Sri Radhashtami
The auspicious appearance day of Srimati Radharani
Monday, Sep 17, 2018

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

tvat-pada-padma-yugale
pada-padmalayarcite
dehi mahyam param bhaktim
krishnena parisevite

O Radhika, please give me transcendental devotional service to
Your lotus feet, which are worshiped by Lord Brahma and Lakshmi,
and which are served even by Lord Krishna.

For more details of the festival visit: http://www.iskconbangalore.org/radhashtami
His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age 69, to fulfill his spiritual master’s request that he teach the science of Krishna consciousness throughout the English-speaking world. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India’s Vedic literature, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, travelling almost nonstop, Srila Prabhupada moulded his international society into a world-wide confederation of ashrams, schools, temples and farm communities. He passed away in 1977, in Vrindavana, the place most sacred to Lord Krishna. His disciples and followers are carrying forward the movement he started.

To know more about Srila Prabhupada visit www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada
Using the Vedic scriptural writings of India, the author makes an important contribution to our knowledge of man, his universe and the destiny of his life.

In the Brahma Samhita, one of the oldest and most important of Vedic scriptures, in the fifth chapter, there is a description of variegated planetary systems within the material world. And in the Bhagavad-gita such planetary systems—in thousands and millions of material universes—are considered to be one fourth part of the complete creative energy of Godhead. The major three-fourths of the Lord's creative energy is manifested in the spiritual sky, called Paravyoma, or the Vaikuntha Loka.

The declaration of the Brahma Samhita is widely confirmed by material science today, both as regards varieties of habitable planets within the universe, and also insofar as there is the theoretical acceptance of an antimaterial world.

According to the Brahma Samhita there is not only an infinite number of habitable planets within the universe, as is confirmed by most leading contemporary astronomers, but there is also an infinite number of universes. And all these infinite universes with their infinitude of planets are floating on and are produced of the Brahman effulgence emanating from the transcendental body of Govinda, Lord Sri Krishna. This is the Primeval Lord who is worshiped by Brahma, the presiding deity of the universe where we are residing.

Various astronomers throughout the world have asserted their belief that beings capable of reason can and do dwell on the different planets throughout the universe. Such eminent minds as Drs. Nikolai Zhirov and Vladimir Alpatov of Russia, as well as Sir Harold Spencer Jones of England (author of the erudite Life on Other Worlds) have expressed their agreement that life can adapt to the various atmospheres—such as that of Mars—which are to be found on the planets.

This adaptability of organisms to different varieties of planets is described in the Brahma Samhita as vibhuti bhinnam, i.e., each and every one of the innumerable planets within the universe is endowed with a particular type of atmosphere, and the living beings on some are more perfectly advanced in science and psychology on account of a superior atmosphere for life.

Vibhuti means specific power and bhinnam means variegated. Scientists who are attempting to explore outer space and are trying to reach other planets by mechanical arrangements should realize that organisms adapted to the atmosphere of the Earth cannot long exist under the atmospheric influences of other planets. As such, attempts to establish colonies on the Moon and on Mars will be an ultimately futile endeavour on account of the different atmospheres prevailing on those planets, as described in the Brahma Samhita.

Interplanetary Travel

Individually, however, one can attempt to go to any planet he desires. But this is only possible by psychological changes within the mind of a particular person. The mind is the nucleus of the material body. The gradual evolutionary process of the material body depends more or less on the psychological changes in the mind. The change of bodily construction of a caterpillar into a butterfly, and in modern medical science the conversion of a man’s body into that of a woman or vice versa—all depend more or less on the psychological change of the mind.

In the Bhagavad-gita it is said that, at the time of death, if anyone concentrates his mind upon the form of the Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, and thus doing relinquishes his body, he at once enters into the spiritual existence of the antimaterial world. This means that anyone who strives constantly for psychological changes within the mind, going from master to the spiritual form of Godhead by the performance of the prescribed rules of devotional service, can easily attain to the Kingdom of God in the antimaterial sky.

And in the same way if anyone desires to enter into any planet of the material sky, he can go there just after quitting the present body—i.e., after death—and enter into the atmosphere of the particular planet he desires. Thus if someone wants to enter the Moon planet as science is now attempting to do, or the Sun planet or Mars, one can do so simply by performing certain acts meant for that purpose.

The Bhagavad-gita confirms this in the following words: “In whatever condition one quits his present body, in his
next life he will attain to that state of being without fail.” (8.6) In the Mahabharata, of which the Gita is a part, we find the story of Maharaja Bharata, who in spite of a life of severe penances foolishly thought of his stag at the time of death, and thus became a deer in his next birth. But because of his life of austerity, he was granted clear consciousness of his past. This is a very important point. The atmosphere created at the time of death is but an aftereffect of the actual deeds which one performs during his life.

In the Gita the process of entering into the Moon planet is mentioned. There it states that materialistic men who have no information of the Kingdom of God are generally mad after the acquisition of wealth, fame and adoration. Such men are interested in progress and welfare work for the family and for self-satisfaction, and they may extend these activities into social or national welfare. Such men obtain the desired object by material activities, through the prescribed mechanical or ritualistic discharge of duties, and are thus inclined to satisfy the Pitris, or the bygone forefathers, as well as other controlling gods by sacrifices such as are presented in the revealed scriptures.

Addicted to such acts of sacrifice and ceremonial observance, such men enter the Moon planet after death. When a person is thus promoted to the atmosphere of the Moon he gets the necessary strength to enjoy the drinking of Somarasa, a celestial beverage.

The Moon planet is the place where the demigod Chandra is the predominating deity. The atmosphere and amenities of life there are far more comfortable and advantageous than those that we have here. But, reaching there, if a person does not utilize the opportunity to get promotion to still better planets, then he is degraded and is made to come down again to this planet or some other similar to Earth. And even though such materialistic persons may attain to the topmost planetary system, they ultimately are annihilated at the time of the periodic general disappearance of the cosmic manifestation.

So far as the planetary systems in the spiritual sky are concerned, there is an unlimited number of such Vaikunthas there, and the ratio is that that manifestation of the Lord's internal potency is three times greater than this material sky, which is manifested by the external energy.

The yoga of space travel

The poor materialist is busy making his political adjustments in a place which is most insignificant in the evaluation of God. Not just to speak of this planet Earth, the whole universe with its innumerable planets has been compared by one saint with a grain of mustard seed amongst all the mustard seeds packed in a bag. But the poor materialist makes his plans to live here comfortably, and thus he wastes his most valuable human energy on a cause which is never to be realized. Instead of wasting time in that plan-making business, a plain and simple life with high thinking after spiritual matter would save the misguided human being from perpetual unrest, the only gift of matter.

Even if a materialist wants to enjoy developed material facilities, he can transfer himself to the many, many other material planets where he can experience more and more advanced material pleasures. The best plan of life is to prepare oneself for going back to the spiritual sky after leaving this body; but yet if anyone wants to enjoy the largest amount of material facilities, one can transfer himself to other planets—not by means of playful sputniks, which are simply childish entertainments—but by psychological effects and by learning the art of transferring the soul through mystic powers.

The yoga system is also materialistic inasmuch as it teaches one to control the movements of air within the body. The spiritual spark or soul is floating on air within the body, and inhalation and exhalation are the waves of that air containing the soul. Therefore the yoga system is the materialistic art of controlling that air. By practice of such yoga, the soul with all its energy and consciousness can be transferred from the stomach to the navel, from the navel to the chest, from the chest to collarbones, from the collarbones to the eyeballs, and from there to the cerebellum. From the cerebellum the expert yogi can convey his own soul to any planet he desires.

The velocity of light must be taken into consideration by the material scientist as the highest speed theoretically attainable by any object in travel, but the scientist has no information of the velocity of such forms of matter as the mind and intelligence. We have some experience of the velocity of the mind, because, in a moment, we can transfer the mind to places hundreds and thousands of miles away. Intelligence is a still finer form of matter. And finer than even intelligence is the soul, which is not matter at all but is spirit or antimaterial, and which is many, many times finer and more powerful than intelligence. We can thus barely imagine the velocity of the soul and how quickly it can travel from one planet to another by its own strength, without any help from any sort of material vehicle.

Our animal's civilization of eating, sleeping, fearing and sense-gratifying has misled contemporary man and he has forgotten how powerful the soul is. The soul is in fact a spiritual spark which is many, many times more
illuminating, dazzling and powerful than the Sun, the Moon or electricity. Human life is spoiled by not realizing this as one's own true identity.

How the yogis can travel to all the planets of the universe is described in the Srimad-Bhagavatam as follows: When the vital force is lifted to the cerebellum there is every chance of this force bursting out from one of the bodily holes like the eyes, nose or ears. These places are known as the seventh orbit of the vital force. The yogis can, however, block these holes by complete suspension of the passing air, and then the yogi carefully concentrates the vital force in the middle position, in between the eyebrows. At this point the yogi can think of which of the planets he wants to go to after leaving this body. He can decide either to go to the abode of Krishna in the Vaikunthas, which are transcendental places and from which no one is required to come back to the material world, or if he wants to travel to the higher planets in this universe, he is at liberty to do so.

