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

To know more about Srila Prabhupada visit www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada
The Matchless Gift
Liberation in Krishna Consciousness

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

If we simply worship the original person (adi-purusa) we need not fear being misled by anyone. Sridhara Svami, the original commentator on Srimad-Bhagavatam, explains that one can reach the perfection of life simply by devotional service (kevalaya bhaktya); one need not be dependent on any other process. Sukadeva Gosvami, the original speaker of the Bhagavatam, says that one can put an end to material life by one stroke (kevalaya). There is no need to first undergo severe penance and austerity, practice celibacy, control the mind and the senses, give charity, perform great sacrifices and become very truthful and clean. Simply by one stroke-by accepting Krishna consciousness-one immediately rises to the highest position. By just taking to Krishna consciousness, one develops all transcendental qualifications. The goldsmith uses a small hammer and taps the gold many times, but the blacksmith uses a large hammer, and with one stroke his job is finished. This is the blacksmith's method; we take the big hammer of bhakti-yoga and finish all material life. There is no need to undergo the many lesser disciplines, nor to follow any other process. In actuality, there is no possibility of even following the other Vedic processes to perfection. For instance, the hatha-yoga process would say: “You have to become strictly celibate and sit in the forest with your body at a right angle to the ground, pressing your nose with your finger for six months.” Who could follow such an instruction? Since such a method is not practical in this present age, the goldsmith's method has to be discarded. The solution is to take the blacksmith's hammer of Krishna consciousness and finish off all sinful reactions immediately.

By devotional service one has to become vasudeva-parayana, a devotee of Lord Vasudeva, or Lord Krishna. In other words, we have to learn how to become lovers of Vasudeva. If the world takes up this Krishna consciousness, the planet is certain to be peaceful. Now the earth is quickly becoming a hellish planet, and if this Krishna consciousness is not taken up, this hellish condition will progress despite all advances in education and economic development. Therefore those who are thoughtful should take this movement very seriously and try to understand its value. It is not something manufactured by one man or a group of disciples. It is authoritative and age-old, based on the Vedic literatures that date back thousands of years.

Niharam iva bhaskarah. Bhaskara refers to the sun. The sun immediately dissipates mist or fog as well as darkness. We should therefore try to make the sun of Krishna rise within our hearts. In the Chaitanya-charitamrita also it is stated that Krishna is like the sun and that maya, the illusory energy, is darkness. Yahan krishna, tahan nahi mayara adhikara: as soon as the sun of Krishna is present, the darkness of maya immediately disappears. Without following this process, it is very difficult to overcome the ocean of darkness, maya. But if we simply teach people to surrender unto Krishna, God, all the fog and mist of illusion will disappear. The method is very simple: chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. The more one goes on chanting, the more the darkness of many lives is dissipated. Ceto-darpana-marjanam: by chanting, one can cleanse the dust from the mirror of his mind and perceive things very distinctly. Thus one will know what he is, what God is, what this world is, what our relationship with God in this world is, how to live in this world, and what our next life is. Such knowledge is not taught in schools, where one is taught how to manufacture or acquire products for sense gratification.

There is always a hard struggle going on involving man's attempt to dominate material nature. However, for every convenience he manages to produce, there is an inconvenience accompanying it. For example, recently some engineers designed an airplane that can fly at great speeds without danger. When the plane flies, however, it breaks windows all over the city. Our time is thus being wasted in constructing so many devices to give us temporary and artificial convenience at the price of a proportionate amount of inconvenience. This is all part of the law of karma, the law of action and reaction. For whatever we do, there must be a reaction by which we become entangled. That is stated in Bhagavad-gita:

yajnarthat karmano 'nyatra loko 'yam karma-bandhanah
 tad-arthaṁ karma kaunteya mukta-sangah samacara

"Work done as a sacrifice for Vishnu has to be performed, otherwise work binds one to this material world. Therefore,
O son of Kunti, perform your prescribed duties for His satisfaction, and in that way you will always remain unattached and free from bondage.” (Bg. 3.9)

When one acts for sense gratification, work entangles him, whether the work be good or bad, but if one works for Krishna (yajnarthat karmanah), he will be free, regardless of the possible undesirability of his work.

Not only does Sukadeva Gosvami recommend unalloyed devotional service, but he further says that by devotional service one's sinful activities will be negated. Every one of us is more or less sinful, for if we were not sinful we would not have been put into material bodies. As soon as one is free from sinful life, he is liberated and transferred to the spiritual world in a spiritual body. The whole process is to cleanse oneself from the contamination of sinful or material life.

Sukadeva Gosvami said, "My dear king, those who are sinful can become purified from contamination by tapa-adibhih, practicing austerity.” Sukadeva also said, however, that no one can become completely purified by executing this process of austerity. There are many examples of yogis who practiced austerities but did not emerge completely pure. Vishvamitra Muni, for example, was a kshatriya who wanted to become a brahmana and therefore began to practice austerity. Later on, however, he became a victim of Menaka, a society girl of the heavenly planets. Because Vishvamitra was not pure, he became entangled with her and begot a child. Therefore it is said that even if one performs austerities and penances, worldly circumstances are so implicating that somehow or other they will involve one again and again in the material modes of nature. There are many examples of sannyasi who give up the world, renouncing it as false, saying, “Let me turn to Brahman [spirit]” but they again become entangled in the work of the world when they set up hospitals and perform philanthropic work and welfare activities. If the world is false, why are they attracted to welfare activities? The philosophy of Krishna consciousness maintains that this world is not false but that it is temporary. God created this world, and He is true, so how can His creation be false? Because this is the creation of God, and God is the Absolute Truth, this creation is also true. We simply see it otherwise due to illusion. The world is a fact, but it is a temporary fact.

A person may claim something within this world to be his property, but that is a false claim. It is a fact that it is someone's property, but it is God's property (isavasyam idam sarvam). This does not mean, however, that the property is false. What is false is the claim to the property, which is based upon a puffed-up false consciousness that the individual is the proprietor, the master, or God. Everyone desires to be master or proprietor of something, then minister, then president, and then God. When everything else fails, the living entity wants to become God. The tendency is there to want to become the greatest of all, but the fact remains that God is the greatest and the living entity is small compared to Him. The smallest is not false, and the greatest is not false, but when the small thinks that he is great, that is false.

We understand from Vedic literature that Brahman, or the spirit, is anor aniyamsam, smaller than an atom, and mahato mahiyamsam, greater than the greatest. As far as we can conceive, the space that contains the universe is the greatest, but Krishna has shown millions of universes in His mouth. The greatness of God cannot be comprehended by the living entities, who are part and parcel of God. As living entities, we are very minute, infinitesimal, and God is infinite. Indeed, the magnitude of the individual spirit soul is so microscopic that it cannot be seen. One cannot even imagine it with his material senses. Therefore it is said that the spirit soul is smaller than an atom (anor aniyamsam).

Since the living entities and Krishna, the Supreme Lord, are both spirit, they are qualitatively one. Quantitatively, however, the Lord is great and the living entities are small. This fact can be accepted immediately on the basis of Vedic information. In Brahma-samhita it is stated, yasyaika-nisvasita-kalam athavalambya jivanti loma-vilaja jagad-anda-nathah: many millions of universes come out of God's body when He exhales, and they again disappear when He inhales. Simply by His breathing, millions of universes are created and dissolved. If this is the case, then how can the living entities claim proprietorship over anything? One's position is safe only insofar as he does not falsely declare himself God or proprietor. It has become fashionable to claim to be God, and fools accept such claims, but from the Vedic literatures we understand that God is not so cheap.

