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Vishesha Deepotsava
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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 ashramas, schools, temples and farm communities. He passed away in 1977, in Vrindavana, the place most sacred to Lord Krishna. His disciples and followers are carrying forward the movement he started.

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

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Life’s a puzzle, but it can be solved. In our search for answers, we tend to overlook the essential element of our identity—our soul. But when we understand who we are, then all of life’s pieces fall into place.
Who Are You?

You won't find out by examining your body's parts or even its colour, race, nationality, sex, or occupation. The search for identity must go beyond the body and mind.

A lecture in Bombay in December 1972, by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

sri bhagavan uvaca

idam sariram kaunteya ksetram ity abhidhiyate
etad yo vetti tam prahuh ksetrajna iti tad-vidah

“This body, O son of Kunti, is called the field, and one who knows this body is called the knower of the field.” (Bhagavad-gita 13.2)

Here Lord Krishna states that the "field" of the body (the kshetra) is different from the one who knows the body (the kshetrajna). So we should know, "I am not this body; it is my body." If we analyse, we may say, “This is my hand, this is my leg, this is my head.” But nobody says “I head” or “I hand.” So the I, the soul, is different from the body. For example, although I am living in this apartment, I am not this apartment.

But the modern civilization accepts the basic idea that "I am this body." Therefore people think, "I am an American," "I am an Indian," "I am a brahmana," "I am a man," "I am a woman," and so on. Life's a puzzle, but it can be solved.

In our search for answers, we tend to overlook the essential element of our identity - the soul. But when we understand who we are, then all of life's pieces fall into place. This conception is condemned; it is the conception of the animals. A dog does not know that the soul who has obtained the body of a dog is different from the dog body. But it is a fact that although the soul is put into that condition, he's different from the body. This is the Vedic information, and this is knowledge.

If you meditate on your body, you may ask, “Am I this finger?” The answer will be “No, I am not this finger. It is my finger.” Similarly, one can say, “This is my head, my leg, my body.” So by simple logic we can see that we are not the body. And here it is confirmed by the supreme authority, Krishna.

Now, the shastra [scripture] says, yasyatma-buddhih kunape tri-dhatuke ... sa eva go-kharah: “Anyone who identifies himself as his body, which is made of three elements mucus, bile, and air is no better than a cow or an ass.” Now, just try to understand what the modern civilization is. It is a combination of cows and asses, because everyone is thinking, "I am this body." Someone thinks, "I am an American," another thinks, "I am a Russian," and they both think, “Let us fight.” This is going on. The simple knowledge that “I am not this body” is lacking.

The Vedic declaration is aham brahmasmi, “I am spirit.” And also so ‘ham which means “I am qualitatively one with the Supersoul, Krishna.” As Krishna's form is sac-cid-ananda - eternal and full of knowledge and bliss, so I am also sac-cid-ananda, because I am part and parcel of Him. The difference is that while He is infinite, I am very minute.

A minute particle of gold is qualitatively the same as the vast mass of gold in the gold mine, and a minute drop of sea water is the same as the sea, qualitatively. It has the same chemicals. Similarly, we, being part and parcel of Krishna, are transcendental to material conditions, but we have artificially put ourselves into this material condition. This is called maya, illusion. We wanted to enjoy separately from Krishna, and therefore we have been put into a condition of illusion.

The material condition we are in is just like a dream. At night, when we dream, we forget this body. Although in the daytime I identify myself with my body, thinking, “I am an American,” “I am an Indian,” “I am a brahmana,” at night, when I sleep, I forget whether I am an American, an Indian, or a brahmana. Sometimes in a dream we go to a very nice place full of palaces and gardens, but as soon as the dream is over we are again on our bed. You see? This is our daily experience.

So, because we wanted to imitate Krishna, He has given us a temporary place of illusion, a place that is not factual. Sometimes we think we see water in the desert. That is illusion. There is no water, but we say, "Oh, there is a vast body of water!" And just as the foolish animals may run after the illusory water in the desert, we are running after the illusion of happiness in this material world.

There is no happiness here. At the far end of life we are disappointed and frustrated. When we can no longer enjoy...
our senses, we become very much depressed. You'll find that old men who are not spiritually inclined are very morose because they cannot enjoy their senses anymore. Sometimes they take medicine to make their senses strong, but how can it be done? It is hopeless. So we should understand that we are not this body and that bodily enjoyment, sense gratification, is illusion.

In another place in the Bhagavad-gita [6.21] you'll find this verse:

sukham atyantikam yat tad buddhi-grahyam atindriyam
vetti yatra na caivayam sthitas calati tattvatah

[To a devotee] Find this verse and read the translation.

Devotee: There are a few verses together. “In the stage of perfection called trance, or samadhi, one’s mind is completely restrained from material mental activities by practice of yoga. This perfection is characterized by one’s ability to see the Self by the pure mind and to relish and rejoice in the Self. In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness, realized through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he thinks there is no greater gain.”

Srila Prabhupada: So, all information is there in the Bhagavad-gita. If we want actual happiness, we have to purify our consciousness of everything material. That is the goal of everyone in the Krishna consciousness movement to come to the point of pure Krishna consciousness. That consciousness can be achieved by the grace of Krishna: athapi te deva padambuja-dvaya-prasada-lesanugrita eva hi janati tattvam bhagavan-mahimnah. Krishna cannot be understood by any method other than Krishna’s method, and that method is bhakti, devotional service.

The root of the word bhakti is bhaj, which means “to offer loving service unto the Lord.” And Krishna says, mahatmanas tu mam partha daivim prakrtim asritah: “Those who are broadminded take shelter of my spiritual potency and serve Me without deviation.” So devotional service is for mahatmas. A mahatma is one whose atma, or mind, has been expanded. Those who are thinking in terms of family, society, nation, religion, and so on are not mahatmas. They are ksudratmas, small- or cripple minded persons. Mahatmas think in a broader way. As Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, prthivite ache yata nagaradi grama sarvatra pracara haibe mora nama “In as many towns and villages as there are all over the world, My name will be celebrated.” He was not thinking in terms of “My village, My country, My society.” No, He was thinking in a broader way.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is Krishna, and Krishna thinks in terms of all living entities:
sarva-yonisu kaunteya murtayah sambhavanti yah tasam brahma mahad yonir aham bija-pradah pita “Of all living entities in all species of life, I am the father” [Bg. 14.4]. This is mahatma thinking. Krishna is thinking in terms of all living entities. People sometimes say Krishna is a Hindu God. Why a Hindu God? The dictionary may say that Krishna is a Hindu God, but in the Bhagavad-gita Lord Krishna Himself says, “I am the father of all living entities.” Why should He be the father of just Hindus or Indians? No, He is the supreme father of everyone.

Similarly, this Krishna consciousness movement is not a crippled or sectarian movement. It is a very broad movement that is inviting all living entities to come to Krishna, back home, back to Godhead.

