Sri Gaura Purnima
Glorious appearance day of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu
Monday - March 9 - 2020

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

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

To know more about Srila Prabhupada visit www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada
The Mercy of Lord Chaitanya

Although in this age people do not even know who God is, Lord Chaitanya came to freely distribute love of Godhead.

Lecture in Atlanta on March 2, 1975
by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

namo maha-vadanyaya krishna-prema-pradaya te
krishnaya krishna-chaitanya-namne gaura-tvise namah

"O most munificent incarnation! You are Krishna Himself appearing as Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. You have assumed the golden colour of Srimati Radharani, and You are widely distributing pure love of Krishna. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You." (Chaitanya-charitamrita, Madhya 19.53)

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu wanted to preach love of Krishna, love of God, not only in India but all over the world. Different religions have many different names of God, and in the Vedic scriptures there are many demigods and incarnations of God. But Krishna is the original name of God. As said in the Srimad-Bhagavatam [1.3.28], ete camsa-kalah pumsah krishnas tu bhagavan svayam. There is a list of incarnations, and at the conclusion of the list the Bhagavatam says, "In this long list there are many names, but Krishna is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead."

God is not like us—He can expand Himself. Even some yogis (not these ordinary, third-class yogis), but those who have attained yogic perfection) can expand their bodies up to at most eight times. There are instances of yogis doing that. So if an ordinary yogi can do that, just imagine how much potency the Supreme Lord has for expanding Himself!

In the Bhagavad-gita [18.61] Krishna says, isvarah sarva-bhutanam hrd-dese 'rjuna tisthati: "My dear Arjuna, the Supreme Lord is situated in every living being's heart." Just imagine how many living entities there are! They cannot be counted. There are many millions of trillions, but even millions of trillions is insufficient. There is no counting them. Yet they are all part and parcel of God, and He is living within the heart of all of them. This is the unlimited potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Consider the sunshine, the sun globe, and the sun-god. The sun-god is within the sun globe, and the inhabitants of the sun globe are all glowing, luminous. On account of their bodies' glowing, the whole sun planet is glowing. And on account of the sun planet's glowing, the sunshine reaches us from ninety-three million miles away, and we perceive heat and light. The sun is an ordinary, material thing, but it has such great power.

So just imagine what is the potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead! Actually, we cannot imagine what great energy He has. We cannot even estimate the temperature of the sun globe. We may try to approach the sun globe in our rockets, but before reaching it we will be finished. The temperature is so high; everyone knows it.

Now, if an ordinary thing like the sun globe is so powerful, how much more powerful must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead! We say, "God is almighty, all-powerful," but we have no idea what is meant by "all-powerful." We think, "I am somewhat powerful, so God may be ten times as powerful as I am." Somebody else may say "twenty times." "All right, let us compromise—fifty times." (Laughter.)

This kind of speculation is like the frog's speculation within the well. Once there was a frog within a well, and one of his friends came to him and said, "My dear friend, I have seen a vast mass of water, the Atlantic Ocean."

"What is that Atlantic Ocean?"

"It is vast."

"How vast? Is it ten times bigger than this well? Or twenty times? Come on!" [Laughter.]

"No, no, it is very, very vast."

So, the rascal speculation about God is like the speculation of the frog about the Atlantic Ocean. These mundane philosophers and scientists are thinking of God in that way. Dr. Frog's philosophy. Dr. Frog's philosophy will not help you understand what God is.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's preaching was to distribute love of God. This human life is especially meant for
understanding what God is and loving Him. That's all. This is our only business. The cats and dogs and other lower animals—if you preach to them about Krishna consciousness, they will not understand. But human beings can understand. For example, this Krishna consciousness movement is being spread all over the world, and as you can see, here in your country people are understanding. That is the special advantage of human life.

One Christian priest in Boston was astonished to see our devotees. He issued a leaflet saying, "These Hare Krishna boys are our boys. Before they joined this movement, they did not care to see us or come to the church, but now they are mad after God." So this movement is certified by a Christian priest.

And actually, you can see the potency of Lord Chaitanya's movement. I am a poor Indian; I came to America with forty rupees. I had no money to bribe these young people. [Laughter.] But now they are mad after God. It is practical. Now if you try to bribe them to leave this movement, they will not go. Many fathers and mothers have tried to induce them to go home, but they are not going.

So, what is the intoxication? These boys and girls have given up all intoxication, but they are now "intoxicated" with "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna." This is the mercy of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. A draft-board officer came to see one of our centers. He said, "What is the facility you have given these boys who have joined the Hare Krishna movement? It must be much easier than the army." But when he investigated, he saw that these boys and girls are prohibited from engaging in illicit sex, intoxication, meat-eating, and gambling. So he concluded that this movement is actually harder than the army. The army does not make these restrictions, which are very, very difficult to follow. But by the mercy of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu these boys and girls are following them.

Every human being should accept the mercy of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. That is the purport of the verse Rupa Gosvami offered to Lord Chaitanya upon first seeing Him: namo maha-vadanyaya. “You are the most munificent incarnation of God.” Why? “You are distributing krishna-prema, love of God. People do not know what God is, yet You are distributing love of Godhead.”

Ordinarily one cannot love anybody unless he knows the other party very well. Only then is there a question of love. If you and I live ten thousand miles apart, there is no question of love. For love there must be intimacy. So, to understand God is very difficult. In the Bhagavad-gita [7.3], Krishna says,

> manusyanam sahasresu kascid yatati siddhaye
> yatatam api siddhanam kascin mam vetti tattvatah

"Out of many millions of persons, one is interested in making his life perfect. And out of all those who are actually perfect, hardly one knows Me as I am."

Perfection does not mean that I can eat whatever I like, without any restriction. Or that I have a very nice car, a very nice apartment, and a big bank balance. This is not perfection, because I remain under the grip of the laws of material nature. Prakrteh kriyamanani guṇaiḥ karmanī sarvasah. Material nature is controlling me.

How is the material nature controlling? She has a machine made of the three modes of nature. Karanam guna-sango 'syā sad-asad-yoni-janmasu. People are contacting these three modes of nature and thus being “infected.” We know that if we contract some disease, knowingly or unknowingly, that disease will develop. This is the law of nature. Even if you do not know when or how you contracted a particular disease, that is no excuse. You must suffer.

Similarly, there are three modes of material nature one can become “infected” by—goodness, passion, and ignorance. Not knowing about this is no excuse. If in the law court you say, "Your Honour, I did not know I would be punished for stealing," the magistrate or judge will not excuse you. And if the government law is so strict, you can imagine how strict are the stringent laws of material nature.

Knowingly or unknowingly, in this life we are being infected by a particular combination of the modes of material nature and thus creating our next body. There are 8,400,000 different varieties of life forms. Why? The answer is in the Bhagavad-gita: karanam guna-sangah. There are so many different species of life because each living entity is becoming infected with a particular combination of the qualities of material nature. This is going on perpetually. "Perpetually" means we do not know when this process began or when it will end. Therefore we say it is perpetual.

So, in this human form of life we have the great advantage of being able to study all these things—what is the living entity, how he is being infected by material nature, and how he is taking different bodies. The first thing we must understand is that we are not the body. Therefore in the very beginning of the Bhagavad-gita Lord Krishna tries to impress upon us that we are not this body but rather the owner or occupier of the body. This is His first instruction. If we understand this instruction, we can rise above the bodily platform.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's movement is not on the bodily platform; it is on the spiritual platform. This He explained
when He talked with Sanatana Gosvami. Sanatana asked, “What is my identity?” He was a very learned man—a minister and a brahmana. He knew Sanskrit and Urdu very well. Because the kingdom he lived in was Mohammedan, Urdu was the state language, just as during the British period the state language was English. So, Sanatana was quite conversant with Urdu, Farsi, and Sanskrit. Therefore he said to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, “Ordinary people address me as panditji, a very learned man, but I know my position. I do not know what I am. This is my position.”

Now, if you ask a big, big doctor, scientist, or philosopher, "What are you?" he will say, "I am an Indian," "I am an American," "I am this, I am that." Bodily designations, that's all. He is fool number one, and still he is passing as a great scientist, a great philosopher.

If one does not know himself, what is the value of his learning? One must know his own identity. Everyone is identifying with his body: "I am Hindu," "I am Muslim," "I am Christian," "I am Indian," "I am American," "I am German," "I am English." This is why so much fighting is going on. The living entity is part and parcel of God, a spiritual spark covered by a material body. For example, we are all human beings covered by different clothes. That does not mean we are different. We are one as human beings, as inhabitants of this earth. But due to our different bodily dress, I am thinking you are my enemy, and you are thinking I am your enemy.