As long as we are not making puffed-up ego-centered claims, we are already liberated. There is actually no need to seek liberation. But as long as one thinks, "I am this body," he is not liberated. Liberation means knowing perfectly well that one's self is separate from the body. Therefore Sukadeva Gosvami said, prayascittam vimarsanam: “Develop your knowledge; that will give you relief.” Our knowledge is perfect when we come to know that we are very small particles of spiritual sparks, and that God, the Supreme, the greatest spiritual identity, supplies all our necessities (eko bahunam yo vidadhati kaman). By knowing ourselves as minute particles, part and parcel of God, we can understand that our duty is to serve God. God is the center of all creation, of the whole universal body; He is the enjoyer, and we are His servitors. As this conception becomes clear, we become liberated.
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SALARPURIA SATTVA
Liberation entails freedom from all false conceptions. It is not that upon liberation one acquires ten hands. In Srimad-Bhagavatam liberation (mukt) is defined as hitvanyatha rupam. Hitva means “giving up,” and anyatha rupam denotes a false conception of life. This is to say that when one is situated in his original constitutional position, having given up all false notions, he is liberated. It is also said in Srimad-Bhagavatam that by the acquisition of knowledge, one becomes liberated immediately. That knowledge can be very easily acquired, for it is simple: God is great, and I am very small; He is the supreme proprietor supplying all necessities, and I am His servant. Who can challenge this? It is a fact. We are simply under the false impression that we are this or that, and this leads us to the ultimate false impression that we are God. Yet we do not consider what manner of God we are. A small bodily disorder will send us to the physician. One who claims to be the Supreme, therefore, should be understood to have fallen to the last snare of maya. One who is thus fallen cannot even be liberated, for he is bound by false impressions.

Only when one has attained proper knowledge can he actually be liberated. The stage of liberation is also called the brahma-bhuta stage, or the stage of spiritual realization. One who has attained this stage is characterized by Sri Krishna in Bhagavad-gita in this way:

\[
\text{brahma-bhutah prasannatma} \\
\text{na socati na kanksati} \\
\text{samah sarvesu bhutesu} \\
\text{mad-bhaktim labhate param}
\]

“One who is thus transcendentally situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman [spirit]. He never laments nor desires to have anything; he is equally disposed to every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me.” (Bg. 18.54)

The joy that follows realization arises from understanding, “I was illusioned by false notions for so long. What a fool I was! I was thinking that I was God, but now I can understand that I am God's eternal servant.” Upon gaining such realization, one attains liberation and becomes prasannatma, or jolly, for this is the constitutional position of the living entity.

There is no lamentation when one is in pure consciousness, for he knows that he is a small part, a spiritual spark protected by the Supreme Lord. Where then is the scope for lamentation? A small child feels free as long as he knows that his father is there. He thinks, “My father is standing by me, so I am free. No one can harm me.” Similarly, when one surrenders to Krishna, he has complete faith that he is not in danger because Krishna is protecting him. One who is thus surrendered to Krishna is not subject to lamentation or desire, whereas one who is not God conscious simply hankers and laments. He hankers for that which he does possess but has lost. A God conscious person is not subject to such misery. If something is lost, he knows that it is God’s wish, and he thinks, “God desired this, so it is all right.” He does not desire anything, for he knows that all his necessities are being provided by Krishna, the supreme father.

As soon as one understands his relationship to God, he realizes universal brotherhood, for he understands that all men and animals—indeed, all life itself—are all parts of the supreme whole and are therefore all equal. Seeing this, one does not envy, exploit or trouble another living entity. Thus a devotee of Krishna automatically develops all good qualities, for he is in the proper consciousness. Harav abhaktasya kuto mahad-guna mano-rathenasati dhavato bahih. One who has developed Krishna consciousness will manifest all the good qualities of the demigods. Indeed, it is stated, Vancha-kalpa-tarubhyas ca krpa-sindhubhyaeva ca: a Vaishnava, or devotee of Krishna, is an ocean of mercy to others. He gives the greatest gift to society, for society is in dire need of God consciousness. A Vaishnava bestows the priceless gift of the maha-mantra, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Simply by chanting this mantra, one can remain in a liberated state.

One should not think, however, that this state is simply a state of trance whereby one remains seated in lotus position in a corner for days on end. No, liberation means serving. One cannot simply say, “Now I have dedicated my life to Krishna. Let me remain seated in trance.” The standard of surrender must be maintained nisevaya, by serving. As one serves the Supreme Lord, the Lord reveals Himself within the heart. The program of devotional service to the Lord is executed from morning to night. Indeed, Krishna says in Bhagavad-gita that one must engage in devotional service to Him twenty-four hours a day. It is not that we should meditate for fifteen minutes and then engage in all kinds of nonsense. The more we serve, the more dedicated to Krishna we become; therefore a person should utilize whatever talents he has for Krishna. There are nine process of devotional service-hearing, chanting, remembering, serving, worshiping the Deity in the temple, praying, carrying out orders, serving the Lord as friend, and sacrificing everything for Him—and one should always keep engaged in at least one of these nine
processes. One who is always engaged in Krishna's service never becomes disgusted (bhajatam priti-purvakam). Service must be rendered with love, but in the beginning this may be difficult, and so one may become disgusted. As one makes progress in Krishna's service, however, he will find it pleasing. This is indicated by Krishna in Bhagavad-gita;

\[
yat tadh agragam
pariname 'mrtopamam
\]
\[
tat sukham sattvikam proktam
atma-buddhi-prasada-jam
\]

"That which in the beginning may be just like poison, but at the end is like nectar, and which awakens one to self-realization, is said to be happiness in the mode of goodness." (Bg. 18.37)

Once one has attained the spiritual platform, it is material service that actually becomes disgusting. For example, if one chants Hare Krishna throughout his life, he will not grow tired of the names, but if one chants a material name over and over, he will soon become disgusted. The more one chants the names of Krishna, the more he becomes attached. Thus service by sravanam and kirtanam, hearing and chanting about Krishna, is the beginning. The next process is smaranam-always remembering Krishna. When one is perfect in chanting and hearing, he will always remember Krishna. In this third stage, he becomes the greatest yogi.

Nor is progress in Krishna consciousness ever lost. In the material world, if one begins to construct a factory but does not complete it, the factory is useless for all intents and purposes, if the construction is stopped and the building half finished, whatever money is invested is lost. This is not the case with Krishna consciousness, for even if one does not come to the perfectional point, whatever work he does is his permanent asset, and he can begin from that point in his next life. Krishna also confirms in Bhagavad-gita that one who begins Krishna consciousness cannot lose anything:

\[
nehabhikrama-naso 'sti
pratyavayo na vidyate
sv-alpam apy asya dharmasya
trayate mahato bhayat
\]

"In this endeavour there is no loss or diminution, and a little advancement on this path can protect one from the most dangerous type of fear." (Bg. 2.40)

In the Sixth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita, when Arjuna asks about the fate of the unsuccessful yogi, Sri Krishna replied:

\[
partha naiveha namutra
vinasas tasya vidyate
na hi kalyana-krt kascid
durgatim tata gacchati
\]

"Son of Partha, a transcendentalist engaged in auspicious activities does not meet with destruction either in this world or in the spiritual world; one who does good, My friend, is never overcome by evil." (Bg. 6.40)

The Lord then indicates that the unsuccessful yogi takes up his practice of Krishna consciousness in the next life, beginning from the point where he left off. In other words, if one has finished fifty percent of the process in one life, in the next life he begins at fifty-one percent. Whatever material assets we accumulate in our life, however,
are all annihilated at death, for we cannot take material opulence with us.

But one should not think that he will do well to wait for the next life to attain Krishna consciousness. We should try to fulfill the mission of Krishna consciousness in this life. Krishna promises us that one who becomes His devotee will come to Him without fail:

\[ \text{man-mana bhava mad-bhakto mad-yaji mam namaskuru} \]
\[ \text{mam evaisyasi satyam te pratijane priyo 'si me} \]

"Always think of Me and become My devotee. Worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are my very dear friend." (Bg. 18.65)

When we think of coming to Krishna, we should not think that we will be standing before a void or an impersonal bright light. Krishna, God, is a person, just as we are persons. Materially we can understand that our father is a person, and that his father is also a person, and that his father's father is a person and so on back to the supreme father, who must also be a person. This is not very difficult to understand, and it is noteworthy that God is called the supreme father not only in the Vedas but in the Bible, Koran, and other scriptures. The Vedanta-sutra also confirms that the Absolute Truth is the original father from whom everything has taken birth or emanated. This is also confirmed in the Vedas:

\[ \text{nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam} \]
\[ \text{eko bahunam yo vidadhah kaman} \]

The Lord is the supreme eternal amongst all living entities. He is maintaining all others." The desires and life symptoms displayed by all living entities are simply reflections of the desires and life symptoms of the supreme father. In other words, our desires are born because He has desires. Because we are part and parcel of God, we have all the instincts of God in minute quantity. The sex play and sex life we see in the material world is but the perverted reflection of the love found in the spiritual world. This world is material because God is forgotten here, but once He is remembered the world immediately becomes spiritual. In other words, the spiritual world is that place where Krishna is not forgotten. That is also the definition of the spiritual world given by Vedic literatures. We must therefore plan our lives in such a way that it will not be possible for us to forget Krishna for a moment. In this way, by engaging in the service of Krishna, we will therefore always live in Vaikuntha or Vrindavana, the abode of Krishna.