For a perfect yogi, one who has attained success in the practice of leaving this material body in perfect consciousness, the process is as easy as it is for an ordinary man to go from one place to another. As we have already indicated, the material body is just a covering of the spiritual soul. Mind and intelligence compose the inner covering, and the gross body of earth, water, air, etc. is the outer covering of the soul. Any advanced soul who has realized himself by the yogic process (which means, literally, the linking up of matter with spirit) can leave these shirts and coats of the soul in perfect order as he desires. Such a one has complete freedom by the grace of God.

The Lord is so kind upon us that we can live anywhere, either in the spiritual sky or in the material sky, and in any planet thereof. The misuse of this freedom makes one fall down in the material world and live a conditioned life, subject to the threefold miseries (those imposed by Nature, by other living beings and by the bodily condition itself.) To live a miserable life in the material world is a choice of the soul, as is nicely illustrated in Milton's Paradise Lost, and is not a matter of chance. And from the material world, also by his own choice, one can go back to home, back to Godhead.

The Upper Planets

So in that critical time of placing the vital force between the eyebrows, one has to decide where he wants to go. If he is completely reluctant to keep any connection with the material world, he can do so and within less than a second he can reach the transcendental Vaikuntha sky and appear there in a spiritual body just suitable for the spiritual atmosphere. One has simply to desire to leave the material world both in finer and grosser forms, and then fix the vital force at the topmost part of the skull and leave the body from the hole of the skull called "Brahmarandhra." That is the highest perfection in practicing the yoga system.

But the yogi is endowed with free will, and as such if he does not wish to get completely free from the material world, but prefers to enjoy a life of Brahma Pada, or to occupy the post of "Brahma," and if he wishes to see the place of materially perfect beings called Siddha Loka, where every living being has full capacity to control gravity, space, time, etc.—then he doesn't have to leave the mind and intelligence (finer forms of matter), but can simply give up the grosser matter and thus go up to the highest place of the material universe.

The sputniks and other man-made mechanical planets will never be able to carry human beings very far in interplanetary space. The reason is, again, that in the higher planetary systems the atmosphere is different from here. Each and every planet has its particular atmosphere, and if anyone wants to go to any planet anywhere within the material universe, he has to get his material shirt and coat (his body) made exactly adaptable to the climatic condition of that planet.

It is just like this: If a person wants to go from India to Europe, where the climate is different from India, then one has to change his dress accordingly. Similarly, a more complete change of dress, to the extent of changing the body itself, is necessary if we want to go up to the transcendental planets of Vaikuntha, or even to the upper worlds of this universe.

If we want to go to the highest material planet we need not change the finer dress of mind, intelligence and ego, but we do have to change the gross dress of earth, water, fire, air, etc. When we go to a transcendental planet, however, we require to change both the fine as well as the gross body and we have to arrive in the spiritual sky completely in spiritual form.

The change of dress will automatically take place simply by desiring it at the time of death. This desire, however, is possible only if we practice it during the conscious state of life. Such desires, when practiced in relation with the material world, are called fruitive actions, or karma. When such desires are conducted in relation to the Kingdom of God, they are called divine or devotional service.

One can prepare himself for an easy journey to the Vaikuntha or antimaterial planets, where life is free from birth,
death, disease and old age, by pursuit of the following principles:

1. The desiring candidate must accept a bona fide spiritual master in order to be trained scientifically to use the senses in devotional service. The senses are made of matter, and as such it is not at all possible to realize the Transcendence through the material senses. Therefore the senses have to be spiritualized by the prescribed method offered by the proper guide, who is himself Krishna conscious, or perfect in antimaterial activities.

2. When the choice of a bona fide spiritual master is made, the candidate must take rightful initiation from the spiritual master, which is the beginning of spiritual training.

3. The candidate must be prepared to satisfy the spiritual master in every way. A bona fide spiritual master who is fully cognizant of the effects of spiritual science, learned in the spiritual scriptures like the Bhagavad-gita, Vedanta, Bhagavatam, Upanishads, etc.—and who is also a self-realized soul, having made tangible connection with the Supreme Lord—is the transparent medium to help the willing candidate on the path to Vaikuntha. He must therefore be satisfied in all respects, because simply by his good wishes a candidate can make wonderful progress in the line.

4. This service of the spiritual master is meant for the intelligent class of candidates who can place relevant questions before the master in order to clear the way. The spiritual master shows him the way not whimsically, but on the principles of authorities who have actually traversed the path. The names of such authorities are also disclosed in the scriptures and we have simply to follow them by the direction of the spiritual master. The true spiritual master never deviates from the path of the authorities.

5. The candidate must always try to follow in the footsteps of the great sages who have practiced the method and obtained success. This must be taken as the motto of life. Not to imitate them, but to follow them sincerely, in terms of the particular time and circumstances.

6. The candidate must be prepared to change his habits in terms of the instructions contained in the books of authority, and he must be prepared to sacrifice sense enjoyment as well as sense abnegation for the satisfaction of the Lord, as Arjuna did.

7. The candidate should live in a spiritual atmosphere.
8. He must be satisfied with as much wealth as is sufficient for maintenance only. He should not try to amass more wealth than is necessary for maintenance in the simple way.

9. He must observe certain fast days, such as the eleventh day after the growing and again after the waning moon (called Ekadashi).

10. He must show respect to the banyan tree, the cow, the learned Brahmana and the devotee.

11. One should avoid offenses in the discharge of duties, in devotional service and in chanting the holy name (the Hare Krishna mantra).

12. He must leave the company of nondevotees, i.e., not associate with them intimately.

13. He must not create unlimited disciples. This means that a candidate who has successfully reached up to the 12th stage can also become spiritual master himself, just as a student becomes monitor in the class. He should have, however, a limited number of disciples.

14. He must not pose himself as a vastly learned man, simply quoting the statements of books. He must have solid knowledge from others.

15. A regular and successful practice up to the 14th item will enable the candidate to have equilibrium of the mind even if there is a great trial of material loss or a great material gain in life.

16. And the next stage is that the candidate does not become afflicted by any lamentation or illusion.

17. He does not deride another's mode of religion or worship, neither does he indulge in deriding the Personality of Godhead or His devotees.

18. He must not indulge in topics regarding the relations of man and woman, or in the useless topics of others' family affairs.

19. He must not inflict pain either in the body or in the mind of another living being, whosoever he may be.

The latter ten items are negative injunctions while the first ten are positive. Out of these twenty the first three positive items are imperative and most essential for the desiring candidates. There are 44 other items to be followed by the desiring candidates, but Lord Chaitanya, the great Avatar of Godhead whose mission was to deliver the souls of this age, selected only five items from them as being most important, having regard for the conditions of the present mode of life. These five are as follows:

1. To associate with devotees. The association of devotees is made possible by hearing them attentively, by asking them relevant questions, by supplying them with foodstuff and accepting foodstuff from them, by giving them charity and accepting from them whatsoever they offer.

2. To chant the Holy Name of the Lord in all circumstances. The chanting of the Lord's Name is an easy job and the most inexpensive attempt also. One can chant any Name of the Lord from among His innumerable Names at any time, and try to make it offenseless. There are ten offenses in the method of such chanting of the transcendental Name, and those offenses must be avoided as far as possible. But at all cost the Holy Name of the Lord can be chanted without any restriction at all times.

3. One should hear the transcendental topics enunciated in The Bhagavad-gita. This hearing is made possible through platform lectures as well as through press propaganda. And this item includes the other two items above.

4. One should make his home at Mathura or the birthplace of Lord Krishna or should make his home as good as Mathura by installing the Deity of the Lord at home to be worshiped by all the members of the family after proper
initiation from the spiritual master.

5. To worship the installed deity with attention and devotion so that the whole atmosphere at home becomes the replica of the Lord’s abode. This is made possible by the direction of the spiritual master, who knows the transcendental art and can guide the candidate in the proper method.

The above-mentioned five items can be adopted by any man in any part or place of the world. Thus one can prepare himself for going back to home, back to Godhead by the simple method recognized by such authorities as Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who specifically advented Himself to deliver the fallen souls of this age.

Transcendental Love

The whole process of transferring oneself to the spiritual sky is to gradually liquidate the material composition of gross and subtle coverings over the spirit soul. And the last-named five items of devotional activities are so spiritually powerful that their performance by a devotee, even in the preliminary stage, can very quickly promote the sincere executor to the position of bhava—emotion on the spiritual plane which is above the intellectual status of the mind. And complete absorption in such spiritual emotion is the perfect change which makes the candidate perfectly fit to be transferred to the spiritual sky just after leaving the present material tabernacle.

Such emotional perfection of the devotee—that is to say, the development of love of God—causes him to be situated on the spiritual platform even from outset, although he may remain superficially fixed in the way that an iron made red hot completely ceases to be iron, and acts like fire. These things are made possible by the subtle cohesion of the Lord’s inconceivable energy, a realm of action which material science has very little scope to calculate.

One should, therefore, engage himself in the task of devotional service with absolute faith, and to make that faith a steadfast affair the candidate should seek the association of standard devotees of the Lord. This will gradually develop into factual devotional service to the Lord, causing the disappearance of all material misgivings like a flash of lightning.

