His Excellency President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind serving mid-day meals in Vrindavan
SRI NITYANANDA TRAYODASHI
APPEARANCE DAY OF LORD NITYANANDA

FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 7, 2020

CELEBRATIONS AT ISKCON,
HARE KRISHNA HILL,
BANGALORE
6:00 PM ONWARDS

abhisheka - arati
kirtanas - video presentation
pallaki utsava - prasadam feast

nitai guna-manis amar nitai guna-manis
aniya premer vanyo bhasailo avani

My Lord Nityananda, the jewel of all virtues,
my Lord Nityananda, the jewel of all virtues,
has brought the flood of ecstatic love of God
that has drowned the entire world.

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

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

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Krishna Voice, January 2020

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CONTENTS

Madana-Mohana 4
Srila Prabhupada Speaks Out 10
Can God Do That? 12
A Fish Out of Water 14
Close Encounter with Another Kind 16
Thiru Parameshwara Vinnagaram 18

Cover pages-4  Text pages-32

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Madana-Mohana
Supreme Enchanter of the Soul
Cupid's arrows can no longer pierce our hearts when we become attracted to Krishna.

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

In this material world everyone is attracted by sex. This is a fact. As the Srimad-Bhagavatam says, yan maithunadi-grhamedhi-sukham hi tuccham: "The happiness, the so-called happiness of household life begins from maithuna, or sexual intercourse."

Generally, a man marries to satisfy sex desire. Then he begets children. Then, when the children are grown up, the daughter marries a boy and the son marries a girl for the same purpose: sex. Then, grandchildren.

In this way, material happiness expands as sry-aishvarya-prajepsavah. Sri means "beauty," aishvarya means "wealth," and praja means "children." People think they are successful if they have a beautiful wife, a good bank balance, and good sons, daughters, daughters-in-law, and so on. If one's family consists of beautiful women and riches and many children, one is supposed to be a most successful man.

What is this success? The shastra [scripture] says this success is simply an expansion of sexual intercourse. That's all. We may polish it in different ways, but this same sex happiness is also there in the hogs. The hogs eat the whole day, here and there, "Where is stool? Where is stool?" and then have sex without any discrimination. The hog does not discriminate whether he has sex with his mother, sister, or daughter.

So, the shastra says we are encaged in this material world only for sex. In other words, we are victims of Cupid. Cupid, or Madana, is the god of sex. Unless one is induced by Madana, one cannot be engladdened in sex life. And one of Krishna's names is Madana-mohana, "He who vanquishes Cupid." In other words, one who is attracted to Krishna will forget the pleasure derived from sex. This is the test of advancement in Krishna consciousness.

Another meaning of madana is "to intoxicate or madden." Everyone is maddened by the force of sex desire. The Srimad-Bhagavatam says, pumsah striya mithuni-bhavam etam tayor mitho hrdaya-granthim ahuh: "The whole material world is going on because of the attraction between male and female." A man is attracted by a woman, a woman is attracted by a man, and when they are united in sex their attachment for this material world increases more and more. After marriage, the man and woman seek a nice home and a job or some land for farming, because they have to earn money to get food and other things. Then come suta (children), apta (friends and relatives), and vittaih (wealth). In this way the attraction for the material world becomes tighter and tighter. And it all begins with our attraction for madana, the pleasure of sex.

But our business is not to be attracted by the glimmer of this material world; our business is to be attracted by Krishna. And when we become attracted by the beauty of Krishna, we will lose our attraction for the false beauty of this material world. As Sri Yamunacharya says,

    yad-avadhima ceta krishna-padaravinde
    nava-nava-rasa-dhamany uryatam rantum asit
    tad-avadhima bata nari-sangane smaryamane
    bhavati mukha-vikarah susthu nisthivanam ca

"Since I have been attracted by the beauty of Krishna and have begun to serve His lotus feet, I am getting newer and newer pleasure, and as soon as I think of sexual intercourse my mouth immediately turns aside and I spit."

So, Krishna is Madana-mohana, the conqueror of Madana, or Cupid. Madana is attracting everyone, but when one is attracted by Krishna, Madana is defeated. And as soon as Madana is defeated, we conquer this material world. Otherwise, it is very difficult. As Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita [7.14],

    daivi hy esa guna-mayi
    mama maya duratayaya
    mam eva ye aprapadyante
    mayam etam taranti te
This material world is very difficult to overcome, but if one surrenders unto Krishna and catches His lotus feet very strongly, "Krishna, save me!" Krishna promises, "Yes, I'll save you. Don't worry, I shall save you." Kaunteya pratijanii na me bhaktah pranasyati: "My dear Arjuna, you can declare to the world that I will protect My devotee who has no other desire but to serve Me."

Unfortunately, people do not know that our only business is to take shelter of the lotus feet of Krishna. We have no other business. Any other business we may do simply entangles us in this material world. The aim of human life is to get out of the clutches of the material world. But, as the Bhagavatam says, na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum: "People do not know that their ultimate goal in life is to realize Vishnu, or Krishna."

So, it is very difficult to turn people to Krishna consciousness in this age. Still, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu [Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is Krishna Himself in the role of His own devotee. He appeared in Bengal, India, five hundred years ago to teach love of God through the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra.] has ordered us to distribute this knowledge all over the world. So let us try. Even if the people do not take our instruction, that is no disqualification for us. Our only qualification is simply to try our best. Maya [illusion] is very strong. Therefore to take the living entities out of the clutches of maya is not a very easy thing. My Guru Maharaja had so many temples all over India, and sometimes he would say, "If by selling all these temples I could turn one man to Krishna consciousness, my mission would be successful." He used to say that.

Our purpose is not to construct big, big buildings, although that is sometimes required for spreading Krishna consciousness and for giving shelter to people. But our main business is to turn the faces of the bewildered conditioned souls toward Krishna. That is our main purpose. Therefore Bhaktivinoda Thakura and other Vaishnavas have warned us to be careful about constructing too many big temples, because our attention may be diverted toward material things. In other words, we may become forgetful of Krishna.

