ISKCON SRI SRI KRISHNA BALARAMA
RATHAYATRA
come...pull the chariot

rathe ca vamanam drstva
punar janma na vidyate

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

Saturday, January 21, 2017
at 5:00pm

For more details visit www.iskconbangalore.org/ratha-yatra
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
The Self Outside the Boundaries of Time

"It's one thing to know it theoretically, but it's a vastly different thing to feel it and to experience it."

The countryside near Frankfurt, West Germany. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada talks with Professor Karl Friederich Graf Eckfrecht Von Durckheim. Professor Durckheim holds a Ph.D. in analytical psychology and is famed for starting a therapeutic school (in the Black Forest) that incorporates both Western and Eastern approaches to the psychology of consciousness. He is the author of fifteen books.

Prof. Durckheim: May I ask a question, sir, about the meaning of time? I think there are two ways to look at time and to look at eternity.

Srila Prabhupada: Time is eternal—but we calculate time in terms of "past" and "present" and "future," according to our temporary material existence. I am a human being. I live for a hundred years. So my past and present are different from the past and present of the ant, who lives for, say, a few hours. And similarly, living beings on higher planets—their past and present are different, too, because one of their days equals millions and billions of our years. So time is eternal—but according to our condition in time and space, we calculate time in terms of past and present and future.

Prof. Durckheim: Well, now, I question you... you see... talking about eternity—there are two meanings or concepts at the same time. It seems one concept is that finite life, as we see it in this finite world, is going on infinitely, infinitely, millions of years—that's one way to think about eternity.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Prof. Durckheim: But there's another way.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. Strictly speaking, eternity means both no end and no beginning.

Prof. Durckheim: So isn't this other concept the one where, for instance, Christ says, "Before anything else in this world existed, I am"? This "I am"... isn't this the kind of eternity that is totally beyond past and future?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. Past and future have to do with this body.

Prof. Durckheim: Oh yes, exactly. Past and future have to do with this body and with this ego, which has a before and an after, an up and a down, and... if you take away this ego, what's left?

Srila Prabhupada: What is left is the pure ego. For instance, now I have got this seventy-eight-year-old Indian body—I have got this false ego that "I am Indian," "I am this body." This is a misconception. Some day this temporary body will vanish, and I'll get another temporary body. Then again will begin my past and present. So therefore, this is called illusion. Time is eternal—it has no beginning and no end—but we transmigrate from one body to another. And so we are miscalculating "past," "present," "future."

Prof. Durckheim: But without this body you couldn't become conscious of what is beyond the body. The pure consciousness has to have a material body—it has to have a background which is not pure consciousness...

Srila Prabhupada: No. The pure consciousness, the soul, does not need to have a material body. For instance, when you are dreaming, you forget your present body, but still you remain conscious. The soul, the consciousness, is like water: water is pure, but as soon as it comes down from the sky and touches the ground, it becomes muddy.

Prof. Durckheim: But what if you leave the body to the level of pure consciousness?

Srila Prabhupada: I am German; I am English, "I am black," I am white; "I am this;" "I am that"—so
many bodily designations. These bodily designations are impurities. And so we see that sometimes artists make
statues that are naked. In France, for example, they regard nakedness as pure art. Similarly, when you come to
the "nakedness" of the spirit soul—without these bodily designations—that is purity.

Prof. Durckheim: But to come to our pure consciousness, we have to experience the background of impurity, the
suffering of impurity. We cannot become conscious of the pure without having experienced the suffering of the
impure...

Srila Prabhupada: Why? Right now your health may be covered by a disease, but do you need that covering of
disease to experience your natural, healthy state? Similarly, I do not need to think, "I am American." "I am German."
"I am this," "I am that"—all these impure, diseased ideas—to experience my pure consciousness: "I am a spirit
soul, part and parcel of God."

Prof. Durckheim: But in order to get there, to feel that one is neither "this" nor "that," one must first have suffered
by having thought that one is this or that.

Srila Prabhupada: No, suffering is not necessary. To experience your pure spiritual consciousness you do not
have to go through suffering. Suffering is just like a bad dream. Let us say you dream that you are being attacked
by a tiger—but there is no tiger. So actually there is no suffering, but on account of ignorance you are thinking,
"The tiger is eating me." This dreaming experience is simply material—it is not a spiritually enlightening experience.
It is an unwanted thing. You do not need it. But this material, dreaming experience will go on continually. As long
as we are attached to temporary, material sense pleasures, we will get new material bodies, one after another.
Even in this single lifetime—in your childhood you experienced a body that was much different from the body you
are experiencing at this time. So as we are getting new material bodies we are getting different experiences, and
all of those experiences are photographed within the mind. Sometimes they come out at night and intermix, and
we see more dreams, and we experience so many contradictory things. All of this—daytime and nighttime—is
simply hovering on the mental plane. This is not the spiritual plane. As Krishna explains in the Bhagavad-gita
[3.42],

\[
\text{indriyani parany ahur}
\text{indriyebhyah param manah}
\text{manasas tu para buddhir}
\text{yo buddheh paratas tu sah}
\]

"The bodily senses are superior to dull matter; mind is higher than the senses; intelligence is still higher than the
mind; and the soul is even higher than the intelligence." So we have to transcend all our material designations.
Then we come to real consciousness—"I am eternal, God is eternal, I am part and parcel of God, my duty is to
serve God." Of course, here in the material world I am also serving. I am not free from service. But I am serving
under material designations. For example, perhaps during the last war you went to fight, because you might have
designated yourself, "I am German." "I must fight, give service to my country" Everybody is thinking, "Let me give
service to my community" or "to my family," or if there is nobody else, at least "to my dog." This is going on. So
we have to get rid of all these designations and become pure and serve God. In other words,

\[
sarvopadhi-vinirmuktam
\text{tat paratvena nirmalam}
\text{hrsikena hrsikesa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate}
\]

"If anyone actually wants to get free from all material designations and purify his senses, then he should simply
engage all his senses in serving Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of all the senses." [Narada-pancharatra] Take Arjuna, for example. Arjuna was in so much anxiety on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra.
Have you read our Bhagavad-gita As It Is?

Prof. Durckheim: Yes.

Srila Prabhupada: Arjuna was in anxiety because he was thinking in terms of bodily designations. "I belong to
this family—on the other side are my cousin-brothers, who belong to the same family—so why shall I fight them?
Let them enjoy." Now, from the material point of view, Arjuna seemed to be a very good man, but Krishna condemned
him: asocyan anvasocas tvam prajna-vadams ca bhasase—"You are talking very high words, but you are Fool
Number One." Arjuna was talking on the platform of this bodily conception of life, but after hearing the Bhagavad-
gita, he understood, "I am not this body—I am an eternal servant of Krishna, and my duty is to obey the orders
APARTMENT

GRAND WEST

INDEPENDENT HOMES, BUT IN THE SKY

Luxurious 2 & 3 BHK Apartments • Penthouses, Duplex & Simplex Units
Opposite To ISKCON, Yeshwanthpur, Bangalore.

924 379 0000
sales@jainheights.com | www.jainheights.com
of Krishna “Superficially he remained the same soldier, but in the beginning he had been a soldier under a bodily designation, and now he became a soldier ready to carry out the order of the Supreme. That is the difference. So when you act not to gratify this material body but to carry out the orders of the Supreme, that is self-realization.

Prof. Durckheim: There’s only one way to world peace—the leaders must attain self-realization.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. That is stated in the Bhagavad-gita. Everyone should understand, “I am not the enjoyer; nobody but Lord Krishna is the enjoyer.” Today most people are trying to be the enjoyers of this world, and that is false. The real enjoyer is the Supreme Lord. We are trying to occupy this land, that land. “This is Germany.” “This is France.” “This is India.” “This is my land, and my land is worshipable.” But we should know that no land belongs to us. Everything belongs to God. The land was not created by us; the ocean was not created by us. Why should we claim, “This is the Scandinavian ocean” or “This is the English ocean”? This is all false, imagination. So we have to come to this understanding—that nothing belongs to us. The United Nations—they’ve been quarreling for the last thirty years, but they are fighting on false ground, because everyone is thinking, “This land is mine; I must protect it.” Because they have no self-realization, there is no peace.

Prof. Durckheim: As soon as two men who are self-realized meet, there can be no war. There’s a very wonderful story about when the Emperor of Japan wanted to take over the leadership again after he had been the high priest for many years. The Emperor’s spiritual master approached the opposing general, and the general, being a self-realized man himself, said, “Well, all right.” In twenty minutes things were all in order. They resolved the matter gently, and without a single shot peace was established, because these two men had a high level of self-realization.