All these different stages of spiritual realization will be personally felt by the candidate and that will create in him
a firm belief in this means of making positive progress, resulting finally in sincere attachment for the Lord and His abode. That is the gradual process of evolving love of God, the prime necessity of human life. There are many instances in Vedic history of great personalities—both kings and sages—who attained perfection in this line. Some of them attained success by adhering to just a single item of devotional service with faith and perseverance. Some of the more important examples of such devotees are as follows:

1. Emperor Parikshit attained the spiritual platform simply by hearing from a great authority, Sri Sukhadeva Goswami.
2. Sri Sukhadeva Goswami attained success in this matter simply by recitation ad verbum of the transcendental message, as he had received it from his great father, Sri Vyasadeva.
3. Emperor Prahlada attained success in this matter simply by remembering the Lord constantly, in pursuance of the instruction of Srila Narada Muni, a great saint and devotee.
4. Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune, attained success simply by sitting and serving the lotus feet of the Lord.
5. King Prithu attained success simply by worshiping the Lord.
6. Akrura, the charioteer, attained success simply by chanting prayers for the Lord.
7. Hanuman (Mahabir), the famous nonhuman devotee of Lord Sri Ramachandra, attained success simply by carrying out the orders of the Lord.
8. Arjuna, the great warrior, attained the same perfection simply by making friendship with the Lord, who delivered the message of the Bhagavad-gita to enlighten Arjuna and his followers.
9. Emperor Bali attained success by surrendering everything unto the Lord, including his personal body.

These are the nine standard items of devotional service to the Lord, and a candidate can make his choice to adopt any one, two, three, four—or all the items together—as he likes. As all these forms of service are rendered to the Absolute, the services themselves are Absolute and there is thus no real difference in quantity or quality, as in the case of inert matter. These are different varieties on the spiritual platform, where everything is identical with everything else.

Emperor Ambarish stands as a very prominent example of devotion because he adopted all the above nine items in his practical life, and he also attained the supreme result. He engaged his mind just on the lotus feet of the Lord, his words in describing the spiritual world, his hands in cleansing the temple of the Lord and his ears in submissively hearing the words of Lord Sri Krishna. He engaged his eyes in visualizing the Deities of the Lord, his body in touching the bodies of the devotees, his nostrils in smelling the flowers which had been first offered to the Deities, his legs in visiting the temple of the Lord and all his energy of life in the services of the Lord without the least desire for sense gratification. All these activities helped him to attain the perfect stage of spiritual life, a stage beyond the vision of the most brilliant experiment in material science.

It is therefore incumbent on all serious human beings to adopt these principles of spiritual realization for the perfection of life. A human being has no obligation whatsoever save and except spiritual realization in his life. In the modern setup of things, human society is very busy in the discharge of national duties. But, in fact, national, social or humanitarian duties are obligatory only to those who are bereft of the spiritual duty.

As soon as a man takes his birth in any part of the globe he does not only have national, social and humanitarian obligations, but also has his obligations to the demigods who supply air, light, water, etc. He has obligations to the great sages who have left behind them a vast treasure house of directions in the conduct of human life. He has obligations to all kinds of living beings, to his forefathers and family members, and so on and so forth. But as soon as one engages himself in the single duty of spiritual perfection, he automatically liquidates—he in fact fulfills perfectly—all other obligations without any separate effort.

A devotee of the Lord is never a disturbing element in society, but on the contrary he becomes an asset to all others. As far as possible no devotee is attracted by any sinful action, and as soon as a man becomes a devotee he can do inestimable service to his society, bringing peace and prosperity to all concerned, both in this life and in the next. Even if by chance a devotee may commit something undesirable, the Lord Himself rectifies that in no time.

Therefore, there is no necessity for a devotee to culture superfluous knowledge or abnegation. A devotee can safely remain at his place and execute devotional service smoothly in any order of life. There are instances in history where the cruellest man became the most kind-hearted simply by the execution of devotional service. Knowledge and abnegation follow automatically in the life of a pure devotee without any extraneous effort by him.
The Eternal

This spiritual art and science of devotional service is the great contribution of the Indian sages to the rest of the world. Everyone, therefore, who has taken his birth in India has an obligation to make his life perfect by adopting the principles of this great art and science, and then to distribute this to the rest of the world, to offer mankind the ultimate aim of life.

Human society is destined to reach this stage of perfection by the gradual development of knowledge. Many Indian sages have already reached this position, while other men still have to tread on the path for many more thousands of years. It is this writer’s hope that the true sages of India today will make a serious and sustained effort to give the world this sublime information immediately, in a systematic way, so that they may not only save humanity’s time and energy for this progress of life, but also that all men may immediately take advantage of this human form of life—a form which they may well obtain again only through the labour of millions of years.

Many writers of philosophy and even of fiction advocate the concept of the eternal life of man. They contribute various literary suggestions to the rest of the world indicating that scientific progress can help man to live forever. But they do not generally believe in the concept of a Supreme Being as the Creator. We welcome the suggestions of such writers because we know that any actual progress in scientific knowledge will certainly take man to the spiritual sky, and that the advancement of knowledge will ultimately inform the scientist that the Supreme Creator exists, full with inconceivable potencies that lie beyond the calculation of material science.

As suggested here before, although every living being is eternal in form, one has to periodically change his outer coverings of gross and subtle matter. This changing process is technically known as life and death. So long as a living being has to wear the shackles of material bondage there is no relief from this changing process, which continues even at the highest stage of material life.

Our fiction writers may go on with their imaginings, as fiction writers are apt to do, but the saner section of the people, in studying natural law, will not agree that man can live forever within this material world. A naturalist can observe the overall action of material Nature by simply studying fruit on a tree. A small fruit develops from a flower, and it continues to develop more and more. It stays for some time and then it becomes full grown and ripe. After the ripe stage it begins to dwindle day by day, and on some day it falls down from the tree to the earth and begins its decomposition. And at last it becomes dust, leaving behind its seed, which again springs up...
to become a tree and produces many, many fruits which in due course meet the same fate already described. Similarly, a living being (the spiritual spark which is part and parcel of the Supreme Being) takes its organic form in the womb of the mother just after sexual intercourse. It grows little by little within the womb, and afterwards outside the womb, gradually becoming a child, a boy, a youth, an adult and so on. In old age a man begins to dwindle, and at a certain period he falls down in the grip of cruel death in spite of all the good wishes and desires of all sections of humanity, fiction writers included. So, by comparison, there is no difference between the two organic bodies—namely, the man and the fruit. As such the man may leave behind him seeds in the form of numerous children, but by Nature he cannot exist permanently within the material body.

How can our writers ignore the law of material Nature? No material scientist can change the stringent rules of Nature, however boastful he may be. No astronomer can change the course of the planets, although he can manufacture a toy planet under the name and style of Apollo. Foolish children may give much credit to the flying of a modern space capsule, but the saner section of the people will give more credit to the Creator of the truly gigantic “capsules”—namely, the stars and planets. If a small playful capsule has a creator in Russia or the West, why should the Creator of these gigantic capsules not exist in the spiritual sky? If a toy spaceship requires the assistance of so many scientific brains, why should we not believe in the existence of a more perfect and subtle brain which has created the gigantic spaceships? So far we have received no good answer from the nonbelieving class of men with their poor fund of knowledge about this suggestion of the Supreme Creator. These unbelieving men put forward their theories of the Creation with so many doubtful wordings, some of which are as follows: "It is hard to understand... Our imagination cannot conceive of it... But it is quite possible that..." etc., which shows that the ideas put forward by such men are not based on authorized and scientific data. They are simply hypotheses resulting from imperfect induction.

But we can give an authorized account from the Bhagavad-gita of how, within this material world, there are living beings who possess a duration of life covering 1,000 x 4,300,000 x 12 x 2 x 30 x 100 solar years of our calculation. We call the Bhagavad-gita authorized because this book of knowledge has been widely accepted by India's great sages even in modern times, and by many of the greatest spiritual personalities, such as Sri Shankaracharya, Sri Ramanujacharya, Sri Madhvacharya, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and so on.

Varieties of Planetary Systems

Even possessing so long a duration of life does not guarantee deathlessness within matter. Therefore, all material shapes are subject to the law of change although potentially the material energy is conserved. Potentially everything is eternal, but in matter the form, or phase as the scientists sometimes call it, takes place, remains for some time, develops to full maturity, becomes old, begins to dwindle and at last disappears. That is the position of all material objects. The current suggestions of the scientists that beyond the material sky there may be some other form, lying outside the boundary of visibility, strange and inconceivable, is a faint idea of the basic principle of the spiritual sky.

This basic principle of spirit is present within all living beings. When the spiritual principle is out of the material body, then no change takes place in that body. Within the body of a child the same spiritual principle is there, and therefore changes take place in the body and it develops. But if somehow or other the spirit has to go away, the same body may be preserved by chemical adjustment; but there will be no more development. This law is applicable in every material object. Matter transforms from one shape to another when it is in contact with the spirit. Without spirit there is no such transformation. The whole universe is developed in this way. It emanates from the energy of the Transcendence, and on account of the spiritual force the body develops into gigantic forms like the Sun, Moon, Earth, etc.

There are fourteen divisions of planetary systems, each different from the others in dimension and quality, and everywhere the same principle of development holds good. Therefore the spiritual force is the creator, because, entirely on account of this principle, transformation, transition and development take place.

