



KRISHNA VOICE

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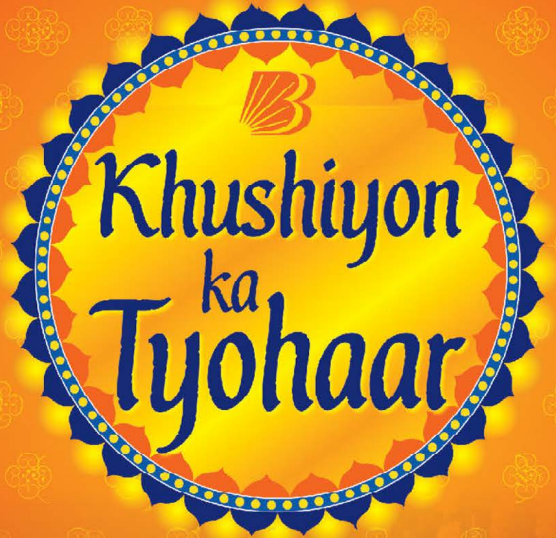
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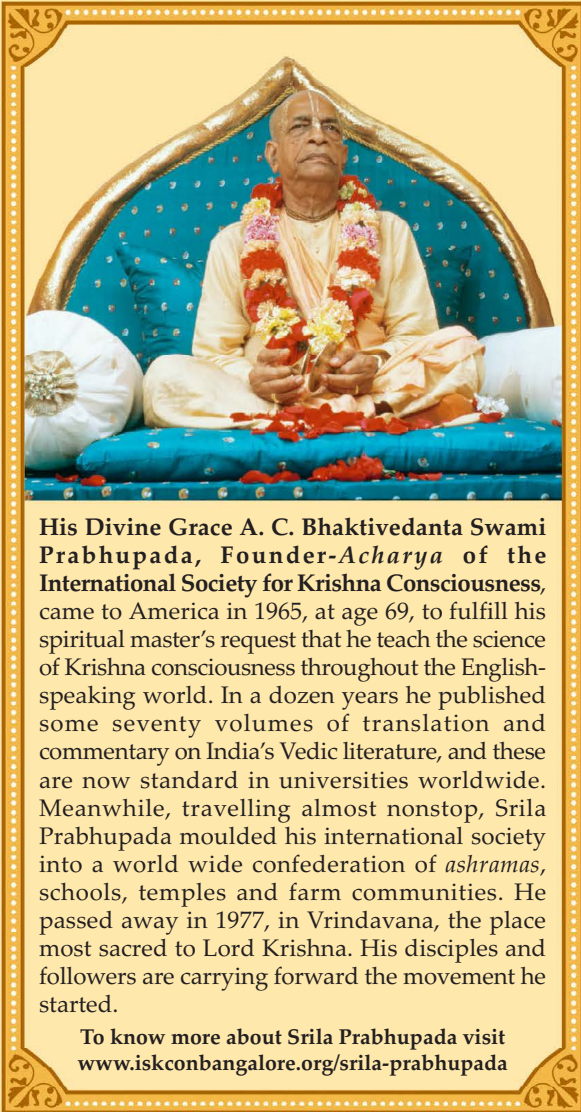


KRISHNA VOICE



Vol 23, No.11

November 2022



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
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Qualified To See God

When you love Him, you will see Him always.

A lecture given in Los Angeles, December 25, 1973

By His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*tad-dhyanodriktaya bhaktya
visuddha-dhisanah pare
tasmin narayana-pade
ekanta-matayo gatim*

*avapur duravapam te
asadbhir visayatmabhih
vidhuta-kalmasa sthanam
virajenatmanaiva hi*

“Thus by pure consciousness due to constant devotional remembrance, the Pandavas attained the spiritual sky, which is ruled by the Supreme Narayana, Lord Krishna. That is attained only by those who meditate upon the one Supreme Lord without deviation. That abode of Lord Sri Krishna, known as Goloka Vrindavana, cannot be attained by persons who are absorbed in the material conception of life. But the Pandavas, being completely washed of all material contamination, attained that abode in their very same bodies.”

—*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 1.15.47-48

Dhyana means meditation. The Pandavas were always thinking of Krishna. While eating, sitting, sleeping, talking, fighting—Krishna. That is Krishna consciousness. When Arjuna fought, Krishna was there. When the Pandavas dealt in politics with Duryodhana, Krishna was there.

Krishna is Arjuna’s friend. Krishna was always talking with him, staying with him, sleeping with him, eating with him. Krishna consciousness is so nice that in our ordinary life we can deal with Krishna as Arjuna and the Pandavas did. There is no difficulty in doing this. We simply have to practice. That practice must be *bhaktya*, “with a devotional attitude.” Dealing with Krishna as the Pandavas did is only possible through devotional service. Krishna was so near to the Pandavas on account of their devotion.

The sage Narada, while speaking to Yudhishthira, the eldest Pandava, praised the Pandavas: “Even yogis and *janis*, speculative philosophers, cannot reach Krishna, but by your devotion Krishna is living with you as a friend and sometimes even as your order carrier.”

During negotiations with Duryodhana, the Pandavas once asked Krishna, “Take this letter and deliver it to Duryodhana.” And Krishna agreed—“Yes, I shall go.” Krishna acted as an ordinary peon. He also acted as an ordinary chariot driver—Partha-sarathi, the charioteer of Arjuna.

If you become a devotee of Krishna, then you can live with Krishna, even in this life. Krishna is omnipotent. If you are really a devotee of Krishna, He will talk with you, He will dance with you, He will eat with you—everything. *Premanjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena santah sadaiva*. By *bhakti*, *prema*—love—saintly persons, those who have developed love of Krishna, can see Krishna at every moment. *Sadaiva* means “at every moment.” Saintly persons do not see anything except Krishna.

Rascals inquire, “Have you seen God?”

We may reply, “Not ‘seen’ God, sir. The saintly person is seeing God at every moment.”

There is no question of seeing God only once. No. *Sadaiva*—at every moment.

Why can one see Krishna at every moment? Because Krishna is already there within us. *Isvarah sarva-bhutanam hrd-dese 'rjuna tisthati*. Krishna’s location is given in the *Bhagavad-gita*: He is within your heart. So to see God you don’t have to go far away. Wherever you are you can see God.



Sarva-bhutanam means that God is not only within the human beings; He is also within the animals, the beasts, the trees, the plants, the aquatics, the insects. He is within everyone, from Brahma, the greatest creature, down to the ant.

God is everywhere. *Andantara-stha paramanu-cayantara-stham*. God is within the universe, within your heart, even within the atom. So what is the difficulty in seeing God? You simply have to make your eyes qualified to see Him. That is the meaning of *premanjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena*. If you actually love somebody, you can see him always. When you are in your office, you see him. When you are eating, you see him. If that is possible materially, how much more must it be possible spiritually.