The Bhagavatam's conclusion is yasyatma-buddhih kunape tri-dhatuke sva-dhih kalatradisu bhauma ijya-dhih… sa eva go-kharah: “Anyone who is identifying himself with his body, and also with the land his body has taken birth in, is no better than an ass or a cow.” Everyone is thinking, “This land of my birth is worshipable.” And from this mentality comes nationalism or this “ism” or that “ism.” But no one thinks, “How long shall be allowed to occupy this body and this land?” This is ignorance.

So, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's movement starts from the understanding that we are spirit souls, eternal servants of Krishna. This is the same teaching as Krishna's in the Bhagavad-gita. There the Lord says, sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja: “Give up your so-called man-made duties, or dharmas, and just surrender unto Me.” This is real dharma, or religion—to surrender to God.

God is one. He is neither Hindu nor Muslim nor Christian. The Vedic injunction is ekam brahma dvitiyam nasti: “God is one; He cannot be two.” So whether you are Hindu, Muslim, or Christian, God is one. This is to be
understood.

Krishna consciousness is the science of God. Try to understand scientifically what you are and what God is and what religion is. That is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s teaching. He begins His teachings to Sanatana Gosvami by saying jivera ‘svarupa’ haya—krishnera ‘nitya-dasa’: “Every living being is an eternal servant of God.” This is religion. Religion does not mean stamping oneself as a Hindu, a Muslim, or a Christian. No. Religion means to know that God is great and that we are subordinate to Him and maintained by Him. This is religion. If anyone simply knows these things—that God is great and we are subordinate, and that our duty is to abide by the orders of God—he is religious.

Unity can be established on the spiritual platform, not on the bodily platform. The United Nations is trying to unite the nations of the world, but every year the number of flags is increasing. This kind of so-called unity will never be successful. The United Nations was established many years ago to bring unity among nations. So, what has it done? It has not done anything, nor can it do anything.

If you want to be united, you have to be united on the spiritual platform. And what is that spiritual platform? The spiritual platform means to understand thoroughly that God is great, that we are subordinate, and that God is maintaining us. All the property everywhere belongs to God, and while we can use our father’s property as much as we require, we should not take more than we need and stock it.

The birds are a good example. If you put a bag of rice here, the birds will come and eat a few grains and go away. But if you put, say, one thousand bags of wheat here and declare that anyone can take them, there will be a fight. Everyone will try to take as much as he can carry. This is human civilization: “Oh, there is so much wheat. Let me take as much as possible and stock it for tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. Let me stock it for my son, my grandson, and my great-grandson.” [Laughter.]

This foolishness is going on because of a lack of spiritual consciousness. As stated in the Vedas, isavasyam idam sarvam: “Everything belongs to God.” The food belongs to God, the mine belongs to God, the ocean belongs to God, the land belongs to God, the air belongs to God—everything belongs to God. So we should feel obliged to God that He has given us so much for our maintenance. We should take as much as we need and use as much as possible in His service. This is Krishna consciousness.

Krishna consciousness is actually perfect communism. The communists think in terms of the human beings within the state, but a Krishna conscious person thinks in terms of all living beings. In the Bhagavatam it is stated that a householder, before taking his lunch, should call out on the street: “If anyone is hungry, please come to my place and eat!” And he should see that in his household even the lizard does not go hungry. Even a snake should not go hungry. This is the Vedic principle, God consciousness. The householder thinks, “Somehow or other some living entity has taken a snake’s body. So at my house why should he remain hungry? Let me give him some food.” Nobody likes snakes, but in the scripture it is said that one should see to it that even a snake does not go hungry.

Of course, this is a very high ideal, but it is the complete ideal of real communism. It is not that national leaders should be concerned only with human beings. The definition of native is “one who takes birth in a particular nation.” So, the cow is also a native. Then why should the cow be slaughtered? The cow is giving milk and the bull is working for you, and then you slaughter them? What is this philosophy? In the Christian religion it is clearly stated, “Thou shalt not kill.” Yet most of the slaughterhouses are in the Christian countries.

This is all a misunderstanding of spiritual life. Every animal should be given protection. That is the Vedic idea. Otherwise, by killing, killing, killing, you become entangled in sinful activities. Therefore now the women are killing their own children in the womb. This is going on.

We cannot be happy in this way, because we shall become more and more entangled in sinful actions and their resultant reactions. Then we will have to take various types of bodies, perpetually.

Therefore, we have begun this Krishna consciousness movement. By taking advantage of this movement, people can awaken to God consciousness, stop sinful activities, and become purified. Without becoming purified, one cannot understand God. It is not possible. As Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita [7.28],

yesam tv anta-gatam papam jananam punya-karmanam
te dvandva-moha-nirmukta bhajante mam drdha-vratah

"One who is completely free from sinful life can take to devotional service."

That is why we have prescribed four regulative principles: no illicit sex, no meat-eating, no gambling, and no intoxication. Especially in your country, America, you have so many nice vegetables, fruits, grains, and milk products. So why should you kill the cow? You have taken our prasadam feasts. How delicious they are! So why kill the
Sometimes people argue that vegetables also have life. Yes, we admit this. But that is why we eat only prasadam, food offered to Krishna before being eaten. Whatever Krishna leaves, we take. This is our process. We don't take directly. So, while the vegetables have life, Krishna says, "If one lovingly offers Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, I will accept it." Then there is no sin in eating the vegetables.

We have invited Krishna as our guest, and He has consented to come here. So we must offer Him the foods He wants. That is proper etiquette. If some respectable guest comes to your house, you should ask him, "What would you like to eat, sir?" Whatever he asks for, you have to supply. That is the real way of receiving a guest.

So Krishna says, "Give Me food among these items: fruits, vegetables, grains, and milk products. And that also with devotion, not neglectfully. Then I will accept it." Therefore we prepare hundreds of items with these ingredients and offer them to Krishna, and you can also do that. They are all delicious and full of vitamins. Then why should you unnecessarily kill the poor animals and become vicious and sinful?

This is Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teaching: Live peacefully, be a gentleman, realize God, and make your life happy in this world and the next. He wanted this teaching spread to every town, every city, every village in the world. And the Hare Krishna movement is just trying to serve Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. You can see how beneficial this Krishna consciousness is. Please don't be blind, but try to consider it a little liberally. Without any bias or prejudice. Don't be carried away by prejudice. Try to understand the philosophy of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and be happy.

Thank you very much.
Disciple: Srila Prabhupada, once you said, “The tractor—this is the cause of all the trouble. It took all the young men's farm work. It forced them to go into the city and become entangled in sensuality.” You said people had to leave the country and the simple life of goodness and God consciousness. And so they went to the city and got caught up in the anxious life, the mode of passion.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. In the city, people must naturally fall into the mode of passion: constant anxiety due to needless lusting and striving. In the city we are surrounded by all sorts of artificial things for agitating our mind and senses. And naturally, when we have this facility we become lusty. We take to this passionate mode and become filled with anxiety.

Disciple: The country is more peaceful. It's easier to think of spiritual life.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. There is less disease. Everything is less brain-taxing. In the country the pangs of this material world are less. So you can arrange your life for real profit. Spiritual profit. Realize God; become Krishna conscious. And if you have got a temple in your home or near your home, you have a very happy life. You work just a little—just for your food—in the spring a month and a half or so for planting, in the fall a month and a half for harvesting. And in your remaining time, you become culturally enriched. You engage all your talents and energies for realizing God. Krishna consciousness. This is ideal life.

You see the minute fibers on this flower? No other manufacturing process in this world can do this—such small fibers. And how brilliant is the colour! If you study only one flower, you will become God conscious.

There is a mechanism that we call “nature.” And from it is coming everything we see around us. Now, how is it that this mechanism is so perfect? And who is it that has devised this mechanism?

Disciple: Once in London you said, “People do not know that flowers are painted. Krishna paints them with thoughts.”
Srila Prabhupada: Yes. Most people think that by itself, unconnected with a painter, this flower has become beautiful. This is foolishness. “Nature has done it.” Whose nature? Everything is being done by the natural mechanism of Krishna. Parasya saktr vividhaiva sruyate: the Lord is orchestrating everything by His innumerable, inconceivable energies.

Anyway, learn to love this natural mode of life, life in a wide-open space. Produce your own grain. Produce your own milk. Save time. Chant Hare Krishna. Glorify the Lord’s holy names. At life’s end, go back to the spiritual world to live forever. Plain living, high thinking—ideal life.

Modern, artificial “necessities of life” may seem to increase your so-called comfort. But if you forget life’s real aim, that is suicidal. We want to stop this suicidal policy. We don’t directly attempt to stop the modern advancement of technology. The so-called advancement of technology is suicidal, but we don’t always talk of this. [Laughter.]

People today are extremely attached to this so-called advancement. Therefore when Lord Chaitanya appeared five hundred years ago, He gave a simple formula: chant Hare Krishna. Even in your technological factory, you can chant. You go on pushing and pulling with your machine, and chant, “Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.” You can devote yourself to God. What is the wrong there?