So far as life is concerned, we can know definitely that life is not generated by any kind of material reaction, like a chemical combination. Material interaction, set in agitation by a Superior Being, creates a favourable circumstance for accommodating the spiritual living force, and the superior energy handles matter in a suitable way by the free will of the spiritual being. For example, building materials do not automatically react and then turn into the suitable shape of a residential house. The living spiritual being handles the matter suitably by his free will and thus constructs a residential house.

And so matter is only the ingredient, while spirit is the creator. The creator may remain unseen in the background, but that does not mean that there is no creator. Such a faulty conclusion will be made by a man with a poor fund of knowledge. One should not therefore be illusioned simply by the gigantic form of the material universes, but...
must learn to admit the existence of a gigantic brain behind all these material manifestations. The Supreme Being who has such a gigantic brain, quantitatively greater than ours, is the ultimate Creator, the all-attractive Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna. For one who does not have the necessary information about the Creator, there is definite information of Him in the Vedic literature, and especially in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

When a capsule is thrown into outer space, a child may not understand that it is sent aloft by some scientific brain, but an older man knows fully well that there is a brain behind the machine. Similarly, a less intelligent person may not have any information of the Creator and His eternal abode in the spiritual world, but actually there exists a spiritual sky more spacious with spiritual planets more numerous than in the material one. From the Bhagavad-gita we get information that the material planets are only one-fourth of the Creation—or a third the number of spiritual planets. Such information is extensively available in the *Bhagavatam* and other Vedic writings.

A Universal Socialism

If living energy could be generated in the physical laboratory by the interaction of chemical compositions, why then are creatures not being manufactured by the boastful material scientists? We should know definitely that the spiritual force is distinct from matter, and that it is not possible to produce such energy by any amount of material adjustment.

At present the Russian nation, though undoubtedly very much advanced in many departments of technological science, is of all nations most glaringly lacking knowledge of spiritual science. The Russians have yet to learn from the superior brain in order to make a perfect society of progressive humanity, and the practical breakdown of their so-called Communist system can be traced to this.

In the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* a socialist philosophy is most perfectly described which our Russian brothers have yet to learn. The Bhagavatam directs that whatever wealth arises, either by agriculture, mining or otherwise, is supposed to be given by the ultimate Creator, and therefore every living being has a right to partake of such wealth. It is said there that a man can possess only as much wealth as will be sufficient to maintain his body, and if he desires more than that, then he is liable to be punished. It is further said there that all living beings who live with man, like cats, dogs, camels, cows, mice, monkeys or even serpents—all should be treated as one’s own children.

I believe that no nation on the globe can conceive of socialism so perfectly as it is thus described in the *Srimad-
Bhagavatam: Living beings other than humans can be treated as brothers and children only when one has a full conception of the Creator and of the actual constitution of the living being.

The principle of deathlessness is possible in the spiritual world. A desire for eternal life or deathlessness is in fact the sign of one's dormant spiritual life and the aim of human civilization should be to develop the fullness of spiritual awareness. It is possible for every human being to transfer himself to that spiritual realm by the process of bhakti yoga, as described above. This is a great science and India has produced many scientific writings for such a perfection of life.

Bhakti yoga is the eternal religion of man. At a time when material science is preponderant over all subjects, including the tenets of religion, it will be a greatly enlivening event if we can see the principles of this eternal religion from the point of view of the modern scientist. Even Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the famous philosopher and former President of India, admitted at a world religion conference held some time ago in Delhi that religion will not be acceptable in modern civilization if it is not offered from the scientific point of view. And in reply to all these different propositions the writer is very glad to put forward in this article for the lovers of Truth the firm idea that bhakti yoga is the eternal religion of the world, and is meant for all living beings.

Sripad Ramanujacharya has explained the word Sanatan, eternal, as that which has neither any beginning nor any end. And when we speak of sanatana dharma, eternal religion, we may take it on the authority of Sripad Ramanujacharya that this has no beginning and no end. The thing which has no beginning and no end cannot be sectarian or limited by any boundary. In the light of modern science it will be possible for us to see sanatana dharma as the business of all the people of the world—of all living entities of the universe. Noneternal religious faith may have some beginning in the annals of human history, but there cannot be any history of sanatana dharma because it continues always within the history of the living entities.

When a man professes to belong to a particular type of faith with reference to the particular time and circumstances of his birth, thus claiming to be a Hindu, Moslem, Christian, Buddhist or member of any other sect, such designations are not sanatana dharma. A Hindu may change his faith to become a Moslem or a Moslem may change his faith to become a Hindu or a Christian, etc. But in all circumstances such a change of religious faith does not allow one to change his eternal engagement—rendering service to others. A Hindu or a Moslem or a Christian, in all circumstances, is the servant of someone and thus, while to profess a particular type of faith is not to be considered...
**sanatana dharma**, the constant companion of the living being—the rendering of service—is itself **sanatana dharma**, the true eternal religion.

The Fountainhead of Existence

In the *Bhagavad-gita* there are several references in this matter of The Fountainhead of Existence **sanatana dharma**, the constant companion of the living being—the rendering of service—is itself **sanatana dharma**.

In *The Fountainhead of Existence* on earth. The eternal religion will teach man about the real aim of life, and all will benefit by such propagation of verge of ruin because, as soon as there is a declaration of war, no one knows what will happen to the human race helped foolish mankind to discover lethal weapons in the form of nuclear bombs. Humanity is practically on the verge of ruin because, as soon as there is a declaration of war, no one knows what will happen to the human race.

People should be given the chance to take advantage of this opportunity, and, because the *Bhagavad-gita* was spoken in the land of Bharatavarsha, every Indian has the responsibility to broadcast the message of real **sanatana dharma**, the Kingdom of God, to take part in the eternal enjoyment prevailing there.

Those who are followers of the eternal religion of devotional service to God may henceforward take up the principles of **sanatana dharma** in the spirit of the *Bhagavad-gita*. There is no bar against anyone taking up these eternal principles, and even those who are less enlightened can go back to Godhead in this way. Such is the verdict of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, as well as of the Supreme Lord Himself in the *Gita*. People should be given the chance to take advantage of this opportunity, and, because the *Bhagavad-gita* was spoken in the land of Bharatavarsha, every Indian has the responsibility to broadcast the message of real **sanatana dharma** in the world. The misguided men of the world, especially at the present moment, are suffering greatly in the darkness of the material atmosphere, and the result is that the so-called advancement of learning has only helped foolish mankind to discover lethal weapons in the form of nuclear bombs. Humanity is practically on the verge of ruin because, as soon as there is a declaration of war, no one knows what will happen to the human race on earth. The eternal religion will teach man about the real aim of life, and all will benefit by such propagation of Krishna consciousness.

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

Krishna Voice, September 2018
Fifty centuries ago, on the expansive Battlefield of Kuruksetra in northern India, huge phalanxes of fully-armed troops were poised to begin a war: on one side, the powerful Kaurava brothers, determined to defend the throne they had usurped from their righteous cousins, the five Pandavas; on the other side, the Pandavas, determined to regain their inheritance.

Arjuna and the other Pandava brothers faced severe tribulations after the untimely demise of their father, Pandu. The envious Kauravas had burned their home, poisoned them, dishonoured their wife, and sentenced them to fourteen years of exile. Exhibiting tolerance and humility worthy of saints, the Pandavas finally requested only five villages to rule. Though the entire kingdom was legally theirs, to avert further disagreement they made this modest proposal. The Kauravas, however, flatly refused, declaring that the Pandavas “would not be given enough land to drive a needle into.” Thus war was inevitable.

The Pandavas and the Kauravas canvassed all the kings of the world, making allies for the great battle. They also approached Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Kauravas acquired Lord Krishna’s large army, while Arjuna chose the Lord Himself. Although Krishna refused to take up arms in the battle, He agreed to become Arjuna’s charioteer. The Lord’s supremacy is
not diminished by His taking this “menial” task. Rather, because Arjuna’s unalloyed devotion to Krishna had endeared Arjuna to Him, Krishna desired to become subservient to Arjuna in a reciprocation of love. Devotees relish thinking of Krishna, the Lord and creator of the universe, standing on the chariot with the horse’s reins in His hands, ready to obey the command of His devotee Arjuna.

At the start of the first day of the battle, both parties blew their conches, filling the sky with vibrations and filling the weak-hearted with terror. Then Arjuna, seated on his fine chariot, took up his bow and prepared to shoot his arrows at the Kauravas. Suddenly, unexpectedly, Arjuna became anxious. He told Krishna to draw his chariot between the two armies so he could see who had come to fight in alliance with the Kauravas. When he got a clear look, he was dumbfounded. There in the midst of the opposing army were his father-in-law, his father’s friends, his grandfather, his grandfather’s friends, his teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, friends, and well-wishers.

Just imagine yourself in Arjuna’s position. If a relative or friend mistreats you, you’re naturally hesitant to retaliate. Out of love, you tolerate and forgive such behaviour. But Arjuna was duty-bound to help conquer an army that included friends and relatives. It was too much for him;
out of affection for them, Arjuna became overwhelmed with grief. His limbs quivered, his mouth dried up, and his bow slipped from his hand. He was not a coward, but a great fighter, yet out of compassion he didn't want to kill his family, friends, and superiors.