Seeing God always is possible only by *bhakti*, as described in today's verse: *bhaktya visuddha-dhisanah pare*. *Visuddha* means "purified." Our consciousness is not purified at the present moment, but we can purify it by being always in touch with Krishna. And that touch is made possible very easily by hearing about Krishna. Those who come here to our classes may not know anything about Krishna, but God has given them ears, so they can hear about Krishna. We are therefore discussing so many points about Krishna, and we have written so many books simply about Krishna. People cannot imagine that sixty books can be written about God. There is no system of religion where you can find so much information about God.

We should turn our attention to Krishna consciousness. We can chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. We can read about Krishna our whole life, because the literature about Krishna is so vast. Even if you read twenty-four hours daily, you'll have to devote your whole life to finish this literature.

My Guru Maharaja published a daily newspaper in Mayapur called *Nadiya Prakasa*. A big politician once asked him, "You are publishing a daily paper about God consciousness?"

"Yes."

"What are you writing about?" The politician was surprised. Politicians think that newspapers can be filled with rubbish political news only. They cannot think that a newspaper can be filled by news from the spiritual world. They have no idea of this. They have no idea even that there is a spiritual world.

My Guru Maharaja explained: "Why are you thinking of only one small newspaper? You do not know the spiritual world. The material world is one fourth of the whole creation of the Lord. And the three-fourths portion is the spiritual world. In this one-fourth portion there are innumerable universes. This is one of the universes. In each universe there are millions of planets. And this planet is only a small planet in one universe. And on this earth planet there are so many cities. And in each city there are so many newspapers. And each newspaper has so many editions. This is the position of the material world.

"Now, consider the spiritual world. It is three times bigger than the material world. And there are so many spiritual planets and so many universes and so many activities. So we can produce not just one newspaper about God daily, but a newspaper every minute. Unfortunately, there are no customers. That is the difficulty. For material news there are so many customers, but for spiritual news, no customers. You are thinking of one newspaper daily. We could issue a newspaper of spiritual news every second."

We must be interested in the news of the spiritual world. Krishna consciousness can be achieved by *ekanta-matayo gatim*—a person who has decided, "Now, in this life, I must go back home, back to Godhead." That determination is described in the *Bhagavad-gita*:

*vyavasayatmika-buddhir
ekeha kuru-nandana
bahu-sakha hy anantas ca
buddhayo 'vyavasayinam*

"Those who are on this path are resolute in purpose, and their aim is one. O beloved child of the Kurus [Arjuna], the intelligence of those who are irresolute is many-branched."

One must decide, "This life is not an ordinary life like that of the cats and dogs. It is human life. I have advanced intelligence, and it is possible in this life to go back home, back to Godhead, simply by cultivating spiritual knowledge. So why shall I waste my time like cats and dogs?" That determination is required. "The cats and dogs are busy in eating, sleeping, and sex life—and one day they die. So why shall I waste my time in that way? I have good

intelligence. Krishna has provided me a better standard of life. I can lie in a nice room, not like the cats and dogs on the street.”

And Krishna has provided such nice foodstuff—fruits, grains, milk—which we can offer Him. Krishna has given different food for different animals and human beings. Krishna has given stool for the pigs and such nice foodstuff—fruits and grains and milk—for the human being. It is not that every food is for everyone. No. “One man’s food is another man’s poison.” Stool is also a kind of food. Everything is a kind of food. Even the stone is food. Pigeons eat stones. They can digest them. The gorillas in the African jungles eat fruits harder than iron bullets. If you hammer on a bullet, it may bend. But that fruit will not bend. And the gorillas chew them just as you chew peanuts. [Laughter.]

Human beings determined to go back home, back to Godhead, have their food. For them, no meat-eating. For them, fine *kachauri*, *rasagulla*, *puri*.* “You are what you eat.” If you eat stool, then you are stool. After all, this body will be stool. After death, the body becomes stool or ashes or earth. If the body is buried, in due course it will turn into earth. If it is burned, as done by the Hindus, it will turn into ashes. And if the body is simply thrown away at death, as done by the Parsees, it will be eaten by animals and birds, like vultures. So the body will become the stool of a vulture. That’s all.

Our beautiful body will become one of three things: stool, earth, or ashes. And we are taking so much care—for stool, earth, and ashes. And the occupier of the body? Forgotten. That is the position of modern society with its so-called advanced scientists.

Those who think “I am this body” are third-class rascals. The present world is simply full of third-class rascals because everyone is thinking, “I am American,” “I am Indian,” “I am white,” “I am black,” “I am Hindu,” “I am Muslim,” “I am Christian.” Such thinking is simply “I am this body.” That’s all.

One must become completely cleansed of this misconception. *Virajena atmanaiva*. *Virajena* means to become completely washed, cleansed. *Raja* means “the material world,” and *vi* means *vigata*, “without.” It is very difficult to come to the position of complete purification. Therefore it is said here, *avapur duravapam*: It is very difficult to come to this stage of life, but the Pandavas did it. For whom is it very difficult? *Asadbhih*, for those attached to temporary things.



Asat means “temporary.” There are two kinds of things: those that will exist permanently and those that will not exist. Temporary things may exist for a few minutes, a few hours, or a few years. The material world is *asat*, because it will not exist. The material body will also not exist. Everyone knows that. Everyone knows that the body is born at a certain date, will continue for a certain number of years, will produce some by-products, will change into different forms, will become old, will dwindle, and one day will be finished.

These are called *sad-vikara*, “six changes.” This is not progress. If one is progressing in age, that is not progress; that means he is going to death. I am seventy-eight years old. So I have already died seventy-eight years. I have only, say, two to five years left. People say “advanced age.” No. Advanced in death, not advanced in age.

So that is the meaning of *asat*: The body will not stay. It has begun to die from the very moment of birth. If you ask a mother how old her child is and she says “One month,” that means the child has already died one month. And he has a certain balance of months and years before he dies. He is simply waiting for death.

Our duration of life is called *asat*. And material existence is also *asat*. Narottama Dasa Thakura therefore sings, *sat-sanga chadi kainu asate vilasa/ te karane lagila ye karma-bandha-phansa*: “I gave up *sat-sanga*, the spiritual society, and I associated with the material society. Therefore I am now entangled by karma, one reaction after another.”

Spiritual realization is difficult for persons attached to temporary things. Why? *Visayatmabhih*: Because they are simply attracted by the four principles of material life—eating, sleeping, sex life, and, one day, death. One must be above these interests. One must be sane. One must think, “These interests are there in the animals. So if I am also interested in only these things, what is the difference between the dog and me?”

There must be something more. That information is given in the *Bhagavad-gita*: *avinasi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idam tatam*. The body is perishable, *asat*, but there is another thing, which is *sat*, permanent. What is that? It is that which spreads all over the body. If you pinch your body you feel pain. Why? Because there is consciousness. Consciousness is permanent. And as soon as the consciousness is gone from someone’s body, you can chop off the hand and there will be no response.