Disciple: The leaders know that once a person starts chanting God’s names, in time he’ll lose his taste for this anxious life of technology.

Srila Prabhupada: That is natural.

Disciple: So the leaders know you are sowing the seeds of their destruction.

Srila Prabhupada: Where is the “destruction?” Rather, it is construction: devote yourself to God, and live forever. This is the proper path. Follow it. You will live forever.

By our method, tyakta deham punar janma naiti. after leaving your present material body, you don’t get any more material bodies. You regain your spiritual body and go back to the spiritual world. And without this spiritual realization, tatha dehantara-praptih: when you leave your present material body, you’ll have to accept another material body.

So consider the two methods of living. Which is better? The “advanced” method—accepting more material bodies. Or our “old-fashioned” method—accepting no more material bodies. Which is better?

As soon as you accept a material body, you have to suffer: birth, old age, disease, death. The material body means suffering. Therefore, if we prepare so that on leaving this present body we undergo no more suffering, that is intelligent. But if we prepare to receive another material body for more suffering, is that intelligent? Unless you understand the Lord, unless you understand Krishna, you’ll have to stay in this material world and accept another body. There is no alternative.

Now our method. We understand, first, that na hanyate hanyamane sarire: when the body is finished, the soul goes on living. Unfortunately, many people have become so dull-brained that they cannot understand this simple truth. Every day of their lives, people see that a soul in an infant body is going to take on a childhood body, then a teenage body, next an adult body, and later an aged body. People see, with their own eyes, how the soul is transmigrating from one body to another body. Nevertheless, with their dull brains they cannot understand that at death, when the aged body is finished, the soul goes on to yet another body, material or spiritual. But people cannot understand this. They are so dull-brained. They cannot make the simple distinction between the body and the soul. It will take five hundred years to teach them this simple truth—their education is so advanced.

(To be continued.)
Srinivasa Acharya is one of the most important personalities in the religious history of Bengal, perhaps the most important Vaishnava teacher in the generation immediately following Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He is chiefly remembered as the illustrious disciple of Gopala Bhatta Gosvami and Jiva Gosvami. His achievements include delivering the writings of the Gosvamis from Vrindavana to Bengal, converting King Birhambir to Vaishnavism, and originating the Manohar Shoy style of kirtana. At Kheturi, Bengal, he co-organized the first Gaura Purnima Festival (celebrating the anniversary of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s appearance in this world), which Narottama, Shyamananda, and thousands of other Vaishnavas attended.

Srinivasa Acharya

Srinivasa Acharya's parents—the brahmana Gangadhara Bhattacharya and his wife, Lakshmi Priya—lived in the small village of Chakhandi, on the bank of the Ganges in the Burdwan district of Bengal. They longed to raise a child who would be a great devotee, but until the birth of Srinivasa, they were childless for many years.

Gangadhara was himself a great devotee of the Golden Avatara, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the incarnation of Sri Sri Radha and Krishna predicted in the scriptures. Lord Chaitanya had appeared in Navadvipa and was currently in the world. Gangadhara spent much of his time hearing and retelling the stories of Lord Chaitanya’s pastimes (lila) with the Lord’s intimate associates. He wanted to see Lord Chaitanya, but social and familial obligations kept him at home, so he resolved to meditate on the Lord in separation. In 1510, however, he could not tolerate the separation any longer. He set out for Navadvipa to see the Lord of his life. After only seven miles, as far as the village of Katwa, he learned that Nimai of Nadiya—Chaitanya Mahaprabhu—was in that very village taking sannyasa, the renounced order of life.

"What?" cried Gangadhara. “Why must my Lord take the renounced order? This austerity is reserved for human beings like me so we can overcome our attachments to this world. Certainly there is no need for Sri Nimai, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, to live the harsh life of an ascetic.”

But Gangadhara's reservations were mixed with excitement: he would soon see his Lord face to face. When he approached the sacrificial area where Sri Nimai was taking sannyasa, he saw the Lord’s intimate associates—Nityananda Prabhu, Chandrasekhara Acharya, Mukunda Datta, and many others. He saw Madhu Sila, the barber, preparing to cut Nimai’s beautiful locks of raven black hair.

"No!" the onlookers were saying. "Please stop!" They, like Gangadhara, could not conceive of the Lord in the renounced order of life. Even Madhu, who had the good fortune to touch the Lord’s head, could cut His hair out of duty only, weeping profusely. Madhu and the others knew that the Lord had decided to set an example for the entire religious world and stress the importance of renunciation. There was nothing they could do.

"Chaitanya Dasa"

Keshava Bharati, the sannyasa-guru, gave Nimai His new sannyasa name, “Sri Krishna Chaitanya.” The crowd was in shock: “Beautiful Nimai is really taking sannyasa!” They couldn’t believe their eyes, from which tears were flowing incessantly. But the deed was done.

Madhu fainted. Why had he shaved the Lord’s head?
It was as if he had been controlled by the Lord’s own hand to fulfill the Lord’s own desire. "Chaitanya! Chaitanya!" said Gangadhara Bhattacharya to himself. "Chaitanya! Chaitanya! Chaitanya!" he repeated again and again. His eyes pleaded with everyone there: he wanted to understand what had just happened, but all he could do was mutter in a stupor of mixed emotions.

Gangadhara found himself calling the Lord’s names aloud with uncontrollable enthusiasm—"Chaitanya! Sri Krishna Chaitanya! Sri Krishna Chaitanya!"

He returned to Chakhandi, half mad with ecstasy, unable to stop repeating the Lord’s names. He told his wife what had happened, and she too was overcome with ecstasy. Seeing Gangadhara’s absorption in Sri Chaitanya’s name, his wife and the other villagers began calling him Chaitanya Dasa.

Journey to Puri
Chaitanya Dasa and his wife went to Jagannatha Puri, where Lord Chaitanya had gone after accepting the renounced order. When the couple arrived, they went to Sri Chaitanya and surrendered at His feet.

"Lord Jagannatha is very happy that you have come here," the Lord said. "Go to the temple and see His Deity form. The lotus-eyed Lord is extremely merciful, so please go see Him."

Govinda, Lord Chaitanya’s personal servant, accompanied Chaitanya Dasa and his wife to the temple, where they offered many prayers at the feet of Lord Jagannatha. Weeping tears of divine love, the happy brahmana couple were soon escorted to the luxurious accommodations Lord Chaitanya had arranged for them. They spent several happy days with Sri Chaitanya in Jagannatha Puri.

One day Lord Chaitanya told His servant of His plans for the couple. "Govinda," the Lord said, "although Chaitanya Dasa and his wife have not mentioned it to Me, I know they would like to have a child. They said so in front of Lord Jagannatha, who is nondifferent from Me. They have prayed sincerely, and I know their hearts. Their desired offspring will soon appear. His name will be Srinivasa, and he will be a greatly beautiful child. Through Rupa and Sanatana I will manifest the bhakti-shastras, and through Srinivasa I will distribute them. Chaitanya Dasa and his wife should quickly return to Chakandhi."

The Appearance of Srinivasa
In Chakhandi the couple had a beautiful baby boy, whom they named Srinivasa. He was born in the second or third decade of the sixteenth century on the auspicious full-moon day of the month of Vaishakha (April-May).
Lakshmi Priya’s father, Balarama Vipra, a learned astrologer, told the happy couple that their son was a mahapurusha, a divinely empowered soul.

The boy had a broad chest and a long, elegant nose, and his beautiful eyes extended like lotus petals. Like Lord Chaitanya, he had a bodily luster resembling molten gold and arms that extended down to his knees. According to custom, Chaitanya Dasa and Lakshmi Priya gave charity to the brahmanas, and the brahmanas blessed the child.

**Srinivasa’s Youth**

Lakshmi Priya would constantly sing the glories of Lord Chaitanya into the child’s ears, and the melodious sounds made him joyful. As Srinivasa grew, he learned to chant the names of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Radha-Krishna. Soon this small crescent moon known as Srinivasa grew full and was known as the brightest and most beautiful boy in Chakhandi. He studied under the famed Dhananjaya Vidyavachaspati, who taught him all branches of Vedic learning, including religion, logic, poetry, political science, grammar, and Ayurveda.

According to the Prema-vilasa, Dhananjaya Vidyavachaspati said that he had nothing to teach Srinivasa. The Prema-vilasa also relates that the goddess of education appeared to Srinivasa in a dream and told him she would make him proficient in all areas of learning, especially the scriptures. Still, Srinivasa became known as Dhananjaya Vidyavachaspati’s prize pupil, and as such he was the pride of Chakhandi. He was loved by all the townspeople, who saw him as a precious gem.