At present, because of our polluted consciousness, we are turning the world into a materialistic and hellish place, and because we are ignorant of our constitutional position, we have created innumerable problems, just as in dreams we create so many problems. But in actuality there are no problems. I may dream that I am in a great storm, or that I am being pursued, or that someone is taking my money, or that I am being devoured by a tiger, but actually these are all creations of my mind. Asango hy ayam purusa iti sruteh. The Vedas say that the purusa (the atma, or the soul) has no connection with all its dreamlike material activities. Therefore we must engage in this Krishna consciousness process to awaken from this dreaming condition.

Above all the fruitive labourers, speculators and mystic yogis’ are the bhaktas, or devotees of Krishna. A bhakta can be perfectly peaceful, whereas the others cannot because everyone but the bhakta, one who has pure love, has desire. A suddha-bhakta, pure devotee, is desireless because he is simply happy serving Krishna. He does not know or even care whether Krishna is God or not; he just wants to love Krishna. Nor is he concerned with the fact that Krishna is omnipotent or that He is all-pervasive. In Vrindavana, the cowherd boys and the gopis did not know whether Krishna was God or not, but they simply loved Him. Although the gopis were not Vedantists, yogis or karmis, they were happy because they were simple village girls and boys who wanted to see Krishna. This is a very highly elevated position called sarvopadhi-vinirmuktam tat-paratvena nirmalam, or the stage of purity in which one is liberated from all material designations.

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Krishna Voice, November 2019
Although the yogis and jnанис are trying to understand God, they are not aware of their illusory condition. Mayasukhaya bharam udvahato vimudhan: they are fools because they are working hard for illusory happiness. There is no question of peace for them. The jnанис, or speculators, wanting to get relief from the hard work of this material world, reject this material world (браhma satyam jаган-mithya). Their position is a little higher than that of the karmis because the karmis have taken this material world as everything. They say, “Here we shall be happy,” and their dharma, or religion, consists of trying to make a peaceful atmosphere within this material world. The fools do not know that this has been tried for millions of years but has never happened and never will happen. How can peace in the material world be possible when Krishna, the creator Himself, says that this place is meant for trouble and miseries?

a-brахma-bhuvanal lokah punar avarтиno ‘рjuna
mam upetya tu kaunteya punar janma na vidyate

“From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode, O son of Kunti, never takes birth again.” (Bg. 8.16)

Dуhkalayam аsасvatam: not only is this world full of suffering, but it is also temporary. One cannot simply agree to go ahead suffering the threefold miseries and stay here. Even that will not be allowed. In this world, not only will he be punished while staying here, but he will also be kicked out at the end. One may accumulate a large bank balance or an expensive home, a wife, children, and so many amenities, and he may think, “I am living very peacefully,” but at any day he may be told, “Please get out.”

“Why?” he will ask. “It is my house, and it is paid for. I have money and a job and responsibilities. Why should I get out?”

“Just get out. Don’t talk. Get out.”

On that day a man sees God. “Oh, I did not believe in God,” he may think. “But now here is God finishing off everything.” Thus it is said that the demoniac recognize Krishna as death, for at that time He takes everything away from them.
Why do we want to see God as death?

When the demon Hiranyakashipu saw Krishna, he saw Him as death personified, but the devotee Prahlada saw Him in His personal form as his beloved Lord. Those who challenge God will see Him in His ghastly aspect, but those who are devoted to Him will see Him in His personal form. In any case, everyone will ultimately see God.

An honest person can always see Krishna everywhere. Krishna says, “Try to understand Me. Try to see Me everywhere.” By way of facilitating this method, the Lord says, “I am the taste of water.” When we are thirsty and need a glass of water, we can drink it and feel happy, understanding that the power of water to quench our thirst is Krishna. Similarly, as soon as there is sunrise or moonshine, we can see Krishna, for He says, prabhasmi sasi-suryayoh: “I am the light of the sun and moon.” At a further stage we can see Krishna as the life force within everything, as He indicates in Bhagavad-gita:

punyo gandhah prthivyam ca tejas casmi vibhavasau
jivanam sarva-bhutesu tapas casmi tapasvisu

"I am the original fragrance of the earth, and I am the light in fire. I am the life of all that lives, and I am the penances of all ascetics." (Bg. 7.9)

Once we understand that all things are dependent upon Krishna for their existence, there is no possibility of His ever becoming lost to us. In Bhagavad-gita the Lord indicates that all things abide in Him both in their beginning and in their end and also in the interim state:

etad-yonini bhutani sarvanity upadharaya
aham krtsnasya jagatah prabhavah pralayas tatha
mattah parataram nanyat kincid asti dhananjaya
mayi sarvam idam protam sutre mani-gana iva

"Of all that is material and all that is spiritual in this world, know for certain that I am both its origin and dissolution. O conqueror of wealth [Arjuna], there is no truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls on a thread.” (Bg. 7.6-7)

Krishna is easily visible, but He is only visible to those who are devoted to Him. For those who are envious, foolish or unintelligent, He obscures Himself with His veil of yoga-maya:

naham prakasah sarvasya yoga-maya-samavrtah
mudho 'yam nabhijanati loko mam ajam avyayam

"I am never manifest to the foolish and unintelligent. For them I am covered by My eternal creative potency [yoga-maya] thus the deluded world knows Me not, who am unborn and infallible.” (Bg. 7.25)

This eternal creative potency, or yoga-maya, which obscures Krishna to the unintelligent, is dissolved by love. This is the verdict of Brahma-samhita:

premanjana-ccurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santah sadaiva hrdaysesu vilokayanti

Those who thus see Krishna are not anxious because they know where they are going at death. One who has taken the gift of Krishna consciousness knows that he will not have to return to this material world to take another body but will go to Krishna. It is not possible to go to Krishna unless one attains a body like Krishna's, a sac-cid- ananda-vigraha body, a body full of eternity, knowledge and bliss. One cannot enter into fire and not perish unless he himself becomes fire, and similarly one cannot enter into the spiritual realm in a body that is not spiritual. In a spiritual body one can dance with Krishna in the rasa dance like the gopis. This is not an ordinary dance, but the dance of eternity, in the association with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Only those who have become purified in their love for Krishna can participate in it. One therefore should not take this process of Krishna consciousness as something cheap, but as a matchless gift bestowed upon suffering humanity by the Lord Himself. Simply by engaging in this process, all the anxieties and fears of one's life, which in actuality revolve about the fear of death, are allayed.
Dr. Oliver: We are in this twentieth century, this last part of the century, with a new global search for the truth about the spiritual. We, of course, in the Western world, are not familiar with the Bhagavad-gita. Our problem is basically, I think, the one that you raised in your lecture: How do we make the spiritual a scientific reality? And I think you were quite right. I think really few people get the point that you were trying to make—that this is a scientific matter.

Srila Prabhupada: That is the beginning of the Bhagavad-gita—scientifically presenting spiritual knowledge. Therefore I raised the question: What is transmigration of the soul? Nobody could reply properly. We are changing bodies. There are so many varieties of bodies, and we may enter into any one of them after death. This is the real problem of life. Prakrteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani sarvasah: nature is working, providing us with material bodies. This body is a machine. This machine, just like a car, has been offered to us by material nature, by the order of God, Krishna. So the real purpose of life is to stop this perpetual transmigration from one body to another, one body to another, and revive our original, spiritual position so that we can live an eternal, blissful life of knowledge. That is the aim of life.

Dr. Oliver: The conception of transmigration is not, of course, in the Christian religion.