Immediately he told Krishna he wanted to leave the battlefield. Only evil could come from killing his kinsmen, and he did not desire any subsequent victory, happiness, or kingdom. To fight such a ghastly war was sinful, and if so many noble men were slain, surely their wives and daughters would be left unprotected. Immorality would flourish, jeopardizing the venerable family heritage.

Besides possessing unrivalled prowess and military expertise, Arjuna was an exalted devotee, an intimate friend of Lord Krishna, the Supreme Person. Therefore he had godly qualities. His senses were controlled, he was detached from the false prestige associated with fame and followers, and he was self-hearted and always conscious of moral principles. Seated on the chariot between the huge armies, Arjuna decided it would be best to allow the Kauravas to kill him unharmed and unresisting. Otherwise he was prepared to give up his royal position, as well as his claim to the throne, and live by begging.

Even these drastic ideas, however, failed to relieve Arjuna’s pressing dilemma. Waves of turmoil arose in his mind because despite his resolve to become a conscientious objector, his entire life was dedicated to defending righteousness. In this battle the Pandavas’ cause was undoubtedly right. Moreover, Arjuna was a natural leader, gifted with heroism, power, and determination—all the qualities needed to defend righteousness. His heritage had served to further enhance these qualities, and he had learned never to give up the work born of his own nature.

Arjuna was torn between his dedication to sacred duty and his love for his relatives and friends. Utterly perplexed and incapacitated by conflicting feelings, Arjuna surrendered to Krishna, saying, “Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of weakness. In this condition I am asking You to tell me clearly what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me.”

But in the next breath he made a second decision—“I shall not fight”—and stopped speaking.

Lord Krishna smiled, not to mock Arjuna in his plight but as a father might smile upon hearing of his son’s bad dream. As the father clearly sees that his boy’s dream is simply an illusion and that its accompanying distress has no significance, so Lord Krishna saw that Arjuna was not in the real world but in a dreamlike world of misconceptions that had brought distress upon him. The Lord immediately began to shake Arjuna from his stupor by explaining the essence and purpose of life.

Krishna’s teachings on the battlefield that day constitute the Bhagavad-gita, the oldest and one of the most widely read scriptures in the world.

Lord Krishna did not mince words. He first told Arjuna that he was foolish because in the highest sense—the spiritual sense—no one was going to perish in the battle. In fact, no one perishes anywhere or at any time, because the soul, the minute spiritual particle that lends vitality to the otherwise dead body, never dies. The soul is immutable and immortal; the body, mutable and mortal.

The body is an aggregate of elements animated by the soul, as much as a puppet, animated by the hand of the puppeteer, works, sings, dances, laughs, and cries. When the puppeteer finally puts the puppet down, will any sane man lament? Similarly, when the soul finally leaves the body, no educated person laments.

Of course, this does not at all encourage unnecessary killing. The Vedas prohibit the wanton killing of anyone, even an animal. Killing is abominable and is punishable by the laws of both the state and God. But just as the state authorizes its police to use force, Krishna, the supreme authority, was encouraging Arjuna to fight.

Krishna presented another argument to Arjuna: Even if Arjuna didn’t believe in the existence of the soul, he still had no cause to lament. If life is born with the body and dies with it, if life is a chemical reaction (albeit the epitome of complexity), then why mourn when chemicals stop reacting? Arjuna, however, was a descendant of a civilization based on spiritual wisdom, and he certainly believed in the existence of the soul.

Krishna explained, “Arjuna, you are thinking you won’t be able to enjoy the victory, happiness, or kingdom you may gain from this fight; but those are never yours to enjoy. You have the right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Perform your duty and abandon all attachment to success or failure.” Arjuna was worried about the sinful reactions he would incur from the war, but Lord Krishna assured him, “If you fight for the sake of fighting, without considering happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory or defeat, you shall never incur sin.”

And to remain inactive, Krishna said, is impossible. “Everyone is forced to act according to his own nature. No one can refrain from doing something, not even for a moment.” To renounce his duties and capriciously take on another’s activities was also not viable: “It is better to engage in one’s own occupation, even though faultily, than to perform another’s duty perfectly.” Arjuna’s so-called renunciation of the war effort was a display of his attachment: since the result of the activity would be painful for him, he decided not to act. But renunciation would entail that he become unattached to the fruits of his work, work as he was obligated, give up the desire...
for sense gratification, and tolerate the unpleasant situations that would occur in the course of his duty.

Just as nonviolence and all other pious activity would not relieve Arjuna's misery or solve his problem, neither would his speculations about what to do and what not to do. Lord Krishna urged him to give up all such concoctions. "To learn the truth you must approach a spiritual master, inquire from him submissively, serve him, and receive transcendental knowledge from him. Then you will realize that all living beings are part of Me and that they are in Me and are Mine."

Because Arjuna is a spirit soul, completely different from his body, he should desire to benefit the soul only. How can he derive that benefit? He must perform his duty not for his self-centered satisfaction but for the satisfaction of Krishna, the Supreme Person. A person fully situated in transcendental knowledge and unattached to the results of his endeavour is not working materially but spiritually. "Therefore, O Arjuna," Krishna says, "surrendering all your works unto Me, with mind intent on Me, without desire for gain, and free from egoism and lethargy, fight."

For Arjuna to fight for his self-aggrandizement was sinful; to be inactive or to renounce his duty was both sinful and impractical; but to fight because Krishna wanted it—that was the path of liberation and happiness. But why did Krishna want a fight? Why did God Himself advocate force? Because to maintain society, force is sometimes necessary. Lord Krishna promises that whenever and wherever religion declines and irreligion predominates, He will protect the pious, annihilate the miscreants, and reestablish religious principles. The Lord had gathered all the miscreants at Kurukshetra; He would rid the world of the them in this one massive battle. Although Arjuna was ready to forgive the offenses perpetrated against him by his cousins, Krishna would not tolerate such injustices to His devotees. Therefore He insisted, "Fight." And at the end of Bhagavad-gita Arjuna agreed.

Even though Arjuna’s opponents were offenders, when they died at Kurukshetra they still attained their original forms in the spiritual world. They died seeing and thinking of the beautiful Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, as He drove the chariot of His friend, guided him in battle, and protected him from danger. Just as one who lives thinking of Krishna has perfected his life, so one who dies thinking of Krishna has also perfected his life. Both Arjuna—who survived the battle and the Kauravas—who didn’t—became perfect. They both linked up to Lord Krishna, the all-good Supreme Person, who always acts for everyone's benefit.
The following conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and some of his disciples took place in March 1974 on an early-morning walk in Perth, Australia.

Devotee: [Taking the part of a materialistic scientist] Why do you call Krishna consciousness a science? It seems like it's only a belief.

Srila Prabhupada: Your so-called science is also belief. If you call your way science, then our way is also science.

Devotee: But with our science we can prove our beliefs.

Srila Prabhupada: Then prove that chemicals make life. Your belief is that life is made from chemicals. So prove it; then it is science. But you cannot prove it; therefore it remains a belief.

Devotee: Well, you believe in the soul, but you can’t prove that it exists. Since we cannot see the soul, we have to conclude that life comes from matter.

Srila Prabhupada: You cannot see the soul with your gross...
senses, but it can be perceived. Consciousness can be perceived, and consciousness is the symptom of the soul. But if, as you say, life comes from matter, then you must demonstrate it by supplying the missing chemicals to make a dead body live again. This is my challenge.

**Devotee:** We will require some time to find the right chemicals.

**Srila Prabhupada:** That is nonsense. Your belief is that life comes from chemicals, but you cannot prove it. Therefore prove yourself to be a rascal.

**Devotee:** But you accept the *Bhagavad-gita* on faith. How is that scientific? It’s only your belief, isn’t that correct?

**Srila Prabhupada:** Why isn’t the *Bhagavad-gita* scientific? The *Bhagavad-gita* says, *annad bhavantir bhutanir parjanayad anna-sambhavah:* "All living entities subsist by eating food grains, and grains are produced from rain." Is that belief?

**Devotee:** That must be true.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Similarly, everything in the *Bhagavad-gita* is true. If you think carefully about what Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gita*, you will find that it is all true. For example, Krishna says that in society there must be an intelligent class of men, the *brahmanas*, who know the soul and God. They are civilized men. But where is such a class of men in today’s society?

**Devotee:** Throughout the world there are many priests, ministers, and rabbis.

**Srila Prabhupada:** But what do they actually know about God? They speculate about God as much as the scientists speculate about material nature. Just try to see this one point clearly: You are not independent; therefore, there must be some authority over you. And ultimately you have to accept that a supreme authority exists. So if you claim to have knowledge of the supreme truth but you do not know the supreme authority, what is the value of your knowledge?

Suppose a man does not know about the government of his country. What kind of man is he? He is simply a third-class man, a rascal. A civilized man knows about his country’s government. Similarly, there is a government of the whole universe, but if you do not know it you are a third-class, uncivilized man. That is why Krishna teaches in the *Bhagavad-gita* that there must be an intelligent class of men who know God and who understand the whole universal management—how it is running under the order of God. Krishna devotees know these things. Therefore they are the real *brahmanas* and the real scientists.