So, we should not be cripple-minded and identify ourselves with the body. As Krishna says here, idam sariram kaunteya kshetram: “The body is the field of activities for the soul.” Suppose one is body conscious. He may undergo many severe exercises, and when his body becomes very stout and strong he's happy, because he is thinking “I am this body.” Similarly, by the process of Krishna consciousness you can make your body spiritually stronger. As you can make your body physically strong, you can make your body spiritually strong.

The word kshetra means “field” or “land.” By tilling the land you can produce nice grain or inferior grain, depending on how you work. The land is in your possession, and you can cultivate it as you like. Similarly, this body is “land,” and I am the “tiller.” By using the body in one way I can become spiritually advanced, and by using it in another way I can become materially advanced. It is up to me. To become spiritually advanced means to gradually forget that you are this material body and to realize, “I am Krishna’s; I am brahman [spirit].” That is what it means to be spiritually advanced. And to become materially advanced means to think “I am this body,” “I am an American,” “I am an Indian,” “I am a brahmana,” “I am a man,” “I am a woman.” This is material advancement. Both ways are open to us.
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We should always remember that we are now not animals but human beings. Therefore we can utilize our body according to our choice. In this chapter Krishna explains how we can utilize our body to become spiritually advanced. If we simply limit ourselves to struggling for the bodily necessities of life, we are just like the animals. Eating, sleeping, sexual intercourse, and defending - these are common to both human beings and cats and dogs. But because I am a human being, I can utilize my body to understand God. The cats and dogs cannot do this. That is the difference between a human being and an animal. And if you don't utilize your body to understand God, then you're no better than the cats and dogs.

Animal life means sinful life, and this human life is also sinful unless we come to the Krishna consciousness platform. If one acts sinfully, he may lose this human form of life. Suppose you act like the hogs and do not discriminate in the matter of eating. Hogs will eat even stool. So, in your next life you will get the body of a hog. As Lord Rsabhadeva advises His sons:

\[ \text{nayam deho deha-bhajam nr-loke kastan kaman arhate vid-bhujam ye} \\
\text{tapo divyam putraka yena sattvam suddhyed yasmad brahma-saukhyam tv anantam} \]

"My dear sons, don't use this body as the hogs do the whole day and night searching after stool to eat. Purify yourselves by austerity and come to the platform of eternal happiness."

Hogs become very stout and strong by eating stool, and then they enjoy sex without any discrimination with their mother, sister, or anyone. The dogs also have no courtesy or shame. In the street they're having sex. And now human civilization is also coming to this. In India it has not yet come to this, but in the Western countries public sex is a common affair. Young men and women are embracing and kissing, and sometimes they're sexually engaged on the sea beach or in the garden. We have seen it.

So, practically speaking people are coming to the hogs' and dogs' life. This is their advancement of civilization. Why? On account of the bodily concept of life: "I am this body." Therefore, one should first of all understand that the soul is different from the body. The human body has been awarded to us so we can utilize it as we like. We can utilize it like the cats and dogs and hogs, or we can utilize it like a deva, a demigod. That is up to us. We have a little independence.

But the shastra says we should not utilize this body like the dogs and hogs. And if we ignore the shastra, we will suffer. As Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita [16.23]:

\[ \text{yah sastra-vidhim utsrjya vartate kama-karatah} \\
\text{na sa siddhim avapnoti na sukham na param gatim} \]

"Anyone who does not care for the instructions given in the shastras cannot achieve any perfection or happiness." Suppose someone doesn't care for the law of the state. What kind of man is he? He's an outlaw; he's not a respectable citizen, and he will suffer punishment at the hands of the police. Similarly, anyone who does not follow the shastras injunctions is violating God's law, and he must be punished by material nature. Therefore we have to follow the shastric injunctions if we want happiness.

The Bhagavad-gita, the Puranas, the Vedanta-sutra - these shastras are meant to help revive our Krishna consciousness. They give us transcendental knowledge. And the first, essential knowledge is to know, "I am not this body."

We have to transcend the bodily concept of life. The bodily concept of life means absorption in sense gratification. That's all. Because a person thinks "I am this body," he must try to satisfy his eyes by seeing something beautiful, and he must try to satisfy his tongue by eating so many abominable things. These things may be forbidden in the shastras, but because his tongue wants them he must eat them. So the bodily concept of life means to be forced to satisfy the gross material senses.

But gradually, by training ourselves in Krishna consciousness, we will desire more and more to satisfy Krishna. Now we are satisfying our senses - that is the result of the bodily concept of material existence. And when we train ourselves how to satisfy Krishna, oh, that is the perfection of our life. That is Krishna consciousness. Thank you very much. Hare Krishna.

Srila Prabhupada, the founder-acharya of ISKCON, has delivered more than 1500 lectures on Vedic scriptures like Bhagavad-gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Chaitanya-charitamrita. The audio recording of his lectures are available in ISKCON centers. You can also hear some of these lectures in www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada-lectures
S R I L A  P R A B H U P A D A  S P E A K S O U T

We Don't Begin from Zero

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (and some of his disciples) took place in July 1975 on an early-morning walk in Chicago.

Srila Prabhupada: Where does Darwin begin?
Devotee: He begins in the ocean. He says that some fish-like animal climbed out of the ocean and began to breathe the air.
Srila Prabhupada: Then where did the ocean come from?
Devotee: He doesn't say.
Srila Prabhupada: Then his theory is not perfect.
Devotee: Scientists say there was great turbulence on this planet in the beginning.

The oceans were stirring, and then some lightning charges occurred.

Srila Prabhupada: From where did the lightning come? And from where did the ocean come? Where is his philosophy? It is a speculation.
Devotee: They say it all began from a primeval explosion.
Srila Prabhupada: Then I ask the same question: Where from did the explosion come?
Devotee: They say that the explosion took place at time zero. [Laughter]
Srila Prabhupada: Time zero?
Devotee: Time began then, at time zero. And they say that the...
question "What was before that?" is not a logical, sensible question.

Srila Prabhupada: Why?

Devotee: They say it's a question that should not even be asked.

Srila Prabhupada: No, then they are rascals. They are beginning from zero. How can you begin from zero?

Devotee: Everything comes from nothing then.

Srila Prabhupada: That is not philosophy.

Devotee: They say it all originates from a giant mass of primordial matter.

Srila Prabhupada: Then the same question arises: From where did the matter come?

Devotee: They say it's an accident.

Srila Prabhupada: So that is rascaldom. Where is the accident? Nothing is accidental. Everything happens by cause and effect. The Bible says that in the beginning there was God, or the word of God. So God was there. That is the beginning. In our philosophy, too, that is the beginning. The Srimad-Bhagavatam gives evidence: janmady atma yatah... aham evasam evagre. And the Bhagavad-gita: aham sarvasya prabhavo matah sarvam pravartate. This is our philosophy. Everything begins from God.

Now you can ask, "From where did God come?" But that is God. God is existing. He is not caused by any other cause. He is the original cause. Anadidhi: He has no beginning, but He is the beginning of everything. This is the conception of God given in the statements of Brahma: anadidhi govidah. That adi is the original person, Govinda, Krishna. We find this in the Vedic history. Brahma is there in the beginning. He is a deva, one of the demigods the first demigod.