Srila Prabhupada: It's not a question of religion. Religion is a kind of faith that develops according to time and circumstances. The reality is that we are spirit souls. By the laws of
material nature, we are carried from one body to another. Sometimes we are happy, sometimes distressed; sometimes in the heavenly planets, sometimes in lower planets. And human life is meant for stopping this process of transmigration and reviving our original consciousness. We have to go back home, back to Godhead, and live eternally. This is the whole scheme of Vedic literature.

The Bhagavad-gita gives the synopsis of how to act in this life. Therefore, through the teachings of the Bhagavad-gita we can begin to understand the constitutional position of the soul.

First of all we have to understand what we are. Am I this body or something else? This is the first question. I was trying to answer this, but some people in my audience thought it was a kind of Hindu culture. It is not Hindu culture. It is a scientific conception. You are a child for some time. Then you become a boy. Then you become a young man, and then you become an old man. In this way you are always changing bodies. This is a fact. It is not a Hindu conception of religion. It applies to everyone.

dehino 'smin yatha dehe kaumaram yauvanam jara tatha dehantara-praptir dhiras tatra na muhyati

[To a devotee:] Find this verse.

Devotee: [reads] “As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change.” [Bg. 2.13]

Srila Prabhupada: In the Bhagavad-gita everything is explained very logically, very scientifically. It is not a sentimental explanation.

Dr. Oliver: The problem, as I see it, is how to get modern man to make an in-depth study of what is contained or outlined in this book, especially when he’s caught up in an educational system that denies a place for this very concept or even the philosophy of it. There is either complete neutrality, or just a simple rejection of these truths.

Srila Prabhupada: They do not accept the soul?

Dr. Oliver: They accept the soul. I think so. But they do not care to analyse what it means.

Srila Prabhupada: Without analysing this, what is their situation? First of all, they should analyse the distinction between a dead body and a living body. The body is always dead, just like a motorcar without a driver. The car is always a lump of matter. Similarly, this body, with or without the soul, is a lump of matter.

Dr. Oliver: It isn’t worth very much. I think around fifty-six cents.

Srila Prabhupada: But if one cannot distinguish between the car and the driver of the car, then he is just like a child. A child thinks the car is running automatically. But that is his foolishness. There is a driver. The child may not know, but when he is grown up and has been educated and still he does not know, then what is the meaning of his education?

Dr. Oliver: In the Western world the whole range of education covers only primary, secondary, and tertiary education. There is no place for an in-depth study of the soul.

Srila Prabhupada: I talked with one professor in Moscow. Maybe you know him—Professor Kotovsky. He teaches at the Soviet Academy of Sciences. I had a talk with him for about an hour. He said, “After this body is annihilated, everything is finished.” I was surprised that he told me this. He is known to be a very good scholar, and still he does not know about the soul.

Dr. Oliver: We have an Indology course here, given by a scholar from Vienna. But what he teaches, what kind of basic philosophy, I wouldn’t know. There are about forty students. In essence they ought to start by making a detailed study of the Bhagavad-gita and use that as a basis for their whole philosophy.

Srila Prabhupada: So why not appoint someone to teach Bhagavad-gita As It Is? That is essential.

Dr. Oliver: Our University almost has an obligation to make a study of these points in depth.

Srila Prabhupada: By thoroughly studying Bhagavad-gita, one begins his spiritual education.

Dr. Oliver: Well, this is apparently what one needs. Our Hindu community here in South Africa seems to lack any fixed idea of what constitutes Hinduism. The young people especially are living in a complete vacuum. For various reasons, they do not want to accept religion, because this is what they see around them. They cannot identify with the Christian religion, the Islamic religion, or the Hindu religion. They are largely ignorant.

Srila Prabhupada: They should be shown the right path. This is the original, authentic path.

Dr. Oliver: There were not very many great scholars in South Africa amongst our Indian community. The Indian people came, by and large, as workers on the sugar plantations—field workers. A few were jewellers and tailors and so on. Then for the last hundred years there was a political struggle, resisting transportation back to India. They were fighting to make a living and to find their own place in this country. As I see it, they must give meaning to the essence of their own beliefs and faith. I’ve been telling them that we are privileged to have them here in this country with their background, and that they mustn’t cut themselves away from it and drift into a vacuum. But they don’t know to whom they should turn. So basically, they and myself and others want to know how we get this spirit into our own hearts,
and how does this then issue out into everyday living?

Srila Prabhupada: That is all explained in the Bhagavad-gita: how to live peacefully in this world and how to go back home, back to Godhead.

Dr. Oliver: But how does one get modern man to voluntarily make this experiment? The real tragedy is we have wandered so far away from the spirit that we do not know where to start. And we can't get a few dozen honest believers to sit down and try to find out how much God wants to give of His mind to our minds.

Srila Prabhupada: God is giving Himself. We just have to accept Him. That requires a little advancement. Otherwise, everything is there. God says that the soul is eternal and the body is changing. It is a very simple example. A boy becomes a young man, and a young man becomes an old man. There is no denying this fact. I can understand it, and you can understand it. It is very simple. I remember that as a boy I was jumping, and I cannot do that now because I have a different body. So I am conscious that I possessed a body like that. Now I do not possess it. The body is changing, but I am the same person eternally. It requires a little intelligence to see this, that's all. I am the owner of the body, and I am an eternal soul. The body is changing.

Dr. Oliver: Now, having accepted that, a further problem then arises: What are the implications?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. If I understand that I am not this body, yet at the present moment I am engaged only to keep my body comfortable, without taking care of my self, that is wrong. For example, if I am cleansing this shirt and coat thrice daily, but I am hungry—that would be impractical. Similarly, this civilization is wrong in this basic way. If I take care of your shirt and coat, but I don’t give you anything to eat, then how long will you be satisfied? That is my point. That is the basic mistake. Material civilization means taking care of the body and bodily comforts. But the owner of the body, the spirit soul, gets no care. Therefore everyone is restless. They are changing the “ism” from capitalism to communism, but they do not know what the mistake is.

Dr. Oliver: There is very little difference. They are both material.

Srila Prabhupada: The communists think that if we take control of the government, everything will be adjusted. But the mistake is there—both the communists and the capitalists are taking care of the external body, not the eternal identity, the soul. The soul must be peaceful. Then everything will be peaceful.

bhoktaram yajna-tapasam sarva-loka-mahesvaram suhrdam sarva-bhutanam jnatva mam santim rcchati

[To a devotee:] Read that verse.

Devotee: “A person in full consciousness of Me, knowing Me to be the ultimate beneficiary of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all planets and demigods, and the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, attains peace from the pangs of material miseries.” [Bg. 5.29]

Srila Prabhupada: This means that one must know what God is. Because you are part and parcel of God, you already have a very intimate relationship with Him. Our business is knowing God. So at the present moment, there is no information. People have no complete idea.

Dr. Oliver: Well, I believe that if a satellite in the sky can reveal what is happening from one pole to the other pole, then surely God can reveal His spirit and His mind to anyone who wants to obey Him, who wants to know Him, and who sincerely wants to follow Him.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, yes. So here in the Bhagavad-gita God is explaining Himself. We have to take it by logic and reason. Then it will be a clear understanding of God.

Dr. Oliver: Yes, but how to get this across?

Srila Prabhupada: The teaching is there. We have to understand it by authoritative discussion.

Dr. Oliver: I think so. This is probably where one has to start. We have to sit down and discuss this, much the same as some professors would discuss any scientific experiment.
Srila Prabhupada: The process for understanding is described here:

"No one can be spiritually realized by manufacturing his own process, as is the fashion of the foolish pretenders. The Srimad-Bhagavatam (6.3.19) says, dharmam tu saksad bhagavat-pranitam: the path of religion is directly enunciated by the Lord. Therefore, mental speculation or dry arguments cannot help lead one to the right path. Nor by independent study of books of knowledge can one progress in spiritual life.

"One has to approach a bona fide spiritual master to receive the knowledge. Such a spiritual master should be accepted in full surrender, and one should serve the spiritual master like a menial servant, without false prestige. Satisfaction of the self-realized spiritual master is the secret of advancement in spiritual life. Inquiries and submission constitute the proper combination for spiritual understanding. Unless there is submission and service, inquiries from the learned spiritual master will not be effective. One must be able to pass the test of the spiritual master, and when he sees the genuine desire of the disciple, he automatically blesses the disciple with genuine spiritual understanding.