**Devotee:** But the *Bhagavad-gita* is five thousand years old, so it doesn’t pertain to our modern world.

**Srila Prabhupada:** The *Bhagavad-gita* is not five thousand years old; it has always existed. Have you read the *Bhagavad-gita*?

**Devotee:** Yes, several times.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Then where do you find in the *Bhagavad-gita* that it is five thousand years old? Krishna says, *imam vivasvate yogam proktavan aham avyayam:* "I spoke this imperishable science of *Bhagavad-gita* to Vivasvan more than 120 million years ago." You do not know this? What kind of reader of the *Bhagavad-gita* are you? The *Bhagavad-gita* is avyayam, eternal. So how can you say it is five thousand years old?

**[Pointing to the rising sun with his cane]** Here we see the sun just rising. But it is always there, in space. The *Bhagavad-gita* is like that: it is eternal truth. When the sun rises we don’t say, "Oh, the sun is just now coming into existence." It is always there, but we can’t see it until it rises. Men used to think that at night the sun died and in the morning a new sun was created. They also used to believe the earth was flat. This is your scientific knowledge: every day a new opinion.

**Devotee:** This means that we are discovering the truth.

**Srila Prabhupada:** No. It means you do not know what the truth is. You are only speculating. Now you accept something as true, but after a few days you say it is not true. And you call this science!

**Devotee:** Yes, you’re right. Many of the scientific textbooks that were written just a few years ago are outdated now.

**Srila Prabhupada:** And the scientific books you are now using will be useless in a few years. This is your science.

**Devotee:** But at least what we know now is more true than what we knew before, and if we keep trying we will know more.

**Srila Prabhupada:** This means you are always in ignorance. But the *Bhagavad-gita* is not like that. Krishna says to Arjuna, "I first instructed this science 120 million years ago, and today I am teaching you the same thing." That is scientific knowledge: the truth is always the same. But you scientists are always changing—"discovering the truth," you call it. That means you do not know what the truth is.

**Devotee:** [As himself] The problem is, everyone is a cheat. Everyone is speculating and presenting his own knowledge as the truth.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Yes. Therefore we accept Krishna, who does not cheat. And since I am presenting only what Krishna has said, I am also not a cheat. That is the difference between the scientists and us.
The author of this article—who is the spiritual master of the founder-acharya of the International Society for Krishna consciousness—may easily be accepted as the greatest scholar and devotee of the recent age. His numerous scriptural translations and commentaries in Sanskrit, Bengali and English and his establishment of 64 centers of Krishna consciousness throughout India attest to his identity as a powerful devotional force in spreading the personal philosophy of Krishna consciousness, the science of love of God. It is he who has caused a flood of God consciousness in the modern world through His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, his emissary to the West. His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktisiddhanta listed these transcendental qualities of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna in an essay which is too lengthy to be presented here in its entirety. However, this authoritative listing, compiled by His Divine Grace in 1932, shines with its own value. All the references are to chapter and verse of the Tenth Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, a scripture which describes the transcendental pastimes of Lord Sri Krishna.

Krishna is possessed of an unlimited intellect (SB 10.84.22).
Krishna is inaccessible to sensuous knowledge (SB 10.16.46).
Krishna is Lord of the infinity of worlds (SB 10.69.17).
Krishna wields the power of creating the unlimited (SB 10.87.28).
Krishna carries the impress of limitless power (SB 10.87.14).
Krishna is possessed of inconceivable potency (SB 10.10.29).
Krishna is unborn (SB 10.59.28, 74.21).
Krishna solves all heterogeneous views (SB 10.74.24).
Krishna is vanquished by exclusive devotion (SB 10.14.3).
Krishna is Inner Guide (SB 10.1.17).
Krishna is the Withholder of the energy of the wicked (SB 10.60.19).
Krishna is the Giver of salvation to jivas (living entities) that are free from vanity (SB 10.86.48).
Krishna ordains the worldly course of conceited jivas (SB 10.86.48).
Krishna is the Primal God (deva) (SB 10.40.1).

Krishna is the Primal Person (purusa) (SB 10.63.38).
Krishna is an overwhelming flood of bliss (SB 10.83.4).
Krishna possesses fulfilled desire (SB 10.47.46).
Krishna is self-delighted (SB 10.60.20).
Krishna is the opponent of the sensuous (SB 10.60.35).
Krishna is sung by the best of hymns (SB 10.86.23).
Krishna is the dispeller of the night of pseudo-religion (SB 10.14.40).
Krishna is devoid of increase and decrease (SB 10.48.26).
Krishna is the efficient and material cause (SB 10.10.29).
Krishna is the only Truth (SB 10.14.23).
Krishna is the Awarder of the fruit of work (SB 10.49.29).
Krishna is not subject to the consequences of work (SB 10.84.17).
Krishna is the Seer of cause and effect (SB 10.38.12).
Krishna is the Person who is time (SB 10.1.7).
Krishna is Time’s Own Self (SB 10.70.26).
Krishna is even the Time of time (SB 10.56.27).
Krishna is Present in the heart of every animate entity, like fire inside wood (SB 10.46.36).
Krishna is Grateful (SB 10.48.26).
Krishna is the Augmenter (like the Full Moon) of the ocean of earth, gods, twice-born and animals (SB 10.14.40).
Krishna is the Tormentor of cannibalistic persons (SB 10.14.40).
Krishna is the Destroyer of the pride of the arrogant (SB 10.60.19).
Krishna is the Root-Cause of the origin, etc., of the world (SB 10.14.23).
Krishna is the Cause of the world (SB 10.40.1).
Krishna is the Creator of the world (SB 10.70.38).
Krishna, for the good of the world, appears as if possessed of a body like that of mundane entities (SB 10.14.55).
Krishna is the guru (centre of gravity) of the world (SB 10.80.44).
Krishna is the Refuge (ashraya) of jivas (individual souls) who are afraid of birth and death (SB 10.49.23).
Krishna is devoid of birth (SB 10.46.36).
Krishna is equally the Internal Guide, Cause and Director of jivas (SB 10.87.30).
Krishna is the Destroyer of the miseries of persons who employ themselves in meditating upon Him (SB 10.58.10).

Krishna is of the fourth dimension and is self-manifest (SB 10.66.38).

Krishna is Worthy of being gifted (SB 10.74.24).

Krishna is the Punisher of the wicked (SB 10.69.17).

Krishna is the God of gods (SB 10.80.44).

Krishna is rarely cognisable by the gods (SB 10.48.27).

Krishna is unconcerned about body, house, etc. (SB 10.60.20).

Krishna is the Supreme Ruler of the greatest gods (SB 10.73.8).

Krishna is the Exponent of Religion (SB 10.69.40).

Krishna is the Eternal Son of Nanda (SB 10.14.1).

Krishna is Visible to man with great difficulty (SB 10.71.23).

Krishna's Presence mocks the world of man (SB 10.70.40).

Krishna is the Object of palatable drink of the human eye (SB 10.71.33).

Krishna is the Internal Guide of all (SB 10.31.4).

Krishna is Worthy of the worship of all the worlds (SB 10.69.15).

Krishna accommodates all the worlds (SB 10.59.30).

Krishna is the Manifestor of all light (SB 10.63.34).

Krishna is unstinted in giving Himself away to one who collects Him (SB 10.80.11).

Krishna is the efficient Cause (SB 10.87.50).

Krishna, although devoid of all mundane quality, assumes mundane qualities by His Inconceivable Power for the purposes of creation, etc. (SB 10.46.40).

Krishna is not subject to change (SB 10.64.29).

Krishna is not capable of discrimination, by reason of being void of any extraneous covering (SB 10.87.29).

Krishna is the Giver of Himself to those who covet nothing (SB 10.86.33).

Krishna loves those who covet nothing (SB 10.60.14).

Krishna does not work (SB 10.60.20).

Krishna is the Human, Hidden, Primal Person (purusa) (SB 10.44.13).

Krishna is Present in the hearts of jivas like the five elements (SB 10.82.45).

Krishna is the Supreme Sorcerer (SB 10.70.37).

Krishna is Supreme Godhead and the Internal Guide of all (SB 10.56.27).

Krishna is the Crest-jewel of those whose praises are sung by the sacred lore (SB 10.71.30).

Krishna is the Primal Person and is Ever-existing (SB 10.14.23).

