try to speak so well. But you don’t know the truth of the soul. You’re forgetting your duty, and your heart is weak. Armed with yoga, arise and fight!”

Arjuna had a sacred duty to perform. As a soldier he was bound to protect the citizens from aggressors. The very word kshatriya (soldier) means “one who protects from harm.” Duryodhana, the main cause of the war, was an aggressor worthy of punishment. The Vedic scriptures describe six kinds of aggressors who should be checked and sufficiently punished, even by death: (1) one who gives poison, (2) one who sets fire to another’s house, (3) one who attacks with deadly weapons, (4) one who plunders riches, (5) one who occupies another’s land, and (6) one who kidnaps another’s wife.

Duryodhana had committed all six of these offenses. He had poisoned Bhima, Arjuna’s brother. He had tried to burn to death all five brothers with their mother, Kunti, his own aunt. He had usurped the Pandavas’ land and property and had tried to steal their wife, Draupadi and make her his slave. And now he was attacking the Pandavas with all the force he could muster. He was a violent man in every sense.

A dictionary definition of violence is “an outrage or injury: an unlawful exercise of force.” And outrage is defined as “a forcible violation of others’ rights or sentiments, or an infringement on morality.”

Duryodhana’s violence was not confined only to the physical platform but extended to a violation of the spiritual rights of the citizens. In the monarchical system then existing, the people had a right to expect the king to represent God and give them full opportunity to develop their spirituality and God consciousness.

Arjuna’s duty was clear, and Krishna, far from being bellicose, was impartially removing the misconceptions preventing its execution. As a soft-hearted devotee, Arjuna hesitated to kill but Krishna reminded him of the reality of the soul which never dies in any circumstance. Certainly the souls present before them could never be touched by any of Arjuna’s powerful weapons. Only their bodies would fall. Such dull material bodies are always, in a sense, dead, whether or not they are occupied by a soul. How could Arjuna think his own “dead” body could be violent to others’ dead bodies? Furthermore, Arjuna would enable aging heroes like Bhishma and Drona to gain fresh, new bodies and so revive their depleted energy.

Someone may still complain: “Arjuna’s retaliation and punishment of Duryodhana is in itself an act of violence and is therefore censurable.”

But does force or even killing always mean violence? And does apparent friendly behaviour always mean nonviolence? A doctor appears to be causing injury by cutting off a limb, and a layman may jump to the wrong conclusion—“What a cruel and violent act!” Yet the doctor’s act is both lawful (because he is authorized) and protective of health. His actions are an exhibition of mercy.

A person may be trying to give up smoking, and if in the name of friend ship I attempt to cajole him into accepting a cigarette, my apparent friendly gesture actually shrouds a violent attitude. Apart from causing injury to his health, I am also, perhaps unwittingly, interfering with his right of free choice.

Or suppose a policeman refrains from violence when duty dictates that he defend a person from attack? His apparent nonviolence is in fact a criminal violation of
the right of a citizen to be protected by the state.

A child suffering from typhoid may be crying for food, but his doctor refuses to mitigate his hunger pangs. Giving food to the child would be an act of violence.

Without knowledge of an absolute standard, however, it is sometimes difficult for us to determine what is right.

Yet there is an Absolute Truth, in which all relative conceptions can be satisfied. According to the Vedic literature, Lord Krishna is the supreme lawmaker, and His laws are meant to be followed by everyone, in every time, place, and circumstance, for the immediate and ultimate good of all. “Unlawful” therefore means to break His laws. One who acts unlawfully, however kind and friendly he may appear, can hardly be called a good person, any more than a criminal can be called a good citizen. Thieves may talk about dividing up their loot honestly, but how can there be honesty among thieves, when the basis of their dealings is dishonest? Real honesty, morality, and goodness come from following the Lord’s laws, which are transcendent and therefore higher than any man-made edict.

A study of Bhagavad-gita under the guidance of Krishna’s representative, the bona fide guru, will reveal the universal relevance of God’s laws. For instance, as a soldier Arjuna was duty bound to defend the principles of religion, so grievously outraged by Duryodhana. And the Supreme Lord was requesting him to fight. Convinced at last, Arjuna fought and saved the people of the world from blind leadership.

Duryodhana and company were saved from severe karmic reactions and prevented from committing further sinful deeds. Everyone associating closely with Duryodhana had been influenced by his lust for power, his greed, anger, vanity, and envy. Thus, like Duryodhana’s, their own mentalities were also polluted. By destroying their bodies in battle. Arjuna acted like a doctor removing a limb to save the patient. His treatment was so effective that the soldiers killed in Krishna’s presence were liberated from all reactions to their sins. By removing such politically motivated aggressors, Arjuna and Krishna created a favourable social condition for the progressive march of civilization toward spiritual perfection.

