Sri Vaikuntha Ekadashi
Sri Gaura Purnima
Glorious Appearance Day Of
Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

Friday March 2, 2018

ananda-lilamaya-vigrahaya
hemabha-durryach-chavi-sundaraya
tasmai maha-prema-rasa-pradaya
chaitanya-chandraya namo namas te

"Obeisances unto Him, Sri Chaitanya-chandra, the giver of the mellow of the highest love of Godhead, who is the embodiment of blissful pastimes, and who is so beautiful, having a dazzling luster, like gold."

Celebrations at ISKCON, Hare Krishna Hill
6:00pm onwards

Maha Sankirtana, Pallaki Visava, Abhisheka & Arati, Video Presentation, Prasadam Feast

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His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age 69, to fulfill his spiritual master’s request that he teach the science of Krishna consciousness throughout the English-speaking world. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India’s Vedic literature, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, travelling almost nonstop, Srila Prabhupada moulded his international society into a worldwide 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 Srla Prabhupada visit www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada

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A Devotee is an Ocean of Mercy

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

Today I shall speak to you about the glorification of the holy name of God. This was discussed between Maharaja Parikshit and Sukadeva Gosvami in connection with a brahmana who was very fallen and addicted to all kinds of sinful activities but was saved simply by chanting the holy name. This is found in the Sixth Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam.

The universal planetary systems are very nicely explained in the Fifth Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam. Within the universe there are some planets which are hellish. Actually, not only the Bhagavatam but all religious scriptures contain descriptions of hell and heaven. In Srimad-Bhagavatam you can find out where those hellish planets are and how distant they are from this planet, just as you can obtain information from modern astronomy. Astronomers have calculated how far the moon is from here and what the distance is between this planet and the sun; similarly, the Bhagavatam contains descriptions of the hellish planets.

We have experience of different atmospheric conditions even on this planet. In the western countries near the North Pole, the climate is different than in India, which is near the Equator. Just as there are differences in atmosphere and living conditions on this planet, similarly there are many planets which have different atmospheres and conditions of life.

After hearing a description of the hellish planets from Sukadeva Gosvami, Parikshit Maharaja said, adhuneha maha-bhaga yathaiva narakannarah / nanograyatananneyatamme vyakhyatumarhasi: "Sir, I have heard from you about the hellish planets. Men who are very sinful are sent to those planets." Parikshit Maharaja is a Vaishnava (devotee), and a Vaishnava always feels compassion for others' distress. He is very afflicted by the miseries of others. When Lord Jesus Christ presented himself, for instance, he was greatly afflicted by the miserable conditions of the people. Regardless of which country or sect they belong to, all Vaishnavas or devotees—any people who are God conscious or Krishna conscious—are thus compassionate. Therefore to blaspheme a Vaishnava, a preacher of God's glories, is a great offense.

Krishna, God, is never tolerant of offenses committed at the lotus feet of a Vaishnava. Kṛpambudhi: A Vaishnava is an ocean of mercy. Vanca-kalpa-taru: Everyone has desires, but a Vaishnava can fulfill all desires. Kalpa-taru means desire tree. There is a tree in the spiritual world which is called a desire tree. In this material world, you get a particular type of fruit from a particular type of tree, but in Krishnaloka as well as in all the Vaikuntha planets, all the trees are spiritual and will fulfill all your desires. That is described in the Brahma-samhita: cintamani-prakara-sadmasu kalpa-vrksa.

A Vaishnava is addressed as mahabhaga, which means “fortunate.” One who becomes a Vaishnava and is God conscious is understood to be greatly fortunate.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has explained that the living entities are rotating in different species of life, in different planetary systems all over the universe. A living entity can go anywhere—to hell or heaven—as he likes and as he prepares himself. There are many heavenly planets, many hellish planets and many species of life. There are 8,400,000 species of life. The living entity is rotating, wandering through these species and creating bodies according to his mentality in the present life. As you sow, so shall you reap.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says that out of all these numberless living entities who are traveling in the material world, one is fortunate, not everyone. If everyone were fortunate, they would all have taken to Krishna consciousness. It is being distributed freely everywhere. But why are people not taking it? Because they are unfortunate. Therefore Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says that only those who are fortunate take to this Krishna consciousness, and they get hopeful life, pleasant life, blissful life, a life of knowledge.

It is the duty of a Vaishnava to go door to door to make the unfortunate people fortunate. A Vaishnava thinks, "How can these people be delivered from their hellish life?” That was Parikshit Maharaja's inquiry. “Sir,” he said, "you have described that on account of one’s sinful activities he is put into a hellish condition of life or in a hellish planetary system. Now, what are the counter methods by which such persons can be saved?” This is the question. When a Vaishnava comes, when God Himself comes, or when God's son or His very confidential devotees come, their only mission is to save the sinful men who are suffering. They have knowledge of how to do this.

When Prahlada Maharaja met Narasimhadeva, he said:

naivodvije para duratyaya vaitaranyas
tvadvirya gayana mahamrta-magna-cittah
"My dear Lord," Prahlada says, "I am not very anxious for my own deliverance." Mayavadi philosophers are very careful that their personal salvation is not interrupted. They think, "If I go to preach in association with others, I may fall down, and my realization will be finished." Therefore they do not come. Only the Vaishnavas come, at the risk of falldown—but they do not fall down. They may even go to hell to deliver the conditioned souls. This is Prahlada Maharaja's mission. He says, naivodvije uvijie: "I am not very anxious about living in this material world."

Prahlada Maharaja says further, "I have no anxiety for myself because somehow or other I have been trained to be always Krishna conscious." Because he is Krishna conscious, he is confident that in his next life he is going to Krishna. It is stated in Bhagavad-gita that if one executes the Krishna conscious regulative principles carefully, it is certain that he will reach the supreme destination in his next life.

In your country you have the greatest number of cars, but that does not solve any problems. You have manufactured cars to help solve the problems of life, but I have experienced that this also creates more problems. When my disciple Dayananda wanted to take me to a doctor in Los Angeles, I had to take the trouble to travel thirty miles before I could even consult the doctor. Once you create cars, then you must travel thirty or forty miles to meet your friends. You can go from New York to Boston in one hour, but it takes even longer than that just to get to the airport. This situation is called maya-sukhaya. Maya means false, illusory. We are trying to create some very comfortable situation, but we have created another uncomfortable situation. This is the way of the material world; if we are not satisfied by the natural comforts offered by God and nature and we want to create artificial comforts, then we have to create some discomfort also. Most people do not know that. They think that they are creating a very comfortable situation, but actually they are traveling fifty miles to go to work and fifty miles to come back. In Hawaii, one boy, Gaursundar, was working to maintain our temple. Unfortunately he had to go fifty miles from the temple to work. I was very sorry to see that this boy had to go fifty miles for Krishna's sake, but now Krishna has given us the facility so that we don't have to work. Because of such conditions, Prahlada Maharaja says that these vimudhans—these materialistic persons, these rascals—have created an unnecessary burden on themselves simply for temporary happiness. Vimudhan, maya-sukhaya bharamudvahato. Therefore, in Vedic civilization, it is recommended that one free himself from material life, take sannyasa, the renounced order of life, and prosecute spiritual life with absolutely no anxiety.

If one can execute Krishna consciousness in family life, that is very good. Bhaktivinode Thakura was a family man, a magistrate, and still he executed devotional service so nicely. Dhruva Maharaja and Prahlada Maharaja were grihasthas, householders, but they trained themselves in such a way that even as householders they were faced with no interruption in their service. Therefore, Prahlada Maharaja says, "I have learned the art of always remaining in Krishna consciousness." What is that art? Tvadviya gayama mahamrta-magna-cittah. Simply glorifying the victorious activities and pastimes of the Lord. Virya means "very heroic."

Krishna's activities are heroic. You can read about them in Krishna Book. Krishna's name, His fame, His activities, His associates and everything else are heroic. Prahlada Maharaja says in this connection, "I am certain that wherever I go, I can glorify Your heroic activities and be safe. There is no question of my falling down. But I am simply anxious for these persons who have created a type of civilization in which they are always busy working hard. I am thinking of them."

Prahlada says further:

prayena deva munyah sva-vimukti-kama
maunam caranti vijane na parartha-nistah
naitan vihaya kpranan vimumuksa eko
nanyam tvadasya saranam bramato 'nupasye
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“My dear Lord, there are many saintly persons and sages who are very interested in their own liberation.” Munayah means saintly persons or philosophers. Prayena deva munayah sva-vimukt-kama: they are very interested in their own liberation. They try to live in solitary places like the Himalayan mountains. They do not talk to anyone, and they are always afraid of mixing with ordinary people in the city and becoming disturbed or maybe even falling down. They think, “Better let me save myself.”