Of course, ultimately nothing is material. Thinking something is material is simply an illusion. Actually, there is nothing but spirit. How can there be anything material? The Supreme Lord is the Supreme Spirit, and since everything is coming from Him, what we call the material energy is also coming from Him and is thus ultimately spiritual.

But the difficulty is that in this material world, Krishna's inferior energy, there is the possibility of forgetting Krishna. People are engaged in so many activities. We can see this very clearly in the Western countries and they are inventing so many modern facilities, but the result is that they are forgetting Krishna. That is material, this forgetfulness of Krishna.

Actually, there is nothing except Krishna and His energies. As Narada Muni says, idam hi visvam bhagavan ivetarah: "This world is Krishna, Bhagavan." But to those in ignorance it appears different from Bhagavan. For a maha-bhagavata, a pure devotee, there is no conception of material and spiritual, because he sees Krishna everywhere. As soon as he sees anything we call material, he sees it as a transformation of Krishna's energy (parinama-vada). Lord Chaitanya gave the following example:

sthavara-jangama dekhe, na dekhe tara murti
sarvatra haya nija ista-deva-sphurti

A pure devotee may see a tree, but he forgets the tree and sees the energy of Krishna. And as soon as he sees the energy of Krishna, he sees Krishna. Therefore, instead of seeing the tree he sees Krishna.

Another example is the sun and the sunshine. As soon as you see the sunshine, you can immediately think of the sun. Is that not so? In the morning, as soon as you see the sunshine shining in your window, you can immediately remember the sun. You are confident the sun is there, because you know that without the sun there cannot be any sunshine. Similarly, whenever we see something, we should immediately think of Krishna with reference to that particular thing, because that thing is a manifestation of Krishna's energy. And because the energy is not different from the energetic, those who have understood Krishna along with His energies do not see anything except Krishna. Therefore for them there is no material world. To a perfect devotee, everything is spiritual (sarvam khalv idam brahma).

So, we have to train our eyes to see Krishna everywhere. And this training is devotional service to Krishna, which is a process of purification:

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tat-paratvena nirmalam
hrsikenahrsikesa-
sevanambhaktiucyate
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SALARPURIA SATTVA
As soon as we are in Krishna consciousness, we give up our false designations, and our seeing, touching, smelling, and so on become nirmala, or purified, by being engaged in the service of Krishna. Then we can immediately see Krishna everywhere. As long as our eyes are not purified we cannot see Krishna, but as soon as they are purified by the process of devotional service, we will see nothing but Krishna.

So, Cupid is one of the agents of the illusory, material energy, but if we are perfectly in Krishna consciousness Cupid cannot pierce our heart with his arrows. It is not possible. A good example is Haridasa Thakura. When Haridasa Thakura was a young man, a nicely dressed young prostitute came to him in the middle of the night and revealed her desire to unite with him. Haridasa Thakura said, “Yes, please sit down. I shall fulfill your desire, but just let me finish my chanting of Hare Krishna.” Just see! It’s the dead of night, and in front of Haridasa Thakura is a beautiful young girl proposing to have sex with him. But still he’s steady, chanting Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. But he never finished his chanting, so her plan was unsuccessful.

So, Cupid cannot pierce our heart when we are fully absorbed in Krishna consciousness. There may be thousands of beautiful women before a devotee, but they cannot disturb him. He sees them as energies of Krishna. He thinks, “They are Krishna’s; they are meant for His enjoyment.”

A devotee's duty is to try to engage all beautiful women in the service of Krishna, not to try to enjoy them. A devotee is not pierced by the arrows of Cupid, because he sees everything in relationship with Krishna. That is real renunciation. He does not accept anything for his own sense gratification but engages everything and everyone in the service of Krishna. This is the process of Krishna consciousness.

Thank you very much.

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

ISKCON Scholarship

In a humble attempt to recognize the important contribution made by unsung heroes in our city, like police personnel, rickshaw drivers, railway porters, paurakarmikas and daily wage workers. ISKCON Bangalore has been awarding scholarships to the students of these families on merit basis. The scholarship is sponsored by The Learning Society, Bangalore, Sri Srinivasalu Reddy & Himalaya Wellness to help these students to pursue higher education. Shri S Suresh Kumar, Honourable Minister for Primary & Secondary Education, Govt of Karnataka, has distributed scholarships symbolically to the meritorious school students. This is an annual feature and this year the cut off percentage was 95%. The entire process has been transparent and conducted online.
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Priest: Do you have what I might call a training in contemplation?

Srila Prabhupada: We worship God in nine ways. One is smaranam, remembering God's activities. That is contemplation.

Priest: You know, in Christian mysticism we have a process of contemplation that St. Theresa of Avila described in her book Interior Mansion. Anybody is able to make an ordinary prayer, but the real mystic prayer is not given to everyone.

Srila Prabhupada: Our mystic prayer is to think of God's activities. Anyone can do it.

Priest: Ours is not so much thinking of God's activities as just being open to receive love, getting to that real stillness and quiet in which

Srila Prabhupada: No. Devotional service, or bhakti-yoga, is not stillness. Stillness is the neutral stage of love of God, when you stop your material activities.

Priest: Could you further describe this neutrality?

Srila Prabhupada: It is simply the stage of realizing that God is great. That is neutrality. But real devotional service begins when one understands, “Because God is so great, I should serve Him. Why am I uselessly rendering service to this world? Why not render service to God?” That stage is called dasyam, or servitude. That is the beginning of bhakti-yoga.

Material activity simply entangles us in the repetition of birth and death. This is called pravrtti-marga, "activity for sense enjoyment." Everyone is busy working for sense enjoyment. The tiger is busy. The hog is busy. The dog is busy. And if a man also becomes busy for sense enjoyment like the tigers and hogs and dogs, then in his next life he may become one of those species of life.

Priest: When one reaches a higher stage of activity, when he really loves all mankind

Srila Prabhupada: That is a concoction mental speculation. Why should you love only mankind? Why not love the tigers, the dogs, and all other species of life?

Priest: Because human beings are my brothers and sisters.

Srila Prabhupada: But the tigers and dogs are also your brothers and sisters, because you all have a common father God. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita [5.18],

vidya-vinaya-sampinne
brahma-gavi hastini
suni caiva sva-pake ca
panditah sama-darsinah
Priest: What does that mean?