Those not interested in understanding consciousness and the origin of consciousness are *asat*. They cannot understand spiritual life. Therefore the beginning of spiritual life is to understand consciousness. The *Bhagavad-gita* says, *dehino ‘smin yatha dehe*: In the temporary body is the proprietor of the body. That point is to be understood. Who can understand? *Vidhuta-kalmasa*, “those who are washed of all sinful acts.” Therefore we prescribe, “Don’t associate with sinful activities.” What are the sinful activities? Meat-eating, intoxication, gambling, and illicit sex. One must be washed of these to understand spiritual life. If you think, “I will do whatever I want,” then you will remain in the material world life after life. That is the point.

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



Fasting		Festivals	
Nov 4	Ekadashi	Nov 4	Srila Gaura Kishora Dasa Babaji - Disappearance <i>Fasting till noon today in addition to regular Ekadashi fasting</i>
Nov 5	<i>break fast</i>		
Nov 20	Ekadashi	Nov 8	Chaturmasya ends, Karthika Month ends Deepotsava ends (in ISKCON Bangalore)
Nov 21	<i>break fast</i>	Nov 17	Srila Prabhupada - Diksha Diwasa
		Nov 27	Srila Prabhupada Book Distribution Festival Inauguration (in ISKCON Bangalore)
		Dec 3	Gita Jayanti

SRILA PRABHUPADA SPEAKS OUT

“Vague ... Bogus ... A Waste of Time”

Here we continue an exchange between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and an official from an impersonalist (“God-is-simply-everyone-and-everything”) movement. The exchange took place in Paris, on August 13, 1973, with Prabhupada’s disciples translating the official’s remarks from French.

Official: We can have spiritual realization and still live in the material world.

Srila Prabhupada: But what is that spiritual life? What is the distinction between spiritual life and material life? What is the goal? You cannot define spiritual life.

Official: I think we should want to know how a person who has actually realized the perfection lives his life.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Official [pointedly]: Tolerant. Above all, he is tolerant.

Srila Prabhupada: “Tolerant.” That is a part of spiritual life, that’s all. But in your way of spiritual life, what is the process? There must be some process—some definite process.

Official: That comes when you become initiated in the movement. We give you the process for arriving at this tolerance.

Srila Prabhupada: That’s all right. But suppose I want to enter. So you must give me some formula—“You have to do this like this.” Otherwise, how can I enter?

Official: There are many techniques, but ultimately they are really all the same, because they lead to the same conclusion.

Srila Prabhupada: Why don’t you tell us some of the techniques?

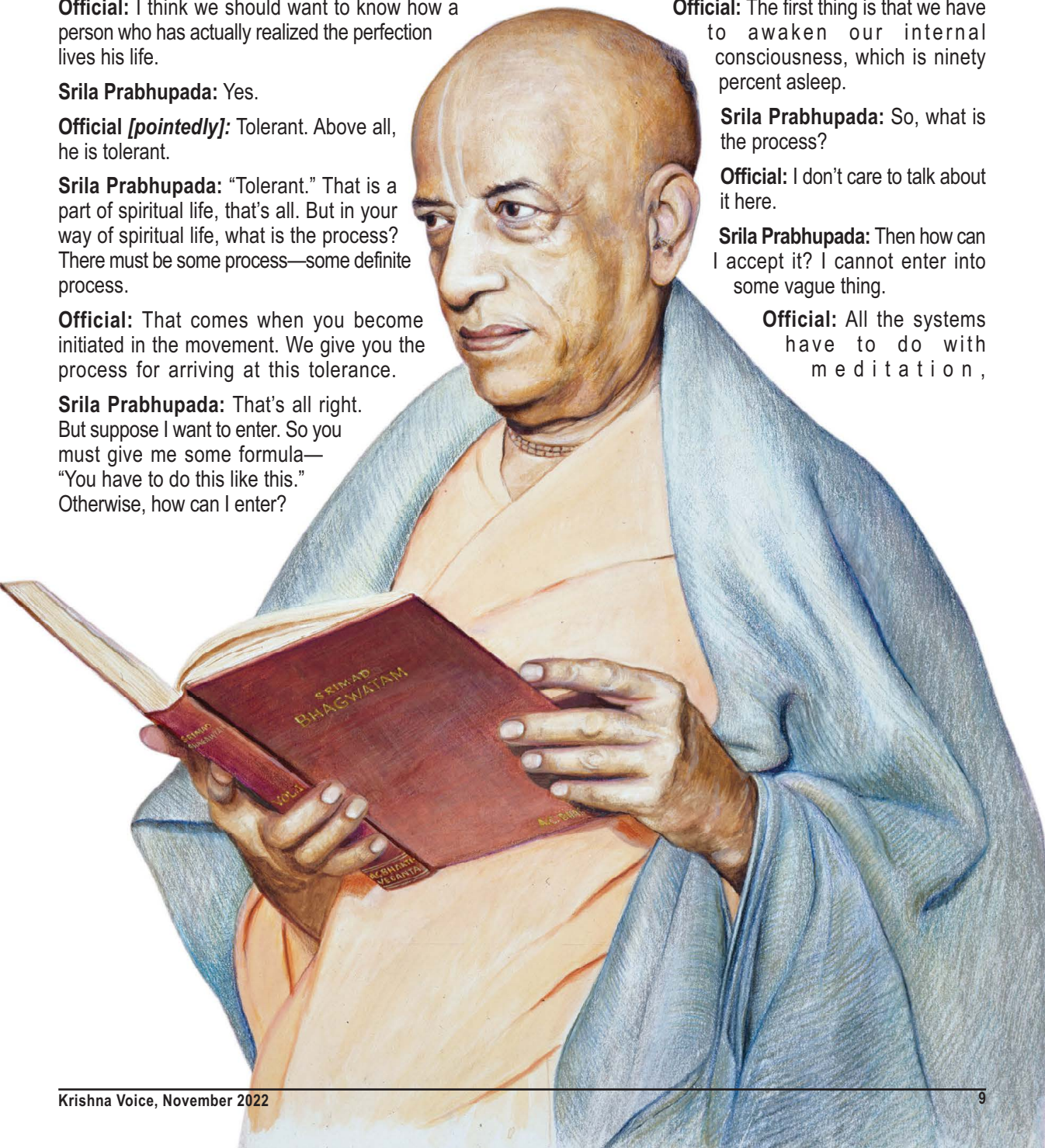
Official: The first thing is that we have to awaken our internal consciousness, which is ninety percent asleep.

Srila Prabhupada: So, what is the process?

Official: I don’t care to talk about it here.

Srila Prabhupada: Then how can I accept it? I cannot enter into some vague thing.

Official: All the systems have to do with meditation,



concentration—things that will reawaken your consciousness.

Srila Prabhupada: What is the object of meditation?

Official: Many different objects.

Srila Prabhupada: But tell one of them.

Official: The body, for example. There is “the eternal meditation number three.”

Srila Prabhupada: So what is the “number one”?

Official: This particular meditation—number three—is basic. It is given to all our students.