Prahlada Maharaja regrets that these great saintly persons do not come to the city, where people have manufactured a civilization of very hard work all day and night. Such saints are not very compassionate. He says, “I am anxious for these fallen people who are unnecessarily working so hard simply for sense gratification.”

Even if there were some point in working that hard, such people do not know what it is. All they know is sex. Either they go to a naked dance or to a naked club or to this or that. Prahlada Maharaja says, “Better let me save myself.”

The Vaishnava knows that as soon as one surrenders, one's path is clear. Naivodvije para duratyayavai taranyak-tvadviya gayana mahamrta-magna-cittah: “Simply, somehow or other, let them bow down before Krishna.” This is a simple method. All you have to do is bow down before Krishna with faith and say, “My Lord Krishna, I was forgetful of You for so long, for so many lives. Now I have come to consciousness; please accept me.” That's all.

With similar Vaishnava compassion, Parikshit Maharaja says to Sukadeva Gosvami, “You have described the different types of hellish conditions of life. Now, tell me how those who are suffering can be delivered. Kindly explain this to me.” Adhuneha maha-bhaga yathaiva narakannarah/ nanograyatan-anneyattan me. Nara means human beings, those who are fallen. Narakannarah nanograyatananneyattan me: “How can they be delivered from their fierce miseries and horrible pains?” That is a Vaishnava heart. Maharaja Parikshit says, “Somehow or other they have fallen down to this hellish life. But that does not mean that they should remain in that condition. There must be some means by which they can be delivered, so kindly explain that.”

Sukadeva Gosvami replied:

“Na cedihaivapacitim yathamhasah  
krtasya kuryanmanauktipanibhih  
dhruvam sa vai pretya narakanupaiti  
ye kirtita me bhavatastigmayanatnah  

“Yes, I've already described the different types of hellish conditions and very severe painful life, but one has to counteract it.”

How can this be done? Sinful activities are committed in various ways. We can commit sinful activity and thus make a plan—"I shall kill that man"—that is still sinful. When the mind is thinking, feeling and willing, then there is action.

The other day I was reading in a book that if someone's dog barks at you when you are passing on the road, then that is an offense on the part of the dog-owner, according to law. No one should have to be scared by dogs barking, so one should take care of his dog. I read this. It is a law in your country. The dog is simply barking, but it is sinful. The dog is not responsible because it is an animal, but because the owner of the animal has made the dog his
best friend, he is responsible by law. If an outside dog enters your house, it may not be killed, but the owners of the dog may be prosecuted. Just as the barking of the dog is unlawful, so when you speak something offensive to others, that is also sinful. That is just like barking. Therefore sinful activities are committed in so many ways. Whether we think of sinful activities, or we speak something sinful, or we actually commit a sinful activity, they are all considered sinful activities. Dhruvam sa vai pretya narananupatit. One has to suffer punishment for such sinful activities.

People do not believe in a next life because they want to avoid this botheration. But we cannot avoid it. We must act according to the law, or we will be punished. Similarly, I cannot avoid God's law. That is not possible. I can cheat others, commit theft and hide myself, thereby saving myself from the punishment of the state law, but I cannot save myself from the superior law, the law of nature. It is very difficult. There are so many witnesses. The daylight is witness, the moonlight is witness, and Krishna is the supreme witness. You cannot say, "I am committing this sin, but no one can see me."

Krishna is the supreme witness sitting within your heart. He notes down what you are thinking and what you are doing. He also gives facility. If you want to do something to satisfy your senses, Krishna gives the facility for that action. That is stated in Bhagavad-gita. Sarvasya caham hrdi samnivisto: "I am sitting in everyone's heart." Mattah smrtir-jnannam-apohanam ca: "From Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness."

In this way Krishna gives us a chance. If you want Krishna, then He will give you a chance to have Him, and if you don't want Krishna, then He will give you a chance to forget Him. If you want to enjoy life forgetting Krishna, forgetting God, then Krishna will give you all facility so that you can forget, and if you want to enjoy life with Krishna consciousness, then Krishna will give you the chance to make progress in Krishna consciousness. That is up to you.

If you think that you can be happy without Krishna consciousness, Krishna does not object to that. Yathecchasi tatha kuru. After advising Arjuna, He simply said, "Now I have explained everything to you. Whatever you desire you can do." Arjuna replied immediately, kariseye vacanam tava: "Now I shall execute Your order." That is Krishna consciousness.

God does not interfere with your little independence. If you want to act according to the order of God, then God will help you. Even if you fall down sometimes, if you become sincere—"From this time on I shall remain Krishna conscious and execute His orders"—then Krishna will help you. In all respects, even if you fall down, He will excuse you and give you more intelligence. This intelligence will say, "Don't do this. Now go on with your duty." But if you want to forget Krishna, if you want to become happy without Krishna, He will give you so many chances that you will forget Krishna life after life.

Parikshit Maharaja says here, "It is not that if I say there is no God then there will be no God or I will not be responsible for what I do." That is the atheistic theory. Atheists do not want God because they are always sinful—if they thought that there were God, then they would be forced to shudder at the thought of punishment. Therefore they deny the existence of God. That is their process. They think that if they do not accept God then there is no punishment and they can do whatever they like.

When rabbits are being attacked by bigger animals, they close their eyes and think, "I am not going to be killed." But they are killed anyway. Similarly, we may deny the existence of God and the law of God, but still God and His law are there. In the high court you may say, "I don't care for the law of the government," but you will be forced to accept the government law. If you deny the state law, then you will be put into prison and be caused to suffer. Similarly, I may foolishly decry the existence of God—"There is no God" or "I am God"—but, nevertheless, you are responsible for all your actions, both good and bad.

There are two kinds of activities—good and bad. If you act nicely and perform pious activities, then you get good fortune, and if you act sinfully, then you have to suffer. Therefore Sukadeva Gosvami says:

tasmat-puraivasviha papa-niskrtau
yateta mrtyoravipadyata "tmana
dosasya drstva guru-laghavam yatha
bhisak cikitseta rujam nidahavit

There are different kinds of atonement. If you commit some sin and counteract it by something else, that is atonement. There are examples of this in the Christian Bible. Sukadeva Gosvami says, "You should know that you are responsible, and according to the gravity of sinful life, you should accept some type of atonement as described in the shastras, the scriptures."

Actually, just as when one is diseased he must go to a doctor and pay doctor bills as a form of atonement, according
to the Vedic way of life there is a class of brahmanas to whom one should go for the prescribed atonement according to the sins one commits.

Sukadeva Gosvami says that one has to execute the prescribed atonement according to the gravity of one’s sinful life. He continues the example: dosasya drstva guru-laghavam yatha bhisak cikitseta rujam nidanavit. When you consult a physician, he prescribes an inexpensive medicine or a costly medicine according to the gravity of the disease. If you simply have a headache he may prescribe an aspirin, but if you have something very severe, he immediately prescribes a surgical operation which will cost a thousand dollars. Similarly, sinful life is a diseased condition, so one must follow the prescribed cure to become healthy.

Acceptance of the chain of birth and death is a diseased condition of the soul. The soul has no birth and death and no disease because it is spirit. Krishna says in Bhagavad-gita: na jayate, the soul has no birth, and mriyate, it has no death. Nityah sasvato ‘yam purano na hanyate hanyamane sarire. The soul is eternal and everlasting. It is not lost with the dissolution of this body. Na hanyate hanyamane sarire. Na hanyate means that it is not killed or destroyed, even after the destruction of this body.

The missing point of modern civilization is that there is no educational system to instruct people on what happens after death. Thus we have the most defective education because without this knowledge of what happens after death, one dies like an animal. The animal does not know that he is going to have another body; he has no such knowledge.

Human life is not meant for becoming an animal. One should not simply be interested in eating, sleeping, sex life and defense. You may have a very nice arrangement for eating, or many nice buildings for sleeping, or a very good arrangement for sex life, or a very good defense force to protect you, but that does not mean that you are a human being. That type of civilization is animal life. Animals are also interested in eating, sleeping and sex life, and according to their own methods they defend also. Where, then, is the distinction between human life and animal life if you simply engage in these four principles of bodily nature?