Srila Prabhupada: So that is our point—that every one of us must realize, “I am a servant of God, a child of God, and everything belongs to the father.” We can use our father’s property as much as we require for our maintenance, but not more than that. If you think like this, this is Krishna consciousness, and there will be no more war. Everything will be peaceful.

Prof. Durckheim: In my work I always feel great difficulty, again and again, in understanding that we are all sons of God. It’s one thing to know it theoretically, but it’s a vastly different thing to feel it and to experience it.

Srila Prabhupada: It is a very simple thing. Suppose you have not seen your father; you are a posthumous child. But you must believe that there is a father. Without your father there is no possibility of your existence. This is something that the Christian people have experienced. They go to church—“O Father, give us our daily bread.” So there is a supreme father. That is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gita. Krishna—God—says, “I am the seed-giving father of all living entities in all the various forms of life.” So as soon as you speak of a father, that means he must have a son or sons; and as soon as there is a son, he must have a father. So this is a matter of science, not sentiment.

Prof. Durckheim: It’s one of the great phrases of the Gospel of Saint John which the church forgot, that Christ always says, “I am the son of God and you are my brothers. You are sons of God, just as I am.”

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. Everyone is the son of the Lord. But they do not agree now. Now, as soon as you say, “Everyone is a son,” the so-called Christians say, “No, Christ is the only son.” But Christ said, “I am a son, and you are also sons.” This is the actual fact. Krishna says,

\[
\text{sarva-yonisukaunteya} \\
\text{murtayah sambhavanti yah} \\
\text{tasam brahma mahad yonir} \\
\text{aham bija-pradah pita}
\]

“It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kunti, are made possible by birth in this material nature and that I am the seed-giving father.” [Bg. 14.4]

Prof. Durckheim: Wonderful.

Srila Prabhupada: Material nature is the mother. Material nature gives the body, but the soul is part and parcel of God. God impregnates material nature with the soul, and the soul appears in so many species of life. So self-realization is very easily explained as samah sarvesu bhutesu: giving equal treatment to all living entities, because all of them are spirit souls, part and parcel of God. But because most people have no spiritual knowledge, they think that humanitarian work means to give all facility to the human being and none to the animals. Or they talk of “nationalism.” A “national” is anyone who has taken birth in their land, and yet they are slaughtering the poor animals who have taken birth there. This is their “nationalism.” So everything is going wrong on account of this
Srila Prabhupada: Yes, you can experience it. On account of foolishness, people are thinking differently, but everyone really knows, "I am not this body." This is very easy to experience. I am existing. I understand that I have existed in a baby body, I have existed in a child body, and also in a boy body. So I have now existed in so many bodies. Or, for example, you have now dressed yourself in a black coat. The next moment you can dress yourself in a white coat. But you are not that black or white coat; you have simply changed coats. If I call you "Mr. Black Coat," that is my foolishness. Similarly, I have changed bodies, but I am not any of these bodies. This is self-realization.

Prof. Durckheim: And yet isn't there a difficulty, in that you may already have understood very well that you are not the body—but as long as you, for instance, still have the fear of death, you didn't understand by experience? As soon as you've understood by experience, you have no fear of death, because you know that you can't die.

Srila Prabhupada: So experience is received from a higher authority, from someone who has higher knowledge. Instead of my trying to experience for years and years that I am not this body, I can take the knowledge from Krishna, the perfect, and then my experience is received.

Prof. Durckheim: Yes, I understand.

Srila Prabhupada:... Therefore the Vedic instruction is tad-vijnanartham sa gurum evabhigacchet. "In order to get first-class experience of the perfection of life, you must approach a guru. "And who is a guru? Whom should I approach"? I should approach someone who is guru-srotriyam—one who has heard from his guru perfectly—that guru. This is called guru-parampara, disciplic succession. I hear from a perfect person, and I distribute the knowledge the same way, without any change. Lord Krishna gives us knowledge in the Bhagavad-gita—and we are distributing the same knowledge. I am always inexperienced, because my power of understanding is very little; therefore I must get knowledge from a person who has perfect knowledge. Then my knowledge is perfect. For instance, a child may not know what this microphone is. So he asks his father, "What is this, father?" And his father says, "My dear child, it is a microphone." Now the child knows, "This is a microphone." Although the child's capacity may be imperfect, still his knowledge is perfect. So this is our process. We are getting knowledge from Krishna, the most perfect. Or you can get knowledge from Jesus Christ; that is also perfect, because the source is perfect. But we have to receive knowledge from the perfect source, not by the ascending process—experiencing, failure, experiencing, failure, experiencing, failure. Not like that. That will take a very long time. But if you actually want to become perfect, just approach the perfect, take knowledge from him, and you will experience perfection.

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

---

**Fasting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan 23</th>
<th>Ekadashi</th>
<th>Jan 14</th>
<th>Ratha Yatra in Mysore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 24</td>
<td>break fast</td>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>Ratha Yatra in Bangalore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 7</td>
<td>Ekadashi</td>
<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>Sri Advaita Acharya - appearance fasting till noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 8</td>
<td>break fast</td>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>Ratha Yatra in Hubli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 8</td>
<td>Sri Varahadeva - appearance fasting observed the previous day till noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>Nityananda Trayodashi: Appearance of Sri Nityananda Prabhu fasting till noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>Ratha Yatra in Dharwad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student: Earlier you were saying that the Western world is spiritually blind and that India is technologically lame, but that if they combine their resources, then both India and the West will benefit.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. If the Western world, the blind man, takes India, the lame man, on its shoulders, then the lame man can point the way spiritually and the blind man can sustain them materially, technologically. If America and India pool their technological and spiritual resources, this combination will bring about perfect peace and prosperity all over the world.

How blind these Americans are. They have attained the human form of life—such an intelligent form of life—and yet they are utilizing it for riding motor boats in the lake. You see? A human being should use every
Of course, the Americans are doing things in a very nice way, with great technological advancement, but what they are doing is blind. You may be a very good driver, but if you are blind, then how well will you drive? You’ll create disaster. So the American people must open their eyes spiritually, so that their good driving capacity will be properly utilized. Now they’re trying to see through microscopes. But as long as they remain blind to their own spiritual identity, what will they see? They may have microscopes or this machine or that machine—but they are blind. That they do not know.

**Student:** I think most Americans are more interested in raising a family than in self-realization.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Krishna consciousness is not hindered by family life, one way or the other. Ahaituky apratihata. God consciousness cannot be checked by anything—if you are sincere. In any circumstances you can be engaged. You can execute Krishna consciousness in four ways: pranair arthat dhiya vaca—by your life, by your money, by your intelligence, and by your words. So if you want to be a family man—if you cannot dedicate twenty-four hours daily—then earn money and use it to spread Krishna consciousness. And if you cannot earn money, then use your intelligence. There is so much intellectual work to do—publication, research, and so on. If you cannot do that, then utilize your words to tell people about Krishna. Wherever you may be, simply explain to someone, “Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Just offer your obeisances to Krishna.” Finished. So where is the scarcity of opportunities? You can serve Krishna in any capacity, provided you want to serve. But if you want to engage Krishna in your service, that is a blunder. People are going to church—“Krishna, serve us; give us our daily bread.”

People manufacture their own problems. Actually, there are no problems. Isavasyam idam sarvam: God has arranged everything. He has made everything perfect and complete. You see so many fruits for the birds—so sumptuously supplied. Pumam idam: Krishna has already supplied everything in sufficient quantity. But these rascals are blind—they do not see this. They are trying to “adjust.” Why do they need to make an “adjustment”? Everything is already sufficient. It is just that people are misusing things. But otherwise, they already have sufficient land, sufficient intelligence—everything is sufficient.

In Africa and Australia they have so much land—and instead of relying on nature’s bounty of crops, they are raising cattle to kill them. This is their intelligence. People are growing coffee and tea and tobacco, even though they know these things hurt their health. In some parts of the world people are dying for want of grain, and yet in other parts of the world people are growing tobacco, which will only bring disease and death. This is their intelligence.

The problem is that these rascals do not know that life is meant for understanding God. Ask anyone. Nobody knows. They are such fools. Don’t you see how much care they are taking for dogs? They’re blind: they do not know whether they’ll be God conscious or “dog conscious.” The dog runs on four legs, but people think they have become advanced because they can run by car—on four wheels. They think they have become civilized, but their business is running, that’s all.

**Student:** And the purpose for the running is the same—eating, sleeping, mating, and defending.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Yes. If the purpose is the same as a dog’s, then what is the use of running by car? Of course, you can use the car for reaching people with the message of Krishna consciousness. You can use everything for Krishna. That is what we teach. If there is a nice car, why should I condemn it? Utilize it for Krishna: then it is all right. We don’t say, “Give it up.” No. When you have produced something by your God-given intelligence, it is all right—if you use it for God. But when you use it for other purposes than Krishna, then it is nonsense.