Srila Prabhupada: “Number three,” and no “number one.”

Official: The idea is that you will meditate on the number three, and in this way you will wake up the consciousness in your body, starting from the tips of your toes and working upward. Now, it may seem easy to you, but all the great masters of the Orient have taught this, and no one can succeed without doing this.

Srila Prabhupada: That means your knowledge is not perfect. It is all bogus. If you meditate on the body, what do you gain?

Official: You wake up your psychic consciousness, which is sleeping inside the body.

Srila Prabhupada: But you tell me—what is that process?

Official: Well, I would like to talk to you a little bit about a book I am reading, which describes how the Russians have just discovered the soul. They have photographed the soul, the soul’s aura. They have found the soul, and they have described all the various phenomena of parapsychology and extrasensory perception. The Russians have made great discoveries, and the book is incredible, although I have not finished it as yet.

Srila Prabhupada: That is the Russians. I am asking about your process.

Official: Our order knows the destiny of human life, the state of Christic consciousness, nirvana—call it what you will—with an understanding that is a million times beyond your understanding.

Srila Prabhupada: If it is “beyond understanding,” how can I accept it?

Official: This is a genuine understanding, and it is translated onto the objective level.

Srila Prabhupada: If I do not understand whom to love, how can I love?

Official: This understanding is in the heart of everyone. Simply it is a question of repressing the false ego—eliminating the old man, the false ego.

Srila Prabhupada: What is that?

Official: I don’t understand why you are objecting. After all, love is a part of everyone.

Srila Prabhupada: I am objecting because if you ask me to love, I want to know whom I shall love.

Official: A mystic loves everything, everyone.

Srila Prabhupada: If you love everyone, that means you love the animals, also. Does your community allow animal killing?

Official: When you come into the movement, there are no regulations required of you. But little by little, it comes to that point. Then, for a short period, our students are required to give up intoxication and meat and things like that. But it is not permanent.

Srila Prabhupada: And then they can take these things.

Official: Yes. Afterwards.

Srila Prabhupada: So in the beginning, why stop? Why, in the beginning, are your students requested to give these things up?

Official: Our order does not force anything, does not make you do anything.

Srila Prabhupada: But the ideal must be there. One may follow or not follow.

Official: Our order doesn’t reject anyone.

Srila Prabhupada: So your order approves animal killing?

Official: There are no restrictions. The order doesn’t require.

Srila Prabhupada: Then let us stop here. No more questions. This is a waste of time. 🙏

On Conceiving the Inconceivable

Some principles in understanding the origin of the conditioned soul

Ravindra Svarupa Dasa

We conditioned souls are originally Krishna conscious living entities, but owing to a desire to be independent of God and to be the Supreme ourselves, we have fallen from our original position and become covered by *maya* (illusion), who provides us with false identities of gross and subtle matter. By the grace of Krishna and His pure devotees we fallen souls can regain our original Krishna consciousness and in so doing go back to Godhead.

This simple dramatic narrative tells the story of who we are, where we came from, how we fell, and how we can be restored. Srila Prabhupada tells us this story, and so do the previous *acharyas* and the scriptures. This story is the profoundest truth about ourselves, and there is no fault in it.

Yet the story becomes complicated when we discover (from the identical infallible sources) that the souls in the spiritual world are *nitya-siddha*, eternally or perpetually liberated souls, and that no one falls from the spiritual world. Further, the souls in the material world are *nitya-baddha*, eternally or perpetually conditioned, and we learn that their conditioned state is *anadi*, or without any beginning. These statements, also, are true without a doubt.

How can these facts be reconciled with the story of fall and redemption?

It is necessary to recognize that the seemingly straightforward linear narrative is more complicated than it appears because the narrative's scope of action spans two "worlds," one eternal and the other temporal.

We can get some sense of the relation between these two worlds if we recollect the temporal structure of the material universe as presented in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. As one ascends from *Martya-loka* (our level or plane), through *Svarga-loka* (the plane of the enjoying and administering demigods, or *devas*), and further through *Mahar-loka* and so on (the planes of the austere sages) to *Satya-loka* (the plane of Lord Brahma), time progressively dilates. Thus, as 360 years go by here in *Martya-loka*, only a year passes for the *devas* in *Svarga-loka*. And 300 billion years have to come and go down here for a single year to transpire in *Satya-loka* for Lord Brahma.

Srimad-Bhagavatam mentions that when Brahma, on earth, kidnapped the cowherd boys and calves from Krishna, the victims were gone a complete year by human experience, but for Brahma, operating on *Satya-loka* time, only a moment (a *truti*) had passed. A *truti* lasts exactly 8/13,500 of a second.

On another occasion Maharaja Kakudmi, seeking a husband for his daughter Revati, took her to *Satya-loka* to ask Lord Brahma to arrange the match. Brahma kept them waiting until he had finished hearing a recital by Gandharva musicians. When Kakudmi finally presented his request, Brahma burst out laughing. Everyone Kakudmi would have wanted for his daughter was long gone, for twenty-seven *yuga* cycles had passed (about 160 million years) while the supplicant and his daughter cooled their heels in the anteroom.

A live television broadcast on *Satya-loka* of events on *Martya-loka* would disclose everything moving with dizzying speed, a blur of mountains rising up and dissolving away, oceans swelling and shrinking, peoples and civilizations rushing on and off the earth. By the same token, a live broadcast on *Martya-loka* of current events on *Satya-loka* would transmit motion so slow as to be undetectable by normal human vision. Only time-lapse photography, snapping the shutter every thousand years or so, would disclose activity.