The quest for such perfection is everyone’s highest duty. Srila Prabhupada once defined violence as “impeding a person in the performance of duty.” Duties possess different degrees of importance. Consequently the severity of a man’s violent offenses will also vary. Duryodhana, already an aggressor, made the fatal mistake of standing in the way of the spiritual right and duty of the citizens to practice self-realization under the protection of the self-realized king Yudhisthira, who, apart from being the rightful heir to the throne, had minutely studied all the Vedic truths.

Duryodhana did not care that God’s laws exist in this world to facilitate everyone’s spiritual progress. Souls who occupy the bodies of beasts, birds, and other creatures gradually evolve to the human form, where they should be offered all facility for continuing their spiritual development. If a leader is unqualified to help liberate a soul but instead acts to bind his followers further to the cycle of birth and death, he should be corrected and if necessary removed for his violation of their natural rights.

As there are clear standards today for examining the proficiency of such public services as medicine and catering, in the Vedic literature clear standards exist for every facet of individual and social behaviour, both spiritual and material.

Take eating, for instance. We learn from the Gita and other Vedic literature that in this material world one living being is food for another. When an animal kills, it does not interfere with its victim’s spiritual evolution through different species, because all its activities are within the parameters of God’s laws.

When a soul is awarded a human body, however, he can make a conscious choice whether to cooperate with these laws or reject them. If he whimsically kills another creature, the soul in that creature is prevented from living out his term of imprisonment in that body and...
must take birth again in the same species before moving on to the next. If he kills a cow, for example, the soul in the cow will have to take birth again in a cow's body before progressing to the next stage, the human form. A person with knowledge of this law decides to give up eating meat.

Eating plants also interferes with a soul's evolution, although less dramatically. So what should we do?

The Bhagavad-gita supplies the answer by explaining that if we offer our food to the Lord, neither we nor the living being within the plant will be adversely affected. In fact the evolution of the soul in the plant's body up through the lower species of life toward the human form will be accelerated. And by eating such offered food [prasadam], we will be purified of karmic reactions, and our inherent spiritual consciousness will gradually awaken. Far from advocating violence, Lord Krishna is concerned that the smallest detail of our lives be pervaded with sensitivity.

Krishna's purpose is to free us from all ignorance and confusion. The world today is so dominated by violence, often even under the guise of spiritual life, that to save us the Lord comprehensively presents the highest principle of nonviolence, culminating in one clear course of action: "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear" (Bg. 18.66). By acting according to Krishna's direction, we will always be situated correctly. We should not think, "Here is yet another opinion." When we fully accept Krishna as God, we will discover His advice to be perfect for everyone.

As part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Vijaya Bank, headquartered in Bengaluru, donated a roti making machine to Bellary unit of The Akshaya Patra Foundation.

This is the first machine to be used by Akshaya Patra Foundation in its South Indian kitchens.

The machine which is 40 feet in length, is completely automated, beginning with dough making and can roll out 20,000 chapatis per hour.

Sri Kishore Kumar Sansi, Managing Director and CEO Vijaya Bank, along with other bank officials inaugurated the machine, witnessed the preparation of hot chapatis and expressed his delight in Akshaya Patra's endeavours of incorporating technology in its kitchens across 11 states of the country.
Bangalore: Yokogawa donated a food distribution vehicle to The Akshaya Patra Foundation. Sri Tsutomu Murata, MD, Yokogawa along with other senior officials handed over the keys of the vehicle to Sri Chanchalapathi Dasa, Vice-Chairman, The Akshaya Patra Foundation.

Vijayawada: BSR INFRRATECH INDIA LTD BENGALURU donated a food distribution vehicle to The Akshaya Patra Foundation.
BANGALORE

Abhisheka was offered to Sri Srinivasa Govinda in the early hours of Vaikuntha Ekadashi

Devotees thronged the temple all day and late into the night.
SRI VAIKUNTHA
EKADASHI

MYSORE

HUBLI

HYDERABAD
BANGALORE: Sri Sri Krishna Balarama Ratha Yatra begins on Chord Road

His Holiness Sri Sri 1008 Vidyasagar Madhava Theertha Swamiji (Sr.) Tambihalli Mahasamsthana and Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa, President of ISKCON Bangalore, sweep the road in front of the ratha, before it begins to roll.
The Shubharambham festival was held at ISKCON Bangalore on the 1st of January, 2017. This was to commemorate the New Year and start it on a Krishna Consciousness note. The devotees who had sponsored this special occasion participated in the Harinam Homa and later had a special interaction with senior devotees.

Read More: https://goo.gl/0AaC7i

ISKCON Bangalore celebrated Vaikuntha Ekadashi on January 8th, 2017 at Hare Krishna Hill. The temple was decorated with flowers and all the Deities were gorgeously adorned. Sri Srinivas Govinda received Suprabhata Seva early in the morning. The northern gate of the main temple hall was decorated as Vaikuntha Dwara.