Take this car—so nicely decorated. If I say, “It is all nonsense,” is that very intelligent? No. “The purpose for which you have created this car—that is nonsense.” So we simply want people to change their consciousness. We don’t condemn the things they have produced.

For instance, with a knife you can cut vegetables and fruit, but if you use it for cutting your throat, that is bad. So now people are using the knife of technology for cutting their own throat, for forgetting all about self-realization, Krishna consciousness. This is bad.

Nṛ-deham adyam sulabham sudurlabham plavam sukalam: our human body is just like a good boat—with our human intelligence we can cross the ocean of nescience, the ocean of repeated birth and death in this material world. And guru-karnadharam/ mayanukleena nabhasa-teritam puman bhavabdhim na taret sa atma-ha: we have a favourable wind—Krishna’s instructions in the Vedic literatures—plus we have a good captain, the bona fide spiritual master, who can guide us and enlighten us. With all these facilities, if we cannot cross the ocean of nescience, then we are cutting our throat. The boat is there, the captain is there, the favourable wind is there, but we are not utilizing them. That means we are killing ourselves. 😞
Throughout recorded history, in every society on the face of the earth, we find different classes of men or divisions of society. Despite all varieties of political, social, economic, and religious climates, classes exist. Even modern democratic and communistic ideals of equality have failed to abolish class divisions. Classes continue to exist, and we can therefore conclude that they are permanent. They are inherent in human society itself, just as our head, arms, stomach, and legs are inherent in our bodily structure.

The Vedic scriptures, the oldest scriptures known to man, describe four principal classes. These are (1) an intelligent class (brahmanas), (2) a martial or administrative class (kshatriyas), (3) a mercantile class (vaishyas), and (4) a labourer class (shudras). The qualities by which these different classes work and by which they can be recognized are given in the Eighteenth Chapter of the Bhagavad-gita:

"Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, wisdom, knowledge, and religiousness—these are the qualities by which the brahmanas work.

"Heroism, power, determination, resourcefulness, courage in battle, generosity, and leadership are the qualities of work for the kshatriyas.

"Farming, cow protection, and trade are the qualities of work for the vaishyas, and for the shudras there is labour and service to others." (Bg. 18.42-44)

These different classes of men, recognized by their respective tendencies for work, are always present, and the system of social organization based on these divisions is called varnashrama. Varna indicates the four social divisions we have already listed, and ashrama indicates progressive spiritual stages. The ashramas are (1) student life, (2) married life, (3) retired life, and (4) renounced life, and they are meant to train each...
man to perform his duties for the satisfaction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna.

These divisions exist in human society because human life is different from the life of animals. A human being has the ability to inquire about spiritual life: "Who am I? Why am I suffering? What is God? What is my relationship with Him?" These are questions that can be posed by human beings, and not by animals. Human life, therefore, offers us the unique opportunity to reestablish our lost relationship with the Supreme Person. The Vedas enjoin, athato brahma-jijnasa: "Now, in the human form of life, is the time to inquire into the Absolute Truth:" A human being who does not make this inquiry the central purpose of his life is loitering on the animal platform. Animals can eat, sleep, mate, and defend without caring for higher goals, but a human being who does so is wasting his valuable life. The value of a thing is judged by what one can attain with it. With five thousand dollars, for instance, you can purchase a nice car. But if someone convinces you to spend the same amount for an ordinary bicycle, then he is a cheater, and you have been tricked into wasting your money. Similarly, if we spend our human life properly, under the guidance of the ancient wisdom of the Vedas, we can attain an eternal, joyful life full of knowledge; and if we spend it for animal pleasures, we have been cheated.

The varnashrama institution, described in the Bhagavad-gita and the Srimad-Bhagavatam, is a system of social organization designed solely for this purpose—to order society in such a way that every human being, no matter what his position, may peacefully cultivate God consciousness and by that spiritual education make a complete success of his life. By varnashrama we achieve the equality which is only advertised by other social systems. By being educated in the science of Krishna, God, everyone can have an equal opportunity to put an end to all the miseries of material life by ultimately returning to the kingdom of God.

In the Fourth Chapter of the Bhagavad-gita, Krishna describes the varnashrama system:

chatur-varnyam maya srstam
guna-karma-vibhagasah
tasya kartaram api mam
viddhy akartaram avyayam

"According to the three modes of material nature and the work ascribed to them, the four divisions of human society were created by Me. And although I am the creator of this system, you should know that I am yet the non-doer, being unchangeable." (Bg. 4.13)

Why do the four divisions exist? Krishna says, maya srstam—“because they were created by Me.” We can understand that any organized structure, such as a...
house or a bridge, implies a creator. We look at a sturdy house and question, “Who has built this house?” Similarly, we must ask, “Who is the creator?” And Krishna says, “I am that creator.” It is because God created the divisions of society that they exist permanently. Social or political structures created by man and imposed upon human society do not last, because they are concocted and artificial. But these four divisions of human society—the intellectual, martial, mercantile, and labourer classes—were created by God when He created human society itself. The divisions are not imposed or artificial. They are inherent by the divine will. Rather than try to abolish them, we should learn how to use them as they were originally intended to be used by their creator.

The divisions in society are like the divisions in our body. Although the body has different parts, they all must cooperate for the body to survive. This is also true of the social body. The social body must have a head to direct it, arms to protect it, a stomach to feed it, and legs to support it. The intelligent class must give direction to society, based on the authority of the Vedas, so that every man may realize his eternal relationship with God. This is real intelligence. Next, the administrative class must protect society by upholding religious principles and thus putting the general population in a receptive mood toward the guidance of the brahmanas. The vaishyas, the mercantile class, are not meant to open factories to mass produce useless items and thus enslave millions of men for the profit of an elite few. As explained in the Bhagavad-gita, the vaishyas should produce abundant grains by farming and should protect cows. In this way, there will never be a scarcity of the two most essential foods for the human being—grains and milk. And the shudras, the labourer class, can render service to the other three classes of society and thus have all their necessities supplied to them. From the example of the social body, we can understand that no part of society is less important than any other part. Do we consider our legs less important than our arms? Would we want to neglect our stomach? Of course not. If you stub your toe, then immediately the attention of the head and the working power of the arms are focused on the injured area. Divisions of the social body are meant for cooperation—not for competition or exploitation. This is the purpose for which they were created.

After explaining that He is the creator of the divisions of society, Krishna explains how to identify these classes. This is explained in the words guna-karma-vibhagasah. Guna means quality, and karma means activity. According to Lord Krishna, the author of varnashrama, we must judge a man impartially by his qualifications and work. In other words, family heritage, nationality, race, colour, and creed are not the criteria for the divisions...
of society. The actual varnashrama system cannot be accused of discrimination or of limiting the individual’s opportunity to follow his inclinations and aspirations. The caste system of India, although using the terminology of varnashrama (brahmana, kshatriya, vaishya, shudra), is not actually varnashrama, because it is based on heredity. The Indian caste system has deteriorated and failed for just this reason. Someone born into a family of brahmanas, the priestly or intellectual class, would claim to be a brahmana automatically, whether or not he had the qualifications, and even if his activities were most degenerate. This is not at all sensible, nor is it supported by the Gita. For example, the son of a high-court judge may receive the opportunity, by inspiration and instruction, to become a high-court judge himself. But he still requires training and education before he seeks an appointment to that post. He cannot claim to be qualified for such a position merely on the strength of his high parentage. Similarly, the son of a doctor may naturally desire to practice medicine and may take advantage of his father’s experience. But he, too, requires long years of training in medical school. So the argument that birth qualifies one for a certain post in society contradicts common sense and is not supported by the instructions of the Bhagavad-gita. Anyone is free to take any position in society, provided he develops the qualifications. Varnashrama cannot be accused of rigidity or of restricting social mobility. The actual varnashrama system trains and educates the individual in the duties and occupation for which he is already inclined. Lord Krishna gives directions for that training in the Bhagavad-gita and other Vedic literatures. Any other system of training, whether caste, communist, or democratic, necessarily misguides society and spoils the mission of human life.