The distinction is made when a human being is inquisitive—“Why have I been put into this miserable condition? Is there any remedy for it? Is there any perpetual eternal life? I do not want to die. I want to live very happily and peacefully. Is there a chance of this? What is that method? What is that science?” When these inquiries are there and steps are taken to answer these questions, that is human civilization: otherwise it is doggish civilization, animal civilization.

Animals are satisfied if they can eat, sleep, have some sex life and have some defense. Actually there is no defense because no one can protect himself from the hands of cruel death. Hiranyakashipu, for instance, wanted to live forever, and so he underwent severe austerities. So-called scientists are now saying that we shall stop death by scientific methods. This is also another crazy utterance. That is not possible. You may make great advancement in scientific knowledge, but there is no scientific solution to these four problems of birth, death, old age and disease.

One who is intelligent will be eager to solve these four prime problems. No one wants to die. But there is no remedy. I have to die. Everyone is very anxious to stop the increase of population by employing so many contraceptive methods, but still, birth is going on. So there is no stoppage of birth. You may invent up-to-date medicines by your scientific methods, but you cannot stop disease. It is not possible just to take a tablet to put an end to disease.

In Bhagavad-gita it is said, janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi-duhkha-dosanudarsanam: one might think that he has solved all the problems of his life, but where is the solution to these four problems of birth, death, old age and disease? That solution is Krishna consciousness.

Krishna also says in the same book, janma karma ca me divyam evam yo vetti tattvatah tyaktva deham punar janma naiti mam eti so ‘rjuna. Every one of us is giving up our body at every moment. The last phase of giving up this body is called death. But Krishna says, “If anyone understands My appearance and disappearance and My activities—not superficially but in truth—after giving up this body he never again accepts a material body.”

What happens to such a person? Mam eti—he returns to Krishna. If you are to go to Krishna, then you have to prepare your spiritual body. That is Krishna consciousness. If you keep yourself in Krishna consciousness, then gradually you prepare your next body, a spiritual body, which will carry you immediately to Krishnaloka, and you will become happy. You will live there perpetually and blissfully.

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
**Srila Prabhupada speaks out**

**From the Reservoir of Knowledge**

*Srila Prabhupada answers question on the science of Krishna*

Asking questions of a bona fide spiritual master is an important part of bhakti-yoga. It is stated in Bhagavad-gita, “Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.” The following questions and answers were recorded during actual class sessions taught by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada at various centers of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

**Question:** How long does it take to attain Krishna consciousness?

**Srila Prabhupada:** A second. You simply have to agree.

**Question:** Do you become conscious of everything?

**Srila Prabhupada:** Yes, because Krishna is everything. For example, if you are in touch with the main powerhouse of electricity in New York City, then you are in touch with all the lights everywhere in the city.

**Question:** But how can you attain it in one second?
Srila Prabhupada: It is simply a matter of surrender. If you accept the process, it begins immediately. It is like a creeper; as soon as you sow the seed, it begins to grow. The watering of the seed is hearing, and gradually the creeper fructifies. It begins as soon as you accept it.

Question: That is the start, but that's not Krishna consciousness, is it?

Srila Prabhupada: That is Krishna consciousness. It simply has to develop. Immediately after sexual intercourse the child is the size of a pea, but that is actually a child. The beginning is there. Surrender, that's all. It is not a material process—it is spiritual. It involves no impediments of material conditioning. It develops in proportion to one's seriousness; we can attain the whole thing in one second. King Katvanga went to assist the demigods, and he was rewarded. When asked what he wanted, he replied, "I want to know how long I shall live." "Not very long," they said. "A second." He at once transferred his thoughts to Krishna and surrendered. If we sincerely take Krishna consciousness, we have it.

Question: Does one need a spiritual master to become Krishna conscious?

Srila Prabhupada: Unless we go to a spiritual master, how can we understand?

Question: Just by chanting?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. Chanting will help us—it is from the source—but if we take guidance it is more helpful. Why should we deny help if we are serious about the goal?

Question: What is the focal point of this religion?

Srila Prabhupada: This is not religion; this is philosophy.

Question: Philosophy? Like metaphysics?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, the first principle of metaphysics is that we are not this body.

Question: Isn't it a little bit like Catholicism?

Srila Prabhupada: Not just Catholicism, but all religions: Hindu, Jewish, Christian, Mohammedan. The first principle of all religions is that we are not this body.

Question: Does Krishna take the spirit and leave the matter when you offer Him food?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, He takes the spirit. And leaves the matter? What is left?

Srila Prabhupada: Everything is spirit. He doesn't take matter, He doesn't leave matter. The devotee prays over the food, and it becomes spiritualized. It is practical. Eat this spiritual food, and you'll get spiritual strength.

Question: What is the duty of a person who does not believe in the scriptures?

Srila Prabhupada: His duty is to go to hell.

Question: How can it be changed for him?

Srila Prabhupada: By coming here and chanting Hare Krishna.

Question: What can you do if they don't come?

Srila Prabhupada: What can you do? One must be willing. If we won't take medicine, we can't be cured. Material disease is thinking, "I am everything. I am perfect. Whatever I think is all right." That is disease. Lord Chaitanya said, "My spiritual master taught that I'm a great fool." Think like that, humbly, and study scripture from a bona fide spiritual master.

Question: If we become servants of Krishna, will He provide our physical needs?

Srila Prabhupada: It is not a question of whether we "become" servants of Krishna—we already are. For example, a citizen of the United States is already under obligation to the government; it is his madness to think that he is not. We are already servants of God, but we declare, "I am not a servant of God; I am a servant of dog." All our needs are supplied as servants of dog—do you not think that God will supply the necessities of servants of God? Why do you think like that? If we are sincere, God will supply our every need. We must believe that Krishna is our master. He is supplying everything, but He cannot be our order supplier. Those who go to God for sense enjoyment become frustrated and say there is no God if they do not get everything for their senses. But we are meant for satisfying God's senses. The impersonalist philosophers say He has no senses, and therefore they think, "I don't have to supply anything to God," but that is nonsense. Only in the perfectional stage of Krishna consciousness does Krishna become dependent on His devotee and say, "My dear father, will you give Me something to eat?" That is the platform of pure love of God. By such love everything is possible.

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Fasting

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Festivals

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<td>Ratha Yatra in Mangalore</td>
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<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>Sri Gaura Purnima: Appearance of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu fasting till moonrise</td>
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Krishna Voice, February 2018

13
The human eye is a complex organ. With auto-focus lens, a sophisticated network of tissues to detect colour, to navigate the eyeballs to the desired line of sight, to prepare tertiary stimulus to the brain; amongst other remarkable features, it stands out as a brilliant exemplar of pure craftsmanship of the Creator.

This optic tool has garnered the largest quantum of our faith. We have always been accustomed to “see” reality. I need to “see” the fruits before I purchase them. I have “seen” the house, and it’s worth the rent. I don’t “see” anyone in other planets, so the Earth is the only home for life-forms.

It is perhaps this de facto notion that necessitates a visual evidence for all incoming information. Subconsciously we start seeking visual proofs. In the absence of such direct supportive data, we look for some trusted source who has directly perceived the data, or arrive at the appropriate inference through multiple ways of deductive analysis. In any case, visible proof has become the ultimate word in any intellectual resolution.

The “rational mind” seldom settles for a time-tested convention if it is not supported by modern schemes of analysis. One of the costliest victims of this attitude is our faith on the Supreme Absolute Truth. Naturally, the question arises, “If God exists, show me God!”

Whilst the authority and the presence of the Lord can be established by several means, this article shall primarily focus on delineating the deficiencies that mar the ideal state of flawless vision.

**Optical Mechanism**

The human eye acts like a camera. The cornea and lens act together like a camera to focus an image of the visual world on the retina, located at the back of the eye, which acts like the film or other image sensor of the camera.

Vision exists due to the interaction of three components:

- **Light sources** – Provide the electromagnetic energy required to initiate visual responses.
- **Objects** – Whose chemical properties modulate the electromagnetic energy.
- **Human visual system** – Machinery to perceive the visual information generated by the interaction of the two aforementioned components.

It is significant to note that without the presence of an illuminating agent, though the eye is receptive to visual signals, one will not be able to see an object, even in close proximity.

**Limitations of Visual Perception**

Four centuries ago, Sir Isaac Newton discovered that white light is an agglomerate of seven colours and showed us through the famous prism experiment how
a spectrum of light colours can be refracted from an apparently colourless beam. Many people are unable to tell apart indigo from either blue or violet due to insensitive vision. Beams of all the other wavelengths when combined again produce pure white light. This is also known as the visible spectrum for the human beings, thus defining their visual capacity limits. The concept of visible spectrum remained indefinite however, till the 19th century, when light outside the visible range was discovered by William Herschel (infrared) and Johann Ritter (ultraviolet). These discoveries inferred that the human eye can see only a limited subset of all potentially visible reality.