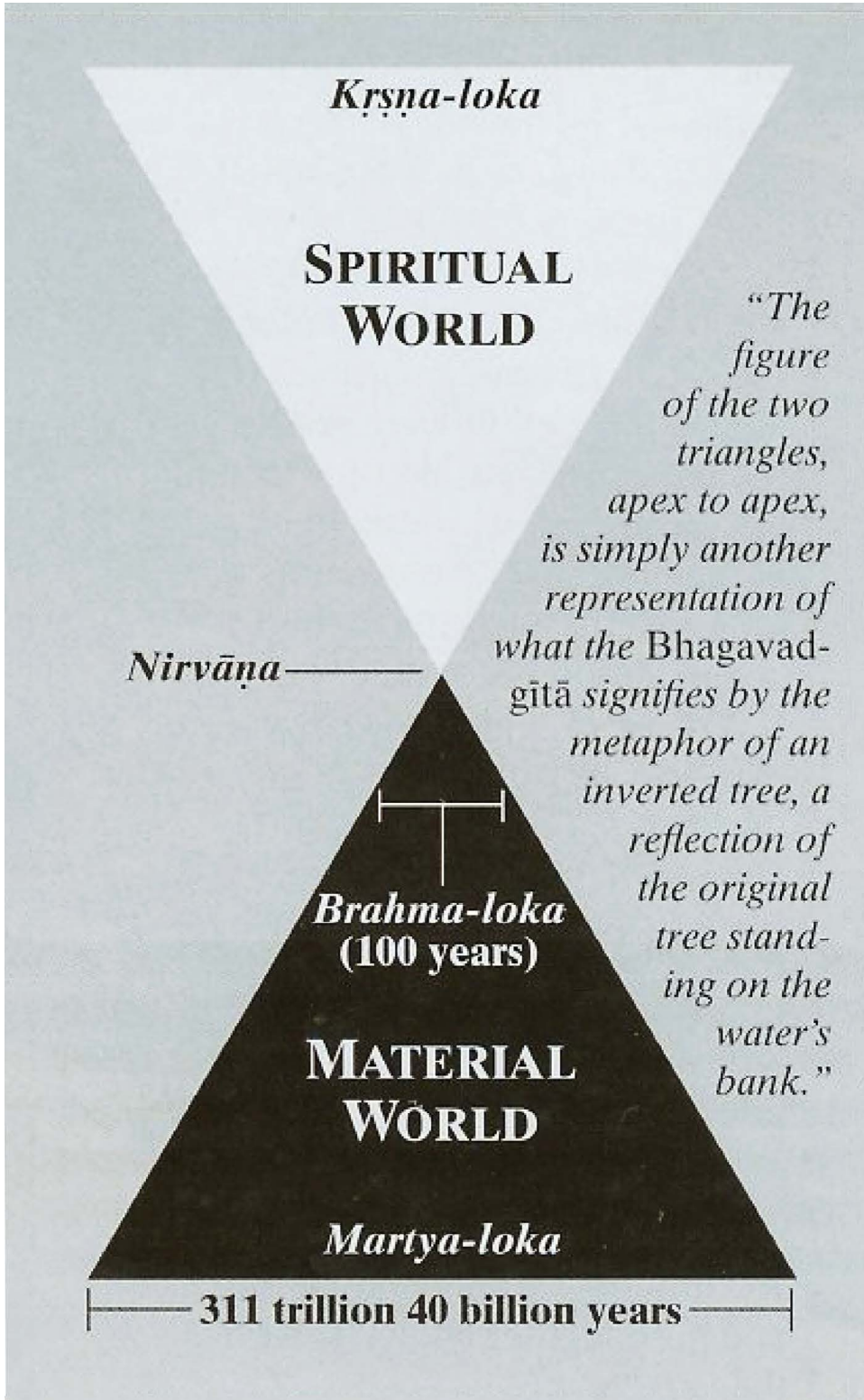
Keeping all this in mind, imagine the temporal structure of the universe depicted in the form of an equilateral triangle, with the base representing *Martya-loka*. Its width at the base stands for the duration of the universe in our years—that is, 311 trillion 40 billion years. As we go up, the triangle narrows, so that at the level of Brahma the duration of the universe (still depicted as the width of the triangle) is 100 of his years.

Now continue up the universe, past *Satya-loka*. The unit-measure of duration continues to dilate, time slows more and more, and finally, at the point where the material realm borders the spiritual, time has its stop. Here, at the apex of the triangle, we reach the point of translation between material and spiritual worlds, between time and eternity.

This is the "now moment of eternity," an everlasting instant without past or future. We have seen how, when we go up the universe, a unit-measure of time includes more and more of our years. What then happens when we take that process to the limit, as we do when we reach the apex? That single climactic moment embodies time

without beginning and end. From this point of view, the lifetimes of a trillion, trillion Brahmās are over as soon as they begin. Who can even express such inconceivable things?

It remains to be mentioned, for the sake of thoroughness, that the apex of our triangle marks the limit of the ascent to the Absolute by mystical speculation. According to mystic speculators, the everlasting moment of eternity is necessarily spent in stasis, immobility. Vaishnavas, however, pure devotees of the Lord, know of transcendental variegatedness and activities. Although eternity is described as having no past or future, there is still sequence



(for there are *lilas*, pastimes); and knowledge, bliss, and beauty eternally increase.

If we were to continue with our figure of a triangle, we would have to envision the two lines of its sides extending through the apex to form a second, inverted triangle. Let this triangle, with its base up and its apex down, signify the spiritual realm of transcendental variegatedness as it expands beyond the zero point of *nirvana*. The figure of the two triangles, apex to apex, is simply another representation of what the *Bhagavad-gita* signifies by the metaphor of an inverted tree, a reflection of the original tree standing on the water's bank.

Our minds boggle even at the “now moment of eternity” of the impersonal speculators. Even further from our conceptions is a realm in which transcendental time, which has neither past nor future, allows for activities—pastimes—and ever-increasing qualities of beauty, joy, and knowledge.

Now to consider the issue before us, we must not only contemplate that inconceivable eternal realm, but we must think about it in relationship with our world of past, passing, and to come. Let us proceed to do so.

As we have seen, the transcendental realm is eternal present, an everlasting instant. Every soul in that realm must accordingly be characterized as *nitya-mukta*, eternally liberated. This includes the souls that come from the material world. For if a soul enters that realm from the material world, can we ask, “When did that soul arrive?” The question does not apply. *Once* the soul gets there, that soul can only be *nitya-mukta*. He has, necessarily, *always* been there. This is the logic of eternity.

Now let us go to a matter equally inconceivable. Let us say, for the purposes of discussion, that a soul “falls” from eternity and sojourns in the material world. When did he enter the material world? We can only say that the fall is a non-temporal act that renders the conditioned soul bound from all time. The history of his incarceration in time has no beginning. The conditioned soul has always been conditioned. Strictly speaking, the question of *when* does not apply. Although bondage is not the soul's original condition, the state of bondage is necessarily described as *anadi*, or beginningless, and the conditioned soul himself is characterized as *nitya-baddha*—eternally bound or conditioned. There was no time when he was not bound.

Yet such souls can attain release and enter the spiritual realm. Let us say that the soul who has fallen from that realm into beginningless bondage now returns. The duration of that bondage spans time without limit, as we have seen. Yet now, if we inquire, from the perspective of eternity, “How long has that fallen and restored soul been absent?” the answer is “He never left.” Or, alternatively, “The question does not apply.” For the logic of eternity dictates that no one falls from eternity—even if he does so.

The logic of eternity also dictates that no conditioned soul can *begin* his eternal life—even though he does so. In considering both falling from and returning to transcendence, we must accept the logic of eternity to be true to what is real.

Thus we see that while it is true that no one falls from the spiritual world, we in fact have done so, and yet there is no contradiction.

The dramatic narration of a life with God, a fall from that life, a sojourn in the alien world of illusion, and a final restoration to God is not a fiction. It is a profound truth. It need not be rejected on the mistaken notion that it conflicts with other, equally true, statements of authorities.

For our better understanding, however, we need to be aware of one simplification that takes place—quite naturally—in the telling of the narrative of fall and redemption. This is the representation of all the events in the story as though they take place on a single temporal continuum. For example, we habitually characterize our entry into time as though it were itself a temporal occasion, a dateable event. However, as we have seen, *once* we become conditioned, we have always been conditioned.