"In this verse, both blind following and absurd inquiries are condemned. Not only should one hear submissively from the spiritual master, but one must also get a clear understanding from him, in submission and service and inquiries. A bona fide spiritual master is by nature very kind toward the disciple. Therefore when the student is submissive and is always ready to render service, the reciprocation of knowledge and inquiries becomes perfect."

Srila Prabhupada: The practical example is here. These European and American boys are coming from well-to-do families. Why are they serving me? I am Indian, coming from a poor country. I cannot pay them. When I came to the West, I had no money. I brought only forty rupees. That was only an hour's expenditure in America. So their soul is to carry out my instruction. And therefore they are making progress. Pranipatena pariprasna— they are asking questions. I am trying to reply to them, and they have all got full faith. They are serving like menial servants. This is the process.

If the spiritual master is bona fide and the disciple is very sincere, then the knowledge will be there. This is the secret. Yasya deve para bhaktir yatha deve tatha gurau—Vedic knowledge is revealed unto those who have faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master. Therefore in Vedic society, the students are automatically sent to the gurukula [the place of the spiritual master], regardless of whether one is a king's son or from some other background. Even Krishna had to go to gurukula.

There is a story that once Krishna went with a classmate to the forest to collect dry wood for His spiritual master. Suddenly there was a heavy rain storm, and they could not get out of the forest. The whole night they remained in the forest with great difficulty. There were torrents of rain. The next morning, the guru, their teacher, along with other students, came to the forest and found them. So even Krishna, whom we accept as the Supreme Lord had to go to gurukula and serve the spiritual master as a menial servant.

So all of the students at the gurukula learn how to be very submissive and how to live only for the benefit of the guru. They are trained from the very beginning to be first-class submissive students. Then the guru, out of affection and with an open heart, teaches the hoys all he knows. This is the process. There is no question of money. It is all done on the basis of love and education.

Dr. Oliver: I might have difficulty accepting parts of what you've indicated here, simply because I don't know. But basically I accept that God lives in us and that when we leave things to Him, He knows how to direct these things. The challenge is living life so that He will be satisfied. This is where the difficulty comes in: you need the inspiration to be disciplined. This will only become a reality in one's life if one practices it. And practices it with others who share this commitment.

Srila Prabhupada: Therefore we have this International Society for Krishna Consciousness—showing how to live a life of dedication to God. That is required. Without practical life in God consciousness, it remains simply theoretical. That may help, but it takes longer. My students are being trained up in practical spiritual life, and they are established.

Dr. Oliver: I want to thank you very much, and I pray that God will bless your visit to our country and our people here.

Srila Prabhupada: Hare Krishna.
Franklin Templeton has extended its support to The Akshaya Patra Foundation by sponsoring 226 food distribution containers, which would feed nutritious food to 300-500 children in 200 government schools, under its corporate social responsibility initiative.

Ardex Endure India Pvt Ltd donated two food distribution vehicles to The Akshaya Patra Foundation.

Sri Sridham Krishna Dasa, Programme Director, Akshaya Patra Foundation handed over a memento to Sri Gopinath Krishnan, Managing Director, Ardex Endure India Pvt Ltd, in appreciation of their contribution.

COMMSCOPE donated three food distribution vehicles to The Akshaya Patra Foundation.

Sri Kiran Gadi, Vice-President, COMMSCOPE handed over the vehicle keys to Sri Sridham Krishna Dasa, Programme Director, Akshaya Patra Foundation.
Ramanuja’s initiation to Sri Vaishnavism

After the departure of Sri Yamunacharya to Sri Vaikuntha, none of his disciples was able to give discourses on the scriptures in the same wonderful way as he had done. His disciple Thiruvarangathamudanar was now in charge of the matha in Srirangam, but he lacked the ability to expound the meaning of the scriptures as his master had done. Everyone admired his devotional qualities and noted the fact that he spent so much of his time worshipping the Lord, but still the atmosphere in the matha was not what it had been before. At that time, both the married and unmarried devotees used to live together in the ashrama, while the wives would live in separate quarters outside, in the city. Their time was passed for the most part in worship of the Deity and the chanting of kirtanas and the songs of Alwars glorifying the Lord. In this way a year passed by uneventfully. On the anniversary of Yamunacharya’s disappearance, all his disciples assembled together, and Thiruvarangathamudanar addressed the assembly. “It is now one year," he began, “since our Acharya, Sri Yamunacharya, left us to return to the abode of Lord Narayana. While he was with us, it was our great fortune that every day we were able to hear his nectarean words. However, since his disappearance, no one has been able to describe the glories of the Lord in such a magnificent manner or expound all the subtle points of the scriptures as he was able to. Although he instructed that I should take over his position in the matha, I have to admit that I am incapable of properly executing this duty."

“All of you may recall how, just prior to his departure, Sri Yamunacharya desired to see Sri Ramanuja of Kanchipuram and sent Mahapurna there to escort him. It is that great soul alone, the intimate friend of Kanchipuram, who, having been chosen by Sri Yamunacharya himself, is competent to take on the responsibility as acharya for this matha. Therefore, let one of us go to Kanchipuram and, after initiating him to the fold of Sri Vaishnavism, bring him here to Srirangam. He will spread the teachings of Yamunacharya all over India, as he promised to do whilst looking at the body of our preceptor."

All the assembled devotees unanimously accepted Thiruvarangathamudanar’s proposal, and Mahapurna was chosen to go to Kanchipuram to initiate Ramanuja and bring him to Srirangam. He was told, “If at present he is reluctant to leave Kanchipuram as he might miss the association of Kanchipuram, then do not press the matter. You may remain in Kanchi for one year, instructing him in all the bhakti shastras. He need not be told about your intention to bring him to Srirangam.”

Being thus instructed, Mahapurna, along with his wife, started the journey to Kanchipuram. After four days they reached the town of Maduranthakam which is famous for a huge lake and a huge temple of Sri Rama. The Sri Rama in this temple is affectionately addressed as Sri Katha Rama or Rama who protects the lake of Maduranthakam. While Mahapurna and his wife were resting beside that lake, Ramanuja suddenly appeared there offering obeisance at his feet. Mahapurna was both surprised and delighted by this unexpected turn of events, and he immediately embraced Ramanuja. “This is certainly a surprise,” he said. ‘Anything can be accomplished by the mercy of Lord Narayana. Why have you come here?” “This must certainly be the plan of Lord Narayana,” Ramanuja replied, “for it was only to find you that I left Kanchipuram. Lord Varadaraja Perumal Himself has instructed me to accept you as my guru. Please bestow your mercy upon me by initiating me at once.” Mahapurna agreed to this request, saying, “Let us go to Kanchipuram so that the ceremony can be performed before Lord Varadaraja.”

However, Ramanuja was insistent. “You know that death makes no distinction between the timely and the untimely," he said. “Do you not recall with what high expectations I went with you to meet Sri Yamunacharya? Fate cheated me then, so why should I trust him now by allowing any delay? Please give me shelter at your lotus feet right at this very moment, immediately!” Mahapurna was pleased by Ramanuja’s words, and there on the banks of the lake in the shade of a flowering bakula tree he lit a sacrificial fire. In that fire he placed two metal impressions, one bearing the sign of Lord Vishnu’s chakra and the other, that of His conch. When the two discs were hot, Mahapurna pressed them onto Ramanuja’s right and left arms, thus marking them with the signs of Lord Vishnu. Finally, meditating on the lotus feet of Yamunacharya, Mahapurna whispered the initiation mantra into Ramanuja’s ear. This is the process of initiation in the Sri Vaishnava sampradaya. When the initiation was thus completed, Ramanuja returned to Kanchipuram, accompanied by Mahapurna and his wife.
When they arrived, they were welcomed by Kanchipurna, who took great pleasure in associating with Mahapurna. Rakshambal, who was the wife of Ramanuja, did not like Mahapurna or Ramanuja’s association with Mahapurna. Half the house was given over to Mahapurna and his wife, and every day Ramanuja would study the Vaishnava scriptures in his association.