The human eye is constrained to see only those objects that lie within the visible range, clearly indicating that there are several objects that our eyes cannot perceive, though such objects tangibly exist, merely because their frequency lies beyond the visible range.

The Fermi Gamma-Ray Telescope orbiting the Earth is recording high-energetic photons. The light we see with human eyes consists of photons with energies in the range 2 to 3 electron volts. The gamma-rays which Fermi detects are billions of times more energetic, from 20 million to more than 300 billion electron volts. These gamma-ray photons are so energetic that they cannot be guided by the mirrors and lenses found in ordinary telescopes. Instead Fermi uses a sensor that is more like a Geiger counter than a telescope. If we could wear Fermi’s gamma ray “glasses,” we’d witness powerful bullets of energy – individual gamma rays – from cosmic phenomena such as supermassive black holes and hypernova explosions. [2]

Besides this, there are several other factors that limit the precision levels of what we see. A distant or extremely near object can never be focused upon. In fact, the focus of our vision at any particular point is only a tiny 2-degree conical pipe heading straight to a small section of the retinal surface known as the fovea.

We are really dealing with a very paltry section of the objective reality, if our perception is the only standard of recognition of any information. Notwithstanding the constriction imposed by the limitations themselves, what appears to be cognitive reality is itself highly ostensible and suspicious.

**Anomalies in Vision Mechanism[1]**

Consider the following observations

A. The headlights of an oncoming automobile are nearly blinding at night but barely noticeable during the day.

B. Stars disappear from our vision at dawn.

C. The walls of a freshly painted room appear significantly different from the colour of the sample that was used to select the paint at the hardware store.

D. Printouts of images do not match the originals displayed on a computer monitor, despite accurate coordinates.

E. There is no such thing as a grey or brown light bulb.

F. There are no colours described as reddish-green or yellowish-blue.

Though all the aforementioned anomalies can be analysed using principles of optics, they pose a serious question on the authority of visual accuracy. We can now deduce that even with facilities replete for visibility of an object and a healthy vision system, one cannot claim to record accurate data. There are inherent anomalies in our eyes, one such peculiar phenomena is described below:

**Increase in Optical Density of the Lens [1]**

The eye lens absorbs and scatters short wavelength (blue and violet) energy. As it hardens, the level of this absorption and hardness increases. In other words, the lens becomes more and more yellow with age. Various mechanisms of chromatic adaptation generally make us unaware of these gradual changes.

However, we are all looking at the world through a ‘yellow filter’ that not only changes with age, but that significantly differs from observer to observer. This is particularly apparent with purple colours. An older lens absorbs most of the blue energy reflected from a purple object but does not affect the reflected red energy, so older observers tend to report that the object is significantly redder than reported by youngsters.

**Invisibility of Subtle Elements**

It is highly evident that our eyes cannot perceive finer objects. Any object which is smaller than a threshold value will not be visible to our eye, no matter how strong our eyesight maybe. The intellectual society also admits that not all objective reality is observable through vision.

The Rutherford Gold Foil experiment beamed alpha particles onto an extremely thin metal sheet. Most of the alpha particles passed straight through; some of the rays, however, took a huge deflection. As an outcome of this observation, it was concluded that the atom comprises of a nucleus with dense positively charged particles, and large spaces around it lie vacant but sparsely populated with negatively charged particles called electrons. Significantly, there was no visual evidence of the structure of the atom, nor were the optical instruments equipped enough to corroborate the findings. Nonetheless, the scientific community accepted the indicative study. Hence the identity of any invisible substance is not rubbished as fantasy if its existence can be proven by a scientific and satisfactory mechanism.

However, objects which are subtle need not be lesser in magnitude; they can be huge and yet not be perceived.
by our eyes at all. The air around
us serves as a good example. Its
volume can be indirectly perceived
when it is filled through the mouth
of a balloon or a parachute.

When marked on the scale of
perceptibility, air or ‘Vayu’ ranks
4th in decreasing order of
tangibility; with the earth as the
most tangible element; followed
by water and fire. Subtler than air
is the sky, and the most subtle
elements are mind, intelligence
and ego. Our bleak intellectual
construction forbids us to even
conceive of the sky as a separate
element, what to speak of the
conception of mind, intelligence
and ego! The shastras define the
spirit soul as an element finer than
all others. The spirit soul is not
only the subt lest, but also
transcendental to nether elements. The Supreme Lord,
however, is transcendental to transcendence. One can
only imagine the degree of abstraction of spiritual
substance.

Thus the presence of the soul is detected through an
indirect indication, a la Rutherford, called consciousness.
This serves as the fundamental symptom of the existence
of the soul within the body.

Modes of Knowledge Acquisition

Direct perception is not the only source of gathering
knowledge; there are other authorized and accurate
modes of acquiring knowledge. Most of them do not
even rely on physical perception! The shastras outline
four different kinds of understanding:

1. Direct Understanding (pratyaksa),
2. Hypothetical (anumana),
3. Historical Understanding (aitihya) and
4. Through Sound (shabda).

Of these four, understanding from the Vedic scriptures
(which are the sound representations of the Absolute
Truth) is the best method. The traditional Vedic students
accept understanding through sound to be the best.

Srila Prabhupada says, “Direct perception is always
imperfect, especially in the conditional stage of life. By
direct perception we can see that the sun is just like a
disc, no larger than a plate we eat on. Although we
cannot ourselves prove how large the sun is, we accept
the verdict of astronomers.”

Knowledge from the pratyaksha pramana is not absolute;
it is relative to the observed, the numerous parameters
that govern vision. Hence the results vary from case to
case. Why invest faith in such a dubious process?

Vedic Definition of Vision

taijasat tu vikurvanad indriyani dasabhavan

“By further transformation of the mode of passion, the
sense organs like the ear, skin, nose, eyes...are all
generated.” [SB 2.5.31] The eyes are a product of the
second mode of material nature, rajas/ passion. To
complement the process, the objects of vision are further
generated as tanmatra.

It is also mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatam, “Thus when
everything existed in darkness, the Lord desired to see
Himself and all that was created. Then the eyes, the
illuminating god-Sun, the power of vision and the object
of sight all became manifested.” [SB 2.10.21]

Why is the Lord Unmanifest to us?

“The conditioned souls are covered by the illusory
creative cloud of matter, and the Lord reserves the right
of not being exposed to their eyes. Because they have
no eyes of transcendental vision and because they
cannot see the Personality of Godhead, they therefore
deny the existence and the transcendental form of the
Lord.” [SB 2.10.33]

To say that a man infected with a deadly communicable
disease is unharmed, merely because we do not see
the parasite is ridiculous. We cannot trust our eyes
therefore, we need alternate sources to affirm the danger.
Before you ask, “Can you show me God?” ask yourself,
“Can you SEE GOD?”

References

[1] “colour Appearance Models” by Mark D. Fairchild
[2] NASA Space Exploration archives
We make your Baby Sleep Peacefully

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The Books of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

by Brahmananda Dasa

(This article appeared in the Back to Godhead magazine in 1973)
"My books are more important than myself." This was Srila Prabhupada's instruction to one of his disciples who was being sent from his personal service to open a temple in a distant place. When one considers how much time, energy and intelligence Srila Prabhupada has utilized to single-handedly begin and spread the Krishna consciousness movement to an international scale, it is even more astonishing that he has written a score of unique books. Despite his responsibilities in guiding thousands of disciples who operate almost a hundred different centers, that he has produced these books—at substantial sacrifice—proves that the most important factor to the Krishna consciousness movement is the books of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

While still in India, His Divine Grace inhabited two ordinary rooms in India's most historic literary temple. This Radha-Damodara temple was built almost 500 years ago by Srila Jiva Gosvami in the holy site of Vrindavana, where Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appeared to display His transcendental pastimes 5,000 years ago. The Radha-Damodara temple, which has since fallen into disrepair, houses the samadhi (burial place) of Jiva Gosvami, one of the six prime disciples of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Lord Chaitanya gave His disciples in Vrindavana three important instructions: first, to discover the exact locations where Krishna displayed His pastimes, as revealed in the shastras (scriptures); then, to build temples where the Lord could be suitably worshiped; and, finally, to write books fully explaining the real science of devotional service to God. Lord Chaitanya Himself wrote only eight shlokas (stanzas), but the six Gosvamis of Vrindavana have left a vast body of literature for the inestimable benefit of all humanity.