Now Krishna says, aham adir hi devanam:

He is the cause of the demigods. He is the cause of Brahma also. So this is our philosophy. We don't begin from zero or from an accident.

Devotee: Darwin never tried to understand the Vedic philosophy.

Srila Prabhupada: No, no, he admitted that he speculated. He is not a philosopher: he is a speculator. He has admitted: "It is my speculation. I think like this."

Devotee: He started his speculation from the creation of life.

Srila Prabhupada: Anywhere, speculation is neither science nor philosophy.

Devotee: They call the Vedas speculation. They say the Upanishads are speculation.

Srila Prabhupada: No, no, no, not speculation. Sri Ishopanishad says, isavasyam idam sarvam: everything is beginning from the isha, the supreme controller. Where is the speculation in the Vedas?

Devotee: They say the Vedas are written by man. Therefore they are imperfect.

Srila Prabhupada: What is your philosophy? It is written by man. What is the value of your philosophy? It is speculation. We don't say that the Vedas are written by man. They come from a transcendental source. The words spoken by the Lord are called apauruseya, which indicates that they are not delivered by any mundane person.

They may say whatever they like, but we don't accept it. Suppose somebody says, "Your father's name is so-and-so." What is his authority to say what my father's name is? I know very well,

So their suggestion is like that: "Your father's name is this." Is that a very good suggestion? We can challenge: "You don't know anything about my family. How can you say, 'Your father's name is this'?"

Is it not rascaldom? You do not know anything about my family, and you say, "Your father's name is this." What is this logic?

Devotee: Darwin's whole theory rests on the fact that he showed bones and archaeological evidence.

Srila Prabhupada: Anyway, it is not possible that he has seen all the bones. So taking it that he has studied by seeing the bones, I can say very easily that it is not possible for a person like him to see all the bones. That is my challenge.

He says, "Millions and millions of years ago..." But he lived for fifty years. How has he seen all the bones? He is a limited person.

Devotee: They admit they haven't found all the bones, but they say that what they have found is conclusive evidence.

Srila Prabhupada: But they cannot say that. If you have seen all the bones, then you can conclude. But they say some of the bones are missing. Therefore their theory is always imperfect.

Devotee: Just this year they found a skull that was millions of years older than any human skull they found before.

Srila Prabhupada: That's all right. But still they cannot say they have found all the skulls. They simply guess: "There is some gap of millions of years."

Devotee: They even say that the missing link is the most important part.

Srila Prabhupada: So that is not science. Therefore we say they are rascals. And other rascals will believe them.
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How He Creates

Did a supremely intelligent being create the universe?

The elaborate Vedic description of creation can make even an atheist curious.

by Mathuresha Dasa

The universe around us appears to be orderly and symmetrical. Our bodies possess complex circulatory, respiratory, and digestive systems. Even the atoms are highly structured. All this suggests that the universe was created not by chance, but by an intelligent person. If human beings can create houses, skyscrapers, and many other structures, it is plausible that a person far more powerful than any human created the universe and everything in it.

But although the design evident in every corner of the visible world strongly indicates the plan of an intelligent creator (God), by logic alone we cannot be absolutely certain that He exists. The origin of the cosmos is beyond our experience. We did not observe the creation of the universe, and for all we know it could have happened in any number of ways that we have not considered or are unable to consider. On the platform of logic, therefore, the debate over whether or not there is a Supreme Being, a Creator, must always end in stalemate.

The Vedic literature confirms that we cannot conclusively understand the Supreme Being by logic alone. The Bhagavad-gita declares that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, who is the creator of both this universe and the spiritual world beyond it, can be understood only by His mercy, when He is pleased to reveal Himself to His faithful devotees. Although our logic and mental gymnastics cannot rise to embrace the Lord, He can by His omnipotence pierce through the uncertainty and ignorance of His faithful servants and show Himself to them.

While confirming the fallibility of human reasoning, however, the Vedas do not recommend that we abandon reason. If we lack a deep philosophical understanding of God, our faith in Him tends toward sentiment and fanaticism and easily falls prey to atheistic arguments. The Vedic literature therefore includes all manner of logical arguments including the argument from design indicating that the universe is the work of a supremely powerful person. But the Vedic literature goes further as well, describing in detail the stages of creation, the age and dimensions of the universe, the purpose of the creation, and the origin of the material elements. The Vedic literature, in other words, not only proclaims “God created” but also tells us how and why He created.

To begin with, the Vedic literature asserts that the Supreme Lord is not obliged to participate directly in the creative work. While theists sometimes conceive of God as an extremely hardworking old man, who has little time off from His duties as creator, the Vedic literature explains that God creates by His desire alone, without having to exert Himself in the least. Since He possesses unlimited power and wealth, He can, like any wealthy person, get others to do the work for Him. If a wealthy financier wants to construct an office building, he doesn't do everything himself. He conceives a general plan or chooses a building site, then hires lawyers, architects, engineers, contractors, and so on to execute his will. The financier doesn't have to dig the foundation, pour the cement, or lay the bricks.

Like the wealthy financier, the Supreme Lord is aloof from the work of creation, but just how He delegates the creative duties, and to whom, is unique. Unlike ordinary persons, Krishna can expand Himself into innumerable forms, known as plenary expansions, who are equal to Him in power and opulence. These expansions are all the same Personality of Godhead, Krishna Himself, and yet at the same time They are individuals with independent thoughts and actions. Brahma-samhita gives the analogy that just as one candle can light many other candles, each with the
same power to illuminate, so Krishna, the original Personality of Godhead, can expand Himself into innumerable plenary forms and still maintain His identity as the supreme, original person.

A person’s appearance on millions of television screens at once partially illustrates Krishna’s power to expand, the difference being that the television expansions are only images of the original person and must move and speak as that person does, whereas Krishna’s expansions, although non-different from Him, can act as They please. They are not mere images, but complete individuals.

While the wealthy financier must employ others to fulfill his desires, Krishna creates the universe through these individual expansions of His own self. Further elucidating this transcendental phenomenon, the Shvetasvatara Upanishad explains that to achieve our goals, we rely on three attributes, knowledge (jnana), strength (bala), and activity (kriya). To construct a large building, for example, the architects and engineers need sufficient knowledge of the building sciences, the construction company must have sufficient strength in the form of manpower and machines, and everyone has to engage in various activities. The Supreme Lord, however, possesses within Himself all knowledge, all strength, and all potential to act and can therefore accomplish anything He wants. By investing these powers in His various expansions. Krishna effortlessly executes the business of creation. The financier works through his money, while Krishna works through His personal expansions and energies.

Krishna’s ability to expand Himself is inconceivable beyond the range of ordinary logic. But it is inconceivable only in that we human beings cannot do it and have not seen anyone else do it. Otherwise, accepting that God is all-powerful, nothing He does is inconceivable. Rather, His apparently inconceivable attributes serve as testimony to His omnipotence. Therefore the Vedic literature, by describing Krishna’s attributes in detail, does not preclude a logical approach to understanding the Supreme Lord, but rather draws our use of logic onto a higher, transcendent platform.