Rakshambal’s Folly

Six months passed by quickly, while Ramanuja felt great satisfaction in hearing all the truths of Sri Vaishnava philosophy from Mahapurna. One day, while both Ramanuja and Mahapurna were away from home, Rakshambal went to draw water from the well. Mahapurna’s wife was also drawing water at the same time, and while so doing, a few drops from her pitcher fell into that of Rakshambal, who immediately flew into a rage.

“Are you blind?” she shouted, “Look what you have done! By your carelessness a whole pitcher of water is wasted!” Rakshambal was highly orthodox and considered it impure to come in contact with water touched by someone else. “Do you think that you can sit on my shoulders just because you are my husband’s guru’s wife? Just remember that my father’s family is of a superior lineage to yours, so how can I use water that has been touched by you? But why should I blame you, for having fallen into the hands of this husband of mine, all my caste and position in the society is lost!”

When she heard these harsh words, Mahapurna’s wife, who was by nature calm and modest, which is the most important Sri Vaishnava virtue and quality, begged forgiveness from Rakshambal. However, being very disturbed by the woman’s anger, she set down her pitcher and began to weep quietly. When Mahapurna returned and found his wife in that distressed condition, he asked her what was the cause of her unhappiness. When he learned of everything that had taken place at the well, Mahapurna became thoughtful. Eventually he said, “It is no longer the will of the Supreme Lord that
we should remain here, and for this reason He has
caused you to hear these unkind words from the mouth
of Rakshambal. Do not be sorry over this matter, for
whatever the Lord ordains is for our good. Because we
have not worshipped the lotus feet of Lord Ranganatha
for a long time, He now desires that we go back to Him.”

Mahapurna leaves Kanchipuram

Without waiting for Ramanuja to return, Mahapurna and
his wife then collected their few possessions and
departed for Srirangam immediately. While Mahapurna
was staying with him in Kanchipuram, Ramanuja had
been very happy, looking upon his acharya as the
representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
During those six months they spent together, Ramanuja
had studied about four thousand verses composed by
the great Vaishnavas of South India. That morning he
had gone out to purchase fruit, flowers, and new cloth
with which to make an offering to his guru, but when he
returned to his house, he found Mahapurna's quarters
deserted. After searching all over the house, he sought
information from a neighbour, who told him that
Mahapurna and his wife had left Kanchipuram to return
to Srirangam. Anxious to discover what could have
caused his guru’s abrupt departure, Ramanuja went to
speak to Rakshambal.

She told him, “I had a quarrel with your guru’s wife when
we went to fetch water from the well this morning. I
hardly spoke any harsh words to her at all, but the great
man was so enraged that he left here almost immediately.
I have heard that a sadhu is supposed to have given
up all feelings of anger, but it must be that he is a new
sort of sadhu. I offer millions of obeisances at the feet
of your sadhu.” Ramanuja could hardly believe his ears
when he heard his wife speak in such an evil and
sarcastic way about Mahapurna, and he could not
restrain his feelings.

“Oh sinful woman,” he cried out, “it is a great sin even
to look at your face!” Having said this, he left the house
and went to the temple to offer the fruits and flowers he
had collected to offer to Lord Varadaraja. A short time
later, a lean and hungry brahmana came to Ramanuja’s
house to beg for something to eat. Rakshambal was
still shocked by her husband’s words, and, when the
brahmana disturbed her, she immediately became angry
and shouted at him in a shrill voice, “Get out of here!
Go somewhere else! Who do you think will give you
rice here?” Hurt by these harsh words, the brahmana
turned away and began to walk slowly towards the
temple of Lord Varadaraja. On the way he met Ramanuja,
who was returning home, having made his offering to
the Lord. Seeing the brahmana’s dejected expression
and undernourished body, Ramanuja felt compassionate
and told him, “Oh great brahmana, it seems that you
have not eaten today.” “I went to your house to ask for
a little prasadam, but your wife became angry and turned
me away,” replied the brahmana.

Ramanuja was shocked to hear that a guest had been
so mistreated at his house. He was thoughtful for a few
moments, and then he said, “Please go back to my
house. I will give you a letter, and I want you to tell my
wife that you have been sent by her father to deliver it
to me. When she hears this, you can be certain she will
feed you with great attention.” Ramanuja then wrote
out a letter as follows: “My Dear Son, my second daughter
is to be married soon. Therefore please send
Rakshambal to my house with this man. If you have no pressing business at present, I would be very pleased if you could come as well. However, it is very important that Rakshambal comes here as soon as possible, as it will be very difficult for your mother-in-law to cater for all the guests alone.

Promising that he would be well rewarded for his services, Ramanuja sent the brahmana to his house with this letter. When he arrived there, the brahmana told Rakshambal, "Your father sent me here." She was delighted to hear this and received the brahmana with great courtesy, feeding him a sumptuous feast and offering him warm water for a bath. In the meantime, Ramanuja returned home. "My father has sent this letter to you," Rakshambal said modestly and gave it to him. Ramanuja read the letter out loud and then said to her, "I have some urgent business to attend to at present, so you must go alone. If I finish my work quickly, then I will try to come later on. Please convey my greetings to your father and mother." Rakshambal accepted his words, and, after preparing herself for the journey, she offered obeisance to her husband and set out for her father's house, escorted by the brahmana.

Ramanuja takes Sannyasa

When she had left, Ramanuja walked back to the temple of Lord Varadaraja, praying constantly to the Lord within his mind, "Oh Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Narayana, please allow this servant of yours to take full shelter at Your lotus feet." When he reached the temple, he bowed down before the Deity and prayed, "My dear Lord, from this day I am Yours in every way. Please accept me." Then he obtained saffron-coloured cloth and a staff that had been touched by the lotus feet of Sri Varadaraja. He went outside the temple and, after bathing, lit a sacrificial fire on the banks of the lake there. At that time Kanchipuram, being inspired by Lord Varadaraja, approached him and gave him the name Yatiraja or king of all sannyasis. Ramanuja then accepted the tridanda of Vaishnava sannyasa, which symbolizes the surrender of thoughts, words, and deeds to the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the ceremony was completed, Yatiraja, in his saffron robes, appeared as effulgent as the rising sun.

All the people of Kanchipuram were very surprised to hear that Ramanuja had taken sannyasa. He was still a young man and his wife was extremely beautiful. Some considered him insane, but many others began to compare him to great devotees of the past. People came to see him from all around. The Vaishnavas who stayed at the matha at Kanchipuram made Ramanuja their acharya, for his good qualities and understanding of the scriptures were well known. Gradually, in ones and twos, disciples began to gather around him. His first disciple was Dasharathi, his nephew, who was famous for his knowledge of the Vedas. The second was a young man named Kuresha, who had a wonderful memory.

Acharya at Srirangam

While all these events were taking place in Kanchipuram, the devotees in Srirangam were still feeling the lack of...
an acharya to guide them. Their strong desire was that Ramanujacharya arrive to take over the administration of the matha and the well-being of devotees of Srirangam. Mahapurna had stayed for some time in Kanchipuram with the intention of bringing Ramanuja to Srirangam, but, because he had left so abruptly, he was unable to do so. When the news reached Srirangam that Ramanuja had taken sannyasa, Mahapurna was very pleased and went into the temple of Lord Ranganatha.

There, before the lotus-eyed Lord who reclines on His bed of Ananta-Sesha, Mahapurna began to offer fervent prayers, begging the Lord to bring Ramanuja to Srirangam. Hearing this impassioned plea from His pure devotee, Lord Ranganatha became compassionate and instructed Mahapurna, “My child, you must send Arayar (refers to the title of a person who officially sings the songs of the Alwars before the Lord, a practice unique to temples of Srirangam, Srivilliputhur, Melkote etc.), the most sweet singer, to Lord Varadaraja in Kanchipuram. When Lord Varadaraja is pleased by Arayar’s songs and offers him a benediction, then he should ask that Ramanuja be allowed to come here. Without Varadaraja’s permission, Ramanuja will never leave His shelter.”