**Narahari Sarakara Thakura**

Because of Srinivasa’s popularity, he met Narahari Sarakara, an intimate associate of Lord Chaitanya from nearby Srikhanda. Narahari Sarakara’s intense devotion had pleased Lord Chaitanya, and Narahari had the distinction of being allowed to sing the Lord’s glories in the Lord’s presence, although the Lord, out of humility, would not let anyone else do so. This distinction impressed young Srinivasa, and he accepted Sri Narahari as his first instructing guru.

After meeting Narahari Sarakara, Srinivasa began to show signs of ecstasy. Narahari told Srinivasa to go to Puri to see Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. While Srinivasa was considering how to execute the instruction, his father passed away from this mortal world after seven days of fever. It was a shock to the family, and Srinivasa did all he could to console his mother.

Meanwhile, the omniscient Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was preparing His associates for Srinivasa’s arrival. He had already written to Rupa, Sanatana, and Gopala Bhatta Gosvamis requesting them to teach Srinivasa spiritual life. And He asked Gadadhara Pandita in
Jagannatha Puri to teach Srinivasa the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Narahari Sarakara advised Srinivasa to see to his mother’s care in Jajigram, where her father and brothers had moved from Chakhandi. Then Srinivasa was to proceed to Puri to associate with Lord Chaitanya. Srinivasa asked Narahari to initiate him into the chanting of Krishna’s name, but Narahari told him that Lord Chaitanya wanted him to take initiation from Gopala Bhatta Gosvami.

**Meeting with Gadadhara Pandita**

Still a boy, Srinivasa set out with a companion for Puri. On the way, he learned that Sri Chaitanya had left this world. Then Lord Chaitanya—along with Nityananda Prabhu, who had also passed away—appeared to Srinivasa “on the pretext of a dream” and consoled him. The phrase shopna chailey (“on the pretext of a dream”) appears frequently in Bengali literature of the period and is usually taken to mean “in a spiritual vision.”

Still, Srinivasa remained grief-stricken. He went to the Gopinatha temple in Puri to take shelter of Gadadhara Pandita. The Pandita was overcome with separation from Lord Chaitanya, and tears always flowed from his eyes. Srinivasa bowed at Sri Gadadhara’s feet and introduced himself.

Gadadhara Pandita became joyful. “I’m glad you have come and introduced yourself,” he said. “Just before passing away, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu told me to teach you the Bhagavatam. He knew you would arrive in Puri one day, and He asked me to explain Krishna-lila to you.”

Gadadhara Pandita’s joy—he could now fulfill this order of the Lord—again turned to sadness. “I cannot teach you Bhagavatam at this time, O young Srinivasa,” he said, “for the manuscript in my possession has become illegible from the tears I have cried onto its pages.”

Srinivasa touched the sacred book to his head and felt ecstasy arise within himself. Nonetheless, the problem of studying a book that had been rendered illegible remained. But Sri Gadadhara and Srinivasa would not be swayed from their purpose. The will of Mahaprabhu could not be obstructed. Sri Gadadhara sent a message to Narahari Sarakara in Bengal asking him to secure another manuscript of Srimad-Bhagavatam. Narahari replied that another copy was available and that a messenger should be dispatched immediately. Gadadhara sent Srinivasa himself and told him to hurry. The separation from Lord Chaitanya was intolerable, he said, and he didn’t know how long he could stay in this world.

Before leaving, Srinivasa fulfilled a long-cherished desire to see Lord Chaitanya’s associates. He went to the homes of Ramananda Raya, Sikhi Mahiti, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, Vakreshvara Pandita, Paramananda Puri, Gopinatha Acharya, and many others. He also went to see King Prataparudra, but according to the Bhakti-ratnakara the king had gone away in solitude to lament the Lord’s passing.

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Krishna Voice, February 2020
Srinivasa as Gaura Shakti

Srinivasa reminded the great personalities in Puri of Lord Chaitanya. Seeing his intense and unprecedented love of Godhead, the devotees could understand that he was Gaura Shakti, the embodiment of the energy of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. According to the Prema-vilasa, Srinivasa is an incarnation of Lord Chaitanya’s ecstasy. The Lord’s intimate associates could naturally perceive this and could understand that through Srinivasa the eternal message of Lord Chaitanya—the message of the Vedic literature—would be widely distributed.

Lord Chaitanya had broken open the storehouse of nectarine love of God, and the Gosvamis, by writing books, had taken that nectar and placed it in tangible vessels. Srinivasa would see that these vessels were circulated among all sincere souls. The intimate associates of the Lord gave Srinivasa instructions and advice for carrying on the mission.

When Srinivasa arrived in Bengal and received the copy of the Bhagavatam from Narahari Sarakara Thakura, he learned that Gadadhara Pandita had passed away. The news was a terrible blow, and Srinivasa lamented. Then Gadadhara Pandita appeared to him on the pretext of a dream and encouraged him to go forward.

Srinivasa reflected on the inconceivable will of the Lord. “Why had He taken away the person who was to teach him the Bhagavatam? Was there a new plan? Was someone else to teach him the sacred scriptures? Some say that Srinivasa fell despondent at this time, but not much is known about the years that followed Sri Gadadhara’s passing from this world. It is generally assumed that Srinivasa spent this time at first in a heartbroken state and then in serious meditation. He probably continued his studies, as he was still in his teens.

When Sri Jahnava Devi, the wife of Nityananda Prabhu, went to Vrndavana, Rupa Gosvami asked her to send Srinivasa to Vrndavana as soon as possible. On her return to Bengal, she relayed the message to Narahari. Sri Chaitanya had told the Gosvamis of Vraja to train Srinivasa, and Narahari advised him to hasten to Vrndavana so that the Lord’s command should not be violated.

The request heightened Srinivasa’s desire to study bhakti literature with Rupa and Sanatana. Had he gone to Vrndavana then, he would have met Rupa and Sanatana. But he decided to visit the homes of Lord Chaitanya’s principal associates on the way, stopping at Navadvipa to visit Sri Chaitanya’s home.

Association with the Navadvipa Devotees

This was the second time Srinivasa delayed a journey: first the journey to see Gadadhara Pandita, and now Rupa and Sanatana. Perhaps Srinivasa’s enthusiasm to associate with Lord Chaitanya’s direct followers in Puri and Navadvipa was so overwhelming that he was unable to heed the advice of his forebears. Some say that all of this was the will of providence, so that Srinivasa would take initiation from Gopala Bhatta Gosvami. Others say that Srinivasa, by his example, was teaching the importance of pilgrimage and association with devotees.

Srinivasa was enthralled with the home of Sri Chaitanya in Navadvipa (Mayapur), where he met Vishnupriya Devi, the Lord’s revered widow, and her esteemed servants, Vamsivadana Thakura and Ishana Prabhu. They all blessed Srinivasa, and he stayed with them for several days, hearing the pastimes of Lord Chaitanya.

During those days he watched Vishnupriya Devi perform severe austerities. For example, she would chant the maha-mantra—Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare—over each grain of rice she was to eat. When she was finished with her daily chanting, she would eat only the grains she had set aside.

“Truly,” Srinivasa said, “this is a wife who was worthy of Sri Chaitanya.”

Srinivasa also met Damodara Pandita, Suklambara, Murari Gupta, and other early friends and intimates of Lord Chaitanya in Navadvipa. From there Srinivasa went to nearby Shantipur, where he was warmly greeted by Sri Advaita’s wife, Sita Thakurani, and her sons Achyuta and Gopala.

Srinivasa Meets Jahnava Devi

Then Srinivasa visited the house of Nityananda Prabhu in Khardaha, where Jahnava Devi, her son Birabhadra, and others greeted Srinivasa as if he were part of their own family. But Jahnava Devi encouraged him to start for Vrndavana without delay because Rupa and Sanatana would soon rejoin the Lord in the spiritual world.

On the way to Vrndavana, Srinivasa stopped at the well-known Abhirama Thakura’s house in Khanakul Krishnanagar to deliver a letter from Jahnava Devi. The Thakura greeted him with three loving lashes from an extraordinary whip, but this unusual greeting was a benediction. The whip, known as Jai Mangala, would bestow love of God on anyone it touched. Sri Abhirama and his wife, Malini, showed deep affection for Srinivasa. Not only did they bless him with their famous whip, but they gave him valuable instructions and reiterated the importance of going to Vrndavana as soon as possible.

While continuing his journey, Srinivasa stopped in Katwa, where his father had seen Lord Chaitanya adopt the renounced order. Next he passed through Agradvipa, where the three famous Ghosh brothers—Vasudeva, Govinda, and Madhava—had established their temple,
and then he proceeded to Ekachakra, the birthplace of Nityananda Prabhu. Finally, Srinivasa made one last stop in Jajigram to say farewell to his aging mother and to visit Narahari Sarakara, his beloved guru. Narahari was concerned about Srinivasa’s delay in going to Vrindavana and asked him to leave immediately.

And so, without further delay Srinivasa set out for Vraja. By this time he had achieved adulthood.