Srila Prabhupada: That a truly learned man sees every living being with equal vision. In other words, he doesn't make any spiritual distinction between you and a dog. You have a soul that is covered by a human body, and a dog a soul covered by a dog's body. But both of you are souls, part and parcel of God.

Priest: Would you say that souls are of different values?

Srila Prabhupada: No, all souls are of the same value.

Priest: That I find hard to accept, because, as I understand it, the soul of man is immortal but the soul of an animal is not. An animal's "soul" is not really a soul at all but a principle of life, something Aristotle called a psyche. Therefore, man has higher value than the animals.

Srila Prabhupada: No, spiritually they are of equal value, although materially their bodies may be of different gradations. It is just like the different gradations of motorcars. A man sitting in a Rolls Royce thinks he is very important, and a man sitting in a Ford or Chevrolet thinks he is poor. But as men both of them are equal. Similarly, the body of a human being and the body of a dog are just different machines, but the souls are of the same quality part and parcel of the Supreme Soul, Krishna.

Priest: That is hard to understand that my soul and your soul are part of the Supreme Soul because the Supreme Soul is infinite and we are finite. Therefore we cannot, added up together, make God.

Srila Prabhupada: No, I don't say that. We are finite, and God is infinite. If all souls were combined together, they would still be finite, not infinite. Ninety billion zeroes cannot make one. So, I don't say that combined together we shall be equal to God. But the quality of God is there in all souls. God is like the vast ocean, and we are like drops of ocean water. The drops contain the same chemicals as the vast ocean, but in minute degree.

Priest: So we have God's qualities in imitation.

Srila Prabhupada: Not imitation. Actually, all souls do have God's qualities, just as a particle of gold has the same qualities as the gold in the mine. A small fragment of gold is certainly gold, but it is not equal to all the gold in the gold mine. So our philosophy is achintya-bhedabheda-tattva, "the inconceivable simultaneous oneness and difference of God and His energies." In other words, we are one with God in quality but different from Him in quantity.

God has creative power, and we also have creative power. But God has created millions of planets that float in space, and we have created the 747 that floats in the air. Yet we want to take more credit.

Priest: That is the sin of pride.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, that is false pride. Modern scientists are taking false pride in their accomplishments and saying there is no need of God. “There is no God. We can do everything.” This is their foolishness.

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<th>Fasting</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 20 Ekadashi</td>
<td>Jan 25 Ratha Yatra in Bangalore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 21 break fast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 5 Ekadashi</td>
<td>Feb 1 Sri Advaita Acharya - Appearance</td>
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<td>Feb 6 break fast</td>
<td>Fasting till noon</td>
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<td>Feb 6</td>
<td>Feb 6 Sri Varahadeva - Appearance</td>
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<td>Fasting observed previous day till noon</td>
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<td>Feb 7 Nityananda Trayodashi: Appearance of Sri Nityananda Mahaprabhu</td>
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If I were to tell you I knew a story about a boy who swallowed a raging forest fire to save his friends and relatives, you’d probably think it was a fairy tale. Boys don’t swallow forest fires.

If I were to tell you the story was about how God swallowed a raging forest fire, you might consider more seriously the possibility of the story’s being true. God has been known to part seas, hold forth from clouds, and demolish mighty empires. So why not inhale a forest fire?

The fact is, the short story I am going to tell is about an attractive young boy who inhaled a raging forest fire to save His friends and relatives. But it’s not a fairy tale. It’s a true story. You see, that young boy is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna. Let me explain.

The Vedic literatures describe three levels of God realization. On the first level, the transcendentalist realizes God as Brahman, the effulgent, all-pervading spirit, and he realizes that he too is eternal spirit, different from the temporary, physical body. This is not to say, as many transcendentalists mistakenly conclude, that we are God, but that we have the same eternal, spiritual nature as God.

On the second level, God is realized as Paramatma, the Supersoul, who is within the hearts of all living creatures and within every atom. The Supersoul witnesses our activities, awards us our karma, hears and answers our prayers, and directs the movements of material nature, from the orbits of the greatest planets down to the stirring of the smallest particles of dust. “Not a blade of grass moves,” say the Upanishads, “without the will of the Lord.”

Most currently popular conceptions of God fall within the categories of Brahman and Paramatma realization: God is understood to be the omnipresent and omniscient Supreme Being, the almighty creator and ruler of the universe, the provider of our daily necessities, the overseer and stern judge of our deeds; He is the Great Cosmic Scorekeeper, fully absorbed in His unlimited administrative duties.

These conceptions of God, while correct, are incomplete. There is a third and higher level of God realization, known as Bhagavan realization, in which we understand that God is not first and foremost the controller of this material world nor the servant of our desires. God is the Supreme, the one master of all. How could He be obliged to act as our servant or simply as a cosmic administrator? The Vedic literatures inform us that God, in His topmost feature as Bhagavan, resides in His eternal abode, beyond the material world, where He enjoys blissful pastimes with His pure devotees. In that transcendental abode He is known as Krishna, the all-attractive Personality of Godhead, and although He is the oldest of all, He appears eternally as a fresh youth.

Brahman, Paramatma, and Bhagavan are progressive realizations of the same Supreme Person. Brahman is the effulgence of Krishna’s transcendental body. Paramatma is Krishna’s personal expansion through which He creates and maintains the material universe. And Bhagavan is Krishna’s original form as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the source of all other features of God.

People sometimes argue that God cannot be a person. If He were, they say. He would be limited and imperfect like us. But the Vedic literatures answer that although...
God is an individual person, we cannot compare our personalities to His in every respect. He is the greatest person and has no limitations or faults. Because He is the origin of everything, He necessarily possesses everything. If He were merely an impersonal being, He would be lacking the most valued of all assets: personality, or individuality. And how can the Supreme lack anything?

Bhagavan Sri Krishna occasionally appears in human society to display His intimate pastimes. To play the part of a human being, He descended five thousand years ago as the son of one of His devotees. He grew from childhood to boyhood to youth but no further. When He spoke the Bhagavad-gita to Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra, He had been on earth for 125 years and had many children and grandchildren. Yet He looked no older than twenty or twenty-five.