Similarly, we think of our rebellion against God as a distant, aboriginal event, one that took place long ago and far away, in *that* world. In truth, that single act of rebellion is perpetual; that very same aboriginal event is taking place right now. We have only to look into our hearts to confirm this.

Furthermore, when we “return” to the spiritual world, it will only be to discover that indeed we never left, and “there” has always been right “here.” We are right now with Krishna, for Krishna consciousness is our *svarupa*, our eternal identity. *We need only wake up and see where we are.*

All this is known to Srila Prabhupada and to the *acharyas*, previous teachers. They know how one can fall from a place no one falls from, enter into an ignorance that has always been, and return to a place one never actually left. Because such matters are inconceivable to mundane minds, when teachers speak of such things their words may seem contradictory. But in one way or another they all tell the whole truth. ☸

Bhakti-yoga at Home

Devotional Service “in Secret”

By Rohininandana Dasa

I have received the following letter:

My problem arises from my attempt—or rather my eagerness—to love and serve Lord Krishna. It must be a typical situation, really: my parents want me to marry a wealthy young man and enjoy material benefits, and I want to practice spiritual life. For my part, I haven’t helped calm them down, because I’ve been so excited about my visits to the temple and I’ve talked a lot about the Lord and the purpose of life. Now I have to keep my visits to the temple top secret. How can I practice *bhakti-yoga* at home in the light of all this? I’m attached to my parents and don’t want to hurt them. At the same time, I want to love Krishna.

Sincerely,
Amba

As I reply, my first consideration is Amba’s Krishna consciousness—whatever may happen at her home or whatever agreement or disagreement she reaches with her parents.

I write: “You should know that devotional service is transcendental to material circumstances. Nothing can check it. A vivid example is Prahlada Maharaja. You can read in the Seventh Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* how, as a five-year-old boy, he cooperated with his father—who was completely inimical to Krishna consciousness—by going to school and otherwise obeying his father. But at the same time he fully carried on with his Krishna consciousness. Absolutely nothing, not even the possibility of death, could impede the steady flow of Prahlada’s remembrance of Lord Krishna.

“You may not be able to imitate Prahlada Maharaja, but as his father could not restrict Prahlada’s thoughts and feelings, your parents cannot restrict yours. Your parents may impose physical restrictions on you, but they can’t really interfere with your inner world.

“The Vedic scriptures say that the essence of all instruction is to always remember Krishna and never forget Him.



So try to see every aspect of your daily life in relationship to Krishna. Feel a thrill each moment as you connect with Krishna by seeing how everything is happening under His direction, and how all that is beautiful and wonderful—and all that is frightening too—is but a spark of His splendour. Try to see how all that you do—from breathing to eating to working to playing to loving—can be done as an offering to Krishna.

“Besides remembering Krishna, you can rise early and have your own regular spiritual program, or *sadhana*. You can go on a daily walk while you chant Hare Krishna on your beads. When walking with disciples early in the morning, Srila Prabhupada would sometimes say that the joggers were doing their physical exercise and we are doing our spiritual exercise.

“You can also offer all your food to Krishna. If you are prevented from offering it openly, you can mentally say prayers of offering, such as, ‘My dear Lord, I offer this to You,’ and then chant Hare Krishna.

“The *Nectar of Devotion* tells of a devotee who was unable to serve Krishna as elaborately as he desired, so he practiced meditating that he was making grand, royal devotional offerings. At times in my own life I have applied this idea. Once I was ill with a fever, and another time I was in a prison cell, arrested for ‘obstructing the footpath’ as I tried to sell Srila Prabhupada’s books. Both times I meditated on the entire morning program at the temple. I sang, offered *arati*, chanted *japa*, danced in a *kirtana*, gave a class—all in my mind. I look back on those experiences as very important for me in my spiritual development.

“So if you want to serve Lord Krishna and practice *bhakti-yoga* at home or in any other circumstance, you can—if for no other reason than it is your eternal right.

“Although devotional service is our rightful ‘inheritance’ from our supreme father, Lord Krishna, still, as prodigal children we chose to turn our backs on Him and enter the material supermarket to purchase its illusory wares. We may now be coming to our senses and getting sick of paying the high price of repeated birth and death, but we can’t expect Krishna to hand us our freedom on a silver platter, gratis. Srila Prabhupada says that Maya tests us to see if we are serious in our commitment to Krishna consciousness. Do we really want to be Krishna’s devotee? Sometimes the fire of adversity may help us decide.

“Perhaps your particular circumstance will ultimately prove greatly beneficial to you. Perhaps you will become increasingly determined to practice Krishna consciousness and to become a pure devotee. Many stories in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*—in fact most of them—depict a devotee facing a circumstance that is difficult or painful. It is not surprising that in this world, where most of us are determined to forget Krishna, practicing devotional service to Him is often fraught with difficulties. Devotees, however, by their devotion to Lord Krishna, eventually come out of anything with flying colours. They know the art—which we can also learn—of using absolutely any circumstance in Krishna’s service. Even amidst great hardship they are always free.

“The sense of spiritual freedom is so valuable to a devotee that he or she may come to welcome hardship. Queen Kunti, the mother of the five Pandavas, prayed that all the calamities she had faced would happen ‘again and again,’ because the calamities gave her more chances to be with Krishna. So never despair. Sooner or later things will work out.

“Lord Chaitanya once instructed someone in a situation similar to yours. A young man named Raghunatha desperately wanted to leave home to join Lord Chaitanya. His parents were horrified at the idea of Raghunatha’s leaving home and, seeing his determination, employed ten people to guard him. His parents even considered binding him with ropes. They married him to an exquisitely beautiful girl and provided him with vast riches. They reasoned that if these things couldn’t tie him down, nothing could. But Raghunatha could think only of getting away. He tried again and again, but was always caught.

“Eventually Lord Chaitanya visited Raghunatha’s neighbourhood. Raghunatha begged his parents on the plea of his life to allow him to spend a little time with the Lord. Seeing his utter earnestness, and being devotees themselves, they gave their permission. Raghunatha was so happy to be with Lord Chaitanya and serve Him that he began to think of cheating his parents and not returning home as agreed.

“Understanding Raghunatha’s mind, Lord Chaitanya advised him, ‘Be patient and return home. Don’t be a crazy fellow. By and by you will be able to cross the ocean of material existence. ... But for the time being enjoy the material world in a befitting way and do not become attached to it. Within your heart you should always keep yourself very faithful, but externally you may behave like an ordinary man. Thus Krishna will soon be very pleased and reveal to you how you may be delivered from the clutches of Maya.... If one has Krishna’s mercy, no one can check him.’ (*Chaitanya-charitamrita, Madhya-lila, Chapter 16*)

“I know it may not presently be easy for you, Amba, but try to see the pluses of your present circumstance. Take advantage of them to go forward in your resolve and deepen your spiritual life.” 🌸

He dances in our hearts

Thirukulandhai Sri Mayakoothar Perumal Temple

by Sampatkumara Ramanuja Dasan (Adv. Ashwin.S)

Located 5 km from Azhvar Thirunagari, in the town of Peringulam, is the beautiful temple of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sriman Narayana, the Srinivasa Perumal temple of Thirukulandhai.