When only ten years old, Jiva Gosvami wanted to join Lord Chaitanya's sankirtana movement, but first he prepared himself by becoming fully versed in Sanskrit in Benares. He was then able to write volumes of books, which have prompted one Indian authority to declare Jiva Gosvami the greatest philosopher that has ever lived. It is lamentable that due to the lack of qualified translators, the English-knowing world may never be able to take advantage of these books.

The Radha-Damodara temple is also the site of the samadhi of Krishnadasa Kaviraja, the most important biographer of Lord Chaitanya. Krishnadasa Kaviraja appeared after Lord Chaitanya but was contemporary to the six Gosvamis. Directly inspired by Lord Nityananda, one of Lord Chaitanya's principal associates, he wrote his Chaitanya-charitamrtha at the age of ninety. This book recounts the teachings of Lord Chaitanya more vividly than the biographical details which have been preserved by other authors.

The treasure of Radha-Damodara is the samadhi and bhajana (place for executing devotional service) of Rupa Gosvami. Of the six Gosvamis, he is the most important. Rupa Gosvami constructed the largest temple in Vrindavana, Radha-Govindaji, and he wrote the most important book on the science of devotional service, Bhakti-rasamritha-sindhu, which was completed in the year 1552. He and his elder brother Sanatana Gosvami were among the chief government administrators of their time and were highly learned in Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit. Lord Chaitanya personally instructed Rupa Gosvami for ten consecutive days, and Bhakti-rasamritha-sindhu codifies these teachings, with supporting evidence from scores of supplementary Vedic texts.

One great acharya (teacher) in the parampara (disciplic succession) has offered obeisances to the six Gosvamis in the following manner: "They are very expert in scrutinizingly studying all the revealed scriptures with the aim of establishing eternal religious principles for the benefit of all human beings. Thus they are honoured all over the three worlds, and they are worth taking shelter of because they are absorbed in the mood of the gopis and are engaged in the transcendental loving service of Radha and Krishna." In one of Srila Prabhupada's rooms in the Radha-Damodara temple there is a window that overlooks the shaded courtyard where the two tomblike structures that honour Rupa Gosvami stand. Just before this window is a bare wooden asana (seat) where Srila Prabhupada sat to receive inspiration from the greatest of the Gosvamis. From the other room, where he wrote his books, Srila Prabhupada could look out and see Jiva Gosvami's own worshipable Deities, Radha-Damodara.

For more than five years Srila Prabhupada lived and worked alone in the Radha-Damodara temple. From the volume of manuscripts and letters he left behind, it is evident that he was constantly writing. He wrote by hand in notebooks, in school lesson pads, and even on the reverse side of mimeographed news releases from the Soviet news agency which was located in nearby Delhi. These releases during the early 1960's were filled with reports of sputnik achievements, and it was these reports that probably prompted Srila Prabhupada to write the most famous of his shorter books, Easy Journey to Other Planets.

Many of these Radha-Damodara manuscripts are incomplete and as yet unpublished. They include Science of Devotion, Practical Theism, Message of Godhead, Prayers of King Kulashekhara and a lengthy verse to verse translation and purport of the first part of the Chaitanya-charitamrtha. Also, there is Srila Prabhupada's voluminous correspondence, addressed to many prominent men in the fields of religion, letters, politics, business and medicine. These letters reveal Srila Prabhupada's gift for soliciting people to help spread scientific knowledge of God consciousness.

In addition to books and letters, during this time Srila Prabhupada also edited Back to Godhead, a fortnightly...
paper begun in 1944 in fulfillment of an order by his spiritual master, His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja. At the very first meeting he had with Srila Prabhupada in 1922, as well as in a letter written only weeks before his demise in 1936, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati specifically requested Srila Prabhupada to propagate the teachings of Krishna consciousness through the medium of the English language. A devotee takes the orders of his spiritual master as his very life, and this is what has impelled His Divine Grace to write prolifically despite many hindrances. Due to spiritual potency, a perfectly executed order received from a higher transcendental authority benefits not only the performer of the duty but also the whole world. Srila Prabhupada's accomplishment is exactly in the line of the six Gosvamis of Vrindavana. Srila Prabhupada's books are, to put it quite simply, authorized.

Back to Godhead contained timely articles, essays, book reviews and selections from full-length works in progress such as the Sri Isopanishad. It should be noted that this paper was entirely the effort of Srila Prabhupada. He wrote all the material, edited it, typed it for the printer and checked the galley proofs. Then he sold the copies. Each fortnight he would take batches of Back to Godhead into Delhi. To save a few cents bus fare he sometimes had to walk for miles, and often he would sit in tea parlours until late at night, himself not even taking a glass of water there, preaching and distributing his paper and collecting one cent per copy.

At this time Srila Prabhupada also wrote outlines of his dream. It was a worldwide association of God conscious devotees who actively preached the eternal religion of love of God in all fields of society at large and who used all the modern means at their disposal. The League of Devotees, the forerunner of the now worldwide ISKCON, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, was thus formally registered. From international sankirtana parties, to goshalas, to a printing press solely for flooding the marketplace with Krishna conscious literature, ISKCON is today the reality of that dream.

The most important work Srila Prabhupada wrote while in Vrindavana was his translation, with purports, of the First Canto of the Srimad-Bhagavatam ("The Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead"). This work was published by the League of Devotees, but, as with Back to Godhead, it was solely by the effort of Srila Prabhupada. It appeared in three volumes—the first in 1962, the second in 1964, and the third in 1965—all in preparation for the trip to the United States of America which Srila Prabhupada had conceived as the crucial factor in fulfilling his spiritual master's sacred mission.

Srimad-Bhagavatam is said to be the postgraduate study of Bhagavad-gita. Of course, in the West Bhagavad-gita is well known. Each year finds several new editions on the American market. Every college graduate knows the Gita's influence on Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Albert Einstein also was a regular student of the Gita, and I am told that Robert Oppenheimer, the atomic physicist, quoted a verse from the Eleventh Chapter upon seeing the first test explosion of the atomic bomb in 1945. Yet there have been no English editions of Srimad-Bhagavatam, which is more advanced than Bhagavad-gita.

Bhagavad-gita is spoken by Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, to His disciple Arjuna, and there unfolds the entire Vedic philosophy of Krishna consciousness. But who is Krishna? A prophet? A philosopher? An incarnation of God? Srimad-Bhagavatam answers this question. Like Bhagavad-gita, it was written 5,000 years ago by Srila Vyasadeva, a literary incarnation of Krishna. In twelve cantos containing 18,000 verses, Srimad-Bhagavatam presents complete information about the Lord, how His energies work, the nature of the living entities or spirit souls, our relationship with God and how to develop love for Him. When one has grasped Srimad-Bhagavatam, then he can fully understand Krishna's ultimate instruction of Bhagavad-gita: "Just give up everything and surrender unto Me."

In virtually every one of the hundreds of available editions
of Bhagavad-gita, Lord Sri Krishna, the speaker of the Gita, is obscured. Either He is relegated to the position of a historical personage, a mere literary device, or He is conceived as an impersonal ever-existing state of being. This allows the commentator himself to replace Krishna as the speaker of the Gita, and he is then free to present his own interpretations and mental speculations instead of Krishna consciousness.

In the opening sentences of Srila Prabhupada's introduction to the Srimad-Bhagavatam, he affirms that the word "God" refers to the supreme controller and that a controller cannot be impersonal. In the first shloka of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, obeisances are offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

om namo bhagavate vasudevaya
om—O my Lord; namah—my respectful obeisances unto You; bhagavate—unto the Personality of Godhead; vasudevaya—unto Lord Krishna, the son of Vasudeva.

O my Lord, the all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.

Whereas others have translated the Sanskrit scriptures conveniently to suit their interpretations, Srila Prabhupada always gives word-for-word English equivalents for each Sanskrit verse, and thus the translations cannot be disputed. This is a painstaking process, considering the length of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, but it is in keeping with the heritage of the Gosvamis to present the literature of devotional service authoritatively and scientifically. Furthermore, the English-reading public can easily learn the meanings to the Sanskrit words from this format.