Krishna is the Highest among the Objects of worship (SB 10.74.19).
Krishna is the Healer of the miseries of the submissive (SB 10.73.16).
Krishna is the Destroyer of the sins of the submissive (SB 10.31.7).
Krishna is the Destroyer of the distress of the submissive (SB 10.73.8).
Krishna is the Residue after the Cataclysm (SB 10.87.15).
Krishna is devoid of touch with mundane senses (SB 10.87.28).
Krishna is the Soul and Friend of all animate entities (SB 10.29.32).
Krishna is devoid of distinction appertaining to an alien (SB 10.63.38).
Krishna is inconceivable by His Nature (SB 10.70.38).
Krishna is the Master of the Universe (SB 10.70.37).
Krishna is the Nourisher of the Universe (SB 10.85.5).
Krishna is the Sun that cheers the lotus of the kindred of the Vrishnis [the members of the family in which He appeared] (SB 10.14.40).
Krishna is the God worshiped by the brahmanas (SB 10.69.15).
Krishna is the Foremost of the brahmanas (SB 10.84.20).
Krishna is the Originator of Brahma (SB 10.40.1).
Krishna is the Worshiped of Brahma (SB 10.31.13).
Krishna loves His devotees (SB 10.48.26).
Krishna wears Forms in accordance with the wishes of His devotee (SB 10.59.25).
Krishna is eternally Present in Mathura (SB 10.1.28).
Krishna is devoid of the sense of kinship and regards all in the same way (SB 10.46.37).
Krishna is beyond all Measuring Potency (maya) (SB 10.63.26).
Krishna is subdued by the love of Yudhisthira [His elder cousin] (SB 10.72.10).
Krishna is concealed by the screen of maya from the sight of the people (SB 10.85.19).
Krishna does not follow the ways of the world (SB 10.60.38).
Krishna is the Destroyer of the fear of the mundane sojourn of the submissive (SB 10.85.19).
Krishna is the Womb of the Scriptures (SB 10.16.44, 80.45, 84.20).
Krishna is sri guru's [the spiritual master's] Own Self (SB 10.80.33).
Krishna is devoid of hankering for wife, offspring, etc. (SB 10.60.20).
Krishna is the Ordainer of the worldly sojourn and of the summum bonum (SB 10.1.7).
Krishna is the Cause of all entities (SB 10.85.4).
Krishna is the Friend of the good (SB 10.69.17).
Krishna is devoid of discrimination as to kinship (SB 10.63.38, 44).

Krishna is Existence (SB 10.56.27).
Krishna possesses true desire (SB 10.80.44).
Krishna is the True Entity (SB 10.87.17).
Krishna is True of speech (SB 10.48.26).
Krishna sees with an equal eye (SB 10.16.33).
Krishna is True of resolve (SB 10.37.12).
Krishna is the Cause of all causes (SB 10.14.56-57, 63.38, 87.16).
Krishna is the Originator of all (SB 10.59.28).
Krishna is the Soul's own self of all jivas (individual souls) (SB 10.14.55).
Krishna is Omniscent (SB 10.16.48).
Krishna is All-seeing (SB 10.38.18).
Krishna is the embodiment of all gods (SB 10.74.19, 86.54).
Krishna is the Seer of all (SB 10.16.48).
Krishna is the Lord of all (SB 10.37.23).
Krishna is the Stay (ashraya) of all entities (SB 10.82.46).
Krishna is All-pervasive and Eternal (SB 10.9.13).
Krishna is the Soul of all elements (SB 10.86.31).
Krishna is the Knower of the minds of all elements (SB 10.81.1).
Krishna is the soul's self of all elements (SB 10.74.24).
Krishna is the Inner Soul of all elements (SB 10.37.11).
Krishna is the Cause of the origin of all elements (SB 10.64.29).
Krishna is the Limit of all good (SB 10.84.21).
Krishna is Omnipotent (SB 10.37.12).
Krishna is the Lord of Laksmi, the Presiding Deity of all riches (SB 10.47.46).
Krishna is the Internal Guide of all (SB 10.63.38, 72.6).
Krishna is the Stay (ashraya) of all entities (SB 10.40.15).
Krishna is Witness and Seer of Self (SB 10.86.31).
Krishna is the Refuge of the good (SB 10.80.9).
Krishna is most difficult to serve (SB 10.88.11).
Krishna is the Friend of one's heart (SB 10.48.26).
Krishna is the Withholder, Creator and Preserver (SB 10.63.44).
Krishna is the Master of the functions of creation, etc. (SB 10.16.49, 37.12).
Krishna is devoid of distinction between kin and alien (SB 10.72.6).
Krishna dwells in the Universe created by Himself (SB 10.48.19).
Krishna is satisfied by the taste of His Self-Delight (SB 10.72.6).
Krishna is the Destroyer of the worldly sojourn of His devotees (SB 10.60.43).
Krishna is the Wearer of a body according to His Wish (SB 10.1.7).
When we view the world around us through the eyes of the scriptures, our understanding of it changes. The scriptures tell us that because nothing is permanent in this material world, that which appears desirable-like wealth, fame, strength, or beauty is ultimately not, because it is not retainable. Whatever our material assets, they will be wrested from us in time. Therefore we should shift our focus from the transient to the permanent, from matter to spirit. To illustrate this point and impress it upon us, the Fifth Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, chapters thirteen and fourteen, describe "The Material World as the Great Forest of Enjoyment," summarized as follows:

Vanik, a poor merchant, was determined to make money. He bravely ventured into a dense forest intending to collect wood to sell in the city at a good profit. But that forest was quite mysterious. Through its cascades of creepers Vanik glimpsed a mirage: his dear wife and children were healthy, happy, peaceful; they were well-educated, well-behaved, and touchingly affectionate to him. As Vanik left his home to explore the forest, so the soul, when incarcerated within the body, identifies with it and with the mind. Forgetful of his actual identity, the soul seeks happiness in material circumstances.

This is the beginning of a scriptural analogy that explains some of the perplexities of material life. In Sanskrit vanik means "merchant" and represents every spiritual soul in the material world. The soul is transcendental to material life and enjoys transcendental pleasures but, when incarcerated within the body, identifies with it and with the mind. Forgetful of his actual identity, the soul is spiritual, material sense gratification leaves him vacant. But without knowing why he feels vacant, the soul is spiritual, material sense gratification leaves him to enjoy illicit sex. The rats and flies are envious enemies who disturb his life unnecessarily. The harsh sounds are the tax collectors, who demand large tax payments and, when they come for collecting taxes, are the cannibals that force him to run for his life. The python is sleep that binds him in forgetfulness.

When Vanik had recovered from the python's attack, he was hungry, thirsty, and still tired, but the trees' fruits were poisonous, the rivers were dry, and a forest fire was quickly approaching. Despite all this, his attention was diverted by some playful monkeys—until a lion was quickly approaching. Despite all this, his attention was diverted by some playful monkeys—until a lion attacked him, and again he had to run for his life. VICIOUS animals, like buzzards, herons, vultures, and crows, feigned friendliness but were insincere and too insignificant to help anyway. Finally Vanik, thoroughly morose at not having achieved his life's goal fell into a mountain cave and died.

Satisfying hunger with poisonous fruits is like trying to become happy by enjoying sense gratification. Because the soul is spiritual, material sense gratification leaves him vacant. But without knowing why he feels vacant, he hungrily searches for sensual pleasures and is poisoned by lust and greed. As one who is thirsty is frustrated by a dry river, so he who wants spiritual life is frustrated when he approaches so-called swamis, priests, and evangelists who concoct their own methods of salvation. Turning to such charlatans and the bogus organizations they run is like

**Pursuing Life's Pleasures**

An allegory from the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* sheds some light on our modern struggle for enjoyment.

by Visakha-devi dasi

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Satisfying hunger with poisonous fruits is like trying to become happy by enjoying sense gratification. Because the soul is spiritual, material sense gratification leaves him vacant. But without knowing why he feels vacant, he hungrily searches for sensual pleasures and is poisoned by lust and greed. As one who is thirsty is frustrated by a dry river, so he who wants spiritual life is frustrated when he approaches so-called swamis, priests, and evangelists who concoct their own methods of salvation. Turning to such charlatans and the bogus organizations they run is like
jumping into a dry river—it results in increased suffering. Sometimes, however, one will find a genuine spiritualist and will learn to worship the Supreme Lord. But if he is unable to stick to spiritual principles, he falls into the company of low-class men who are compared to monkeys. Monkeys are always frivolous and infatuated with sex. Such monkeylike people forget that their short lives will soon be over and that they will have nothing to show for it.

A lion's attack means death is coming, and seeking protection among carnivorous birds is like seeking shelter in man-made gods. Such "gods" are too insignificant to save anyone, including themselves, from life's unhappiness, from fear of death (the mountain cave), and from death itself.

By seeing through scriptural eyes, one can understand that lasting happiness is not to be found in the material world. Happiness is innate within us. But because we lack knowledge of our spiritual nature, we seek happiness in material activities, without considering the suffering that accompanies our endeavours. Instead of venturing farther into the material forest as Vanik did, let us return back from whence we came. Let us return home to the kingdom of God.
Three generations of women were waiting at the bus stop. The eldest woman, wearing a loose floral print over her ample form, appeared to be somewhere in her fifties. She was leaning back against the bench, listening wearily to her daughter’s spirited attacks on the welfare office. The middle woman (the daughter) seemed the most animated of the group, fanning herself with a newspaper and expressing herself with vigour. The youngest, a twelve-year old girl, gazed absently at the passers-by, singing under her breath and holding a large shopping bag between her bony knees. All three faces bore the family markings: wide brown eyes, prominent cheekbones, receding jaw. Yet a certain difference caught my eye. One face was fresh and pleasing, one was full with flesh and assurance, and the third was gaunt and weathered. I wondered if they could see the pattern of destiny as it was so profoundly exposed under the hot summer sun.

Every physical body ages. It’s a fact of life. The rich, the beautiful, the intellectual-everyone witnesses the deterioration of his or her body due to age. And we are puzzled: Why does time ravage our bodies, while within we are still full of youthful desire?