Pastime

The two daughters of Daksha, Kadru and Vinata, were wed to the great sage Kashyapa, the wish-born son of Lord Brahma. (Kashyapa wed numerous other ladies, some of whom were Daksha's daughters.) These two sisters were extremely attractive and competitive with one another. Kashyapa offered to bestow a blessing on both of them because he was so pleased with them.

“Let a thousand sons of unmatched strength and valour be born to me,” Kadru cried. When Kashyapa spoke the words, “So be it!” a thousand strong serpents of the serpent race were born to Kadru.

When it was her turn to choose her boon, Vinata stated, “Let two boys be born to me, who shall surpass the sons of my sister in strength, valour, and fame.”

“So be it,” Kashyapa uttered.

Vinata eventually produced two eggs. She provided her maids with them so they could keep them secure. These two eggs were protected day and night and placed in heated containers. The eggs remained thus for five hundred years, but they never hatched. Vinata felt agitated since her sister had already given birth to 1,000 snakes. One of her eggs had cracked open. It included an embryo whose upper half was complete, but whose lower half had not yet matured. “How could you be so impatient?” the boy said, furious with his mother. “You acted rashly, and it almost killed me. I bind you to servitude! Don't disturb my brother in the other egg. He will serve as the means to freeing you from enslavement, if you wait another 500 years.”

The two sisters Vinata and Kadru got into a fight shortly after this. “Sister, what colour is the celestial horse Uchaisravas that belongs to Indra?” Kadru enquired.

The rajagopuram of the temple





The most ancient Deity of Mayakoothar Perumal is centuries old and has been carefully protected with gold armour

Mayakoothar Perumal with Sridevi and Bhudevi in shayana alankara during Brahmotsava

“It is flawlessly white from its snout to its gorgeous tail,” her sister replied.

“You are mistaken,” Kadru retorted. “Although it is true that both his face and body are a perfect shade of white, I believe that only his tail is a glossy black hue. I’ll tell you what, let’s place a wager on this. I’ll become your slave if you’re correct. If I’m correct, you’ll have to work for me.”

Vinata took the wager. She was sure she would triumph. Kadru came up with a strategy since she was aware that the horse was all white. “I made a wager with your aunt that the horse Uchaisravas has a black tail,” she told her sons. “You must make my words come to pass. Go forth and entwine yourselves around his tail, making it black.”

The snakes refused to be part of this ruse. Kadru became enraged. “How dare you disregard your mother’s command?” she said. “It is pointless to have children who disregard my orders. I curse you all to be consumed by fire before too much time has passed!” (Note: This is the curse that caused so many snakes to be slaughtered



Mayakoothar Perumal with Garudadeva



Mayakoothar Perumal
in Sri Krishna Kaliya Mardana Lila alankara



Mayakoothar Perumal
in Vaikuntanatha alankara

at King Janamejaya's sacrifice.)

When Lord Brahma heard this curse, he added to it by stating, "So be it!" When Kashyapa learned that his sons had been cursed and that his father Brahma had sanctioned it, he rushed to Brahma and begged him to lift the curse.

Brahma said, "Your sons are evil. Their toxin threatens to wipe out all life. Nothing else can exist on the planet if it is not controlled. However, not everyone will be annihilated. Those who are good and have not deviated from the path of truth will be preserved." To console his son, he taught Kashyapa an infallible mantra to neutralise the snake's venom. (In a challenge, Kashyapa defeated his son Takshaka by resurrecting a banyan tree that had been reduced to ashes by the serpent's venom.)

Meanwhile, the Nagas concluded, after much deliberation, that it was best to fulfil their mother's bidding. The blackest of them went and entangled themselves around Uchaisravas' tail. When the two sisters came, the horse's tail was as black as night. Vinata became her sister's slave under the conditions of the wager. She was forced to work as a servant for Kadru and the serpents.

When the moment arrived, Garuda emerged from his egg-shell, bright like the sun and Agni. His lustre was like the fire that would engulf all creation at its end. The *devas* in heaven were nearly blinded when they saw this great flashing light.

Indra then inquired of Agni, "Tell me, O Fire, who is this second Fire that is brighter than you? The end of the planet looks to be approaching!"

Agni said, "My Majesty, Garuda is the son of Kashyapa and Vinata. He was born to be the King of the Birds. His father had promised his mother that her son would surpass all immortals in lustre and splendour, and it is this that has blinded you all."

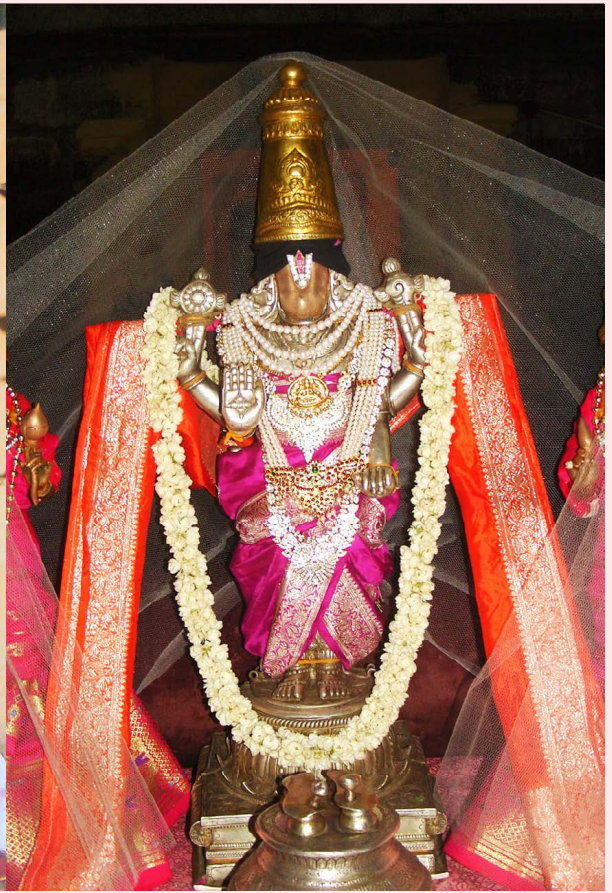
In this temple, Garudadeva is seen next to the Supreme Lord Himself, unlike in other temples where Garuda is seen near the *dvaja sthambha*.

The unique position of Garuda in this temple is associated with yet another pastime.