Krishna’s first expansion for the creation is Maha-Vishnu, who begins by manifesting the material elements from His transcendental body. Modern scientists will object to the mention of a creator. The material energy is eternal, they say, so why bring in God? But the Vedic literatures respond that Maha-Vishnu is also eternal and that the material elements are His eternal energy. God and His energy are like the sun and the sunshine, which exist simultaneously, although one is the origin of the other. Both God and the material energy are eternal, and yet God is the source of the material energy.

We might also wonder how Maha-Vishnu could perform the gigantic act of creating all the material elements without becoming totally depleted, dispersing Himself into the elemental creation. Materially speaking, when we take something from a particular source, we gradually exhaust that source. Withdraw money from your bank account, and the balance goes down. Pour water from a glass, and the glass empties. Take milk from a cow, and the cow gradually dries up unless she can replenish her supply from a pasture or feed bin. Since God is by definition the source of everything, there is nothing outside of Him to replenish Him. So what happens to Maha-Vishnu when He creates the material elements from Himself?

The Ishopanishad says that nothing happens to Him at all. Maha-Vishnu is unaffected and unchanged, even while supplying an unlimited quantity of elements. How could this be? Because depletion and exhaustion are properties of matter. Maha-Vishnu, however, is not matter, but pure spirit, and therefore He has no material properties. He produces the complete cosmic manifestation from His own form, yet remains perfect and complete. As Krishna expands into Maha-Vishnu without changing His form or identity, so Maha-Vishnu creates the material elements, yet remains complete in Himself.

The Srimad-Bhagavatam informs us that from the material elements Maha-Vishnu produces not one, but innumerable universes, or, rather, universal shells. These gigantic shells are hollow spheres. The lower half is filled with water, and the upper half is at least initially empty. The Bhagavatam also states that our particular universe is the smallest of all the universes, and yet the

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<td>Oct 24 Ekadashi</td>
<td>Oct 13 Fourth month of Chaturmasya begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 25 break fast</td>
<td>Fasting from urad dal for one month</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 8 Ekadashi</td>
<td>Karthika month begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 9 break fast</td>
<td>Deepotsava begins (in ISKCON Bangalore)</td>
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<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Oct 29 Govardhana Puja, Go Puja</td>
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<td>Oct 31 Srila Prabhuapa - Disappearance</td>
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<td>Nov 8 Srila Gaura Kishora Dasa Babaji - Disappearance</td>
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space inside the shell measures four billion miles in diameter, while the shell itself is billions of miles thick.

Maha-Vishnu expands His personality and enters each universe as Garbhodakashayi Vishnu. Garbhodakashayi Vishnu then generates Brahma, the first living entity in the universe. Although Lord Brahma is an eternal, individual person, he is not a plenary expansion of the Lord. He, like you and me, is a jiva-tattva expansion, in quality equal with Krishna but quantitatively minute. The jiva-tattva expansions are part and parcel of Krishna, and as such their eternal, blissful function is to render loving service to Him. In fact, they have no other function, just as a finger has no other function than to render service to the entire body. When the jiva souls are separated from the eternal service of Lord Krishna, they lose their eternal blissful nature, just as a finger loses its very life when severed from the body.

Before coming to the material creation, the jiva souls live in the eternal spiritual world, which lies beyond the material universes. There they act in their relationships as servants, friends, and associates of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna. Since these relationships with Krishna are based solely on love, however, the jiva souls have a minute degree of independence: they can choose to remain subordinate to the all-powerful Supreme Person, or they can desire to neglect His service and become independent lords themselves. Without this choice, this freedom to serve or not to serve, there is no question of loving God, since love is necessarily an act of free will. A minority of jiva souls, misusing their independence, desire to enjoy life without Krishna.

It is to fulfill as well as to reform this unnatural desire of a relatively small number of jivas that Lord Krishna creates the material world. Walled within the shells of material universes, the independently-minded jivas are awarded bodies in any of the millions of species and are allowed to forget their eternal life of bliss and knowledge with Krishna. According to Bhagavad-gita, a jiva soul is situated in each living body just as a driver is situated in an automobile. The driver is different from his car, although he directs its movements. Similarly, the jiva soul, although doggedly trying to enjoy a body made of the material elements, is separate from it. Each kind of body from the microbe to the human being affords the jiva a particular kind of sense enjoyment, a different means for trying to satisfy his godless longings.

Within each of the innumerable universes, Garbhodakashayi Vishnu expands as Kshirodakashayi Vishnu, who then expands Himself unlimitedly to enter the hearts of all the living entities in His particular universe. This expansion of Krishna is known as Paramatma, the Supersoul, who accompanies each jiva soul in his search for material pleasure. In the Gita, Lord Krishna says that, as the Supersoul. He directs the jivas’ search by supplying them with memory, knowledge, and forgetfulness. At death, the jiva soul is taken from his present body and prepared for his next birth in one of the 8,400,000 species. All this is arranged by the Lord in the heart. The human body is just suitable for austerity, self-realization, and reawakening Krishna consciousness, but if a human being acts and desires like an animal, he is allowed, in his next life, to enjoy in the body of an animal.

In marked contrast to the jiva soul, the Supersoul, although situated within the material body, is never controlled by a desire to enjoy matter. Krishna and His expansions are the controllers of the material energy, whereas the jiva, as long as he desires to forget Krishna, is controlled by the same energy. In the Upanishads the jiva soul and the Supersoul are compared to two birds sitting in the same tree of the body. One bird (the jiva) tries to enjoy the fruits on the tree, material pleasures, forgetting the other bird (the Supersoul), who is patiently watching. The Supersoul observes and directs the jiva's activities, unaffected by material desire. Only the jiva souls assume material bodies and try to enjoy matter.

We all have experienced, however, that this material world is not a place of unadulterated enjoyment. In fact, it is sometimes argued that even if there is a God. He could not he good or just. since His creation is filled with disease, old age, death, and many other miseries. Krishna, however, creates the material world not just for our independent sense enjoyment, but also to remind us that enjoyment outside of His service is illusory. When a man goes mad, forgetting his friends, relatives, and his own self, whatever enjoyment he experiences in that maddened state is worthless. In the same way, the jiva souls have forgotten their eternal relationship with their dearmost friend, Krishna. Until they re-establish that relationship, they will be able to realize but a small fraction of their potential for happiness, even if they acquire wealth, fame, beauty, education, and other temporary material advantages. The material desires are designed to remind the jiva that the material creation is foreign to him, and thus they evince God’s concern for our true welfare. The jiva who comes to his senses and practices Krishna consciousness can very quickly return to the spiritual world.

Lord Brahma, the first jiva soul in each universe, is in charge of constructing all the planets and planetary systems. He is also in charge of creating the 8,400,000 species of life, including aquatics, insects, plants, birds, animals, and human beings. Inspired and empowered by Garbhodakashayi Vishnu, Brahma assembles the creation using the material elements. Starting from just above the waters of the ocean that fill half the universe and extending up to his own planet in the topmost reaches of the dome of universal space, Brahma
constructs fourteen planetary systems, one above the other. The earth planet is in the seventh of those fourteen planetary systems.