Instinctively we loathe this gradual deterioration of our physical and mental faculties. Every grey hair, every wrinkle, suddenly becomes a threat. Soon we will lose our energy, our eyesight, our memories, our physical beauty. And we feel that universal dread that underlies all human existence: we must die.

We long for permanence. Although aging is foretold by our very birth, we nevertheless fight to stave off its insidious encroach. Faced with mounting evidence that we will grow old and die, we may resort to various psychological schemes for relief. Some people enter their senior years with wild abandon, acting more like teenagers than adults. They smear colour into pallid cheeks and force weakening bodies to endure strenuous exercises. Thinking young and struggling to play hard, many older people desperately cling to a youth that will never return. Unfortunately, this only increases their attachment to that which they are destined to lose. Thinking young may be better than thinking old, but it can’t make us young. And it certainly can’t save us from death. Consequently, our most ardent desires for youth and immortality are frustrated. What we need is reassurance that indications of advancing age do not signal the end of all hopes for happiness.

This reassurance can be found by studying the Vedic scriptures under the guidance of a spiritual master. This will help us to understand that the physical body has no relation to the eternal soul (the self) within. The hapless soul is illusioned, thinking himself to be the physical body. And this mistaken identity is the source of his greatest fear and pain. He sees his body deteriorating, yet he has no knowledge of his destiny after death. Although old age and death are both foreign elements for the pure spirit soul, his attachment to the physical body and identification with it force him to think that he is aging unto death. This is maya, or illusion.

Independent of this illusion of bodily identification, the eternal soul possesses a consciousness rich with unlimited fulfillment and happiness, free from the annoyances of old age and death. The real self, the pure spiritual entity, is eternally linked with the Supreme Lord, the source of all pleasure. When this consciousness is awakened, fear of death and old age are banished. This point is explained by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada:

"Apparently a devotee may grow old, but he is not subjected to the symptoms of defeat experienced by a common man in old age. Consequently, old age does not make a devotee fearful of death, as a common man is fearful of death. A devotee knows that after death he is going back home, back to Godhead; therefore he has no fear of death. Thus instead of depressing a devotee, advanced age helps him become fearless and thus happy." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 4.27.24, purport)
Akshaya Patra News

TTP Technologies Pvt. Ltd. donated a food distribution vehicle to Akshaya Patra Foundation.
Sri Hemanth, Director – Marketing, received plaque of appreciation from Sri Sridham Krishna Dasa, Director, Resource Mobilisation, The Akshaya Patra Foundation.

LIC of India- Golden Jubilee Foundation donated a food distribution vehicle to Akshaya Patra Foundation.
Sri T C Susael Kumar, Zonal Manager, South Central Zone, LIC handed over the keys of the vehicle to Sri Acharya Ratna Dasa, General Manager, The Akshaya Patra Foundation.

The Bangalore City Co-Operative Bank Ltd. donated a food distribution vehicle to The Akshaya Patra Foundation.

Mysore Intercontinental Hotels Pvt Ltd donated a food distribution vehicle to Akshaya Patra Foundation.
Sri Anand B Patil on behalf of Mysore Intercontinental Hotels Pvt Ltd received the plaque of appreciation.
Sri Balarama Jayanti

Abhisheka

Special alankara
Seva Opportunities

Offer the following sevas on the very auspicious day of Radhashtami and receive the blessings of Srimati Radharani.

**Prasada Seva**
Contribute towards the distribution of delicious khichadi prasadam in donas to all temple visitors on this auspicious day.

**Vishesha Alankara Seva**
Contribute towards dressing and decorating Srimati Radharani with fine garments, precious jewelleries and garlands of fragrant flowers.

**Gift a Bouquet to Radharani**
Offer an attractive bouquet of colourful flowers to Srimati Radharani on Her appearance day.

**Chappan Bhog Seva**
Make an offering of delicious and specially cooked 56 food items to Srimati Radharani on the day of Radhashtami.

**Pushpalankara Seva**
Contribute towards decorating the main altar and the temple hall with garlands of varieties of colourful flowers.

For more details visit: www.iskconbangalore.org/radhashtami
Jagannatha Ratha Yatra and abhisheka at Vaikuntha Hill

ISKCON, Vaikuntha Hill, Bangalore celebrated its annual Jagannatha Ratha Yatra on July 14, 2018. After the Ratha Yatra, an elaborate abhisheka was performed to Their Lordships Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra. The festival witnessed hundreds of devotees enthusiastically pulling the ratha and participating in the abhisheka ceremony.

Watch a video of the celebrations: https://goo.gl/oRw3Y2

Akshaya Patra conducts Bhumi Puja for its kitchen at Gadarpur

The Akshaya Patra Foundation in association with the Government of Uttarakhand and M/s Concentrix, conducted the Bhumi Puja on August 2, 2018, to build its second centralized kitchen at Gadarpur in the state of Uttarakhand. Once operational, this kitchen will serve mid-day meals to over 25,000 schoolchildren. Sri Arvind Pandey, Hon’ble Education Minister, Uttarakhand was the Chief Guest for the ground breaking ceremony.

For more details, visit: https://goo.gl/6st8yh

Milk Parlour and other services launched at Hingonia Gaushala

Hingonia Gaushala in Jaipur, run by Sri Krishna Balrama Seva Trust, is the largest gaushala in the state of Rajasthan, sheltering about 22,000 cows. The Trust launched a Milk Parlour, Bulk Milk Cooler, Automated Milk Packing Unit and a Bio Gas Plant at the gaushala on July 11, 2018. Mr. Ashok Lahoty, Mayor, Jaipur City, was the Chief Guest at the launch ceremony.

Watch a video of the ceremony: https://goo.gl/VcmCtQ
Bhumi Puja at Mahabubnagar
The Hare Krishna Movement Charitable Foundation conducted a bhumi puja and homa ceremony on July 12 for its community kitchen to be built at Mahabubnagar in Telangana.
https://goo.gl/5G6GPA

Gopala Bhatta Gosvami
Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami was one of the Six Gosvamis of Vrndavana, the direct disciples of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He installed the Radharamana Deity in Vrndavana.
https://goo.gl/JU6368

How Work Can Be Worship
A karmi works for his personal sense gratification, and a bhakta works for Krishna’s sense gratification. Bhakti and karma look similar, but the quality is different.
https://goo.gl/raVnR6

Srivigraha Nitya Seva
An opportunity for you to contribute towards alankara, daily worship and various other sevas which are regularly performed to the Deities at our temple.
To donate, please visit: www.iskconbangalore.org/srivigrhasevas

Reviews from
tripadvisor

Very beautiful and well managed temple: One of the best places to visit in Bangalore. Very calm, peaceful and clean place and very well planned and managed. It is one of the largest ISKCON temples in the world. Special bhajans are held in the evening every Sunday with free entry, also they have a film show for children which costs 75. Complete staff is very respectful and prasad with other food and snacks are quite tasty and good... anurag v

A very calm place to attain Spirituality: It is an amazing place where you can attain spirituality. You can just sit there in the main temple forever listening to the bhajans. Do not miss the Govinda swami temple on the way before reaching the main temple. They have lots of books like the Bhagavad Gita which are good. LeisureTraveller B

A Vegetarian's Heaven: It’s their vegetarian lunch & dinner buffet in their restaurant that is the USP of this place. During particular Hindu festivals, the menu caters to the cuisine theme wrt that Hindu festival. pankaj537

https://goo.gl/5G6GPA
On the auspicious occasion of Garuda Panchami tithi, pujas were performed at ISKCON Mysore for the commencement of the construction of ‘Nava Brindavan Dham’ temple project on Wed, 15th August 2018. His Grace Madhu Pandit Dasa, President of ISKCON Bangalore and Chairman of The Akshaya Patra Foundation graced the ceremony along with His Grace Jai Chaitanya Dasa, President of ISKCON Mysore and His Grace Stoka Krishna Dasa, President of Hare Krishna Movement, Chennai.

Speaking on the occasion, His Grace Madhu Pandit Dasa said, “The Founder-Acharya of ISKCON Movement, Srila Prabhupada, wanted huge monumental structures to be built so that these will act as a hub to educate the people in general on the art of practicing God consciousness.” Inspiring the gathering, he further said, “By just participating in building a temple in whatever best way possible, one will derive immense spiritual benefit and will also receive special blessings from Lord Sri Krishna.”

In the project key note address, President of ISKCON Mysore, His Grace Jai Chaitanya Dasa said, “Temples built by ISKCON are not like any other temple which gives importance only to the daily worship of the Deities, but these temples are centres for teaching a spiritual way of living, following the eternal teachings of Gita, Bhagavata and other Vedic conclusions”. He also said, “The ‘Nava Brindavan Dham’, ISKCON Mysore Cultural centre will showcase Hoysala tradition architecture, built based on Green Building concepts with zero discharge of wastage.”

Participating in the ceremony, Ex-MLC Go. Madhusudhan, said, “Swami Prabhupada has truly contributed to the wholesome upliftment of mankind by establishing ISKCON temples all over the world and has created a revolution in history by changing the hearts of many westerners to accept and follow the true dharma, as mentioned in the teachings of Bhagavad-gita.”

Many dignitaries, well-wishers and congregation devotees participated in the ceremony.