The Journey to Vraja

Meanwhile, Sanatana Gosvami had left this mortal world, and Rupa Gosvami could not bear the separation. Sri Rupa felt that he, too, might not survive to instruct Srinivasa, so he asked his distinguished disciple (and nephew) Jiva Gosvami to care for Srinivasa.

Travelling in those days, mostly by foot, was difficult. Nonetheless, Srinivasa was making determined progress, stopping briefly on the way in Benares to visit the house of Chandrasekhara Acharya, where Lord Chaitanya had lived for two months. Here Srinivasa met an elderly disciple of Chandrasekhara who invited him for a meal and showed him the places associated with Sri Chaitanya.

Next, Srinivasa reached Prayag (known today as Prayagraj) and spent the night there. Four days before arriving in Vrindavana, he heard that Sanatana had passed away four months earlier. And when he reached Mathura, he learned that Rupa Gosvami had passed away only three days earlier. Srinivasa fell to the ground, crying like a madman. He felt himself the most unfortunate person in the universe. He had failed to meet Lord Chaitanya and to study the Bhagavatam with Gadadhara Pandita. Now he had failed to meet Rupa and Sanatana.

While Srinivasa sat beneath a tree wishing for his own death, Rupa and Sanatana appeared to him on the pretext of a dream and told him he was the embodiment of Lord Chaitanya’s love. They encouraged him to proceed to Vrindavana to take shelter of Gopala Bhatta Gosvami and to study under Sri Jiva with all his life and soul.

(To be continued.)

Srinivasa meets Jahnava Devi, the consort of Nityananda Prabhu in Khardaha

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Krishna Voice, February 2020
Located in the city of Kanchipuram are the twin temples that make one divya desam - Pachavannar temple and Pavalavannar temple.

The Pastime

The pastime of this temple is associated with the Saptarishis.

Like many other demigods, the renowned seven rishis had extremely long lifespans, and they were present on Earth through the four great ages, a period that is equal to seventy-one mahayugas or 306,720,000 years. During all those years, the Saptarishis guided humanity. The Vedic samhitás never enumerate these rishis by name, though later Vedic texts such as the Brahmanas and Upanishads do so. They are regarded in the Vedas as the patriarchs of the Vedic religion. In ancient Indian astronomy, the constellation of the Big Dipper (Ursa Major) is called Saptarishi, with the seven stars representing seven rishis, namely Vasishta, Marichi, Pulastya, Pulaha, Atri, Angiras and Kratu. There is another star slightly visible within it, known as Arundhati. Arundhati is the wife of Vasishta. Vasishta and Arundhati together form the Mizar double. During the Manvantara of Swayambhu Manu, the Saptarishis were Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulaha, Kratu, Pulastya, and Vasishta. At the present moment, we live in Vaivasvata Manvantara and the Saptarishis for this Manvantara are Kashyapa, Atri, Vasishta, Vishvamitra, Gautama Maharishi, Jamadagni and Bharadvaja.

As per the Vedic scriptures, there are four yugas: Krita or Satya yuga, Treta yuga, Dvapara yuga and Kali yuga. We are at present in the Kali yuga, which will last for 432,000 years (we are in year 5112 now, in 2020); Dvapara yuga is twice the duration of Kali yuga, Treta yuga is thrice Kali yuga and Satya yuga is four times Kali yuga. Overall, 4,320,000 years is termed as one Chatur-yuga. One thousand Chatur-yugas make a day (12 hours) of Brahma (Creator) and during another 12 hours (night of

Vimana of Pavalavanna Perumal Temple
Brahma), Brahma takes rest and there is no creation during this period. Thus 1 day of Brahma constitutes 2 x 1000 Chatur-yugas = 8,640,000,000 years, as per earthly time calculation. Brahma has got months and years. Thus 1 year constitutes 360 x 8,640,000,000 = 3,110,400,000,000 years; the lifespan of Brahma is 100 years = 100 x 3,110,400,000,000 = 311,040,000,000,000 years or 311.04 trillion earthly years.

1 kalpa = 1 day of Brahma = 12 hours of Brahma = 1 night of Brahma = 1000 yuga cycle. 1 yuga cycle = Satya yuga (1,728,000 years) + Treta yuga (1,296,000 years) + Dvapara yuga (8,64,000 years) + Kali yuga (4,32,000).

Brahma's life span seems huge but he also dies. Brahma's life in the Karana Ocean is just like a bubble. A bubble comes out during the exhalation of Lord Mahavishnu and disappears during His inhalation. In each Manvanthara, the Saptarishis change, although Vasishta has occupied the post for many Manvantharas.

One of the Saptarishis, Marichi, is associated with this divya desam. Marichi, like some of the other sages, followed the path of worldly duties, denouncing total renunciation. He had many children, the most notable one being Sage Kashyapa. Dharmavrata was one of the many consorts of the sage. Once, she was cursed by the sage to become a stone, for no fault of hers. She pleaded innocence and proved it by immolating herself. Vishnu was pleased by her devotion. She requested Vishnu to revert her curse, but Vishnu said that the curse could not be reverted, however she would continue to be regarded as Devashila, which would be considered sacred in every Hindu house. The life of Marichi is known more by the account of his descendants, notably by the works of Sage Kashyapa. Marichi then married Kala and gave birth to Kashyapa. Kashyapa is also sometimes acknowledged as a Prajapati, who has inherited the right of creation from his father.

In the Bhagavad-gita Lord Krishna says: “Of the Adityas I am Vishnu, of lights I am the radiant sun, of the Maruts I am Marichi, and among the stars I am the moon.”

So it is very clear that Maharshi Marichi is very dear to Krishna. In the purport, Srila Prabhupada states that Marichi is the controlling deity of the heavenly spaces. He is also the author of the Vimanachana Kalpa.

In Srimad Bhagavatam (4.1.8) there is a description of Marichi Rishi becoming a Saptarishi under Swayambhuva Manu:

tusita nama te deva
asan swayambhuvantare
marici-misra rsayo
yajnah sura-ganesvarah

“During the time of Swayambhuva Manu, these sons all became the demigods collectively named the Tusitas. Marichi became the head of the seven rishis, and Yajna
became the king of the demigods, Indra.

PURPORT (of Srila Prabhupada):

During the life of Svayambhuva Manu, six kinds of living entities were generated from the demigods known as the Tusitas, from the sages headed by Marichi, and from descendants of Yajna, king of the demigods, and all of them expanded their progeny to observe the order of the Lord to fill the universe with living entities. These six kinds of living entities are known as Manus, devas, Manu-putras, amsavatara, suresvaras and rishis. Yajna, being the incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, became the leader of the demigods, Indra.

Legend has it that Sage Marichi underwent severe austerities and pleased Lord Vishnu. The sage earnestly enquired from Lord Vishnu about the purpose of His incarnation as Lord Rama in Treta yuga and subsequent outcome of Goddess Sita Devi’s abduction by the demon King Ravana, Lord Rama’s fierce battle with the demon King Ravana etc. The most compassionate Lord Vishnu gracefully revealed the purpose of His incarnation as most essential for the restoration of righteousness in this land. This divya desam is the very spot where Sage Marichi did tapasya and the Lord appeared to him in two forms, one as Pavalavannar or the coral red hued Lord and then as Pachavannar or emerald hued Lord, described popularly as the hue of Lord Rama.

It is believed that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Narayana, assumed various colours during various eras according to the nature of the living beings and their behaviour. During Krita yuga, people were well-behaved (sattva guna) and Vishnu was white (called Svetavarna) in colour. During Treta yuga, He assumed the colour of pavalam (coral, red hued) and hence came to be known as Pavalavannar or Pralavannar (in Sanskrit). In Dvapara yuga, He assumed an emerald green colour (pachai in Tamil). In the current Kali yuga, He assumed blue tint called shyamalavarna and it is believed that people will not be influenced by the form Vishnu appears in.

The temple faces west and the twin Ashwins have worshipped the Lord here. According to another legend, Sage Bhrigu was doing his penance and wanted to find out who among the trio of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva would be the most accommodating when their patience was tested. Out of the three, he found Vishnu to be the most accommodating, who, in spite of the sage kicking him, went on to massage his legs for pain relief. The sage felt ashamed of his act, but Vishnu asked him to go to Kanchipuram to complete his penance. Vishnu appeared as Pavalavannar to the sage. The image of the sage can be seen in the sanctum, in worshipping posture.

The temple of Pavalavannar

In the main sanctum of the temple, we find the Supreme Personality of Godhead as Pavalavannar in sitting posture. The festive Deity and that of Santhana Gopala Krishnan are located inside the sanctum. The west-facing sanctum is approached past the flagstaff, pillared halls (mahamantapam and the ardhamantapam). The roof of the sanctum is called Vedasara Vimana and it has five kalashas and stucco carvings of various legends. The temple has separate shrines for the Alwars, located to the north of the flagstaff. The pillars in the hall are sculpted with images of Nammalwar, Ramanujar, Manavala Mamunigal and various avatars and forms of the Supreme Lord. There are other shrines of Rama along with Sita, Hanuman and Garuda.