Brahma doesn't create his own materials - the elements and even in manipulating them he is dependent on Lord Vishnu for guidance and inspiration. Nor does Brahma create the life which animates each body, for life is not the result of a combination of the material elements. Brahma only assists in creating the bodily vehicles, while the life, the eternal jiva souls, is supplied by the Supreme Lord.

Of the many differences between this short description of Brahma's creation and currently popular scientific descriptions, two are especially important. The first is that the Vedic literature portrays the original creature in each universe as highly intelligent, more so than even the greatest modern scientist. Brahma's intelligence, and his resultant creative accomplishments, are surpassed only by Lord Vishnu Himself. Modern scientists, on the other hand, assert that the original creature in the universe was a microbe, and that the forefathers of modern man were apes and cave-dwellers.

The second contrast is that the Vedic literature asserts that all species were produced more or less simultaneously at the beginning of the creation, while popular evolutionary theory holds that the species have gradually evolved. According to the evolutionists, aquatics evolved into land animals and land animals evolved only a relatively short time ago into human beings. Evolutionists acknowledge, however, that one of the many flaws in their theories is that there is still more than a century after Darwin's debut no fossil record showing one species evolving from another. For dedicated Darwinists this lack of evidence is only an impetus to revamp their theories. But for the dedicated devotee of Krishna it is a confirmation of the Vedic version that all species of life, including the civilized human beings, have existed since the dawn of creation.

In this connection it is also interesting to note the Vedic calculations of the age of the universe. The Vedic literature states that Lord Brahma lives for one breath of Maha-Vishnu. When Maha-Vishnu exhales, the material elements and universes emanate from Him, and when He inhales, the universes are destroyed and merge back into His body. Thus the universes and their respective Brahmans are created and destroyed with every breath of Maha-Vishnu. The entire cycle - one breath of Maha-Vishnu, or one lifetime of Brahma - takes 310 trillion solar years. According to Srimad-Bhagavatam, Brahma's life is half over at present, which means that this universe has existed, along with all the species, for 155 trillion years.

There are many other contrasts between the Vedic version of creation and other versions, both theistic and atheistic. The Bhagavatam and other Vedic texts analyze the relation of time to the universe and to the Supreme Lord, the role and development of each material element, the origin of gravity, and many other details of the creation. At each step the Vedas reveal a unique understanding of the creative process.

Many people will argue that few if any of the Vedic descriptions can be scientifically proven. But neither can they be "scientifically" disproven. How can you prove or disprove the gigantic form of Maha-Vishnu? And why should we not at least consider the Vedic literature as evidence? It is the oldest, most voluminous, and most consistent body of literature known to man, and it contains information not only of the creative process, but of every science human society needs, including medicine, economics, and so on. By its comprehensive nature alone, the Vedic literature deserves serious study by researchers in every field.

Devotees of Krishna accept Vedic statements as evidence as axiomatic truths not due merely to the length and detail of the Vedic texts, but because the author of the Vedas is Krishna. In the Bhagavad-gita Krishna says, "By all the Vedas, I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of Vedanta, and I am the knower of the Vedas." For the devotees, at least, statements made by the Absolute Truth are perfect evidence, irrefutable proof.
The Akshaya Patra Foundation’s High-Tech Centralized Kitchen at Singupuram, Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh was launched by Hon’ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Sri Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and sponsored by Aurobindo Pharma Ltd on Sept. 6, 2019.

The Himalaya Drug Company donated two Akshaya Patra vehicles. CEO – Mr. Philipe Haydon & CFO – Mrs. Jayashree Ullal handing over the vehicle keys to Sri Chanchalapathi Dasa, Vice-Chairman of The Akshaya Patra Foundation.
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The grace of the Lord when Shani (Saturn) distressed Kanchipurama

One day, while Kanchipurama was performing his usual fanning service to the Supreme Lord of Kanchipuram, Varadaraja Perumal, the Lord informed him that his time was not good and he may have to bear separation from his Lord for seven long years. Kanchipurama confessed to the Lord that separation from Him for seven long years was unbearable for him. Then the Lord said at least for seven months he would have to be separated from Him, due to the effects of the planetary transition of Shani (Saturn). The Lord went on to explain that once born on earth, everyone has to undergo the effects of the planets on them and cannot escape from it. Kanchipurama told the Lord that just as Sita Devi could not bear His separation and Nammalvar could not even be separate from the Lord even for a minute, he too would not be able to undergo this.

So the all-merciful Lord implored Kanchipurama to bear separation for 7½ nazhika duration of time (one minute=2.5 nazhika). After this incident, one day, to everyone’s dismay, Lord Varadaraja Perumal’s diamond necklace was lost. The King suspected all the priests of the temple, who when asked, told the king that they all suspected Kanchipurama, for it was he who stayed in the temple after they all departed for the night. The King ordered that Kanchipurama, imprisoned and the case investigated. Meanwhile, the 7½ nazhika duration had passed. Sri Varadaraja Perumal appeared to the King in a dream and dispelled his misconception, assuring him that the diamond necklace was between the Lord’s garlands. The king and the other priests, realizing their mistake, released Kanchipurama and apologised to him, understanding his greatness. When Kanchipurama returned to the temple and the Lord’s sanctum, Varadaraja Perumal enquired whether he had to suffer much. Kanchipurama very humbly replied that the only suffering he underwent was the separation from the Lord for the 7½ nazhika duration. The Lord was jubilant to hear this.

The glory of the dust from the feet of Kanchipurama

Once Kanchipurama saw a person from a place called Valluva Kulam applying the dust which his feet had trodden after he had taken his holy bath, all over his body. When Kanchipurama approached him and asked him the reason for his doing so, the person replied that since the Lord Himself was daily conversing with Kanchipurama, Kanchipurama himself is the Lord for him. He also requested Kanchipurama to enquire from the Lord whether he would be granted moksha. So during his daily conversation with Varadaraja Perumal, Kanchipurama narrated this incident, and Varadaraja Perumal, pleased with the person’s devotion to Kanchipura and to show the world the greatness of a Vaishnava, granted that person from Valluva salvation – moksha. Such is the glory of dust from Kanchipura’s lotus feet.

Swami Ramanuja at Kanchipuram

With the blessings of the Lord, Sri Ramanuja was born to Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji and Kanthimathi in Sriperubudur near Kanchipuram. Sri Asuri Keshava Somayaji had performed all necessary duties for his son Ramanuja, like upanayana (thread ceremony) and vidyabhyasam (initiation to education). Sri Ramanuja was then taken under the tutelage of Sri Yadavaprakasha, the Advaita guru, under whose guidance he was learning the Vedas. But Ramanuja was not satisfied with the Advaita interpretation of the Vedas of his teacher, so he often questioned and offered different explanation to the questions. Guru Yadavaprakasha, jealous about Ramanuja’s zeal and interpretations of the Vedas, decided to put him to death by pushing him into the Ganges River while on pilgrimage to North India. But with the help of his cousin (his aunt’s son) Govinda, Sri Yadavaprakasha’s intentions were exposed and Ramanuja escaped near Vindhya mountains. He was lost in the forest, not knowing how to return. A hunter and his wife met him on the way and helped Ramanuja reach Kanchipuram. When they neared the city, the wife asked for water and Ramanuja went to a well nearby to fetch her water. On his return, he found that they had both disappeared. Ramanuja later perceived them to be Lord Varadaraja and Perundevi Thayar (Mahalakshmi of Kanchipuram) Herself.