So what about that boy in the painting inhaling all those flames? As I was saying, that's Krishna, the Supreme Person, and He's swallowing a forest fire to save His friends and relatives. He grew from childhood to boyhood to youth but no further. When He spoke the Bhagavad-gita to Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra, He had been on earth for 125 years and had many children and grandchildren. Yet He looked no older than twenty or twenty-five.

The residents of Vrindavana were on the topmost level of Bhagavan realization. They knew and loved Krishna as their dear-most friend and as their affectionate child. Although they were sometimes aware that He was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, that fact was not important to them.

Attracted by His beauty and by His loving dealings, they lived only to serve Him and to please Him. "Krishna may or may not be God," they would think, "but we want to serve Him just because He is such a wonderful boy." Even when they called out to Him in fear of the fire, addressing Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and asking Him to save them, they were thinking of Him primarily as their intimate friend.

Hearing the distressed cry of His own townspeople, and understanding that they were depending completely upon Him, Krishna felt compassionate and immediately swallowed the forest fire. Although He was playing the part of a human being, whenever He desired He would display the opulences and power that proved He was God.

In the Bhagavad-gita Krishna explains that He rewards us according to our degree of surrender. To the atheist, who denies the very existence of God, Krishna remains obligingly invisible. To those persons who approach Lord Krishna to request that He fulfill their material desires, He reveals Himself as the Almighty Father. But to those who worship Him only to please Him, without any desire for their own gratification, He is eternally the most loving friend. He displays His earthly pastimes, such as swallowing the forest fire, to awaken in all of us an ambition to attain this transcendental friendship.
For years, Frederick J. Fish lived a very ordinary life beneath the waves of the blue Pacific Ocean off Malibu. But one day he noticed that up on the beach there were finless creatures who appeared to be having more fun. So he rode in on a wave and hopped up on the sun-drenched sand. Soon he was all fixed up to enjoy himself: beach chair, FM radio, a cold drink, sunglasses. But something was wrong. Gradually Fred's feeling of discomfort turned to panic. Finally, gasping for breath, he realized, "I'm out of my element!"

According to the sages of ancient India, we're all out of our element. Originally, we all lived blissfully in the spiritual world, rendering transcendental loving service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna. Since this material world is not our real home, no amount of material gratification can satisfy us.

People often ask. If we were so blissful, why would we choose to leave the spiritual world? The answer is that we mistakenly thought we could enjoy greater happiness away from the Supreme Lord. In the spiritual world, God is the center of everyone's attention. Everyone cooperates to serve Him. When a living being attempts to assume the position of God, he is forced to enter the material universe, where he can live out his fantasies of being the supreme enjoyer.

In the material world, a person tries to enjoy himself by becoming friends with the best sort of people, by picking the most attractive sex partner, by doing everything possible to guarantee a good future for himself and his family members. He dresses as sharp as he can, drives the most expensive car he can afford, takes vacations in posh resorts, buys a house in a good neighbourhood. He gets a colour television, a personal computer, a second home in the country. He eats at the best restaurants, savours his favourite intoxicants, and goes out to see first-run movies. But these material things can never completely satisfy the yearnings of the soul.

In a recent interview, Alfred Ford (Ambarisha Dasa), great-grandson of Henry Ford and now a member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, spoke of the hopelessness of trying to buy happiness: "At a very early age, perhaps because I was born and raised in a very opulent situation, I began to notice that wealth alone can't make people happy, and that everything in the world, even the 'good things,' are temporary."

Sometimes people think that because devotees of Krishna reject material happiness they must lead extremely dull lives. Actually, transcendentalists are the most discriminating connoisseurs of pleasure.

A person serious about enjoying himself will naturally reject inferior pleasures and concentrate upon superior ones. In fact, he should be interested in finding the highest pleasure possible. Logically, a pleasure that never ends is superior to a pleasure that does. Also, pure pleasure is superior to pleasure mixed with some kind of unpleasantness. Finally, a pleasure that constantly increases is superior to one that is static, or that diminishes after a time.

Using this standard, we can see that any kind of pleasure derived from a material object is inferior to the spiritual pleasure obtainable from serving Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose very name means "the reservoir of all pleasure." Any person or object we try to enjoy in this material world will eventually be destroyed by the force of time, and the body with which we try to enjoy the material objects
will also be destroyed. But the pleasure that comes from serving Krishna is eternal, because both the Lord and the soul are eternal.

Furthermore, pleasures derived from material objects and relationships are always mixed with pain. For example, there is some pleasure in sexual relationships between a man and a woman, but that is always followed by the burdens and difficulties of marriage, divorce, jealousy, envy, pregnancy, abortion, venereal disease, unfaithfulness, and so on. But the pure spiritual relationship of the soul with Krishna is purely blissful. The Nectar of Devotion, Srila Prabhupada’s summary study of a devotional classic called Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, describes the condition of one who has achieved love of God: “At that time one’s heart becomes illuminated like the sun, and from his pure heart there is a diffusion of ecstatic love more glorious than the sunshine.”

Finally, attempts to enjoy a material situation inevitably yield diminishing returns. The first ice-cream cone may taste delicious. The second may be just as good. But the third will be hard to eat, and the fourth may make you sick. At the very sight of the fifth, you’ll feel nauseous. But love for Krishna is like an ever-expanding ocean of transcendental bliss, and devotees pray to remain always immersed in its waves.

The Vedic literatures recommend a very simple process by which anyone can enter into this ocean of bliss: the chanting of the Hare Krishna maha-mantra Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Rama. This mantra is composed of Sanskrit names of God. Being Absolute, God’s name is nondifferent from God Himself and possesses all His transcendental energies. Five centuries ago Krishna appeared as Lord Chaitanya and taught His followers: “The chanting of the holy name of God expands the blissful ocean of transcendental life.” That’s where we really belong, not washed up on the beach of material existence.