Departure for Srirangam

The Arayar at that time was the son of Yamunacharya; before Yamunacharya accepted sannyasa he was a grihasta with children. He was a renowned singer and had set to music the beautiful verses known as the Sahasra-gita. Having received these instructions, Mahapurna sent Arayar to Kanchipuram, after instructing him as to how he should accomplish his mission. Every day in the temple of Varadaraja, Arayar would sing songs before the Lord in such an exquisite way that anyone who heard him would become struck with wonder and filled with ecstasy. Eventually Lord Varadaraja became so pleased with Arayar that He offered him a benediction in return for his services. Of course, Arayar requested the Lord’s permission for Ramanuja to come to Srirangam to be the acharya of the Vaishnavas there.

Varadaraja was deeply pained to hear this request. But for the sake of preaching the philosophy of Sri Vaishnavism, it was inevitable for Ramanuja to move to Srirangam. So reluctantly, Varadaraja agreed to the request. It is for this reason that Kanchipuram is called Thyaga Mantapa or the abode of sacrifice, as Varadaraja sacrificed Ramanuja to Srirangam.

Ramanuja was sorry to leave Kanchipuram, particularly as this meant losing the association of Kanchipurna. But, at the same time, he was pleased at the prospect of being with the disciples of Yamunacharya. Thus, it was with mixed feelings that he set off with Arayar a few days later, to make the journey from Kanchipuram to Srirangam. All the people of Srirangam were delighted when Yatiraja Ramanuja arrived in their city, and the assembly of Vaishnavas immediately installed him as the acharya. Lord Ranganatha was also very pleased to see this pure-hearted devotee in His temple, and He bestowed upon him two mystic powers - the ability to cure the sick and the strength to protect the devotees from illusion. On hearing the news of Ramanujacharya’s coming to Srirangam, many Vaishnavas from the surrounding area came to see him; all were thrilled to hear his wonderful explanations of Vaishnava philosophy.

When Ramanuja arrived on the banks of the Kaveri in Srirangam, Lord Ranganatha asked His priests to carry Him to the gopura so that He Himself could receive Ramanuja. Lord Ranganatha was deeply sad that his devotee Ramanuja left Srirangam the previous time without seeing Him. Lord Ranganatha and Ramanuja shared a deep bond of madhurya rasa. Ramanuja made his headquarters in Srirangam and began his journey of preaching the philosophy of Sri Vaishnavism.

Next – Last part of the series of Kanchipuram – Kurazthazwan 😊

Photo courtesy: Keshavabhashyam, Kanchipuram
Offering as much prasadam as possible to the Lord and distributing it to the devotees who visit the temple is an important Vedic custom. Many scriptures glorify the act of distributing prasadam and bless the person who supports this activity.

Annadana-mahatmya

The giver of food is the giver of life, and indeed of everything else. Therefore, one who is desirous of well-being in this world and beyond should specially endeavour to give food.

— Mahabharata, Ashwamedha Parva

Between 11 am and 2 pm everyday, pilgrims to the ISKCON Bangalore temple are invited to partake of a free, hot prasadam meal at the Annadana Hall. This meal consisting of rice, sambar, sabji, sweet pongal and buttermilk is cooked under strict hygienic conditions and pilgrims can eat sumptuously.

Number of free prasadam meals distributed since inception in Jan 2015: 18,85,004

2018-19: 3,71,257

We invite you to support this divine program.

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Cheque/DD should be in the name of “ISKCON BANGALORE”.

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Bank Name: AXIS BANK Account Type: Savings Purpose as: ISKCON Nitya Annadana Seva

ONLINE PAYMENT: You can also donate online through our website - www.iskonbangalore.org/donations/annadana-seva

Hare Krishna Hill, Chord Road, Bangalore-560 010 Ph: 080-23471956 Mob: 93791 56083 Website: www.iskonbangalore.org Email: donor.care@hkm-group.org
Dasara, the festival that marks the victory of good over evil, was celebrated with immense gaiety by the participants of Krishna Kids Carnival, a gala event organized by the Cultural Education Services (CES) division of ISKCON Bangalore for children during Dasara vacations, in the blessed backdrop of Hare Krishna Hill temple.

The fun-filled gala event offered an opportunity to inculcate in children an understanding of the pastimes of Lord Rama and to enable them understand the essence surrounding the festivities. The carnival venue wore a festive look with decorative festoons and an attractive Dasara doll display.

The celebration encompassed soulful kirtans and dance, prayerful temple darshan, an edifying visit to the temple goshala and Akshaya Patra kitchen, interactive Dasara themed fun games, an engaging doll-making activity, an exciting pottery session, an informative Ramayana themed shadow puppet show, delicious prasadam and festival gifts galore. The programme concluded with a Dasara based quiz for parents, much to the amusement of children, prize distribution for winners of various games and distribution of prasadam to the participating families.

The Krishna Kids Carnival, true to its theme, delivered an authentic insight into our rich culture and tradition in the most appropriate and relatable manner to the participants. It was indeed a splendid sight to witness children frolicking through the Dasara themed carnival!

The next Krishna Kids Carnival is scheduled for Christmas vacations.
To enrol your child call: +91 9341124222 / 9341211119
For more details visit: www.iskconbangalore.org/krishna-kids-carnival
ISKCON Bangalore celebrated its maiden Dasara programme at National College Grounds, Basavangudi, on 8th October 2019 on the special occasion of Dasara. As a part of the celebration, the Cultural Education Services (CES) division of the temple organized a colorful Ramayana Costume Contest for children from Pre-nursery to Class X.

The celebration offered a unique platform for children to display their talent and creativity in representing different characters from the Ramayana. One could witness children enthusiastically dress up as Rama, Lakshmana, Hanuman, Sita, Shabari and other characters from the Ramayana. The enthusiastic effort of the children towards getting into the skin of the character was both heartwarming and engaging. A distinguished panel of judges evaluated the contest. Participation certificates and prasadam were accorded to each participant.
KRISHNA KIDS CARNIVAL
Cultural gala event for kids

December 28, 2019 * Time: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
For Children of LKG to Class II | Venue: ISKCON, HK Hill

December 29, 2019 * Time: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
For Children of Class III to Class X | Venue: ISKCON, HK Hill

EVENTS
- Ecstatic Kirtan
- Mantra Meditation
- Storytelling & Quiz Time
- Attractive Gifts
- Interactive fun games
- Krishna Kids Master Chef
- Temple Darshan
- Delicious Prasadam

Entry fee ₹1500/-

Carnival open to parents also with additional fee of ₹500/- per person

Only limited seats!

CONTESTS
- Coloring
- Painting
- Pencil Shading
- Handwriting
- Essay Writing

CONTEST DURATION
- October to December 2019

CONTEST FEE - ₹50/-

ORGANIZER PROVIDES
- Prasadam
- Certificate
- Mantra Card
- Awards for winners

For more details contact:
Mob: 9341124222 / 9341211119
www.iskconbangalore.org/goloka-shades/
**ISKCON PILGRIMAGES**

**Ahobilam Pilgrimage**

**Travel date:** Friday, Dec 13 (8 pm) to Monday, Dec 16 (6 am)  
**Amount:** ₹6200/- (AC Bus)  
(all inclusive – Doll charges extra for Sr. Citizens)

**Places of visit:** Ahobilam Nava Narasimha Temples (involves trekking)

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**Puri Pilgrimage**

"Jagannath-Lord of the Universe"

**Places of visit:**
Jagannatha temple, Gundicha temple, Alarnatha, Tota-Gopinatha, Sakshi-Gopala, Bhubaneshwar-Sun temple, sea bath and more

**Travel date:** Fri, Dec 20 to Tue, Dec 24, 2019  
**Amount:** ₹21,000/- + flight charges

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**Mayapur Pilgrimage**

**Mercy Unlimited**

**Travel date:** Wednesday, Dec 25 to Sunday, Dec 29, 2019  
**Amount:** ₹15,000/-  
(+ flight charges)

**Places to visit:** Yogapetha, Chandrodaya Mandir, Rajapur, Ekachakra, Shantipur, Panihati, Ganga bath and more

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**Puri & Mayapur Pilgrimage**

**Travel date:** Saturday, Feb 22 to Saturday, Feb 29  
**Amount:** ₹24,000/-  
(+ flight charge)

**Places of visit in Puri:** Puri Jagannath, Gundicha, Alarnath, Tota Gopinath, Gambhir, Sakshi Gopal, Bhubaneswar Lingaraj, Konark and many more...  
**Places of visit in Mayapur:** Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s birth place, Mayapur Chandrodaya, Rajapur, Navadipa, Ganga bath, Shantipur, Panihati and many more...