Upon reaching Kanchipuram, Ramanuja met Kanchipura and decided to dedicate his life to the service of Varadaraja Perumal. He requested Kanchipurama to ask the Lord in what way he could serve Him. Lord Varadaraja conveyed to Kanchipura to counsel Ramanuja to do the service of fetching water for temple needs, since Sri Perundevi Mahalakshmi had asked him for water. Meanwhile Ramanuja continued
his study under Yadavaprakasha, even though the former knew of his intentions. But Ramanuja was now immersed in the service of the Lord and was neither scared nor apprehensive of being in the presence of Yadavaprakasha. It should to be noted here that Yadavaprakasha later converted to Srivaishnavism and accepted the discipleship of Ramanuja. He took sannyasa and was named Govinda Jeeyar. With the mercy of the Lord, disciple became the guru and reformed a Mayavada philosopher.

Facilitating Yadavaprakasha to become Sri Ramanuja's disciple

One day Sri Yadavaprakasha's mother dreamt of Lord Varadaraja telling her to convey to her son to accept Sri Ramanuja as his guru and become a Vaishnava sannyasi. When she conveyed this dream to her son, Sri Yadavaprakasha accepted it, but was also confused as regards to his earlier dharma, wherein he had renounced all karma including the sacred thread when he had become an Advaita sannyasi. Then his mother came to his rescue by offering to ask Kanchipurna to get an answer from the Lord Himself. When asked, the Lord told Kanchipurna to ask Yadavaprakasha to circumambulate Sri Ramanuja, which is equivalent to circumambulating the Earth (one of the prayashchita or remedial measures for renouncing the sacred thread worn by brahmanas), which he conveyed to his mother, thereby facilitating Yadavaprakasha to become Sri Ramanuja's disciple.

The Six Words

Sri Ramanuja was constantly and unwaveringly performing his duties of fetching water at the temple and studying under Yadavaprakasha, who, learning that Perumal and Thayar had rescued Ramanuja, asked Ramanuja to return to study.

Sri Yamunacharya, who was not just the guru of Kanchipurna, but the leader of Srivaishnavas as well, had his headquarters at Srirangam. He learnt of the above incidents and expressed a desire to meet Sri Ramanuja, for he saw in him the beacon light that would help in establishing Vishistadvaita-Srivaishnava philosophy. Sri Yamunacharya journeyed to Kanchipuram to meet Sri Ramanuja. There, Kanchipurna pointed out Sri Ramanuja among the group of disciples of Yadavaprakasha to Sri Yamunacharya, who gave Ramanuja his blessings, recognizing in him the foremost guru.

Kanchipurma hence became a medium for facilitating the meeting between Sri Yamunacharya and Ramanuja. After sometime, Sri Yamunacharya's health deteriorated and realizing that the time had come to leave his body, he asked his disciple Mahapurna to fetch Sri Ramanuja from Kanchipuram. Before Sri Ramanuja's arrival, Sri Yamunacharya passed away, leaving three of his fingers unclosed as a gist of all that he wanted to convey to Sri Ramanuja. Upon Sri Ramanuja's arrival, Sri Yamunacharya's disciples convey to him that the 3
unclosed fingers might signify 3 unfulfilled wishes of Sri Yamunacharya. By the grace of Lord Narayana, Swami Ramanuja realized the 3 wishes and pledged to complete these:

1. To write a commentary on Brahma-sutra of Bhodayana
2. To name someone as Parashara
3. To write a commentary on Nammalwar's scripture, Thiruvaimozhi

Upon his pledge, Sri Yamunacharya’s three unclosed fingers close and Ramanuja returned to Kanchipuram without paying obeisance to Lord Ranganatha, in his anger towards Him for his not being able to meet Sri Yamunacharya alive.

When Ramanuja began to think of writing a commentary to Brahma-sutra, he faced some difficulty from the point of the Vishistadvaita. Therefore, he asked Kanchipuram to ask the Lord regarding the same, as Kanchipurna was the only person empowered to converse with Him.

When Kanchipurna presented Ramanuja’s question to Lord Varadaraja, He gave Kanchipurna six words which later became the crux of Srivaishnava philosophy:

1. Aham eva Param Tattvam – I (Narayana) am the ultimate and transcendental truth and Brahman.
2. Darshanam bhedayevacha – Paramatma and jivatma are two separate entities.
3. Upayeshu prapatisyat – Surrender to the Lord by engaging in practical devotional service is the solution to attain moksha or liberation.
4. Anthimamriti varjanam – The Lord possesses the sole discretion regarding moksha of a jiva after his death.
5. Dehavasane muktisyat – Salvation after the death of the body (present life).
6. Purnacharyam samashraya - Accept Mahapurna as a spiritual master.

Kanchipurna dines at Sri Ramanuja’s house

It was Sri Ramanuja’s desire that Kanchipurna should dine at his home, so that he could have the remnants, for it is said that that to consume food left over after a Vaishnava has consumed it is meritorious.

But Lord Varadaraja did not approve of this intention of Sri Ramanuja, since it was against varnashrama dharma, as Kanchipurna was a vaishya and Ramanuja a brahmana. Thus, the Lord told Kanchipurna to go to Sri Ramanuja’s house before Ramanuja arrived, partake of the meal and leave. Accordingly, Kanchipurna went to Ramanuja’s house and finding his wife (Ramanuja was married to a young orthodox lady, Rakshambal), asked her for food, saying that he was hungry. She served him and he left after the meal.

Meanwhile Ramanuja went to the temple to invite Kanchipurna to his house. Not finding Kanchipurna there, he returned home to find his wife bathing, saying she had got impure due to the water spilling on her when she was cleaning the place after Kanchipurna had taken food and left. Sri Ramanuja was angry at all this.

Kanchipurna’s parents’ acceptance

Hearing about Kanchipurna’s glories, his parents realized and acknowledged their mistake and came to their son to request him to return to Poonthamalli (his birthplace). But Kanchipurna refused to go to Poonthamalli, and explained to them that it is impossible for him to remain separate from the Lord for even a day. So his parents and relatives prayed to Lord Varadaraja to send Kanchipurna at least for a day to Poonthamalli. The Lord, granting their request and prayer, asked Kanchipurna to go to his parents for one day and grant their wishes. Kanchipurna told the Lord that it is unbearable for him to be separate from Him. Then the all-merciful Lord assured Kanchipurna that He Himself would give him darshana at Poonthamalli.

Kanchipurna finally agreed to visit Poonthamalli and all through the day there, he awaited to have darshana of his beloved Lord. But only at dawn the next day did Kanchipurna get His Lord’s darshana, along with Lord Ranganatha and Lord Venkateshwara. His parents also had the Lord’s darshana and surrendered and prayed to Him for salvation. The Lord granted them salvation.