Gita Jayanti Celebration in Ahmedabad

Gita Jayanti, the advent day of Srimad Bhagavad-gita was celebrated at Hare Krishna Mandir, Ahmedabad on 8th December, 2019. Devotees recited all the 700 verses of Srimad Bhagavad-gita. HG Shri Jagannmohan Krishna Dasa, President, Hare Krishna Movement Ahmedabad, gave a discourse on the glories of Srimad Bhagavad-gita. Students from Bal Sanskriti Programme of HKM Ahmedabad presented the knowledge of the Gita for the present time through an exhibition. The festival concluded with arati and pallaki utsav.
Of the 8,400,000 species of life enumerated in the Vedas, two confront each other on the broad Australian plains. The feathered and the unfeathered biped regard each other across the vast gulf that separates their kinds.

The emu, like all animals, must follow the ways of his species according to the dictates of nature. For him no question arises of what to do with his life; his purposes are fixed and invariant. But the human is set apart from the animals; he is developed in consciousness.

It is not that the man is categorically different from his feathered fellow creature; alien though they may appear to each other, man and emu are kin. However divergent their bodies, each is a living soul, a fragmental part of the one supreme soul; as such they are of the same spiritual nature and are equals. Yet fate has cast them into diverse bodies.

Here the human regards his own past, for a soul dwells in a human form only after evolving upward through all the species of life; on the cosmic time scale, the man has only recently shed his feathers. But now he has that which makes him unique—not a soul, for all life is soul, but a body in which the soul's own consciousness is relatively uncovered. In this condition, the soul can ask himself: Who am I? Why am I here? Where did I come from, and where shall I go? What purpose or significance has my life? The ability to put such questions makes man different from emu, and the Vedas tell us that such inquiry into ultimate meaning and truth is the real purpose of life.

Unlike the emu, however, a human must pursue his purpose deliberately, consciously. This final step in the evolution of consciousness will ultimately free him from the endless repetition of birth and death in various species of life and liberate him into an eternal life of knowledge and bliss. In fact, we see here a human being who has taken advantage of his opportunity, and even a little advancement on his path will save him from the worst danger that of falling back down again into the animal forms.

It is unfortunate that most humans no longer use their gift of developed consciousness. Electing to live like animals, they run the grave risk of becoming animals once more. Indeed, our feathered friend may be looking, all unknowingly, at the form of his long lost opportunity. But his time will come around again in due course.

Meanwhile, those of us now in the human form should not lose our rare opportunity to be truly human and so to become what we truly are: wholly spiritual beings, deathless, fully conscious, and filled with unending joy.
ISKCON SRI SRI KRISHNA BALARAMA

RATHA YATRA

in Bengaluru

25th Jan 2020, at 5:00pm

rathe ca vamanam
drstva punar janma na vidyate
Simply by seeing the Lord on the
chariot, one makes advancement
for stopping the repetition of
birth and death.

Hubli 15th Feb 2020
Dharwad 22nd Feb 2020
Mangalore 14th Mar 2020
Thrissur 23rd June 2020

For more details visit www.iskconbangalore.org/ratha-yatra
The Lord of Vaikunta

Thiru Parameshwara Vinnagaram

by Sampatkumara Ramanuja Dasan (Adv. Ashwin.S)

Located in the city of Kanchipuram is the ancient temple of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Vaikuntanatha, Thiru Parameshwara Vinnagaram.

The Legend

The region of Kanchipuram where the temple is located was called Vidarbha Desha during the ancient times (not to be confused with Vidharba of Central India) and it was ruled by a very righteous and just king named Maharaja Virocha. Due to his misdeeds in his preceding birth, Virocha had no heir. He was very much upset that his lineage would end with his reign. He prayed at Kailasanathar temple of Kanchipuram and Shiva, the presiding deity of the temple, gave the king a boon that the dwarapalakas (the gatekeepers) of Vishnu, Jaya and Vijaya, would be born as sons to him. Soon Maharaja Virochana was blessed with twins who were incarnations of Jaya and Vijaya. The princes were devoted to Vishnu and conducted yagna for the welfare of the people of their kingdom. Vishnu was pleased with their worship and appeared as Vaikuntanatha to the princes and gave them liberation. The very spot where the Supreme Personality of Godhead gave darshana to the dwarapalakas is the temple as we see today. The original temple was constructed by the sons of Maharaja Virochana.

According to another legend, Sage Bharadwaja was doing penance at this place and was attracted by an apsara (celestial dancer of Swargaloka). The sage married her and they begot a son. The sage returned to his penance, while the apsara returned to her abode, Swargaloka. Lord Vishnu took the child under His care in the temple. At the same time, a Pallava king worshiped Vishnu for a child. Vishnu gave the child to the king. The child was named Parameshwara and he later became the Pallava king. The place is believed to be named after the king.

The Temple

The temple as we see today was built by the Pallava kings. Parameshvaravarman II of the Pallava dynasty was succeeded by twelve year old Nandivarman II who rebuilt the temple and made arrangements for daily worship. Nandivarman Pallavamallan was a worshipper of Vishnu and a great patron of learning. The great Vaishnava saint Thirumangai Alwar was his contemporary. There are various inscriptions in the temple that detail
the socio-economic and political situation of the country during the Pallava regime. Around the sanctum sanctorum in the first precinct, there is an inscription dating back to the 8th century AD, which records the gift of a bowl and an image made of gold measuring 1,000 sovereigns by King Abhimanasiddhi. During the period of Dantivarman I in 813 AD, there was a gift of a golden bowl weighing ten thousand kalanju. There was another gift of 3,000 kalanju of gold to meet daily expenses of the temple. A record of gift of a devotee named Thiruvaranga Manickam to feed devotees of Vishnu is also seen in the temple. The bas reliefs in the temple reveal the war between the Pallavas and Gangas and also with Chalukyas.