The shrine of Pavazhavalli, the consort of Pavalavannar, is located facing the central shrine on the eastern side of the temple. The temple has two precincts, with the second precinct enclosed by granite walls pierced by a five-tiered rajagopuram (gateway tower). This gopuram is studded with various sculptures of various pastimes, the most notable among them being the representation of Narasimha, an incarnation of Vishnu slaying the demon Hiranyakashipu. A shrine of Manavala Mamunigal is located to the left of the gopuram from the entrance. The temple tank, Chakra Theertham, is located to the

Entrance of Pachavanna Perumal temple  Rajagopuram of Pavalavanna temple
northeast from the entrance. The temple as we see today is believed to have been built by the Cholas, with later contributions from Medieval Cholas and Vijayanagar kings. The temple has three inscriptions on its walls, two dating from the period of Kulothunga Chola I (1070–1120 CE) and one to that of Rajadhiraja Chola (1018-54 CE). A granite wall surrounds the temple, enclosing all the shrines and two bodies of water. The seven-tiered rajagopuram is said to be built by Vijayanagar Kings.

The temple of Pachavannar

The temple of the emerald-hued Lord is located just opposite to Pavalavannar and the Lord here is seen in standing position, with four hands holding conch, discus, mace and blessing position.

Festivals

Brahmotsavam celebrated during the Tamil month of Vaikasi (May - June) is the major festival of the temple. Pavitrotsavam celebrated during the Tamil month of Panguni (March - April) and Vaikuntha Ekadashi during Margazhi (December - January) are the other festivals celebrated in the temple.

Thirumangai Alwar has sung about the Lord of Pavalavannar temple:

Oh! Lord! I shall roam about singing Your qualities, the beauty of Your Deity form in various divya desam. I shall sing Your qualities which is revealed by You, giving one part of Your body to Shiva.

The ship called vatsalya carrying the precious gems, unloaded them on the shore of Mahabalipuram. Since it is a forest, there was no one to appreciate the ‘gems.’ Moreover since the gems can be sold only in cities, the ship carried them to Thiruvekka temple in Kanchipuram.

There was a parama bhakta called Pundareeka who had a beautiful garden near the sea. He plucked fresh beautiful flowers, made a garland and wanted to offer it to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Narayana, across the sea. He scooped out water with his hand to empty the ocean and cross it. Bhagavan appreciated his bhakti and came to the shore to lie there, so that he can offer flowers and worship Him. This is the history of Mahabalipuram divya desam.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Narayana, gives one side of His body to Shiva who wears garland of sculls and gives half of his body to his wife. You are so benevolent as to give one part of You to Shiva. You are very merciful too, for You lie on the milk ocean to enable Indra and the devas to approach You easily to pour out their woes.

The devas lost their homes when the asuras drove them away. You took Rama and Krishna avataras in order to restore their places for them and roamed on this earth like ordinary mortals.

The cool mountain of Thirumala removes the heat of samsara, the material world.

Pavalavanna! Oh coral-hued Lord!

Alwars says, “However much I shout for You, cry for You, You don’t seem to come. Are You not residing in these divya desams for the sake of Your devotees? My only job is to cry for You throughout my life. Can’t You have mercy on me?” 🙏

Photo courtesy: Santhanakrishnan, Srirangam
Is Krishna God?

Is God an idea? A quality? A white light? Or do these conceptions ignore the most important feature of the Supreme?

By Nagaraja Dasa

In 1966 in New York City when His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada was founding the Hare Krishna movement, a friend suggested he call it the "International Society for God Consciousness." But Srila Prabhupada felt that the word God was too vague. By naming his movement the "International Society for Krishna Consciousness," Srila Prabhupada was telling everyone that when he spoke of God he meant a specific person—Krishna.

To convince Westerners that Krishna is God, Srila Prabhupada had to refute a variety of misconceptions: There is no God; we are all God; God is impersonal; God is love; God is dead. Or, God is a person, but He can't be Krishna, who is, after all, either an Indian folk hero or one of the mythological Hindu gods. Despite facing such an array of ideas, Srila Prabhupada was confident of the power of the Vedic literature to convince people of the existence and identity of God. On the premise that God is unlimited, Srila Prabhupada ruled out philosophical speculation as an adequate means of understanding God. God is beyond our present powers of perception. If we want to know God, therefore, we must hear from God Himself. His revelations about Himself are recorded in the world's scriptures. The most elaborate exposition of God can be found in the Vedic literature, and the cream of the Vedic literature is Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Because Srila Prabhupada wanted to deliver convincing information about God, he had begun translating the Srimad-Bhagavatam from Sanskrit into English even before coming to the United States. Although the vast library of Vedic literature deals with a variety of subjects directly or indirectly related to God, the Bhagavatam deals exclusively with the science of God and the method by which to understand Him.

The Bhagavatam is scientific and does not demand blind faith. It presents not only an exhaustive analysis of God, but also the method for realizing Him. In the second verse the author, Srila Vyasa-deva, declares that God will reveal Himself within the heart of the serious student of the Srimad-Bhagavatam. And throughout the Bhagavatam Vyasa-deva has verified his claim by recording the histories of great saints who have realized God by the method prescribed in the Bhagavatam.

The Bhagavatam gives a reasonable, step-by-step presentation of the science of God. In Srila Prabhupada's Introduction to the Srimad-Bhagavatam, he begins by defining the term God:

The Sanskrit word ishvara (controller) conveys the import of God, but the Supreme Person is called the paramesvara, or the supreme ishvara. The Supreme Person, or paramesvara, is the supreme conscious personality, and because He does not derive any power from any other source. He is supremely independent.

In summary then, God is the supreme person and the supreme controller, and He is completely independent. The Bhagavatam also describes God as Bhagavan, the possessor of all opulences, chief of which is His unlimited beauty. The reservoir of that beauty is His eternal, transcendental body, composed of unlimited knowledge and bliss.

These elaborations on the word God from the Srimad-Bhagavatam at once solve many philosophical problems. They especially help us evaluate the validity of various impersonal conceptions of God. For example, because God means the supreme controller. He must be a person. He cannot be impersonal, like a white light or a quality or an idea.

An impersonal energy, a "white light," cannot control the creation or any part of it, since control must be ultimately exerted by a controller, a person. The "white light" is in fact a subordinate aspect of God known as the brahmajyoti, or the impersonal Brahman. Although many people accept Brahman to be the highest manifestation of God, the Bhagavatam repeatedly declares that the Supreme Absolute Truth is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna. The Bhagavatam also states that those who think they have attained ultimate liberation by merging with Brahman are not mature in their realization and must eventually fall again to the material world. Only devotees of the supreme controller, Krishna, can attain complete liberation.

Believing that God is a quality, like love or beauty, is also impersonalism. Being the supreme person, Krishna possesses these qualities in full, but such qualities are not the complete expression of God. They are but aspects of His personality.

Nor is God simply an idea. He is the supreme controller, the person who directs the workings of the universe. He must possess intelligence, discrimination, determination, and all the other qualities that make a person an expert manager. He is the best manager. As the elaborate workings of the universe testify, God is a
living, supremely intelligent person.

The atheist, of course, denies the existence of a universal controller. In his opinion the universe simply operates under a set of complex laws that do not warrant the supervision of any person. But this is contrary to common sense: Laws are made by persons. And behind every complex system within our experience we find a person. For example, the traffic in a large city flows smoothly (ideally) because of a complex system of traffic signals. A child may think the traffic lights operate independently, but an adult knows about the city government behind those traffic signals. And the city government is made of people, headed ultimately by one person. All complex systems trace back to a person. Experience leads us to assume that the extremely complex workings of the universe are controlled by a person.

That person is also controlling us. Those who deny the existence of the supreme controller cannot even prove that they themselves are free of His control. By advances in science and technology they may feel that they can ultimately control nature, but such hopes are unfounded. The unconquerable forces of old age, disease, and death are intrinsic to this material world and are dispensed by the justice department of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The atheist, despite his denial of God, will undeniably witness God's control at death.

Though atheists may hear many reasonable arguments for the existence of God, they stubbornly hold to their belief that God does not exist. They sometimes demand, "Show me God." But if they want a direct experience of God, they must avail themselves of the proper method of obtaining that experience. The uninformed and unfounded claims of the atheists cannot influence the devotees of God, who have experienced God by dint of their adherence to godly principles.

Despite atheistic propaganda, most people still "believe" in God. Unfortunately, they often reject Krishna as God, owing to incomplete knowledge about Him. But if someone is serious about knowing God, then he or she will be eager to hear about Krishna. Give Krishna a chance. Check His credentials.