At the temple in Poonthamalli, one can have the darshana of Lord Varadaraja with a brilliant halo, since He appeared to Kanchipurna and his parents during dawn. Kanchipurna dedicated all the remaining wealth of his parents to Lord Varadaraja in the form of jewels and returned to Kanchipuram.

Acceptance of diksha by Kanchipurna

Kanchipurna was continuing his service to Lord Sri Varadaraja Perumal, when once his fan slipped and fell on the Lord. Kanchipuram immediately realised he had become old and had no control over his limbs, which had become weak, and that the time for him to leave this material world had come. Kanchipurna requested the Lord to grant him moksha. This is the moment when the most unexpected of events happened. Sri Varadaraja Perumal said that granting moksha to Kanchipurna was not possible, as he did not yet have Vaishnava association, as it is impossible for anyone to get moksha without Vaishnava association.

Kanchipurna replied that he had been under the tutelage of Sri Yamunacharya himself, to which Perumal said that He was the one who had sent Kanchipurna to Yamunacharya, so that did not count as diksha. Interestingly the Lord added, “Neer veesiner, Naan pessinen” in Tamil, which means, “You fanned Me and

Hearing about Kanchipurna’s...
I spoke with you, which doesn't mean I would give you moksha."

This incident highlights the regard the Supreme Lord has for devotees and how we should respect fellow devotees, as only association of a Vaishnava can give a person moksha. Kanchipurna then decided to "earn" some association of Vaishnavas.

Kanchipurna took leave from Lord Varadaraja and proceeded to the home of the great acharya Goshtipurna (refer Krishna Voice article about Thirukoshtiyur temple to learn about Goshtipurna or Thirukoshtiyur Nambi). He was well aware that Goshtipurna (from whom Swami Ramanuja took mantra upadesha) would not accept as a domestic help, someone with whom Lord Varadaraja Himself had conversed. Therefore, in the guise of a common peasant, Kanchipurna introduced himself as Gajendra Dasan (his birth name) and requested for some work from Thirukoshtiyur Nambi. Unaware that it was Kanchipurna himself seeking work, Thirukoshtiyur asked him to take care of his cows and cart. Kanchipurna was relieved and happy that he had an opportunity to serve a great acharya.

One rainy day, Thirukoshtiyur Nambi found his cows missing and asked his disciples to find them, but they were reluctant to go out in the heavy rains and wind. So Goshtipurna decided to look for the cows by himself and called Kanchipurna for help. Kanchipurna instantly replied, "Here I come my master, your eternal slave," and Goshtipurna looked in the direction of the voice. To his wonder, Kanchipurna had brought the cows home and also covered them with his own cloth too to keep them dry. Thirukoshtiyur Nambi was instantly pleased at Kanchipurna's devotion and called out to his wife, "Give food to our man." Since Thirukoshtiyur Nambi had called him as "our man," it signified a relationship and hence deep association of the devotees. The next day Kanchipurna changed to his original attire as when fanning Lord Varadaraja Perumal and revealed his real identity. He narrated the sequence of incidents that led him to come as Gajandra Dasan to Thirukoshtiyur Nambi. In some places, it is also said that Kanchipurna had instead gone to Mahapurna of Srirangam (also Swami Ramanuja's diskha acharya) at Srirangam to serve as Nambi's cart man. Once during heavy rains, Kanchipurna had, with great difficulty, holding a lantern in one hand and the cart reins in the other hand, brought Mahapurna safely home. Since Kanchipurna had no alternative clothes, he had worn the attire that he wore when doing the fanning service to the Lord. Seeing him in his original attire, Mahapurna recognised him and blessed him, thereby bringing association of devotees.

Kanchipurna attains moksha

Finally, blessed with the association of devotees, Kanchipurna returned to Lord Varadaraja Perumal's sanctum sanctorum. And like an eager mother expecting her child back, Lord Varadaraja welcomed Kanchipurna with open arms right at the steps and praised his steadfast devotion and affection. At this moment, Kanchipurna sang the mesmerising Devaraja Ashtakam, glorifying the Lord's boundless love for His bhaktas and the pains of this materialistic world. Then, Kanchipurna attained moksha to serve Sriman Narayana in Sri Vaikunta. Thus ends the nectarine history of the most beloved devotee of Lord Varadaraja of Kanchipuram—Sri Kanchipurna.

Thaniyan (Praman Mantra) of Sri Kanchipurna

SRIMATH KAANCHIMUNIM VANDE
KAMALAPATHINANDANAM | VARADAANGHRISADA
SANGA RASAAYANA PARAAYANAM ||

I offer my respects to Kanchipurna who is also called the Sage of Kanchi, who is immersed in the rasaayana or nectarine service of having unceasing, uninterrupted love and devotion at the feet of Lord Devaraja (Lord Varadaraja).

DEVARAJA DAYAAPATRAM SRIKANCHIPOORNAM
UTTAMAM | RAMANUJA MUNERH MAANYAM
VANDEHAM SAJJANAASRAYAM ||

I worship Sri Kanchipurna, who is the container for the grace of Lord Varadaraja, who is very special and worthy of devotion of Ramanuja, and who is the place of refuge for all good qualities.
Srimad-Bhagavatam is so scientifically presented that any sincere student of this great science will be able to understand the science of God simply by reading it with attention or simply by regularly hearing it from the bonafide speaker.

— Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.7.52

Steadiness means that one should be very determined to make progress in spiritual life. Without such determination, one cannot make tangible progress.

— Bhagavad-gita 8.8
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The Cultural Education Services (CES) division of ISKCON Bangalore, continued with its school schedule of conducting the Heritage Fest, the inter-school traditional arts competition during the month of September 2019.

Glimpses from competitions conducted in schools such as Harvest International School, National Centre for Excellence (NCFE), East West Academy, Elite Public School, JSS Public School, Jubilee International School, KNE group of schools, Ashok International School and Silicon City Academy.
Personality Enrichment Workshop

The Cultural Education Services (CES) division of the temple, commenced its Personality Enrichment Workshop program for 35 children of Hani Foundation Pre-school, Kanakapura, from 17th September 2019.

The exclusive workshop focuses on grooming children in techniques of balancing body, mind and soul, in their foundational years. The vision is that children trained in early years in these techniques, will grow up to have a well-rounded and versatile personality.

The year-long program will offer a conducive environment for children to engage in activities that will enable them to imbibe cultural values based on the Vedic principles. During the course of the sessions, children will also be trained in mantra meditation, Bhagavad-gita sloka chanting, prayer recitation and kirtans. The training pedagogy being experiential and interactive makes the workshop holistic, engaging and fun-filled for the young minds.

Images from the first session of the Personality Enrichment Workshop at Hani Foundation Pre-school.