Parameshwara Vinnagaram is one of the earliest specimen of Dravidian architecture. The temple has a rectangular plan and is approached through a flat granite gateway tower which many historians believe is an unfinished rajagopuram. The vimala has a stepped pyramidal roof and it resembles a vihara. It has a striking similarity to the shore temple of Mahabalipuram. Three sanctuaries host the image of Vishnu in different postures - seated (ground floor), lying (first floor, accessible to devotees only on Ekadashi days) and standing (second floor, inaccessible to devotees). The logical and complex plan of the temple provided a prototype for the much larger shrines later constructed all over Tamil Nadu. The external cloisters, with their lion pillars, are predecessors of the grand thousand pillared halls of later temples. In modern times, the four lions have been replaced with Garuda. The cloister walls have a sequence of relief sculptures depicting the history of the Pallava dynasty. The first set of panels show the supposedly divine lineage of the Pallavas starting from Brahma, followed by the Sages Angiras, Brihaspati, Bharadwaja, Drona and Ashwathama. Panels depicting the actual Pallava kings themselves follow these panels. A typical panel shows the king on the left frame of the panel. In some cases, the panels depict the coronation of the king, with priests pouring sacred water on his head. The right side of the panel shows battle scenes or other events during that monarch’s reign. The panels of Mahendravarman I and Narasimhavarman I show the battles with Pulakesin II of the Badami Chalukyas. Finally, there are panels that show the search and the finding of a successor after Parameswvaravarman II’s early death. The successor is none other than Nandivarman II, who built this temple. The niches on the walls around the sanctum are similar to the ones in Mahabalipuram. Some of the sculptures indicate various legends of the Mahabharata, depicting the images of Dharmaraja, Arjuna and Bhima. The temple is made of granite with a mixture of sandstone. The three-storied temple is the forerunner for various later built temples like Vaikunta Perumal temple.
at Uthiramerur, Koodal Azhagar temple at Madurai and Rajagopalaswamy temple at Mannargudi. The three storeys are constructed in three concentric squares with a small passage in between, with the top layer being closed by a filial. The Lord is seen in the temple with His consort, Vaikunta Valli Thayar.

Festivals
The Vaikasi Brahmotsavam, celebrated during the Tamil month of Vaikasi (May–June), and Vaikunta Ekadashi celebrated during the Tamil month of Margazhi (December–January) are the two major festivals celebrated in this temple. Verses from Nalayira Divya Prabandham or the songs of Alwars are recited by a group of temple priests.

Thirumangai Alwar has sung 10 beautiful songs about the Supreme Lord of Parameshwara Vinnagaram:

He is the words spoken by common people and Vedic texts. He is the senses—eyes, nose, tongue and skin. He is the five senses—sound, touch, taste, smell, and form. He is the three moortis—Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, performing the acts of creation, sustenance and destruction respectively. He resides in Parameshwara Vinnagaram. King Pallava has offered much devotional service to this temple and Deity. He ruled the kingdom, with Mahabalipuram as the capital city. The Pallava and Villava kings were very much devoted to Him.

The vast sky, the large oceans, the huge mountains, the brilliant luminaries like sun, moon and stars and all the rest are created by Brahma, who is created by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Narayana, from His navel. Therefore He becomes the causes of all causes. He is the causeless cause. He was worshipped by the Pallava king of Mahabalipuram who defeated the Pandya king in the battle. He is seen in Parameshwara Vinnagaram.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Narayana who lies on Adisesha in Vaikunta is in Kanchipuram as Varadaraja and as the Deity of Parameshwara Vinnagaram. The Pallava king who defeated the foes in Mannai in the war, always found pleasure in offering devotional service to this Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Narayana.

The divya desam where the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Narayana—who swallowed all the world’s eight directions, Bhoomi, oceans, sky, Agni, air and all the rest, in order to protect them from getting destroyed in the great annihilation pralaya—resides in Parameshwara Vinnagaram. The Pallava king who used his bows and arrows to defeat his foes in the war—offered devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Narayana at this place.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Narayana removed the sorrow of Gajendra by killing the enemy crocodile. He defeated the pride of Kaliya by stamping on his hoods since he was the enemy of the cattle and
The most ancient prakaram of Parameshwara Vinnagaram

The prakaras and the iconic lion pillars

Dwajasthamba of Parameshwara Vinnagaram

The entrance of the temple

Depiction of the Deity of the temple in one of the walls

Simha and Narasimha in the temple
gopa and gopis. He resides in Parameshwara Vinnagaram—where the Pallava king did devotional service—in order to bless His bhaktas.

The great devotee Vaishnava men of the Pallava king defeated the great Pandya kings in the battle field, marching against him with his snake-flag flying high in the air.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Narayana—who split open the chest of Hiranya with His nails, taking Narasimha avatara—resides in Parameshwara Vinnagaram. He is worshipped by the Pallava king who rules justly under the white royal umbrella, defeating his enemies in the warfield with his spear. He has the entire kingdom under his control, having the serpent as the flag emblem.

There are different readings of the phrase—viDai vEl koDi. One meaning is already given. There is another reading viral vElkoDi—which means the Pallava king had earlier a bull flag which he changed into a serpent flag after conquering the Nagaloka.

The small dwarf roopa (form) of Vamana begged three feet of land from the huge Mahabali who wore a tall diadem during his big yaga. He measured the lands with His enormously huge thiruvadi (lotus feet), taking the Trivikrama avatara. The Pallava king conquered the Pandya king in a battle at Karuvoor, where he destroyed the huge armies of Pandya. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Narayana at Parameshwara Vinnagaram is worshipped by the Pallava king.

The divya desam where the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Narayana—who took Sri Rama avatara, born of Dasharatha Chakravarthi and built a bridge across the sea with the help of mere monkeys—is Parameshwara Vinnagaram. This divya desam is worshipped by the Pallava king who terrified the enemies with his spear, held in his right hand. He conquered the King Villavan at Nenmeli, commanding the army with dignity and skill.

The Pallavarkon—who had a parai called Kaduvai defeated the enemies who had bloodstained swords effortlessly in the war—did seva to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Narayana residing at Parameshwara Vinnagaram. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Narayana subdued the powerful seven bulls in a fight with them for the sake of Nappinnai Piratti. He resides in this divya desam for the sake of His bhaktas.

Thirumangai Alwar has sung these ten songs—a garland of words—on Parameshwara Vinnagaram which was worshipped by the Pallava king. Those who read these songs with bhakti will rule over this vast earth surrounded by oceans for a long time by the grace of Mahalakshmi.