tasya kartaram api mam
vidhgy akartaram avayam

Krishna next explains that although He created the varnashrama system, He is transcendental to it. Varnashrama serves to elevate the human being from the animal consciousness of eating, sleeping, mating, and fearing to the level of pure love of God. Without this there is no meaning to varnashrama. Since Krishna is Himself the Personality of Godhead, there is no need for Him to take part in varnashrama. When He appears in human society, however, He does participate in varnashrama just to set an example for human society. The principles of religion are His enacted laws, and He therefore takes care to see that they are maintained. When Krishna appeared in human society five thousand years ago, He followed all the prescribed duties for a kshatriya (warrior-prince) and family man. Although He is above all such requirements, He accepted them in
order to set an example, just as a father behaves in an exemplary manner to teach his children. Krishna is like the governor of a state who visits the penitentiary to see that things run smoothly and that the prisoners make progress toward again becoming law-abiding citizens. The governor is not a prisoner, even while in the prison. He can come and go as he likes. His position is that of an overseer. Similarly, when Krishna descends to the material world, He does so to establish religious principles, and He is not subject to the laws of material nature. Simply by understanding this, we become qualified to return to the eternal spiritual world beyond the material sky—Krishna's abode, the kingdom of God.

janma karma ca me divyam
evam yo vetti tattvatah
tyaktva deham punar janma
naiti mam eti so ‘rjuna

"One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna.” (Bg. 4.9)

Krishna is transcendental to varnashrama. Since each class and order of society engages a man in the service of God, each participant in varnashrama understands that his particular designation as a brahmana, kshatriya, vaishya, or shudra is temporary, and that his permanent position is that of a transcendental servant of Krishna. Thus, even if one remains in one class or occupation his entire life, there is no question of stigma or restriction, because everyone's actual position is that he is a servant of God. Lord Chaitanya, the incarnation of Krishna who appeared five hundred years ago in Bengal, taught this very principle:

naham vipro na ca nara-patir...
gopi-bhartuh pada-kamalayor
dasa-dasanudasah

"I am neither a brahmana, nor a kshatriya... The only designation that I wish to accept is that of a servant of the servant of the servant of Krishna."

We are, first of all, servants of the Supreme Person, and the different divisions of society are meant to best engage our respective qualities in His service. When one becomes completely purified by that service, he no longer relies on any designation, but simply thinks himself a humble servant of God, Krishna. Lord Chaitanya therefore taught that it is the prime duty of everyone to chant the holy names of God. Lord Chaitanya especially recommended the Hare Krishna mantra: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Rama. This mantra simply means, "O my Lord, please engage me in Your loving service.” •

**Terms & Conditions:**
1. Offer valid in India only 2. This is a limited period offer and Sankirtana Seva Trust reserves the right to cancel, modify, extend or discontinue the offer any part thereof, without giving any reasons or prior notice. 3. Your assured subscription referral gift will be despatched within 8 to 10 weeks after all your referrals' have enrolled as subscribers to Krishna Voice. 4. Gifts will be delivered by post/courier. 5. Sankirtana Seva Trust will not be responsible for any delay or loss during transit. 6. Sankirtana Seva Trust reserves the right to reject the application without any prior reason. 7. Sankirtana Seva Trust reserves the right to terminate the whole/partial of the scheme without giving any prior notice. 8. All disputes shall be subjected to Bangalore jurisdiction only.
What Attracts me to Krishna?

An answer to the question: "Why is a good Christian like you worshiping a Hindu god?"

by Ranachora Dasa

People often ask me why I changed my faith from Christianity to worship of Krishna. They ask what made me give up Christianity. I am always quick to answer that I never “gave up” Christianity. The principal instruction Jesus gave was to love God, and I believe I can best do that by worshiping and serving Krishna.

What is it that makes Krishna more attractive or meaningful to me than the God of the Bible? Well, first of all, as a devotee of Krishna I believe in only one God and He is the same Supreme Person whether He appears in the Vedic scriptures of India or the Bible of the West, although He may be known by different names. So by worshiping Krishna I don’t reject the God of the Bible: I simply get to know Him from a different perspective.

The Vedas teach that God appears many times in this world in different places and different ages. Each time He comes for the same reason: to reveal Himself to His lost children and to lead them back onto the right path.

When Krishna came into this world five thousand years ago, in northern India, He showed the symptoms of God Himself. Krishna performed many supernatural feats and displayed many facets of His character, but He is best remembered for His childhood, as the darling son of Yashoda, playing in the forest of Vrindavana with His friends.

I sometimes hear, “How can God be a cowherd boy playing in the forest?” But why not? Why should He be an old man in the clouds, as He is so often depicted in Western religious art? Can’t He be an innocent and playful child?

In fact, isn’t it logical to suppose that God, being eternal, without beginning or end, never gets old.

Of course, we have to get old, because we are bound by the laws of birth and death. But not Krishna—He is the one who made the laws, and He is not bound by them. When Krishna was on earth, He never appeared to age beyond youth, although he lived here for 125 years.

Krishna played in the forest as a child, surrounded by His devoted childhood friends. But He was not an ordinary child, and they were not ordinary friends. The Vedic scriptures say that only after many lifetimes of pious acts did those souls get a chance to play with Krishna as children.

Once, Krishna’s friends complained to His mother that He had been eating clay. Krishna denied the story, and so His mother asked Him to open His mouth. When Krishna obeyed, Yashoda saw the entire creation within it. She saw the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, as well as all living creatures and the rest of creation. She even saw herself with her son on her lap.

Seeing all these things, she became bewildered and confused and began to wonder who she really was and if Krishna were actually her child. But then Krishna, feeling sorry for her, closed His mouth, and she once more became overwhelmed with love for her beautiful son and forgot what she had seen. Yashoda took Krishna on her lap and began to feed Him just like an ordinary boy, convinced through love that He was actually her son and was dependent upon her for protection.

Who can fail to be attracted by the wonderful stories of Krishna? Indeed, the name Krishna means “all-attractive.” He attracts everyone to Him, and He is easy to love. Later, when Krishna spoke the famous Bhagavad-gita, the essence of the Vedic scriptures. He made a special promise: anyone who becomes His devotee, surrendering his life fully to Him as His servant, will always be protected by Him. “Do not fear.” Krishna said. “I will free you from all your sins, and you will come to live with Me eternally.”
Twenty one kilometers north-east of Madurai on a picturesque wooded hill amidst panoramic surroundings resides Lord Vishnu, Kallazhagar Perumal, the brother of Goddess Meenakshi. Azhagar Kovil is situated on the foothills of Azhagar Hills or Solaimalai, surrounded by the ruins of an ancient fortified town.

The Pastime

According to legend, when Lord Vishnu manifested the Vishvarupa in His Vamana avatara and raised His foot, Lord Brahma performed padapuja with the Ganga water in heaven. Some of the water drops splashed over the anklet of Lord Vishnu, fell on the earth at Azhagar Hills and still exists as a lake. This water body is known as Nupura Ganga (nupura means anklet in Sanskrit) or silambaru (in Tamil).

Once, while Sage Suthapas was bathing in Nupura Ganga at Azhagar Hill, he failed to pay heed to Maharishi Durvasa who was passing by. The enraged Maharishi Durvasa cursed Sage Suthapas that he would turn into a frog, until he was redeemed of the curse by Lord Sundararajar, who is also known as Kallazhagar (the Lord of Azhagar Kovil).

Because of this curse, Sage Suthapas came to be known as Manduka Maharishi (manduka means frog in Sanskrit).

The sage began to perform penance on the banks of river Vaigai, which is otherwise known as Vegavathi, at Thenur near Madurai, not far from Azhagar Kovil. According to legend, Lord Kallazhagar came riding on a golden horse to Madurai from Azhagar Kovil to participate in the celestial wedding ceremony of His sister Goddess Meenakshi (Goddess Parvathy) and Lord Sundareshwar (Lord Shiva). He arrived late and as He reached the river Vaigai, He was informed that the wedding ceremony was over. He was furious and decided to return home to Azhagar Kovil.

However He changed His plan and decided to visit Goddess Meenakshi and Lord Sundareshwar to bless them. He presented them with the gifts that He brought with Him from Azhagar Kovil and blessed them. On His way back to Azhagar Kovil, Lord Kallazhagar heard the prayers of Sage Suthapas and was immensely pleased. He went to where Sage Suthapas was and blessed him to regain his original form. Upon getting his original form, Manduaka Maharishi requested Lord Kallazhagar to show him His Dashavatara (the ten avatars of Lord Vishnu). Lord Kallazhagar, being very happy, revealed to the sage His divine Dashavatara and blessed him.

It is believed that Lord Kallazhagar came to Thenur to attend the wedding via Malaipatti, Alanganallur and Vayalur.

The Mahabharata says that this temple was visited by both Yudhisthira and Arjuna.