For more details about the program call: 9341124222 / 9341211119
Places of visit:
Colombo, Jaffna,
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Travel by - As per your choice
Accommodation - As per your choice
No. of seats - As per your choice (1-40)
Amount - Based on the package
PANCHA DWARKA, NATHDWAR & SOMNATH PILGRIMAGE  
Sat, Nov 16 to Sat, Nov 23, 2019  
**Places of visit:**  
Ranachoda Raya temple, Dwarkadish temple at Kankroli, Snanthji temple at Nathdwar, Dwarka, Bet Dwarka, Mula Dwarka, Ranavav, Porbandhar, Somnath.  
**Amount:** ₹20,000/- + flight charges

AHOBILAM PILGRIMAGE  
Fri, Dec 13 (8 pm) to Mon, Dec 16 (6 am) 2019  
**Places of visit:**  
Ahobilam Nava Narasimha Temples (involves trekking)  
**Amount:** ₹6,200/-

PURI PILGRIMAGE  
“Jagannath-Lord of the Universe”  
Fri, Dec 20 to Tue, Dec 24, 2019  
**Places of visit:**  
Jagannatha temple, Gundicha temple, Alamatha, Tota-Gopinatha, Sakshi-Gopala, Bhubaneswar-Sun temple, sea bath and more  
**Amount:** ₹21,000/- + flight charges

MAYAPUR PILGRIMAGE  
Mercy Unlimited  
Wed, Dec 25 to Sun, Dec 29, 2019  
**Places of visit:**  
Yogapeetha, Chandrodaya Mandir, Rajapur, Ekachakra, Shantipur, Panihat, Ganga bath and more  
**Amount:** ₹15,000/- + flight charges

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**Feedback**

Dear ISKCON TEAM

Thank you all very much for arranging this memorable CHARDHAM pilgrimage, for sharing your knowledge and inspiring us to take up Krishna consciousness." - Dr. Preethi (Doctor)

"Hare Krishna! Thank you very much for ISKCON PILGRIMAGES DEPARTMENT for arranging excellent pilgrimage tour of Chardham."
- Dr. Premalatha (ENT)

"Hare Krishna.. thanks for organising this wonderful trip to Char dham. After reaching home, just realised that, had we not gone there with right consciousness we wouldn't have had this kind of experience. Thanks to all the prabhuji's who made a constant effort to keep us in the right consciousness throughout through kirtan, chanting, playing spiritual games and narrating the pastimes.

Great job done. Kudos to all prabhuji's!!! HARE KRISHNA." - Priyanka (Software Engineer)

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Join us for a spiritual and devotional retreat with ecstatic kirtans, bhajans, pastime narrations and delicious Krishna prasad!

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

**Limited seats on a first-come, first-served basis.**
Congratulations to the Winners!

This year, 895 children from 167 cities spread across 13 countries participated in the contest held as part of Sri Krishna Janmashtami celebrations. The top three winners and seven consolation prize awardees were chosen based on the number of votes garnered by them. Our judges selected 16 entries for the Cute-16 Awards based on various parameters as in the previous years.

Top 3 Prizes

1. Dhyan, Bangalore (1412 votes)
2. Ridhaan Garg, Jaipur (1276 votes)
3. Garveesh Gupta, Jaipur (1113 votes)

Consolation Prizes

M Lathish, Chennai (1030 votes)
Kiyaan, Bangalore (967 votes)
Nishvith Vinay, Bangalore (902 votes)

V Chinmay Yajmaan, Tumakuru (744 votes)
Devaadhiiev B A, Bangalore (699 votes)
Vipul, Bangalore (674 votes)
Nainika, Bangalore (662 votes)
Cute-16 Awards

Aadhya M, Mysore
Aadvika, Bangalore
Aadya, Bangalore
Aneesh Pai, Bangalore
Anvitha, Udupi
Chaarvi R, Bangalore
Deshna Hidaya N, Bangalore
Manvita Halli, Gadag
Monvitha, Bangalore
Mugdha Pranavi, Tumakuru
Sanskruti Halli, Gadag
Shrekar, Ghataprabha
Sivansh, Piduguralla
Tasmai M Pai, Shimoga
Thashvi R Vijay, Udupi
Vedanth, Udupi
Damodarashtaka
In the month of Kartika, one should daily recite the prayer known as Damodarashtaka, remembering the sweet pastime of Lord Krishna which got Him the name - Damodara.
https://bit.ly/2kOsWQ0

Haridasa Thakura
Srila Haridasa Thakura was a confidential associate of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He is known as namacharya as he chanted three lakh holy names of the Lord every day.

Krishna’s beautiful form
The transcendental body of Lord Krishna is very sweet, and His face is even sweeter than His body. But His soft smile, which has the fragrance of honey, is sweeter still.
https://bit.ly/2m0iODR

Deepotsava Sevas
Participate in the month-long Deepotsava celebrations at our temple in the holy month of Kartika (October 13 to November 12, 2019).
For details about the celebrations and seva opportunities, please visit:
www.iskconbangalore.org/deeotsava/

Beautiful temple, a must for everyone: ... I personally like the architecture, the cleanliness of the temple. Also when you chant Hare Krishna and step on the stones it gives you a different feel which I cannot express in words. Food is quite amazing here... - Pranati M

Place for your soul: Visited the temple on Janmashtami. Loved the way temple was decorated and the day well spent. So many activities to do and feeding the cows was so much fun and who will miss the prasadam...
- Jasleenkour

Immense pleasure and peace: ... It gives immense pleasure and peace to listen chanting of “Hare Rama Hare Krishna”, it’s a great place to visit.
- Trip31374813694

A beautiful temple: ... The deities are lifelike and a visit during aarti is a heavenly experience. Love the whole ambience with beautiful floral decorations, the kirtan, the incense, the traditional lamps et al... This time during Janmashtami festival, had the opportunity to witness the abhisheka ceremony. It was ethereal...a not to be missed experience.
- Ranjana2018
TUESDAY - OCT 29-2019

Celebrations 6 pm onwards
ISKCON Sri Radha Krishna Temple

Be blessed with darshan of the Lord in Giridhari alankara, and partake of the grand annakuta offered to Him.

vina bhavet kim hari-dasa-varya-
padashrayam bhaktir atah shrayami
yam eva saprema nijesayoh sri-
govardhano me dishatam abhistam

Without taking shelter of the feet of the hill that is the best of Lord Hari’s servants and full of love for the divine king and queen, how is it possible to attain pure devotional service? May Govardhan Hill fulfill my desire.

www.iskconbangalore.org/govardhana-puja
Sri Krishna Janmashtami

FLASH MOB - 2019

The fifth edition of ISKCON Bangalore’s annual Sri Krishna Janmashtami Flash Mob was performed on 25th August, 2019, in its biggest iteration yet.

As part of the celebrations in honour of the Lord’s appearance, the Flash Mob 2019 was performed at 3 iconic venues in Bangalore, including Lal Bagh and Gopalan Arcade Mall.

Fifty eight performers came together in a short span of two weeks to present an enactment of ‘The Birth of Lord Krishna.’ The show comprised of dance, drama, and spectacular music composed by Sri Praveen D Rao and sung by renowned musician Kum. Varijashree Venugopal. The flash mob attracted large audiences at all the venues, successfully bringing the people of Bangalore together to celebrate Sri Krishna Janmashtami and the holy name.