Srimad-Bhagavatam is the most mature work of transcendental science written by Srila Vyasadeva. Vyasadeva had compiled the four Vedas and written the Vedanta-sutra, the Puranas and the Mahabharata (which includes Bhagavad-gita), yet he was not satisfied with his work. Therefore his spiritual master, Narada Muni, instructed him to specifically glorify the transcendental activities of Lord Sri Krishna. Thus the famous Tenth Canto of the Bhagavatam reveals the most intimate of Krishna's pastimes with His devotees. It should be cautioned that there are many professional Bhagavatam recitors who indulge in reading only this most confidential portion of the book, not caring for transcendental realization either for their innocent audiences or for themselves. However, Vyasadeva purposely placed these stories in the later portion of the text so that by reading through the first nine cantos the reader would be spiritually elevated and be able to understand the transcendental nature of these activities. Therefore Srila Prabhupada presents the Bhagavatam in a complete manner, beginning from the very first verse and progressing systematically to the most elevated portion of this great literature.

When Srila Prabhupada finally arrived in America in 1965, he did not come empty-handed. His baggage was a yellow tin box filled with sets of his Bhagavatams. Upon first setting foot on American soil, he wrote a poem addressed to Lord Krishna in Bengali, one passage of which reads as follows: "The words of Srimad-Bhagavatam are Your incarnation, and if people repeatedly hear them in submissive aural reception, then they will be able to understand Your message."

Srila Prabhupada then commenced his legendary preaching, first in the rural towns of Pennsylvania and then in New York's Bowery and Greenwich Village. He was practically supporting himself from the sales of his books until ISKCON was incorporated by some interested students and the first center was opened in July, 1966. (Even up until the present, the entire financial growth of the Society depends upon the distribution of Srila Prabhupada's books by street sales, store distribution, and the Society's Life Membership programme. All major donations and sales proceeds are used for printing books).

On two mimeograph machines personally purchased by Srila Prabhupada, we, his American students, began putting out Back to Godhead, which consisted mostly of Srila Prabhupada's lectures and some articles and poems by his students. Now that we had started it, we were instructed to publish an issue every month without fail, regardless of our financial situation—even if we could only afford one page. Upon seeing us putting together the first issue, Srila Prabhupada announced that ISKCON Press had been born. In the streets and through shops, we sold as many copies as we were able to run off and staple.

Srila Prabhupada was at that time delivering his lectures three evenings a week and every morning in the storefront assembly hall. One morning he titled his lecture, "Introduction to Bhagavad-gita As It Is by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami." That lecture was transcribed as the present introduction to his book. We learned that Srila Prabhupada was taking rest at 10:00 p.m. and rising at 2:00 a.m. to write his verse by verse translations and purports to the Bhagavad-gita. He would write all morning and then come down and speak on the verses upon which he had commented.

On a portable typewriter given by one of his students, Srila Prabhupada typed out the manuscript page after page. He would spend the remainder of the day writing correspondence, managing the center, speaking to visitors and teaching his students. Despite the threat of immigration difficulties, financial straits and the problems in teaching his fledgling students spiritual life, we watched the manuscript grow day by day. It was a labour of love which continued until one day serious illness struck Srila Prabhupada and he was unable to operate the typewriter. When our shock and confusion cleared away, we managed to purchase a dictaphone, and Srila Prabhupada was able to write by dictating tapes. One day a college student on leave who was an expert typist...
appeared and offered his services to Srila Prabhupada. Not long afterwards, the manuscript, over one thousand pages, was completed.

_Bhagavad-gita As It Is_ stands as a challenge to all the mental speculators who depart from the Gita’s central teaching of devotional service to the Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna. Even Mahatma Gandhi stands accused, since his ingenious metaphorical interpretation is simply designed to support his mundane political movement of nonviolence. In India Srila Prabhupada personally requested Gandhi to preach the Gita for what it teaches, Krishna consciousness, just as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja had personally requested the most famous Indian poet of his time, Rabindranath Tagore.

In the Gita’s Ninth Chapter Lord Krishna categorically advises Arjuna to surrender to Him and to love and worship Him only. He specifically uses the Sanskrit word _mam_, meaning “unto Me.” Yet one commentator, a renowned Indian philosopher and political leader, begins his commentary on this crucial verse, “It is not to Krishna that we have to surrender...” It is very clear that Krishna and Arjuna are standing on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra and that Krishna is telling Arjuna to surrender unto Him. But this scholar wants to turn the reader away from Krishna by insidiously implying that Krishna actually means to surrender to the eternal unmanifested essence within Himself. But Krishna didn’t say this. Significantly, Srila Prabhupada entitles his comments “purports,” not interpretations. In his purports he gives the actual significance of the verses. Srila Prabhupada informs all deluded scholars that because Krishna is absolute, there is no qualitative difference between His within and His without as there is with conditioned living entities like ourselves.

Only Srila Prabhupada can title his edition of the Gita “As It Is.” The reason why is readily understood from Krishna’s statement to Arjuna in the beginning of the Fourth Chapter regarding Arjuna’s qualification for receiving the teachings of the Gita. It is not that Arjuna was a great yogi, scholar or ascetic. Krishna said, “You are My devotee and My friend; therefore you can understand this science rightly.” As unusual as it may seem, Srila Prabhupada is virtually the only devotee of Krishna who has commented on _Bhagavad-gita_. Krishna also disclosed that the Gita can only be understood by those who are in the line of authorized devotees and acharyas (teachers) known as parampara (disciplic succession). Of the four such successions, the line from Lord Brahma yet remains intact, and Srila Prabhupada is the thirty-second teacher in that line. Vedic knowledge is not unlike a family secret that has been carefully handed down through many generations. Even though the present family descendants were not personally present, they know precisely what took place generations ago.

After it was completed, the Gita manuscript was placed in our hands for publication. We approached several big New York publishers, but even with the help of the poet Allen Ginsberg, there was no success. However, Srila Prabhupada had some time previously recorded an album of the hypnotic Hare Krishna mantra, and we happened to receive an order for a copy from an executive at the Macmillan Company. Srila Prabhupada, who was in New York at the time, instructed me to deliver the album personally and inform them that we had books they might be interested to publish. In the executive office, I sat before a man in the accounting section who had nothing to do with publishing books. But then in stepped his colleague, a chief editor. I was introduced, and then I repeated Srila Prabhupada’s offer. Believe it or not, he was just looking to publish an edition of the Gita to fill out their religion section. “Bring in the manuscript tomorrow morning,” he said, “and we’ll publish it.”
The next book, Teachings of Lord Chaitanya, was then dictated. It is a summary study of the historic Chaitanya-charitamritha. Instead of the exhaustive format of verse to verse translation and purport, Srila Prabhupada presented this book in a shortened but more essential manner. "My books are for my students," he told us, and so he wanted to write as many as possible. If Bhagavad-gita could be considered the undergraduate study of spiritual life and Srimad-Bhagavatam the master's study, then Chaitanya-charitamritha is the doctorate course. It recounts Lord Chaitanya's teachings to the only five disciples He personally taught. In Teachings of Lord Chaitanya, the incomplete philosophy of impersonalism is fully analyzed and forcefully defeated by Lord Chaitanya in His discussions with the two biggest impersonalists of His time, Prakashananda Sarasvati and Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. Also, the quintessence of all detailed knowledge of Krishna and how He acts both in the spiritual and material worlds is disclosed to Ramananda Raya.

The book was published by Prabhupada's students, who met the costs by donations of all their personal monies. We decided to print it overseas, in Japan, and ultimately in 1968 it came off the presses of one of the world's largest printing organizations. ISKCON Press was then given full responsibility to publish all of Srila Prabhupada's books and to develop Back to Godhead to the scale of Time and Life. By this time it was being printed by offset at five thousand copies per month. At Prabhupada's request, the issues included more articles by his students. He wanted to see how we were realizing what he was teaching, and he was not concerned for outward polish or sophistication in the articles. He said that for a father whose child is first learning how to speak, there is great pleasure even though the child mispronounces the words.

Srila Prabhupada considered Back to Godhead the backbone of the Krishna consciousness movement. He had us give it to a Japanese printer who, to our dismay, could print a minimum of 20,000 copies per issue. "Krishna will distribute them," Srila Prabhupada assured us. At present, over half a million copies are distributed each month in English, Spanish, French, German, Dutch, Japanese, Hindi, Bengali and Swahili.

Macmillan's Gita also came out in 1968 in an abbreviated 300 page edition, which included appreciations by several well-known authors for commercial appeal. One author who was very well known for his books on Eastern philosophy and was solicited with a copy of the manuscript for appreciation wrote back a hot letter to Macmillan. He denounced the Bhagavad-gita As It Is by saying that not to interpret the Gita was itself an interpretation. "Our book is successful," declared Srila Prabhupada. The juggler had properly understood Bhagavad-gita As It Is and was properly offended.