Andal and Kallazhagar Perumal

Andal is the incarnation of the goddess Sri Mahalakshmi, the consort of Lord Vishnu, and is one of the 12 Alwars. She wanted to marry Lord Sri Ranganatha (Lord Vishnu) of Srirangam, without knowing the birth secret of Her incarnation. She often used to make the garland for Lord Vishnu and had garlanded Him with flowers and Her songs. She and her father Periyalwar (also one of the 12 Alwars) often visited Azhagar Kovil and sang paasurams about the hill and Azhagar.

Sri Andal, prayed to offer akkara adisil (sweet milk rice)
to Lord Kallazhagar of Azhagar Kovil temple, if her desire to marry Sri Mahavishnu of Sri Rangam would be fulfilled. Though she attained her desire of marrying the Lord of Srirangam, she could not perform her promised offerings. Later, Sri Ramanuja, the incarnation of Adishesha or Anantha, came to Azhagar Kovil on the 27th day of the Tamil month Margazhi and performed offerings of akkara adisil on Andal’s behalf. Every year, this is remembered by performing the offerings on the 27th day of the Tamil month Margazhi.

Lord Kallazhagar and Sri Andal of Srivilliputtur have a divine relationship. As a mark of this, even today a garland adorned by Sri Andal comes from Srivilliputtur (birthplace of Andal) during Chithirai festival. Wearing this garland, Lord Kallazhagar enters River Vaigai in His Kuthirai vahana (horse vehicle).

Ramanuja and Kallazhagar Perumal

In the time of Sri Ramanujacharya, his glories spread far and wide. Along with this, grew the number of enemies, i.e. the people who became jealous of Sri Ramanujacharya. At that time, the Chola king who was influenced by certain groups, ordered Sri Ramanujacharya to be brought to his court. Understanding the king’s plan, Koorathalwar, one of the chief disciples of Sri Ramanujacharya, immediately rushed back to the matha in Srirangam and requested Sri Ramanujacharya and the others to move away to some safer place. Though not interested in moving, Sri Ramanujacharya had to oblige his adamant disciples. When the soldiers came to the matha, Koorathalwar was dressed up as Ramanujacharya. Mistaken, they took him along with Sri Mahapurna, (Periya Nambi), the diksha acharya of Sri Ramanujacharya, to the royal court in Gangaikonda Cholapuram. At the court, the King presented a written declaration which read, “Nothing higher than Shiva exists,” and commanded them both to affix their signatures to it without protest. But both of them refused and argued the supremacy of Lord Vishnu, quoting from the Vedas, Upanishads and various other...
At some point, the king became furious and ordered their eyes be gouged out. On hearing the order, Koorathalwar replied that he did not need the eyes which have seen a sinner like the king, and he blinded himself. The eyes of Mahapurna were also gouged out by the soldiers and they were sent away from the court. The old Sri Mahapurna died on the way to Srirangam. Sri Ramanujacharya meanwhile had moved to Melkote in Karnataka along with his disciples and established Vaishnavism there with the support of the local king. After a turbulent period of over 12 years, Sri Ramanujacharya returned to Srirangam and the old friends reunited. Ramanujacharya was very sad to hear of the mournful incident. Sri Ramanujacharya asked Koorathalwar to go to Azhagar Kovil and pray for his eyesight. Sri Koorathalwar who had no desire for eyesight, was obliged to obey the orders of his acharya. Sri Koorathalwar got back his eyesight in Azhagar Kovil, by composing Sundararajastavam, a hymn in praise of Sri Kallazhagar.

The Somasundara Vimanam, also known as the Somaskanda Vimanam or the Somachanda Vimanam was designed by Vishwakarma. This shrine was built by Dharma Deva, upon whose request Vishnu took this place as His permanent abode. The devotees take bath in the Nupura Ganga to wash away their sins. This water tastes sweet and has medicinal values. Bath in Nupura Ganga during full moon, new moon and Dwadashi are considered sacred.

The Deities, the temple precincts and the pond of this temple have been described in Varaha Purana, Brahmanda Purana, Vamana Purana, and Agni Purana clearly. Azhagar Hills and Azhagar Kovil have been highlighted in the Valmiki Ramayana and Veda Vyasa’s Mahabharatha. Vyasa quoted in the Mahabharatha, that Yudhishtira came here when the Pandavas had been banished from the kingdom for 12 years. In Bhagavatam, Balarama, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, had reached Virushapathiri (Azhagar Kovil), and had gone to Sethu (Rameshwaram), when on His pilgrimage.

### The Temple

The moolavār (main Deity) here is Azhagar/Paramaswamy, in a standing posture facing east. The utsavār (processional Deity) is called Azhagar and also Sundararajan. This beautiful Deity is made of pure gold and is a fine example of craftsmanship of the ancient period. In the topmost right hand, He has Prayoka Chakram (the chakra that is going to be used). Both the moolavar and utsavar are found along with the pancha aayutham (5 weapons) namely the shanka, chakra, vaal or sword, kodanda (bow) and gadha or mace, in their hands. There are also utsavars of Kalyana Sundaravalli Thayar, Andal, Sridevi and Bhoodevi.

The vimanam (roof of the sanctum sanctorum) is called as Somachanda Vimanam and is fully gold plated. Azhagar is considered to be the tutelary Deity of the holy texts.
Kallar tribe of this region, hence the name Kallazhagar. Thayar (Mahalakshmi) in Azhagar Kovil is called Kalyana Sundaravalli. The shrine of Kalyana Sundaravalli, the divine consort of Azhagar, is in the southern enclosure. As the Thayar has a separate shrine, she is also called Thanikkovil Thayar. There is another shrine in the north dedicated to Andal who visited this place with Periyalwar from Srivilliputtur. Other important shrines are those of Sudarshana and Yoga Narasimha. Sudarshana or Sudarshana-chakra is about 2,000 years old and only once a year the door of the shrine is opened. Sri Yoga Narasimha is in sitting posture.

Karuppannaswamy, the God of Kallars and the finely carved eighteen steps are held in great reverence by the devotees. It is claimed that nobody will dare tell a lie at this spot. The hill by the side of the temple is about 300 metres high and is famous for its holy springs called Silambaru and Nupura Gangai. According to local tradition, this spring is said to have originated from the anklets of Mahavishnu during His incarnation as Thrivikrama. The 3 kms path on the hillock to the summit, where bathing facilities are available, offers some beautiful natural scenery to the visitors. Taking a holy bath in this water is said to fulfill the desires of the people and so it is also called ishta siddhi. In Silappadikaram there is a mention of three springs found in this hill namely Shravanam, Bhavatharan and Ista Siddhi.

The hill nearby resembles the shape of a cow, and hence the name Vishabhadrri. The temple is surrounded by two forts, the outer one being Azhagapurri and the inner one Hiranyapurri. The southern gateway to the fort, the Hiranyakottai vaasal is the main entrance. The Thirumalai Nayakar Mantapam is a grand structure while the Anna Vahana Mantapam has sculptures depicting scenes from the Puranas. The Kalyana Mantapam has life-size images of Narasimha, Krishna, Garuda, Manmatha, Rathri, Trivikrama and Lakshmi Varaha. The flagstaff here is gold plated. The Aryan Mantapam houses Yalis with non-removable stone balls in their mouths.

This temple is called as Dakshina Thirupathi. Azhagar also gives His seva in the same nindra thirukkolam on the foot hill (malaiyadi vaaram) of Azhagar Malai.

Other important shrines are the 12th disciples of Lord Vishnu from the 8th century. They have praised this hill and its wealth, and have described this temple as the southern Thirupathi. In their hymns they have praised the place, the Lord and the pond. Out of 12 Alwars, six of them, namely Periyalwar, Andal, Thirumangaiyar, Bootathalwar, Peyyalwar, Nammalwar had praised the hill and Lord Azhagar in 128 hymns.

Pillai Lokachariyar

When Srirangam had been looted by the Mohammedans, in order to save the Deity, a fierce devotee called Pillai Lokachariyar (one of the main acharyas in the Sri Vaishnava disciple succession) had taken the Deity in a palanquin and travelled to a safe place towards the south. On the way, Pillai Lokachariyar left to the abode of Lord Vishnu at the place called Jodishkudi. His followers took the Deity safely to Thirmaliruncholai (Azhagar Kovil) and kept the Deity in a well. This well which protected the Deity is called Alagiya Manavalan.
Thirukinaru. All the religious rites were performed to the Deity inside the well. Thus for more than a year, Thiru Arangan of Srirangam had stayed in Azhagar Malai. Then the Deity of Thiru Arangan was taken to some other places in Kerala and at last after 60 years, in 1370, the He returned safely to Srirangam.