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

Annadana-mahatmya

अन्नदन न्युत्पत्ति सबूतो, भक्ति भर्तृमण प्राणी के।
तथा सबूत में विशेषण दातन्थ्य भूतित्तिथि च।

कलत्रं पीढ़ित्रत्वा तु देशी काले च शशितिष्ठ।
दातत्र्यं द्विस्वायै चाचादात्त्वनां भूतित्तिथि च।

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

Therefore, one who wishes to attain well-being in this world and beyond should offer food to all who seek. One should give food in accordance with time and place, and should keep giving to the limits of one's capacity.

— Mahabharata, Ashwamedha Parva

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

Number of free prasadam meals distributed since inception in Jan 2015: 18,85,004
2018-19: 3,71,257

We invite you to support this divine program.

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

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Beneficiary Name: ISKCON BANGALORE Account No: 559010100078597 IFSC Code: UTIB00X0559
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Website: www.iskonbangalore.org Email: donor.care@hkm-group.org
His Excellency President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, visited Akshaya Patra Foundation’s kitchen facility in Vrindavan on November 28, 2019 and served meals to few government school children. He was accompanied by Her Excellency Smt Anandiben Patel, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Honourable Chief Minister, Shri Yogi Adityanath, Chairman, Akshaya Patra Foundation, Shri Madhu Pandit Dasa and other dignitaries.

Uttar Pradesh Minister for Dairy and Animal Husbandry, Laxmi Narayan Chaudhary, Power Minister, Shrikant Sharma, Basic Education Minister, Satish Dwivedi were also present on the occasion.
His Excellency President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, along with dignitaries serving meals to the government school children.

His Excellency President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind along with dignitaries interacting with the children.

His Excellency President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind along with dignitaries posing for a photograph with the school children.

His Excellency President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, along with dignitaries interacting with the children.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ISKCON PILGRIMAGES</strong></th>
<th><strong>Upcoming ISKCON Pilgrimages</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SANKRANTI PRAYAG SNAN AND KASHI PILGRIMAGE</strong></td>
<td><strong>PANCHA DWARAKA SOMNATH AND MATRU-GAYA PILGRIMAGE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue, Jan 14 to Fri, Jan 17, 2020</td>
<td>Sun, Jan 26 to Sun, Feb 2, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Places of visit:</strong> Kashi Vishwanath and local temples, Ganga Arati, Triveni Sangam Snan on Sankranti day, Prayagraj local temples.</td>
<td><strong>Places of visit:</strong> Dakor, Nathdwara, Kankroli, Dwarka, Bet Dwarka, Mula Dwarka, Porbandar, Somnath, Nageswara Mahadev, Matru Gaya and more...</td>
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<td><strong>Amount:</strong> ₹15,000/- + flight charges</td>
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<td><strong>KERALA MALAINADU DIVYADESAM PILGRIMAGE</strong></td>
<td><strong>TAMILNADU DIVYADESAM PART 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu, Feb 13 to Wed, Feb 19, 2020</td>
<td>Mar 11 (8 pm) to Mar 18, 2020 (6 am)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Places of visit:</strong> Thiruvananthapuram, Thiruvananvdoor, Thiruvaranmula, Thripuliyoor, Thricchitattu, Thirkkodithananam, Thiruvalla, Thirumoozhi Kulam, Thirkakkara, Thirumittacode, Thirunavaya, Guruvayur, Mamiyoor, Elephant Sanctuary, Crocodile Lake temple and more</td>
<td><strong>Places of visit:</strong> Madurai, Thirukoodalazhgar, Thirumogur, Thirukkoshtiyyur, Thirumeyam and Meenakshi Amman, Srivilliputtur, Thiruthangal, Thirupullani, Rameshwaram Dhanushkodi, Kanyakumari, Nagarkoil, Tirunelveli, Navatrupati temples, Nanguneri and more</td>
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<td><strong>KISHKINDA AND HAMPI PILGRIMAGE</strong></td>
<td><strong>KAILASH MANSAROVAR PILGRIMAGE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Jai Hanuman”</td>
<td>(by helicopter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri, April 3, 8 pm to Mon, April 6, 6 am 2020</td>
<td>Tue, July 7 to Sat, July 18, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Places of visit:</strong> Kishkinda - birthplace of Hanuman, Cintamani temple, Kodandarama temple, Shabari cave, Brundavanam, Raganatha temple, Hampi, Vijaya Vittala, Narasimha, Virupaksha temple, Tungabhadra river and more...</td>
<td><strong>Places of visit:</strong> Mansarovar Lake, Kailash Parikrama, Pashupatinath and other Nepal temples</td>
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<td><strong>Amount:</strong> ₹7,500/- (All inclusive)</td>
<td><strong>Amount:</strong> ₹2,40,000/- (all inclusive)</td>
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<td>10 nights - 11 days</td>
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NEPAL MUKTINATH
Janakpur Lumbini Pilgrimage
Sat, May 9, 2020 to Tue, May 19, 2020
Places of visit:
Kathmandu-Pashupatinath, Changu
Narayan, Bhatapur, ISKCON,
Budhanilkhanth and more
Damauli-Vyasa birthplace, Manakamana
temple, Muktinath temple, Janakpur
temples and Dhanushadham, Lumbini-
birthplace of Lord Buddha ....and more
Amount: ₹55,000/-
(+ flight charges ₹20,000)
₹10,000 extra for Lumbini All inclusive amount.
Incl. Flights from Kathmandu-Janakpur, Kathmandu-
Lumbini-Kathmandu, Pokhara-Jomsom-Pokhara

Reviews and Feedback

I want to thank ISKCON Bangalore for arranging
the pilgrimage to Ahobilam, the transcendental
place, Dham where our beloved Lord
Narasimhadev resides eternally. It is very
beautiful, blissful place with powerful
vibrations.

I take back beautiful memories, feeling blessed.
Though most of us were strangers to each other,
I was heartening to see each one helping out and
caring for each other and being bonded so well as
a single family in 2 days.

Will miss the kirtan, long treks, divine darshan
and delicious prasadam -Mrs.Priya Rjashekar

It was a lovely and memorable Yatra that we
undertook. We had good dharshans in all the
dhams and we have now got great and
affectionate friends who were also part of
Chardham pilgrimage. We will cherish your
friendship throughout our life time.