Join us for a spiritual and devotional retreat with ecstatic *kirtans*, *bhejans*, pastime narrations and delicious Krishna *prasadam*!

**For registration contact:** 93791 55555  
iskcon.pilgrimages@hkm-group.org

Limited seats on a first-come, first-served basis.
Bhoomi Puja of
Basil Woods International School,
an initiative of the devotees of ISKCON Bangalore

On the auspicious day of Vijayadashami, the devotees of ISKCON Bangalore performed the groundbreaking ceremony (Bhoomi Puja) of their international school campus in Gunjur, East Bangalore, on 8th October 2019.

Basil Woods International School is an initiative conceived by the devotees of ISKCON Bangalore and its first campus is being set up in an 8-acre integrated campus in Gunjur, off Whitefield, East Bangalore.

The school is planned to be a fusion of Indian traditional architectural style with all the modern amenities. Plans are on to make it a certified green campus with net-zero energy goals, which makes it a one-of-a-kind school project in the country. The infrastructure is designed to accommodate about 1500 students over a period of 4 years and is set to commence operations from the academic year 2020.

The vision is to create a transformative learning experience for the next-gen students by providing a unique combination of value education found in ancient Indian scriptures, along with a world-class academic curriculum.

The groundbreaking ceremony witnessed the presence of distinguished personalities like Dr. K. Kasturirangan (Former chairman of ISRO and Chair, National Education Policy, 2019),
Smt. Ashwini Nachappa (Renowned athlete and educationist) and Sri K. P. Mohan Raj, IAS (Commissioner, Directorate of Employment and Training, GoK)

His Grace Madhu Pandit Dasa, Chairman, Basil Woods International School and President, ISKCON Bangalore presided over the event. His Grace Chanchalapathi Dasa, Vice Chairman, Basil Woods and Senior Vice-President, ISKCON Bangalore was also present.

Former Minister and MLA of Mahadevapura constituency Sri Aravinda Limbavali, MLA of Anekal constituency Sri B. Shivanna and Neriga Grama Panchayat Chairman Smt. Shylaja Yogesh Reddy also graced the occasion.

Dr. Kasturirangan stressed on the need to close the gap between the existing education policies in the country to the needs of the present generation of students, in the context of technological proliferation and disruption. He expressed hope that this school will help develop holistic individuals who will be an asset to the society.

His Grace Madhu Pandit Dasa emphasized on the mission and vision of the upcoming school and assured that sincere efforts will be made to implement the ideas mentioned in the National Education Policy, 2019.

Renowned athlete Ashwini Nachappa recollected one of her conversations with His Grace Chanchalapati Dasa and expressed her happiness that he could make his dream of a school, a reality. MLA Sri B. Shivanna assured his complete cooperation for this project and its cause of providing value education to the next generation learners of the country.
VRINDAVAN KARTIK FESTIVAL

Sri Chaitanya Padukotsav

The paduka of Lord Chaitanya, worshipped at Dhameshwar Mahaprabhu temple in Navadwip, are the original paduka of Lord Chaitanya, personally worn by the Lord Himself. Lord Chaitanya gifted these paduka to His consort Srimati Vishnupriya Devi, before taking sannyasa. Srimati Vishnupriya Devi worshipped these paduka throughout Her life.

These original paduka came to Vrindavan on 21st Oct 2019 and were worshipped at the Vrindavan Chandrodaya Mandir on 21st and 22nd October 2019. On the 22nd evening, the paduka were taken in a grand procession, on a golden ratha, from the Vrindavan Chandrodaya Mandir to the Radha Damodar Mandir and worshipped there till 25th October 2019.

These original paduka of Lord Chaitanya were offered various sevas during the period of worship at Vrindavan Chandrodaya Mandir and Radha Damodar Mandir.
Dasara, a festival widely celebrated, depicts the glorious victory of Lord Rama over evil Ravana. In commemoration of this, every year, effigies of Ravana along with his brother are burnt to mark the victory of good over evil. ISKCON Bangalore, for the first time, celebrated the auspicious festival of Dasara on October 8, 2019 at National College Grounds in Basavanagudi, Bengaluru with the Ravana Dahana as the main event.

Despite the plans of the rain god, around 25,000 people assembled to relish the euphoric moments of the auspicious festival. As 50 feet high effigies of Ravana and Kumbhakarna were set ablaze, a tremendous roar of joy emerged from the assembled, followed by the chant "Jai Sri Ram." The experience was life-affirming, quoted many.
The celebrations commenced at the temple with the adorning of the Deities of Krishna and Balarama as Lord Rama and Lakshmana in special *alankara*.

The festival at the venue began in the afternoon with the Ramayana Costume Contest for kids. The other attractions of the event were Food Festival, *bhajans* and *kirtans* by devotees, followed by Rama Taraka Homa with the chanting of 108 holy names of Lord Ramachandra which was a rare opportunity for those assembled, to join the recitations.

The much-awaited devotional concert of Sri Vijay Prakash and team kicked off at 7:00 PM. Soon, Deepali Sathe, renowned Bollywood singer from Mumbai joined Vijay Prakash. The audience was immersed in devotional feelings as the duo performed popular Vaishnava songs, *bhajans* and ISKCON *kirtans*.

Among the top dignitaries who attended the occasion were Sri Mrutyunjay Mahapatra - MD and CEO of Syndicate Bank, Sri Tejasvi Surya – MP (Bangalore South), Dr. Uday B. Garudachar – MLA (Chickpet), His Grace Madhu Pandit Dasa - President, ISKCON Bangalore, His Grace Chanchalapathri Dasa – Senior Vice President, ISKCON Bangalore, Smt. Tejaswini Ananth Kumar - Managing Trustee of the Adamba Chetana Foundation and Sri D N Ramesh, Corporator of Sunkenahalli Ward.

Finally, around 8:45 PM, the main event of the Dasara celebrations, Ravana Dahana was carried out with eco-friendly fireworks that culminated the heart-warming celebrations.
Ten Qualities of Lord Rama

Lord Ramachandra is an ocean of transcendental qualities. We bring you a series of narrations from Ramayana, describing ten transcendental qualities of Lord Ramachandra.

https://bit.ly/2qoxwaA

The Glory of Radha Kunda

Radha Kunda is described by great sages as very dear to Lord Krishna. If one simply bathes once within those holy waters, one’s pure love of Krishna is fully aroused.


Srinivasa Acharya

Sri Srinivasa Acharya is one of the chief Vaishnava teachers in the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition. He wrote the famous Goswami-ashataka (eight prayers to the Six Gosvamis).

https://bit.ly/2MQ16wL

Go Poshana Seva

Lord Krishna is fondly called Gopala – the caretaker of cows. Support the Goshala at ISKCON Bangalore by contributing towards the feeding of a cow and receive the blessings of the Lord. To donate, visit: www.iskconbangalore.org/donations/go-poshana-seva

Reviews from tripadvisor

Magnificent temple: I went there for prayers; ending up being overwhelmed with the structure and magnitude of the whole set up. The prayer area is a joy, peace for the mind. - Banglorevist

Place with Positive Vibes: This is the place you will love to visit with your family. You will feel strong positive aura once you enter the main temple. Temple is very well managed and clean. It has ample space for 2 and 4 wheeler parking. Don’t miss to taste the food, coconut sweets and snacks. You will get everything at affordable price and worth a try. - 778sandeepr

Beautiful: Very organized and systematic in making sure there is no conjunction on the crowd. Clean and very pleasant. Well maintained, friendly care takers and very welcoming community. Majestic look and royal feeling as you enter in. - Angiexplores

Nice outing: It’s a nice outing. Grand place. Very religious but respects and welcomes everyone. Really beautiful. - Nd1234567

Beautiful temple: As a westerner I found the temple very beautiful and interesting. The monks were very friendly and made me feel welcome. - Paul M


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