Recent Historical Period

At the origin of the Pandyan kingdom, Azhagar Kovil and Alagapuri were already present. The temple was situated within the castle wall of Alagapuri. Both the temple and Alagapuri were once considered as the same in social and religious life. At first both of these were said to be constructed by the deity of justice and Vishwakarma, the celestial architect, and were later renovated by the Pandyan king Malaithuvaaje Pandyan, who was the son of the founder of the Pandyan dynasty, Kulashekara Pandyan.

The Periyalwar Puranam mentions that there was a big wall around the temple, and now we can see the ruins of this big wall here and there. The length of the wall was said to be more than 1.5 km. Apart from the Pandyan kings, other kings of the Cholas, of Sri Lanka, of the Vaanars, Hoysalas and the Vijayanagara Nayaks also engaged themselves in religious services here. At last the patronage was handed over to the East Indian Company in 1785.

The flags of the Pandyan kings bore the monogram of the Matsya avatar, since they were the followers of Vaishnavism. The Pandyan king Jadavarman Sundarapandy (1251 - 1270) had offered a lot of service to Azhagar Kovil, one of these being the making of the golden cladding work on the tower of the temple. Later, the kings of Vijayanagara superseded the Pandyan kingdom, allowing the Pandyan kings to function as only their representatives. They also offered their services to Azhagar Kovil. In 1565, after the defeat of the Vijayanagara rulers by the Mohammedans, the ambassadors of the Pandyan kingdom became liberated and declared they were the kings of those regions. Among the Vijayanagara kings, the most noted was Krishnadevaraya, who had immense devotion towards Azhagar and the temple. He then gave two villages called Samayanallur and Satthamangalam to the temple. From the revenue collected from those two villages, during the festivals on the Tamil month of Aadi, some charity was given to the public.

During the reign of Thirumalai Nayak (1623 - 1659), Madurai was at the peak of prosperity. He offered religious services to the Azhagar Kovil, like the construction and renovation of the yaaga salai, paliyarai, thantha vimaanam, thantha pallakku, abisheka mantapam etc. He also built a palace in Azhagar Kovil.
In 1757, the Mohammedan king Hyder Ali conquered Madurai and robbed the wealth of Madurai and destroyed the sculptures in the wedding hall of the temple. He destroyed the city of Alagapuri and the surrounding walls of Azhagar Kovil. He also broke down the palace and laid it to ruins, its surroundings. These are still visible today.

A great Mohammedan warrior called Yusuf Khan defeated Hyder Ali, and returned what Hyder Ali had looted from the temple, to Azhagar Kovil. But Yusuf Khan was killed by conspiracy and chaos returned to Madurai. At last, in 1785, Madurai was handed over to the East India Company.

During the British raj, although at first there were a lot of improvements made for the smooth maintenance of the temple, later due to mismanagement, a lot of the temple’s treasure was lost. Finally, in 1929, the Hindu Religious and Endowment Board took charge of ancient temples and under the control of this board, the temple is managed well.

**Architecture**

Kallazhagar temple covers an area of about 2 acres (0.81 hectares) and has a five-tiered gopuram (gateway tower). The temple is enclosed in a rectangular courtyard with huge granite walls. The central shrine houses the presiding Deity. The Deities of Sridevi and Bhooodevi are also housed in the sanctum. There two life-size Deities of Narasimha. One of them is shown holding the demon Hiranya and the other, slaying him.

The temple houses some rare Vijayanagara sculptures. The style of the buildings denote 3rd or early 4th Century construction. The gopuram of the Karuppaswamy shrine depicts the passionate side of human relationship in the form of beautiful statues. Apart from these, it also depicts the evolution of cultural aspects of the local society, including a depiction of an Englishman in British police uniforms. There is another half-built gopuram on the southern side of the temple.

The main tower entrance, mukya gopuram always remains closed, with the shrine of Karuppana Swami. The closed door is worshipped as Pathinettaam padi Karuppan (meaning, the black Lord who sits at the eighteen steps). There are various legends associated with this. Only once a year the door is opened and Sudarshana Chakra passes through the open door. Not
even the Lord's utsava Deity goes through this passage. This is a centuries-old practice.

The Kalyana Mantapa of the temple has beautiful sculptures on its pillars which are fine specimens of Nayaka art. In addition to the life-size sculptures of the kings who ruled over this place, there are many delicate carvings relating to the epics. They are magnificent in concept and yet jewel-like in the delicacy of the chisel. Some of them surpass the workmanship found in similar pillars of the famous Meenakshi temple of Madurai. The notable ones are those of Narasimha, Krishna, Rathi seated on the parrot, Manmatha, Vishnu on Garuda and a few others. Apart from these, the statue of Thirumala Nayaka found on a pillar is claimed to be the best when compared with similar figures found elsewhere. The inscriptions of various dynasties found in this temple, as also in a cavern on the hill, throw light on the antiquity of this place. Some of them date back to the glorious reign of Ashoka. It is believed that the renowned Jaina teacher Ajjanandi and his disciples were staying on the caves of this hillock.

Lakhs throng to see the Supreme Lord
The various architectural specialties of the temple are: car mantapam, elephant vehicle mantapam, sixteen-pillared mantapam (Andal mantapam), Kondappa Naicker mantapam, Thirukkalyana mantapam, Kodaithirunal mantapam, Ponveinthta Perumal mantapam (constructed by Sundara Pandyan), Aryan mantapam (Padiyatra mantapam), Maha mantapam (Alanagara mantapam), Vasantha mantapam, Madhavi mantapam (Noopura Gangai - Rakkayee Amman Temple).

A granite wall surrounds the temple, enclosing all its shrines. The temple has a seven-tiered rajagopuram.

Festivals

The temple follows the traditions of the Thenkalai sect of Vaishnavite tradition and follows Vaikanasa agama.

Amongst the many festivals that are conducted here, the Chithirai festival is the most important. During this festival, the processional Deity of Azhagar is taken to Madurai, halting at various places on the way. This festival attracts thousands of pilgrims and visitors from South India as well as from other parts of the country. A legend is popular how Azhagar, the brother of Meenakshi, was unable to attend her marriage in time and how He turned back from the banks of the Vaigai River. As Azhagar returns from Madurai, Dasavatharam festival is celebrated throughout the night at Ramarayar Mantapam on the northern part of river Vaigai. After this event Azhagar is taken to Mysore Veera Mantapam on a decorated Anantharayar palanquin. The next morning Azhagar in the form of Kallar returns to Azhagar Kovil on a palanquin decorated with flowers.

Lord Kallazhagar also goes to Poigaikaraipatti for Theppam festival (boat festival).

During the months of July and August the festival of Aadi Brahmotsavam is celebrated for 10 days, within the precincts of the temple. Devotees from different parts of Tamil Nadu throng to participate in this festival. The temple car, Amaiththa Narayanan, is taken in procession during Pournami (full moon day) of Aadi.

Thirukalyanam (celestial wedding) of Sri Kallazhagar with four Thayars namely Sundaravalli, Sridevi, Bhoodevi and Andal takes place on Panguni Uthiram day. Azhagar Kovil dosai prasadam is very famous.

The various festivals are:

- Chithirai - Chithirai Grand festival, Vaikashi - Vasantha festival, Aani - Muppala festival,

Photo courtesy: Santhanakrishnan, Srirangam
Breaking Open the Jaws of Death

The Transcendental Pastimes of Lord Krishna

Western poets and philosophers have long lamented the power of time. Shakespeare’s King Richard despairs, “I wasted time, and now doth time waste me.” But in Srimad-Bhagavatam and other Vedic literatures we find portraits not only of time’s victims but also of persons who conquered time and death. One was Gajendra.

Ages ago, on a celestial planet in this universe, there was a mountain named Trikuta. In the valleys surrounding this mountain were many lakes and streams, whose water was clear as crystal and whose banks and beaches were covered not with sand but with trillions of tiny jewels. Sometimes lovely young demigoddesses would come to the lakes and streams to bathe, and their bodies (quite unlike those of earthly women, who must smear themselves with deodorants) lent a pleasing fragrance to the water and the breeze.

In one valley of Trikuta Mountain was a garden called Atumat. Many tropical fruits—including mangoes, coconuts, dates, pomegranates, and bananas grew luxuriantly all year long. There was a lake filled with golden lotuses and other rare flowers. Intoxicated bumblebees drank the nectar of the flowers and hummed along with the chirping of the birds. And graceful swans glided across the lake’s surface.

Deep in the mountain forest lived Gajendra, the king of the elephants. On one occasion Gajendra and his male and female companions wandered to the lake, overrunning all sorts of plants, creepers, thickets, and trees in their path. As soon as Gajendra’s scent reached the rival elephants and other ferocious animals like lions and rhinoceroses, they fled in fear. The smaller and less dangerous animals like the porcupines, rabbits, foxes, and wolves remained in the forest. But out of respect for Gajendra, they did not come before him.