In 1969 ISKCON Press composed and printed with its own machinery the Sri Isopanishad, subtitled "The Knowledge that Brings One Nearer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna." It is an elementary book written in verse to verse format and fits as a bridge between the impersonal stress of the Upanishads and the distinct personalism of Bhagavad-gita. Its remarkable introduction, "Teachings of the Vedas," originally delivered as a lecture in Conway Hall in London, explains how one should best approach a study of the Vedic literature.

Also in 1969, the law book for the Krishna consciousness movement was finished. Srila Rupa's Bhakti-rasamritha-sindhu ("The Ocean of the Nectar of Devotion") was presented as a summary study entitled The Nectar of Devotion. In the first "wave" of the ocean of nectar, all the Krishna conscious rules, regulations, devotional practices, ceremonies and so on are codified and explained with abundant scriptural evidence. The Nectar of Devotion is greatly responsible for maintaining the spiritual atmosphere and upholding all the devotional discipline in ISKCON's temples, for it is written in such a way that almost any question in the day to day problems encountered in prosecuting Krishna consciousness can be authoritatively solved. The second "wave" contains incredible details about Lord Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead—His form, personality, abode and pastimes with His devotees. The book concludes with a detailed analysis of the variegated relationships of devotion that the living entities have with God, or Lord Krishna. The Nectar of Devotion was printed entirely by ISKCON Press. When the first copy was presented to Srila Prabhupada, he requested that we read aloud from it. When asked which portion he would like to hear, he replied, "Read from any part you open. Sugar tasted on any side is sweet."
One day when several of Srila Prabhupada's leading disciples were assembled before him, he announced that he had been requested to write a summary study of the Tenth Canto of the Srimad-Bhagavatam. If Srila Prabhupada proceeded translating canto by canto, some students feared, he might not be able to complete the confidential Tenth Canto in his life time. Because this portion had been so misrepresented by materialistic religionists, he wanted to leave behind an edition which presented this important portion in its proper transcendental perspective. He took our approval and then began dictating Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This work is the most entertaining of all of Srila Prabhupada's books. He conceded that he was writing it in such a way that the reader would not detect the philosophy. In the Bhagavatam, Sukadeva Gosvami, its principal reciter, has declared that there are three classes of men who will be attracted to Krishna's pastimes. Those very advanced in transcendental realization, the liberated souls, will relish the pastimes. Those who are on the path to achievement of liberation will automatically be purified, and even the gross materialist will enjoy them because of the resemblance between Krishna's affairs with the gopis and the love affairs between ordinary men and women.

The book was printed in Japan in 1970 in two volumes of 750 pages, with the addition of 82 full-colour plates. Several talented disciples had laboured for almost six months to produce magnificent paintings depicting the pastimes. Virtually every detail was referred for Srila Prabhupada's approval because the paintings also had to be "as it is." A welcome introduction by musician George Harrison, who contributed the entire cost of printing the first volume, completes the set of books. Although more expensive than all other of Srila Prabhupada's books, the Krishna Books are the most popular, having gone into three printings to date, as well as publication in a three-volume paperback edition.

Srila Prabhupada had never been entirely satisfied with Macmillan's edition of his Gita because they had drastically shortened it for business reasons. However, when the book was well into its fifth printing, Macmillan informed him that they would be honourable to bring out the complete edition, including the Sanskrit shlokas. All other published editions of the Gita were decreasing in sales, they reported, whereas Srila Prabhupada's was steadily increasing. Therefore, in the fall of 1972, the Macmillan Company released the complete edition of Bhagavad-gita As It Is, containing the entire text of Srila Prabhupada's original manuscript, fully indexed and cross-referenced, along with more than fifty colour plates. Finally, this was indeed the complete and authoritative edition of Bhagavad-gita that we had hoped for. The paintings dramatically portray the ideas of the Gita's verses and Srila Prabhupada's purports. Simply from the pictures the reader will be able to understand the great transcendental message of Bhagavad-gita.

Soon to be released from Japan are eight fully illustrated volumes comprising the first three cantos of the Srimad-Bhagavatam in verse to verse format. The Fourth Canto is still in the manuscript stage. Also still in manuscript is a large two-volume work in which Srila Prabhupada discusses the ideas of major ancient and contemporary philosophers—from Aristotle and Plato to Jean-Paul Sartre and modern theoretical physicists—in the light of Krishna consciousness.

We do not know what Srila Prabhupada's literary program will be for the future. Since his last books, he has been extensively traveling and preaching, especially throughout India and Africa. He is now in Japan on his way back to the United States on his fifth tour around the world since 1965. It is the hope of his disciples that while in the USA he will be able to retire from active management of ISKCON to completely devote himself to his writing, which he has wanted to do for a long time. There are eight cantos of Srimad-Bhagavatam remaining, as well as the manuscripts started in Vrindavana and one incomplete manuscript of the Vedanta-sutra.

Srila Prabhupada, as a pure devotee free from all defects, can transmit the Absolute Truth as it has been carefully set down in the Vedic literature, like a mailman who delivers a letter without opening it to add or subtract something. Because Srila Prabhupada is qualified to receive the king of all education, he is empowered to pass it on purely. His books are considered Vedic literature because they are in pursuance of Vyasa-deva's original intentions. Thus Srila Prabhupada's translations and purports are nondifferent from the original instructions delivered 5,000 years ago by Lord Krishna.

The mission of Lord Chaitanya to defeat impersonalism and establish the Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna, as the supreme has fully fructified for the benefit of the modern world in the books of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The Nectar of Devotion figuratively states that impersonalists dwell in the rivers of liberation which gradually lead down to the ocean of nectar to merge with it. They do not know that devotees are in a better position. Devotees don't care at all for the rivers of liberation, for they are like sharks who dwell eternally in the deep ocean of transcendental loving service.

Not having fully realized God, the impersonalist concludes that He is formless, nameless, without personality or abode, and does not engage in activities. Then, who is God? To say He is not this, not this, and not that means that He is nothing—which is to say that there is no God. Thus, impersonalism has given great impetus to the atheism which characterizes modern civilization. God cannot be formless, because if He were less than anything in His creation, how could He be the complete whole? God, the complete whole, must have everything
Within and beyond our experience. From the statements of virtually every Vedic source, Krishna is accepted as Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As Bhagavan, “possessor of opulences,” Krishna exhibits all beauty, all fame, all wealth, all knowledge, all strength and all renunciation. Since the very word “Krishna” means “all-attractive,” Srila Prabhupada explicitly explains all of God’s all-attractive features. Whereas the scriptures of other religions terminate with the conclusion that God is great, Srila Prabhupada begins from that realization to explain how He is great. The science of the Absolute Truth transcends sectarian religious principles. One who reads Srila Prabhupada’s books will know God perfectly, regardless of sectarian conceptions of God to which he may adhere. No other literature in philosophy, religion or yoga is as complete as the body of work that Srila Prabhupada has dutifully presented to the English-speaking world. This is due to the perfection of the main theme in Srila Prabhupada’s books—devotional service—which far exceeds the four perfections of material life: sense gratification, economic development, pious activities and liberation. The superb quality of Srila Prabhupada’s books is due simply to his glorifying the Supreme and presenting Him as He is.

Although the sales figures for Srila Prabhupada’s books approach those of consistent best sellers due to the vigorous efforts of ISKCON, critics have mainly ignored them. There does not seem to be any solution to this problem due to the lack of critics who are qualified to understand and explicate transcendental knowledge. The Macmillan Gita received only a handful of reviews, with the nation’s largest reviewing syndicate criticizing Srila Prabhupada for treating Bhagavad-gita as the literal word of God.

Be that as it may, the lives of several thousand young men and women from all over the world have been dramatically changed either by their coming into personal contact with Srila Prabhupada or simply by their reading his books. There is an instance of one boy who was stationed in the US Air Force in Spain. He was so impressed by Bhagavad-gita As It Is that he immediately took leave to visit the ISKCON center in London. Soon afterward, upon his military discharge, he surrendered himself as a disciple and servant. In accordance with the teachings of Krishna in Bhagavad-gita, Srila Prabhupada teaches the technique for practicing real spiritual life. He does not give only theoretical knowledge. In Bhagavad-gita Krishna first imparts to Arjuna knowledge of what is material and what is spiritual and who he is, but ultimately He instructs Arjuna to fight on the battlefield. Although this has been variously interpreted by commentators, the true significance of this is that in order to realize the spiritual instructions given to him by Krishna, his guru, Arjuna had to render devotional service without material attachment and thus satisfy Krishna. Thus the message of the Gita is to surrender oneself to God.