Read More: https://goo.gl/23zf2

A music concert entitled ‘Chords of Giving’ was organized by the Akshaya Patra Foundation at the Phoenix Market city, Whitefield, Bengaluru on the 13th of January, 2017. The concert was held to extend support in providing mid-day meals to underprivileged children and it featured renowned musicians, Sona Mohapatra and Ram Sampath.

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

Whichever Sri Krishna, the embodiment of compassion, chooses to send to you as your guru, that person alone will manifest before you externally as the mahanta-guru, the guru in the form of the foremost living sadhu. By the mercy of Bhagavan we will obtain a guru, and by the mercy of the guru we can attain Bhagavan.

Read More: https://goo.gl/h11oKT

Iskcon temple: Krishna temple is a must-visit attraction. Built on a hillock on a huge place, well-kept and wonderfully managed. Eating places and a restaurant is there. Great for a family visit with children. U can take back sweets and prasad. There is an Akshaya Patra kitchen here. Sarika S S

Lavish: Lavish temple of Krishna, beautiful temple, decoration is divine, food is good at their restaurant which is a little away from the main temple. You should watch the Shringar (decoration of God’s statue). Visit at the evening time. Aditya S

Good place of worship: Whenever I go to Bengaluru, I try my best to go there. I feel peace of soul & peace of mind there. To get prasadam is best. Balefrompayback

Totally divine: This place is easily accessible from all corners of the city. A few steps and u meet Lord Krishna with Hare Krishna chanting all around. shivaraikod

Beautiful & peaceful place: Amidst the chaos outside, it’s very peaceful & beautiful inside the temple. Neat and clean. Can also visit the landmark kitchen - Akshaya Patra. Dineshmc2013

Loved it: I visited with my friends and it was amazing, really had some good time, really had peace of mind. We were all young guys together but everybody liked it. Sagar048

Awesome temple: No words to define the divinity of the place. Have been here more than 8 times. Just love the place!!!!!!! Must-visit for all interested in a bit of spiritual experience with beauty, calm n serenity. Pradeepti A

Temple on top: This is a Hare Rama Hare Krishna temple, very nice temple architecture and gives good vibes. DO visit. Amit P
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.

To donate visit www.iskconbangalore.org/visheshasevaslist
Online registrations for Laksharchanana scales new heights

Lord Srinivasa Govinda receives a number of sevas on Vaikuntha Ekadashi. One of them is laksharchanana. The Lord is worshipped by chanting of His holy names one lakh times while offering fragrant flowers.

This year, two batches of devotees comprising fourteen per batch, took turns to perform laksharchanana from 8:45 am to 9:00 pm. They recited Sri Krishna Ashtottara Shata Namavali (108 holy names of Sri Krishna) 1,556 times which totals to 1,68,048 names of the Lord.

Sri Gunabhadra dasa who coordinated the laksharchanana seva said, “Chanting the names of the Lord is very important in this kali-yuga. The devotees who participated in the seva enjoyed chanting the names of the Lord. They were not tired of chanting the names repeatedly and were enthusiastic to chant more and more.”

It is noteworthy that this year, for the first time, a group of 14 children below 12 years - seven boys and seven girls - also participated in the laksharchanana and chanted the holy names for one hour.

Every year we have been providing an opportunity for devotees around the world to offer this archana to Lord Srinivasa Govinda. This facility is extended free of cost. To avail this opportunity, people register on the temple’s website. There is also a provision for them to add names of their family members along with gotra, rashi, and nakshatra.

Those who have registered for this seva can also participate online in the archana along with their family members by logging on to the temple’s website and chanting the names of the Lord.

This year saw an increase of 42% in the number of devotees who registered for this seva. 15,939 devotees from 934 cities spread across 52 countries participated, as against 11,219 devotees last year. The registration was open from 6th December 2016 to 8th January 2017.

www.iskconbangalore.org/blog/registrations-for-online-archana-scales-new-heights/
Shubharambh heralds the New Year at ISKCON

The Shubharambh festival was held at ISKCON, Bangalore on the 1st of January, 2017. This has been conducted for the second time, to give an opportunity to those devotees who wish to commemorate the New Year by seeking the divine blessings of their Lordships Sri Radha Krishnachandra. More than 100 families joined the festivities by taking part in the Harinama Yajna which involved chanting of the Hare Krishna mahamantra 108 times.

After the yajna, the devotees had a chance to interact with senior devotees – Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa, President and Sri Chanchalapathi Dasa, Senior Vice-President, ISKCON Bangalore, who emphasized the need of awakening the spiritual dimension in our daily lives.

Devotees who took part in this programme were also fortunate to treat their taste buds with Chappan Bhog mahaprasadam, that comprised of 56 exotic delicacies offered to Lord Sri Krishna.

Archana Prasad, one of the participants of Shubharambh said, “This is the best New Year celebration that I have ever been to until now. The temple and the buffet counter are beautifully decorated with flowers and lights. There could not have been a better start to the New Year for me.”
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