Our special thanks to ISKCON Prabhujis for their
sincerity and humbleness and the nice
arrangements. - Natarajan and Radha

Join us for a spiritual and devotional retreat with ecstatic kirtans,

bhajans, pastime narrations and delicious Krishna prasadam!

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

Limited seats on a first-come, first-served basis.
Goloka Shades, an Inter-School Coloring, Painting and Literary competition presented by the Cultural Education Services (CES) division of ISKCON Bangalore, for students from Pre-Nursery to Class X, commenced in schools across Bengaluru in November 2019. The contest offers a platform for children to engage their artistic and creative abilities in preparing attractive artwork through the medium of colors and displaying their talent in writing by partaking in the handwriting and essay writing competitions. Over 25000 children are expected to participate in the prestigious contest spread over three months.

Memorable moments of Goloka Shades 2019 from the contests conducted at schools like New Horizon Gurukul and NITTE International School.

For more details about the program call: 9341124222 / 9341211119
The Cultural Education Services (CES) division of ISKCON Bangalore drew the curtains on Heritage Fest 2019, the annual inter-school traditional arts competitions, with a grand prize distribution ceremony on Saturday, 30th November 2019 at Hare Krishna Hill, Rajajinagar. This year, the engaging and enthralling fest witnessed participation from over 13000 children representing more than 300 schools across Bangalore. In diverse streams ranging from Classical Dance and Music to Theatre, Sacred Chants to Art and Craft, and Oratory to Literary events, the fest offered a unique platform for children from Pre-Nursery to Class X to display their talents in culture and heritage-based competitions.

Enthusiastic award winners attended the prize distribution ceremony with their families appearing visibly delighted at being selected the winners despite enormous competition. During the course of the day, temple devotees and eminent educationalist guests distributed over 800 prizes to the winning students.

The prize distribution programme commenced on an auspicious note with the lighting of the lamp by temple Vice President, Sri Vasudev Keshav Dasa and chief guest Prof. V. Girish Chandra, Vice Chancellor, Karnataka Sanskrit University. Addressing a packed auditorium, both the guests reiterated the need for introducing spiritual education to children at a young age.

The programme for prize winners from high school was presided over by temple devotee Sri Meghashyama Dasa and chief guest Dr. (Sri) Wooday P. Krishna, Honorary General Secretary of Seshadripuram Educational Trust. The words of wisdom spoken by the two guests in context with the attention children needed in their childhood years for inculcating in them a strong value based foundation, was appreciated by the rapt audience of parents and school representatives.

The prize distribution programme concluded with the final schedule being presided over by temple devotee, Sri Anantha Kirti Dasa and chief guest Dr. (Mrs.) S R Leela, a former Member of the Legislative Council, Government of Karnataka and an accomplished Sanskrit Scholar. A parallel was drawn between the banyan tree and children to lay stress on the point of both requiring attention from the roots in order to develop a solid foundation. Towards achieving this end, the importance of reading Vedic scriptures and literatures was emphasised.

Overall, an eventful day with accolades and well-deserved praises being showered on the young achievers. Given the stupendous participation and the sheer magnitude of the Heritage Fest 2019 competitions, the achievement of the award winners is indeed remarkable!
Annual Day Program
@Podar International School (CISCE)

The Podar International School, a part of the Podar Group of Education, Bannerghatta Road, celebrated its Primary School Annual Day ‘Kalanjali 2019’ on Friday, 22nd November 2019 at the T. John College Auditorium. Temple devotee, Sri Kalakantha Dasa, presided over the celebration as the Guest of Honor. Amongst the dignitaries were Sri Srinivas Prasad K.N., a retired IAS officer and a learned scholar in religion, Sri Narayana Joisa, Principal, Podar International School and Srimati Abhaya Rajiv, Headmistress.

Addressing a packed gathering of Management, staff and parents, Sri Kalakantha Dasa spoke about the endless list of challenges faced by young parents in current times and that there was no college/philosopher/scientist who had solutions to more important problems. Referring to the message contained in the Bhagavad-gita, he lay emphasis on Krishna’s message of being able to cross over all problems merely by His grace. The engrossed audience was informed about the simple method of chanting the Lord’s holy names in order to get past all modern day distractions.

The programme concluded with Sri Kalakantha Dasa personally interacting with the school management, felicitating them and informing them about the gamut of cultural programmes organized by the temple for the benefit of children.
Sri Sri Krishna Balarama
RATHA YATRA


During Ratha Yatra, the all-merciful Lord Himself comes out of the temple, taking a pleasure ride on the Ratha and bestowing His mercy upon everyone.

Please come and pull the Ratha and experience the spiritually enlivening moments of this joyful celebration!

You may also offer the following sevas on this occasion and receive the blessings of Sri Sri Krishna Balarama.

Sri Sri Krishna Balarama Ratha Yatra
Pushpalankara Seva
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Here is an account of the first Ratha Yatra of ISKCON Bangalore which was held on a Friday in December 1985, with two gigantic Ratha's for Lord Krishna and Lord Balarama.

https://bit.ly/34qKZwp

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Sri Jayadeva was born during the reign of King Lakshmana Sena of Bengal in the eleventh or twelfth century of the Saka Era. His father was Bhoja deva, and mother Bama devi.


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Reviews from TripAdvisor

Must visit one time: If you are living in Bengaluru, then visit to ISKCON temple becomes a must. So, take a day out and visit this place... Prasad that you get at the end of the journey was the most delicious and fulfilling prasad I have eaten till date... - ShraddhaBhowad

Excellent: It is a very good Krishna temple. Very neat and clean. Well managed, well-appointed and spacious. Very good arrangement for Darshan. One can peacefully make Darshan. Very good eatery with hygienic food at very reasonable rates... - _rshuklag

It was worth seeing it: It is a beautiful temple. You can feel the vibes. The experience is great in the evening, when you can participate the praying if you want. You can also make donations at the exit... - 221277Vale

Vaikuntha on earth: Must visit place in Bangalore. This temple is truly Vaikuntha. I had been to this temple more than 10 times. The ananda and bliss we feel in the temple seeing the deities in immeasurable... - mail2sree

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