The weight of Gajendra’s body made Trikuta Mountain tremble. As Gajendra walked he perspired, his mouth dripping with liquor and his eyes clouded with intoxication. From a distance he smelled the lotus flowers’ sweet pollen. Now he led his herd to the lake, where they could satisfy their thirst.

In a moment the king of the elephants plunged in, bathed, and drank the cold, clear, nectarean water. Feeling utterly satisfied and refreshed, he invited his wives and children to bathe and drink as he had done. And with great endeavour he drew water in through his trunk and sprayed it over them.

Then, suddenly, a huge crocodile attacked the mighty elephant’s leg. Gajendra was uncommonly strong, but though he tried and tried, he could not get free. His wives felt aggrieved and began to cry. The other elephants wanted to rescue Gajendra by grasping him from behind, but because of the crocodile’s great strength they could not do anything. So the crocodile and the king of the elephants fought and pulled each other in and out of the water, for one thousand years.

Eventually, the elephant became weakened. At the same time the crocodile, being an animal of the water, increased in enthusiasm, physical...
strength, and sensory power. When Gajendra saw that
he could not save himself, he became terrified of being
killed.

"The other male elephants, my friends and relatives,
cannot help me," he thought. "What, then, to speak of
my wives? It must be the will of providence that I have
been attacked by this crocodile.

"The serpent of eternal time endlessly chases everyone," said Gajendra, "but if one who fears this serpent seeks
the shelter of the Supreme Lord, the Lord gives him
protection. Even death runs away in fear of the Lord. I
therefore surrender unto the Supreme Personality of
Godhead, Krishna."

Now Gajendra fixed his mind on a prayer he had learned
in his previous life, and he chanted it with all his heart.
"The Supreme Lord is the platform on which everything
rests and the ingredient from which everything is
produced," Gajendra prayed. "The Lord is the person
who has created this cosmic manifestation. By expanding
His energy He keeps it sometimes visible and sometimes
invisible.

"The identity of an actor on stage is covered by attractive
costuming and dancing and cannot be understood by
his audience. Similarly, the activities and features of the
supreme actor cannot be understood even by the
demigods and great sages, and certainly not by those
men who are unintelligent like animals. But may that
Supreme Personality of Godhead give protection to an
animal like me."

Gajendra did not want simply to be saved from his
present predicament. He further prayed, "After I am
rescued from the attack of the crocodile, I do not wish
to live in this material world any more. What is the use
of living in this elephant's body, covered by ignorance?
Now, fully desiring release from material life, I offer my
respected obeisances unto that Supreme Person who
is the creator of the universe."

In Bhagavad-gita we learn that all living beings are
actually spirit souls, part and parcel of the Supreme
Personality of Godhead—that they are like spiritual
sparks emanating from the fire of the Absolute Truth.
Unfortunately, some souls desire to forget their eternal
connection with the Supreme Lord. As a result, they
take birth in the material world, in the bodies of demigods,
humans, animals, birds, plants, and insects.

These bodies—subject to birth, death, old age, and
disease—cover the eternal soul. And so, ignorant of his
real identity, the soul remains in the material world
lifetime after lifetime. Forgetful of his spiritual selfhood,
he remains attracted to material life (to house, country,
society, family, bank balance, and so on). Continually
he thinks, "I am this body, and everything related to this
body is mine." This conception of life is extremely difficult
to surmount, unless (like Gajendra) the soul realizes,

aham brahmasmi—"I am a spirit"—and surrenders to
the Supreme Spirit, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
At that moment he regains his spiritual enlightenment.

Seeing Gajendra's awkward position, the Supreme Lord
(in His four-armed form as Vishnu) flew toward the
mountain lake on the back of His great winged carrier,
Garuda. Gajendra was still caught in the jaws of the
crocodile and was feeling acute pain. But he was relieved
to see the Lord wielding His disc and other weapons
and coming in the sky to rescue him. So with great
difficulty due to his painful condition, he took a lotus
flower in his trunk, raised it high, and prayed, "O my
Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, I offer my
respectful obeisances unto You."

The Lord got down from Garuda's back and pulled
Gajendra and the crocodile out of the water. Then He
released His disc and cut the crocodile's head from his
body. All the demigods and sages who had gathered
there praised this act and showered flowers upon the
Lord and Gajendra.

In their previous lives, both Gajendra and the crocodile
had been kings. The crocodile had been King Huhu, of
the Gandharva planet. But once, while reveling in the
water with a group of celestial women, he had somehow
pulled the leg of the sage Devala. At this the sage
became furious and cursed King Huhu to become a
crocodile. Despondent, the king begged pardon from
the sage, who gave him the benediction that he would
be freed at the very moment when the Supreme Lord
delivered Gajendra. So as soon as the Lord cut off the
crocodile's head, the soul left that body and regained
the beautiful form of the demigod King Huhu. After
offering prayers to Krishna, King Huhu returned at once
to the Gandharva planet.

In his previous life Gajendra had been Indradymuna, a
great devotee of Lord Krishna and the king of a South
Indian region called Pandya. When Indradymuna retired
from his kingdom and family life, he went to the Malaya
Hills, where he lived in a small cottage ashrama and
practiced spiritual disciplines. He let his hair grow in
matted locks and engaged in continual austerities. Once,
while observing a vow of silence, he became fully
absorbed in the ecstasy of love of Godhead.

Just then the great sage Agastya arrived, along with his
disciples. But King Indradymuna was so absorbed in
meditation that he did not even notice the sage, what
to speak of offering him a proper reception. Angered at
this breach of etiquette, Agastya cursed the king.

"This King Indradymuna is not at all gentle," said Agastya.
"Being low and uneducated, he has insulted me. May
he therefore enter the region of darkness and receive
the dull, dumb body of an elephant."

Because Indradymuna was a devotee, he humbly
accepted the sage's curse as the desire of the Lord. He
lost his royal position and got the body of an elephant, but he retained his devotional mentality. And because he remembered how to offer prayers to the Lord, he received spiritual liberation. In fact, after the Lord saved His dear devotee from the crocodile's jaws, He promised, "Anyone who offers Me the prayers you have offered and who meditates upon My form, this lake, this mountain, the gardens, the celestial trees, and My unlimited, all-auspicious activities—he will at last receive eternal residence in the spiritual world."

As we have seen, time—death—takes everything away. No one can say that he is unafraid of death. Now, we might well ask, "Doesn't Krishna's devotee also die?" The answer is that a devotee still has to give up his material body, but the present body is his last. In Bhagavad-gita Krishna assures us that after a devotee gives up his present body, he does not accept another. He returns home, back to Godhead.

[Adapted by Drutakarma dasa from Srimad-Bhagavatam, translation and commentary by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.]
Human Welfare Activities

by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Once, when I met the founder of a human welfare society, I suggested a little improvement on it by keeping all the items of the plan in touch with the planings of the Bhagavad-gita. The whole theme of the Bhagavad-gita is to do everything in relation with the wish of the Supreme Lord. Arjuna was sufficiently educated in politics, sociology, family affairs, education and all that is required for human welfare, but he was lacking in the sense of service for the Supreme Lord. So far as Arjuna was personally concerned, he was actually quite cognizant, but he assumed the role of a common man who did not know how to work according to the plan and desire of the Lord. That was the beginning of Bhagavad-gita.

Arjuna pretended to become a pious man, and he desired to be nonviolent, refraining from the painful acts of bloodshed on the battlefield. Such a pious attitude, without knowing the desire of the Supreme Lord, was condemned by Sri Krishna. He described such a pseudo-pious attitude as befitting an unadvanced person. Piety, non-violence and all such good qualities are judged in terms of their purpose. A small boy, without knowing the effect of his pious activity, gave to his ailing brother some pieces of foodstuff when his brother asked for it. The ailing brother was suffering from typhoid fever and as he was a child, he asked his younger brother to give him the food. The younger brother, without knowing the result of his charitable work, gave this to the suffering brother. When the whole thing was disclosed to the mother, the charitable younger brother was severely punished for the food could well prove fatal to the diseased boy. This is our practical experience.

Simply to do charitable work without knowing the effect of it is to act in the mode of ignorance. So far as charities, penances and sacrifices are concerned, they are all of three qualities: Charity done in full cognizance of the authoritative injunctions is called sattvic, or in goodness. Charity done with the purpose of getting something in return is called rajasic, or in the mode of passion. And charity done in darkness, without knowing its effect, done under some superior pressure or request, is called tamasic, or in the mode of ignorance. The same applies to other good works also. Tamasic charity and sattvic charity are two different items altogether. One leads to degradation while the other leads to elevation. Therefore simple charity, penance and sacrifices may not be always good, unless accompanied by a descriptive and discriminative knowledge.