Krishna's credentials appear in many Vedic literatures. The Srimad-Bhagavatam in particular clearly and repeatedly states that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
of Godhead. In the Bhagavatam’s step-by-step presentation, the complete science of God is given in nine cantos, comprising more than two dozen volumes. The entire Tenth Canto describes exclusively the appearance and activities of Sri Krishna. Lord Krishna alone, the Bhagavatam reveals, possesses all the qualifications of God discussed in the preceding nine cantos. And all the great teachers of the Vedic literature—led by Madhvacharya, Ramanujacharya, Vishnusvami, Nimbarkacharya, and Shankaracharya (who professed to be an impersonalist)—accept Krishna as God.

Some people reject Krishna as God because of their misunderstanding that the Vedic religion of India, now known as Hinduism, propounds the worship of many gods, one of them being Krishna. The Vedic religion, however, is not polytheistic. If we study the Vedic literature closely, we find that Krishna is always declared to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. After listing many incarnations of God, the Srimad-Bhagavatam states that Krishna is the origin of all incarnations and that He alone is the Supreme God (krishnas tu bhagavan svayam). The Brahma-samhitā (5.1) states, “Krishna, who is known as Govinda, is the supreme controller. He has an eternal, blissful, spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin, for He is the prime cause of all causes.” Krishna is described here as the original controller. His position is unique: There can be only one original controller, and He is God.

But Krishna does not have to personally supervise the workings of the universe. He has subordinate controllers (demigods) whom He empowers to run various functions of universal affairs.

Modern man ridicules the so-called primitive practice of worshiping a powerful aspect of material nature as if it has personal qualities. The Vedic literature, however, explains that empowered individuals known as demigods control all material phenomena. Just because we cannot see these powerful controllers doesn’t mean they don’t exist. We can reasonably infer their existence after studying the intricacies of material nature. The Vedic literature describes the demigods elaborately. Srila Vyasadeva’s rigorous presentation of the science of God is serious and scholarly. And he describes the demigods as real persons, not as mythological characters.

The demigods control the departments of universal management. Indra controls the rain, Vayu controls the air, Varuna the water, Vivasvan the sun, and so on.

Although from our point of view these demigods are extremely powerful, they are nonetheless subordinate to Krishna. All living beings are spiritual, but they belong to two different categories. In one category there exist the unlimited Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna, and His personal expansions. In the other category are all other living entities, the innumerable infinitesimal souls. Although Lord Krishna can expand Himself into unlimited forms that possess His full potency, the demigods are not such expansions. Rather, the demigods belong to the category of the infinitesimal living entities, called jivas. The jivas may possess material bodies—like those of the demigods, for example—but Krishna’s body is always transcendental. Pleased with their devotion and good qualities. Lord Krishna assigns the demigods to responsible posts in His universal government. No matter how powerful a demigod may be, however, Krishna is ultimately in control.

Despite hundreds of direct statements throughout the Vedic literature that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the Absolute Truth, some people (who profess to be followers of the Vedic literature) still contend that ultimately Krishna is not a person. They may even say that Krishna is God, but they really mean that Krishna is an incarnation of the impersonal Brahman, which they say is the ultimate truth. Krishna has realized His identity with the impersonal Brahman, they say, so now He is God. And we too can “become God” through meditation and philosophical speculation. We are all God, they say; we just have to realize it. They say that when Krishna speaks in the Bhagavad-gītā about surrender to Him, He is actually telling us to surrender to “the unborn” within Him. For them, the “unborn” is greater than Krishna.

Such speculative notions betray an ignorance of the science of God. There is no difference in the Absolute Godhead between His inside and His outside. His body is purely spiritual. He is the Absolute Truth, the source of everything. He is not subordinate to any impersonal “unborn” entity. As Krishna explains, brahmaḥo hi pratisthahāṃ: “I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman.”

And God never forgets His identity. Because He is the source of all energies, He never falls under illusion like ordinary jivas. If we were God we would not be bewildered by God’s illusory energy—and we wouldn’t be struggling to become God. God is always God. He doesn’t need to do anything to realize that eternal truth.

Because God is a person beyond all time and space, we can never understand Him by our speculation. He can be understood only when He reveals Himself. To our great fortune. He has revealed Himself in the Vedic literature, which presents the fullest explanation of the transcendental names, forms, qualities, and activities of God. The Srimad-Bhagavatam—the crest jewel of the Vedic literature—specifically expounds the glories of Lord Sri Krishna. Those who wish to advance their understanding of God would do well to study Srimad-Bhagavatam as it is presented in English in its pure form by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.
PJ Margo Pvt. Ltd. donated two food distribution vehicles to The Akshaya Patra Foundation.

Sri Acharya Ratna Dasa, General Manager-Projects, Akshaya Patra Foundation, handed over a memento to Sri Pradeep Jaipuria (MD), in appreciation of their contribution. Praveen Jaipuria (Executive Director), Sharad Singhania (President of Business Development) & Ambily P Nair (Secretary) also present.
BANGALORE

Abhisheka

Arati

Pallakki Utsava

Devotees in the main temple hall

Laksharchana

Vaikuntha Dwara
Distinguished Guests to ISKCON Bangalore

Dr Sri Sri Chandrashekar Shivacharya Swamiji
Jangamwadi Math, Kashi

Sri B S Yediyurappa
Chief Minister of Karnataka

Sri K S Eshwarappa, Minister of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj of Karnataka

Sri K Gopalaiah
MLA of Mahalakshmi Layout, Bangalore

Sri Vijay Sankeshwar
Chairman and Managing Director of VRL Group

Sri Chandrashekhar Kambara
President, Kendra Sahitya Akademi, Government of India
The Consciousness Graph
by Gopeesha Dasa

Do you remember your progressive learning of mathematics in your childhood days? When we were in standard 1 or 2, we all learnt numbers starting from 1 and later 0 was introduced. We had no idea about negative numbers. When we came to standard 5, the concept of negative numbers was introduced through a number line.

This graph of number line can be compared with the graph of our consciousness.

![Consciousness Graph](image)

As shown in the graph above, there are broadly three types of consciousness – that of *karmis*, *jnanis* and devotees.

The *karmi* consciousness is on the negative side. The consciousness of the *jnanis* is at zero. The positive consciousness on the right side is called Krishna consciousness and devotees are of this positive consciousness. The negative side of the graph represents the material world and the positive side indicates the spiritual world.

**Karmis on the Negative Side**

The *karmis* or fruitive workers are those who are trying to enjoy in the material platform by always being engaged in materialistic activities. They work hard for improving their economic condition in order to better fulfil the demands of their senses. Sometimes they take to religiosity and perform ritualistic ceremonies as well as pious activities, desiring to get rid of their miseries or to attain sensual pleasures in the future. But their so-called happiness is only illusory, temporary and also the source of so many miseries.

**Impersonalists and Voidists at Zero**

*Jnanis* are the philosophers and mental speculators, who are inclined towards understanding the ultimate truth by way of their own logic and reasoning.

In the material world, there exist varieties of forms, persons, activities and relationships. And the material bodies are perishable, full of ignorance and completely miserable. Therefore impersonalists negate all variegatedness in the Supreme Truth, the source of all pleasure and conclude that it must be without form, qualities and activities. They think that the Supreme Truth is
impersonal and the thought of retaining the personality after liberation from material existence frightens them. So they prefer a kind of merging into the impersonal void like the merging of the bubbles of an ocean into the ocean. This is a kind of fearful stage of life, devoid of perfect knowledge of spiritual existence.

And there are voidists, who are bewildered by so many theories about the ultimate truth and the contradictions of different philosophical speculations. They become frustrated or angry and conclude that there is no supreme cause and that everything is ultimately void.

![Devotees on the Positive Side](image)

**Devotees on the Positive Side**

The devotees are those who are engaged in the service of the Supreme Lord in His personal feature. They are the intelligent persons who know that if there are negative numbers, there are positive numbers too.

Lord Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gita* (10.8):

“I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who know this perfectly engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts.”

Thus, one has to get rid of all three stages of attachment to the material world: negligence of spiritual life due to material attachment, fear of a spiritual personal identity, and the conception of void out of frustration and come to the positive side of the graph where devotees are situated.