It should be noted that all of Srila Prabhupada’s disciples, many of whom are college graduates and former teachers, social workers, etc., find that they have ceased reading other books after reading those by Srila Prabhupada. This is perhaps best explained by the preface to Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, where Srila Prabhupada says that people love to read various kinds of fiction, but now, with this book, this tendency can be directed toward Krishna, or God. “The result will be the imperishable satisfaction of the soul, both individually and collectively. ... One will find that by reading one page after another, an immense treasure of knowledge in art, science, literature, philosophy and religion will be revealed, and ultimately by reading this one book, Krishna, love of Godhead will fructify.”

Srila Prabhupada teaches the most difficult and sublime science—the science of how to serve God—in such a way that anyone can understand it. The concepts are presented over and over again, for repetition is a time-tested learning technique in transcendental study. Thus in whichever of Srila Prabhupada’s books one reads first, one will find the entire science of Krishna consciousness presented, yet each succeeding book reveals something more, and with each rereading one will find new light. Srila Prabhupada’s books are the most wonderful vehicle because they swiftly transport the reader to a timeless and ever-green world where everyone is joyfully awakened to the Absolute Truth of Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
Bangalore
Vaikuntha dwara (above left), alankara (above right), laksharchana chanting (below)
Bangalore: *(above)* Sri Sri Krishna Balarama Ratha Yatra begins.

*(right)* Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa, President of ISKCON Bangalore and Sri Sri Vidhya Shreesha Theertha Swamiji of Sri Vyasaraja Mutt (Sosale), sweep the road in front of the *ratha*, before it begins to roll.

*(left)* Dignitaries on the dais from left to right, Sri Vasudeva Keshav Dasa (Vice President, ISKCON-Bangalore), Sri Stoka Krishna Dasa (Vice President, ISKCON-Bangalore), Sri Chanchalapathi Dasa (Senior Vice President, ISKCON-Bangalore), Sri Sri Vidhya Shreesha Theertha Swamiji (Sri Vyasaraja Mutt), Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa (President, ISKCON-Bangalore), Sri K Gopalaiah (MLA Mahalakshmi Layout), Sri Bhadre Gowda B (BBMP Corporator), Sri S S Mishra (General Manager, Canara Bank)
The devotees at Hare Krishna Movement Ahmedabad welcomed the new year with Harinama Kirtana Festival. The key features of the event were Hare Krishna Rock Band, Drama by FOLK devotees based on the story of Ajamila, bharatanatyam dance performance on Krishna lila, spiritually enlightening games, food festival, midnight arati for Sri Sri Nitai Gauranga with all the assembled devotees offering lamps to Their Lordships at midnight and distribution of mahaprasadam.
Visit of Hon. Premier to Victoria to ISKON Bangalore

On Jan 18, 2018, Hon Daniel Andrews MP, Premier of Victoria, Australia, visited the ISKCON Bangalore temple with his delegates to take the blessings of Lord. He was welcomed by Sri Vasudev Keshav Dasa, Vice President, ISKCON Bangalore. He said “This is the most beautiful temple I have ever seen and also appreciate the work of Akshaya Patra which is feeding 1.7 million children everyday.” He was accompanied by Ms Gabrielle Williams MP, State Member for Dandenong.
We cordially invite you to
Sri Gaura Purnima Celebrations
Friday, March 2, 2018 | 6.00 p.m. onwards

Seva Opportunities

**Pushpalankara Seva**
Sri Sri Nitai Gauranga (Sri Nityananda Prabhu and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu) are gorgeously adorned on this day. Contribute towards decorating Their Lordships with colourful flower garlands.

**Prasada Seva**
Every day free lunch prasadam is served to hundreds of devotees visiting our temple. Your contribution will be used for this Prasada Seva on the auspicious day of Gaura Purnima.

**Vishesha Naivedya Seva**
A special bhoga comprising 56 varieties of delicious food items are offered to Sri Sri Nitai Gauranga on this day. Offer the seva and seek the blessings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

To donate, please visit [www.iskconbangalore.org/sri-gaura-purnima/](http://www.iskconbangalore.org/sri-gaura-purnima/)
Over 10,000 register online for free puja on Vaikuntha Ekadashi

ISKCON Bangalore witnessed a grand and ceremonious celebration of Sri Vaikuntha Ekadashi on December 29, 2017. Thousands of devotees visited the temple and sought the blessings of Sri Srinivasa Govinda on this auspicious day.

Among the various special sevas offered to the Lord on this occasion was Laksharchana. As the same suggests, devotees perform archana to the Lord invoked in kalashas by chanting His holy names at least one lakh times while offering flowers. The seva starts in the morning and continues throughout the day.

This year two batches of 15 devotees each, recited Sri Krishna Ashtottara Shata Namavali (Lord Krishna’s 108 holy names) alternately from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Altogether they chanted 1,93,536 names of the Lord during the Laksharchana. A batch of 15 children also took part in the seva and chanted the holy names for one hour.

Sri Gunabhadra dasa who coordinated the seva said, “Chanting the names of the Lord is very auspicious in the Kali-yuga, especially on days like Vaikuntha Ekadashi.” Quoting a few verses from the scriptures he said, “In Kali-yuga, the best means of spiritual realization is chanting the holy names of the Lord. By doing so one can be freed from all sins and thus can attain the highest perfection of life by returning back to Godhead.”

The temple offered, as in the previous years, to conduct a free puja in the names of devotees who registered online for the same. This year 10,930 devotees had this seva performed in their name and 1,189 of them participated online in the archana. The registration was open from December 5 to 27, 2017.
Heritage Fest
The Hare Krishna Movement, Hyderabad celebrated its annual Heritage Fest on December 23, 2017. Over 10,000 students from 800 schools of Hyderabad participated in the Fest.
https://goo.gl/JG8rz1

Sri Jayadeva Gosvami
Sri Jayadeva was born during the reign of Maharaja Laksmana Sena of Bengal in the eleventh or twelfth century of the Saka Era. His father was Bhojadeva, and mother Vamadevi.
https://goo.gl/3ht1Q7

Going back to Jail
“What I fear the most is going back to Jail,” said a famous actor upon his release from jail. He also said that there is nothing better than living a free life, a life of freedom.
https://goo.gl/2Zbf3F

Nitya Annadana Seva
Contribute towards serving free and tasty lunch prasadam at our Annadana Hall every day to hundreds of pilgrims visiting the temple.
To donate, please visit: www.iskconbangalore.org/annadana-seva

Great Hindu temple: Enjoyed my visit here - modern Hindu temple with a cafeteria at the end - tasty local Indian food. Very interesting interiors at the temple. I enjoyed the visit. KerrySquires

Worth a visit: I was impressed with the level of organization at this temple given that there are literally tens of thousands of people who come here daily. The systemized queuing with shoe and baggage storage made it very easy to flow through in and out. BijayBNI

Good for people seeking cultural and spiritual education: It’s quite easily accessible from all the places in the city. There are several programs conducted regularly where you get to learn about culture and religion and life. sunnykhawash

Spiritual hour: I really enjoyed an hour walking and admiring the wonder inside. It is a definite visit if in Bangalore. However, the crowd over weekends can get a bit daunting. Ensure not to wear expensive foot wear as you have to leave it outside for a fee... can be collected later. Respect the prayers and ensure to keep your mobile on silent. Skinnygirldiariez

www.iskconbangalore.org
The Shubharambham festival was held at ISKCON, Bangalore on the 1st of January, 2018. This was the third year of celebrations, to give an opportunity to those devotees who wish to begin the New Year on a high note, by seeking the divine blessings of their Lordships Sri Radha Krishna. More than 100 families joined the festivities by taking part in the Harinama Yajna that involved the chanting Hare Krishna mahamantra 108 times. After the yajna, the devotees had a chance to interact with senior devotees – Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa, President or Sri Chanchalapathi Dasa, Senior Vice-President, ISKCON Bangalore, who emphasized the need for 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.

Shri Vasanth G R, one of the participants of Shubharambham said, “This is the best New Year celebration that I have ever been to until now. The temple was filled with divine vibrations all around. We had the good fortune of being the part of fire sacrifice and then understand the purpose of our lives in the association of experienced saints. My children were fascinated by the wide-spread of 56 varieties of Prasada, along with beautifully decorated flowers and lights. There could not have been a better way to start the New Year for me. I wish to be a part of this event at ISKCON every year.”
AN ALL-INCLUSIVE PRICE FOR THE HOME THAT HAS EVERYTHING.