Human welfare activities in full scientific knowledge will certainly elevate the status of human society. Now, the aim of welfare activity must be first of all ascertained. This means we must consider the aim of life. Is the aim of life to live for a number of long years? The Bhagavatam says no. It is not such. Because, so far as longevity is concerned, the life of some tree is far longer than that of a human being: The longest duration of life of the human being is not more than 100 years. But in the vegetable kingdom some trees live more than one thousand years. A human being will answer that the tree may live for one thousand years but the signs of life are absent there. The main sign of life is breathing. The Bhagavatam, in answer to this, will say that there are many many big bellows which can breathe more vehemently than a man. So breathing is no special qualification. There are beasts who can produce more children than the human being. They also eat sumptuously according to their own standard of life. And so, according to Bhagavatam, which is the practical commentary on the Vedanta Sutra, the only aim of life should be to hear the message of the Supreme Lord, wherein only lies the sum total welfare of human society.

In the Bhagavad-gita the ultimate instruction is to surrender unto the will of the Supreme Lord, and in that manner the surrendered soul is protected in all ways by the Lord from all the frailties of human life. Arjuna understood this principle and he altered his decision to leave the battlefield. Therefore, to know the Supreme Lord and to know our eternally existent relationship with the Lord does not mean to give up all activities. But to know Him, our relationship with Him and our duties to Him is the highest knowledge. And to impart this knowledge to one and all is the highest welfare activity in human society. 😊
We present here, a collection of questions that were asked to Srila Prabhupada, in 1967, by various people who used to attend his lectures.

Dear Swami Bhaktivedanta,

Could you please explain the Vedic concept of Universal Time? It seems to me that this is a bewilderingly complex system of thought.

Yours truly,
Henry Langdon

Dear Mr. Langdon,

Universal Time is no more complex than the relationship of a second to a minute to an hour to a day. History is divided into series of four yugas, or sub-ages. Each complete series is 4,200,000 years long. One thousand of such complete ages make one day of Brahma. Brahma is the creator of this Universe, and his life span is co-equal to it. Brahma's day is a thousand ages, and his night is also a thousand ages. And Brahma lives one hundred years. Thus, we can calculate the duration of this universe at something over three hundred billion years. I hope this answers your question.

Dear Mr. Arden,

One second is more than enough. The perfection of Krishna consciousness is found in complete surrender unto the Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna. If you are capable of such surrender, then don't delay even one more heartbeat. The Mahamantra (Hare Krishna) will help you to be able to surrender, by giving you direct experience of the Lord's presence. By thus understanding His beauty, kindness and other attributes, you will realize the value of His association, and will at once surrender for His sake.

Dear Miss Lee,

Chanting will put you directly in touch with the Source—Krishna Himself. But the spiritual master is Krishna's direct representative, and he too is of incalculable value for your spiritual progress.

My dear N. Ogden,

Do you think the government builds its prisons in hopes that they'll be filled? But there is a need. As the criminal must be removed from moral society, so the living entities who reject God must leave the spiritual realm, where all adore Him.
Dear Swami,

You say that unalloyed service to the Lord is the purest devotion. But how can we always put faith in Krishna's mercy, and at the same time never ask Him for anything?

Thank you,
Marie Moskowitz

Dear Miss Moskowitz,

We need never ask for the Lord's mercy. It is given us freely and abundantly at all times. Even the atheist enjoys it. But what we must have is God's loving service, if we are to know true happiness. Make this loving service the object of your every prayer, and see the result yourself.

Dear Swamiji,

What's wrong with pleasure?
D. T. Mervin

Dear D. T. Mervin,

Until you serve Krishna, you cannot know what pleasure is.

Dear Swami,

If one has rejected God, will God still take him back?

Yours,
Miss Anita Keough

My dear Miss Keough,

We are all here due to mistakes. Krishna only cares for our love.

Dear Swami,

Is it necessary to pursue all the different yogas in turn in order to reach the Ultimate?

Yours truly,
John The

Dear Mr. The,

You can walk the stairs to the top of the Empire State Building if you like. But the elevator is also there. Try chanting Hare Krishna.

Dear Swami,

Why do so many people neglect the Lord, if He is the center of everything?

Thanks,
Brendan Jones

Dear Mr. Jones,

Why do some men lie down on the Bowery Street? There is independence, and independence means one can choose wisely or foolishly.

Ever your well-wisher,
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
The auspicious month when Lord Krishna spoke Srimad Bhagavad-gita to Arjuna.

Gita Dana
Gift a Gita during the auspicious month of Gita Jayanti
www.iskconbangalore.org/visheshasascvaslist

Come participate and enlighten your mind with the ongoing festive month of Gita Contests

Gita Essay Contest
Submit an Essay on the Bhagavad-gita and Win Attractive prizes!
Last Date of Submission: January 10, 2017
www.iskconbangalore.org/gita-essay-contest

Gita Quiz
Participate in the Gita Quiz and win attractive prizes!
www.iskconbangalore.org/gita-quiz
ISKCON Bangalore’s book distribution marathon was launched as part of the ongoing Gita Jayanti celebrations. The inauguration ceremony was held at the Multi-Vision Theatre on the 11th of December. This occasion was graced by His Holiness Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa, President, ISKCON Bangalore...
Read More: https://goo.gl/tsz4Ao

On the auspicious occasion of Gita Jayanti (10th December, 2016) ISKCON Bangalore organized a Bhagavad-gita Japa-Yajna to impart the essence of Vedic knowledge. Our Acharya Srila Prabhupada says, “If one properly follows the instructions of the Bhagavad-gita...
Read More: https://goo.gl/GhKjkg

In the Bhagavad-gita, this material world is compared to a banyan tree that has its roots upward and its branches down. urdhva-mulam adhah-shakham ashwattham praihu avayam (15.1). If you see the reflection of a banyan tree in water, it will have its branches down and roots up. Similarly this material world is a perverted reflection of the spiritual world...
Read More: https://goo.gl/6YNMNY

As I stood in the queue, waiting to withdraw money from the ATM, I was thinking about the bold move by the government in banning the Rs 500 and 1000 notes. No one expected this. It came as a shock to many, especially those who had counterfeit currency and black money. Of course, common people had to face some inconvenience...
Read More: https://goo.gl/01PYMs

Reviews from tripadvisor®

Good place to visit ISKCON temple: Bangalore ISKCON temple is an amazing place with great ambiance. Since it is located on a hill the temperature is also very low and you can enjoy the surrounding atmosphere, very fresh and exciting, really well maintained and organized place I would say. Drhuv_Touristor

My favorite place: I absolutely love this place, the vibes, the scenes and the devotion and love for Lord Krishna, makes this place my favorite spot in Bangalore. Ishaan R

Calm place: Visited with my family. One should visit this place with their family in Bangalore. Arindom R

Worship: I went with my friends here to visit. This place is really amazing. It is very holy place and the infrastructure is very nice. Nice place to visit with family. Riyan G

Phenomenal: It’s beyond my expectation. It’s an amazing family trip for us. Its old and authentic and too mesmerizing experience for us. Anusol

Fortunately frequently visited: The atmosphere transports us to the spiritual realm just with the purity in the environment. It has cleanliness, hygiene, friendly inmates, delicious delicacies and soul stirring praises of Lord Krishna. Amit K S

Such wow: I’ve visited this temple, around 7 years back. Wanted to visit this again for quite some time now, which came true last week. Such peace here. The aarti time is the best. The food is too good in the temple. rachel t

Peaceful: Perfect place for Peaceful day. Well-built temple in Bangalore and one must visit. Well managed administration. There is also prasadam and also lunch offered by temple. DEEKSHA S

Top YouTube Picks

https://goo.gl/3tQaQPF
Vaikuntha Ekadashi at ISKCON Bangalore

https://youtu.be/btQiaD85sdI
Jagannatha Ratha Yatra

For more videos visit youtube.com/iskconworld
sri Nityananda trayodashi

Thursday, February 9, 2017

Celebrations at Iskcon, Hare Krishna Hill, Bangalore 6:00 pm onwards

For more details visit: www.iskconbangalore.org/nityananda-trayodashi
Because space is the biggest luxury of all.

Spacious villas set in 110 acres with lots of space to walk around and all the amenities you need to enjoy your valuable leisure time.

ON KANAKAPURA MAIN ROAD, BENGALURU

3 & 4 BHK LUXURY VILLAS
₹95 lakhs onwards
Phase 1 Possession Started

7676 222 888
www.concordegroup.in