Read the full article on our blog: [www.iskconbangalore.org/blog/the-consciousness-graph/](http://www.iskconbangalore.org/blog/the-consciousness-graph/)
<table>
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<th>PILGRIMAGE NAME</th>
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<th>DATE OF TRAVEL</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
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<td>MY PILGRIMAGE</td>
<td>As per your choice</td>
<td>As per your choice</td>
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<td>MONTHLY AHOBILAM</td>
<td>Nava Narasimha Temples, Bahavanasini River and more</td>
<td>Every 2nd Sat and Sun</td>
<td>₹6,500/-</td>
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<td>KERALA DIVYADESAM</td>
<td>Divyadesams, Guruveyoor and more</td>
<td>Feb 13 to Feb 19, 2020</td>
<td>₹20,000/-</td>
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<td>HUBLI RATHA YATRA</td>
<td>Badami, Aihole, Gadag and more</td>
<td>Feb 14 to Feb 17, 2020</td>
<td>₹5,600/-</td>
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<td>DHARWAD RATHA YATRA</td>
<td>Sirsi, Sode Math, Yana and more</td>
<td>Feb 21 to Feb 24, 2020</td>
<td>₹5,500/-</td>
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<td>PURI</td>
<td>Puri, Bhubaneswar, Konark and more</td>
<td>Feb 22 to Feb 25, 2020</td>
<td>₹12,000/- + flight charges</td>
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<td>MAYAPUR</td>
<td>Yogapitha, Ganga, Shantipur, Panthiati and more</td>
<td>Feb 25 to Feb 29, 2020</td>
<td>₹12,000/- + flight charges</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAMESHWARAM MADURAI</td>
<td>Rameshwaram, Madurai, Dhanushkodi, Thirupullani and more</td>
<td>Mar 13 to Mar 16, 2020</td>
<td>₹7,500/-</td>
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<td>MANGALORE RATHA YATRA</td>
<td>Ratha Yatra, Udupi, Malpe, Gokarna, Murdeshwar &amp; more</td>
<td>Mar 13 to Mar 16, 2020</td>
<td>₹6,000/-</td>
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<td>KISHKINDA HAMPI</td>
<td>Anjanadri Hill, Hampi, Tungabhadra and more</td>
<td>Apr 3 to Apr 6, 2020</td>
<td>₹7,500/-</td>
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<td>PANDHARPUR KOLHAPUR</td>
<td>Pandharpur, Kolhapur, Chabdrabhaga and more</td>
<td>Batch 1 - Apr 24 to Apr 27, 2020</td>
<td>₹7,500/-</td>
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<td>NEPAL MUKTINATH</td>
<td>Mukthinath, Kathmandu, Damauli, Janakpur, Sitamadi and more</td>
<td>Batch 1 - May 9 to May 19, 2020</td>
<td>₹55,000/- + flight charges</td>
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<tr>
<td>PURI RATHA YATRA</td>
<td>Ratha Yatra, Puri, Bhubaneswar, Konark and more</td>
<td>Batch 1 – Jun 21 to Jun 25, 2020</td>
<td>₹25,000/- + flight charges</td>
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<td>KAILASH MANSAROVAR</td>
<td>Manasarovar lake, Kailash parikrama Pashupatinath and other Nepal temples</td>
<td>July 7 to July 18, 2020</td>
<td>₹2,40,000/-</td>
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<td>SRILANKA</td>
<td>Colombo, Jaffna, Mannar, Trincomalee, Rambod, Ashoka Vatika, Nuwavariya, Ussamgoda, Rummalsala, Kandy and more</td>
<td>Batch 1 – Mar 21 to 30, 2020</td>
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<td>CHARDHAM</td>
<td>Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, Yamunotri, Rishikesh, Haridwar and more!</td>
<td>Batch 1 – June 19 to Jun 30, 2020</td>
<td>₹50,000/- + flight charges</td>
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<td>CHARDHAM (By Helicopter)</td>
<td>Pancha Badri (5 Badrinarayana temples) Pancha Prayag, Rishikesh, Haridwar and more</td>
<td>Batch 1 – April 27 to May 8, 2020</td>
<td>₹2,00,000/-</td>
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<td>PANCHAM BADRI</td>
<td>Pancha Badri (5 Badrinarayana temples) Pancha Prayag, Rishikesh, Haridwar and more</td>
<td>Batch 1 – April 27 to May 8, 2020</td>
<td>₹45,000/- + flight charges</td>
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<td>NAVADVIPA MAYAPUR</td>
<td>Navadvipa (9 islands), Sridham Mayapur, Yogapitha Gaanga, Ekachakra, Shantipur Panthiati and more</td>
<td>Batch 1 – Jul 4 to Jul 10, 2020</td>
<td>₹20,000/- + flight charges</td>
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<tr>
<td>VRINDAVAN</td>
<td>Mathura, Vrindavan, Barsana, Raval, Nandagaon, Gokul, Yamuna, Govardhana Parikrama, Kurukshetra, Shukratal and more</td>
<td>Nov 2 to Nov 8, 2020</td>
<td>₹20,000/- + flight charges</td>
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"Hare Krishna, we are very much thankful to ISKCON prabhuji for arranging such a wonderful trip. We’re very happy with the arrangement of the Puri pilgrimage, information about all the temples and God’s pastimes is what we liked the most. We’re also thankful to prabhuji for helping us reach home early. We are eagerly waiting to join again for another pilgrimage. Yes we will also continue chanting God’s names as advised." - Mrs. Jayashree Modi, Homemaker

"Hare Krishna. Thanks a lot for kindly arranging for darshan of Lord Jagannath. I was personally waiting for this darshan since 2002. I only wish more repeated pilgrimages to Sridham Puri with ISKCON group. We had a very delightful prasadam at HKM Puri, especially on ekadashi day Jai Jagannath Jai Prabhu Jaya" - Murali, Manager R&D, Nokia

"I’m very happy to share that it was a very pleasant experience to complete Mayapur pilgrimage and ISKCON really helped create that for all of us. From the time we landed in the Kolkata airport till the time we were dropped off, you made a very sincere attempt to keep all the yatris together, attending personally to each of us and checking if things were going good. I have traveled with a lot of other travel companies earlier but the experience I had with ISKCON Bangalore was simply amazing. The most important and relishing part of the trip was the Kirtans we did in Mayapur/Ekachakra where I also learnt some new Pranama mantras and Vaishnava songs. You were very considerate all along to help the senior citizens traveling with us and ensured their slow pace was attended to and we all stayed together as a group. The pastimes you narrated when we visited various places was good and its so important that we understand this when we cover those places." - Mrs. Anjana Talya, Program Manager, Global Technology Services
GOLOKA SHADES at Buddhi Special School
The Cultural Education Services division of ISKCON Bangalore conducted the Goloka Shades contest for children of Buddhi Special School, Yelahanka on 9th January 2020. The competition was preceded by the children with special needs melodiously chanting the Hare Krishna Maha-mantra. They enthusiastically participating in the coloring, painting, pencil shading and handwriting contests.

Images of Artwork done by children from Buddhi Special School

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To register online:
www.iskconbangalore.org/culture-camp
The Cultural Education Services division of ISKCON Bangalore organized the refreshing ‘Krishna Kids Carnival’ for children during the winter break on 28th and 29th December 2019.

The carnival, centered on the theme of Gita Jayanti—the auspicious day of the advent of Srimad Bhagavad-gita, saw children dancing and singing to ecstatic kirtan, playing fun-filled games and praying fervently as they took darshan of the presiding Deities at Hare Krishna Hill. They rejoiced and delighted in the art sessions and the Master Chef baking sessions organized as a part of the program.

The carnival, true to its title, was an engaging gala event with children having loads of fun while meaningfully imbibing several aspects of our rich culture and tradition in the blessed temple environment!
Memorable moments of Goloka Shades 2019 contest conducted at Bharati Vidya Mandir School, Nation Builder School, Kidzee School, Vagdevi International School, St. Thomas school, Jain International School, Karnataka Public School and National Public School Kengeri.
Why Vaikuntha?
Vaikuntha is the supreme abode of Sri Srinivasa Govinda and our eternal home. Here is a series of seven articles that enlightens our consciousness on reaching Vaikuntha.

Gaura Purnima
Sri Gaura Purnima is the auspicious appearance day of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and this year we are celebrating the 534th anniversary of His appearance on March 9, 2020.

The Passing of Bhishmadeva
In the epic of Mahabharata, an old warrior had a boon to give up his body at a time of his choice. But, in our case, death in unpredictable. So, are we prepared for it?

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

Reviews from tripadvisor
Very beautiful and well maintained temple: The temple is very beautiful and very nice surroundings, it is definitely the best ISKCON temple you can visit in India. We loved the food there, it was tasty and very hygienic preparation unlike at other places. The arati is also grand. Must-visit for Lord Krishna devotees. - KarishmaSizzles

Magical Place: The place is very big, well maintained and the main attracting thing about this place is it’s a very peaceful place which is the very reason I myself have visited many times and everything in Iskcon Temple is Just Perfect... - SLMN1998

Nice: Good place to visit early in the morning. You can participate in the prayers and bhajans. Also have hot kichidi they serve after the prayers which is pretty good. Very close to Metro station. - Devendra R

Nice temple to visit: A serene place to visit which gives you a happy vibes by enchanting “hare krishna mantra” with a yummy prasadam. ... It looks way more beautiful in the evening and morning. I would recommend everyone to visit this temple at least once. - heartout9

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Dr K Kasturirangan
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Chair, Draft National Education Policy 2019

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