In Peringulam resided Vedasaran and Kumadavalli, a devoted *brahmana* couple. They had a daughter named Kamalavathi. She exacted severe punishment here, having resolved to marry only the Supreme Personality of



Moolavar of Mayakoothar Perumal,
known as Srinivasa Perumal in this temple



Mayakoothar Perumal (utsavar)

Godhead Sriman Narayana. The Supreme Lord agreed to aid her and gave her a permanent position on His midsection. Satisfied, Vedasaran included himself in the day-to-day *puja* here. His wife Kumudavalli assisted him in every way. When she was on her way to the Thamiraparni river, an evil spirit named Asmasaran kidnapped her by force and imprisoned her in the Himalayas. Vedasaran was enraged by this and made extraordinary requests to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sriman Narayana for help in relocating Kumudavalli.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead Sriman Narayana captured the demonic spirit who engaged in a violent struggle before succumbing. Sriman Narayana threw down the demonic spirit and killed him. Kumudavalli was returned to Vedasaran. As a result, He was given the name Mayakoothan (*utsavar*). Garuda carried the Lord during this battle. Satisfied with Garuda's wonderful *seva*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sriman Narayana granted him a seat next to Himself on the same (*utsavar*) platform. A large lake (*kulam*) was discovered in this place, and as a result, the place is also known as 'Perungkulam.'

Temple

The temple is located on the banks of the Thamiraparni river in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, on the Thiruchendur-Thirunelveli road. The temple is built in the Dravidian architectural style, with two *prakaras*. The temple entrance features an idol of Vishnu facing east. The temple's shrines are all housed behind rectangular granite walls pierced by a three-tiered *gopuram*. Sriman Narayana is seen seated, with Sridevi and Bhudevi on either side. There are photos of Bhudevi and Sridevi, as well as celebration scenes.

The temple is one of the places where Vishnu has four consorts, namely Sridevi, Bhudevi, Niladevi and Kamaladevi.

Nammazhwar has sung in praise of the Lord in this temple.

He imagines himself to be a lady and sings about the Lord with *prema rasa*:

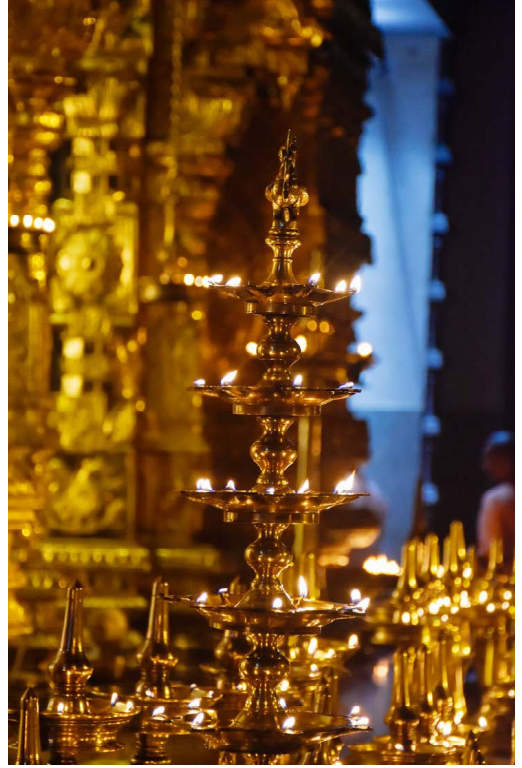
O Sakhis! The wonder-dancer Mayakoothan lives westwards in Southern Kulandhai amid groves and mansions. The deft spinner of the war discus rode away on His dancing mount, Garuda. Filled with desire, I followed; my bangles fell, my heart and all left me. I stand shamed before bangled friends, now what can I lose? 🌸

Photo courtesy: Santhanakrishnan, Srirangam



Deepotsava

Srila Prabhupada's
ISKCON
BANGALORE



Offering lamps to the Lord during the month of Karthika to commemorate His Damodara *lila*





Deepotsava

Sri La Prabhupada's
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Distinguished guests during Deepotsava



Sri Govind Karjol
Hon'ble Minister of Major and Medium Irrigation
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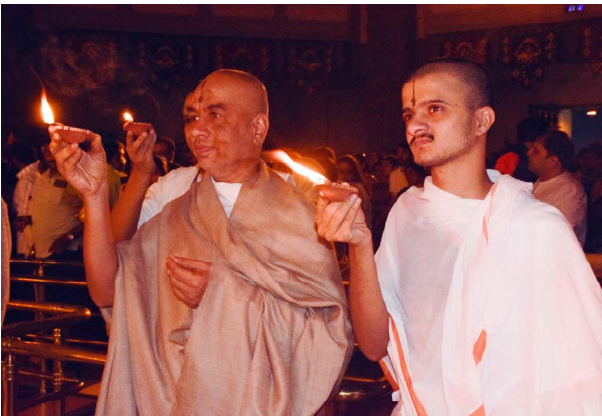
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Hon'ble Minister for Labour
Government of Karnataka



Sri Manjunath R (MLA) & Sri S L Bhojgowda (MLC)
Government of Karnataka



Sri Puttanna (MLC)
Government of Karnataka



Pandit Dr. Satyadhanachar Katti
Principal, Sri Jayateertha Vidyapeetha, Uttaradhi Mut



Ms. HariPriya
Noted heroine in Kannada, Telugu and Tamil movies



Govardhan Puja

Srila Prabhupada's
ISKCON
BANGALORE



Arati to utsava vighraha of Sri Sri Krishna Balarama in special Giridhari alankara



Govardhana cake *annakoota* was offered to the Lord, with decoration of cookies and sweets



Govardhan Puja

It was during the auspicious month of Karthika that Lord Krishna saved the Vrajavasis from the wrath of Indra. The Vrajavasis were preparing to offer Indra his annual worship and sacrifice, when Lord Krishna told them to direct their offerings to Govardhana Hill instead, as the hill provided the villagers with all that they needed - fresh green grasses for their cows, water from lakes and streams, fruits and flowers from the groves and forests that covered the hill. While the Vrajavasis circumambulated the hill after their worship, keeping their cows in front of them in procession, Lord Krishna appeared from the hill in a gigantic form to accept all the offerings, thus revealing that Govardhana Hill is non-different from Himself. Soon after, when he heard the news of this worship of Govardhana Hill, Indra was furious and sent torrential rainfall to inundate Vrindavana and destroy the villages and people. The Vrajavasis sought Krishna's protection and He saved them by easily lifting Govardhana Hill on the little finger of His left hand, and holding it up as an umbrella from the storms. Indra's pride was defeated and he surrendered in submission to Lord Krishna, realizing that the little boy whose instructions the Vrajavasis had followed was none other than his own Supreme Master.

Devotees celebrate Govardhana Puja every year to commemorate this amazing pastime of Lord Krishna. In ISKCON temples around the world, devotees offer a mound of foodstuffs or *annakoota* to the Lord and also perform *go-puja* on this auspicious day.



Prasadam
distribution



Go Puja



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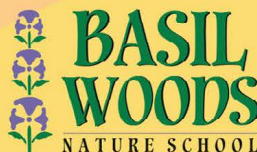
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