



# KRISHNA VOICE

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Sri Radhashtami 2022

# Deepotsava

the festival of lights

Oct 9 - Nov 8

Participate in offering ghee lamps to Their Lordships  
Sri Sri Radha Krishnachandra during the  
auspicious month of Karthik and be spiritually enlivened

Celebrations  
every evening at 7:30 pm  
at ISKCON Sri Radha Krishna Temple

Vishesha Deepotsava  
Oct-26

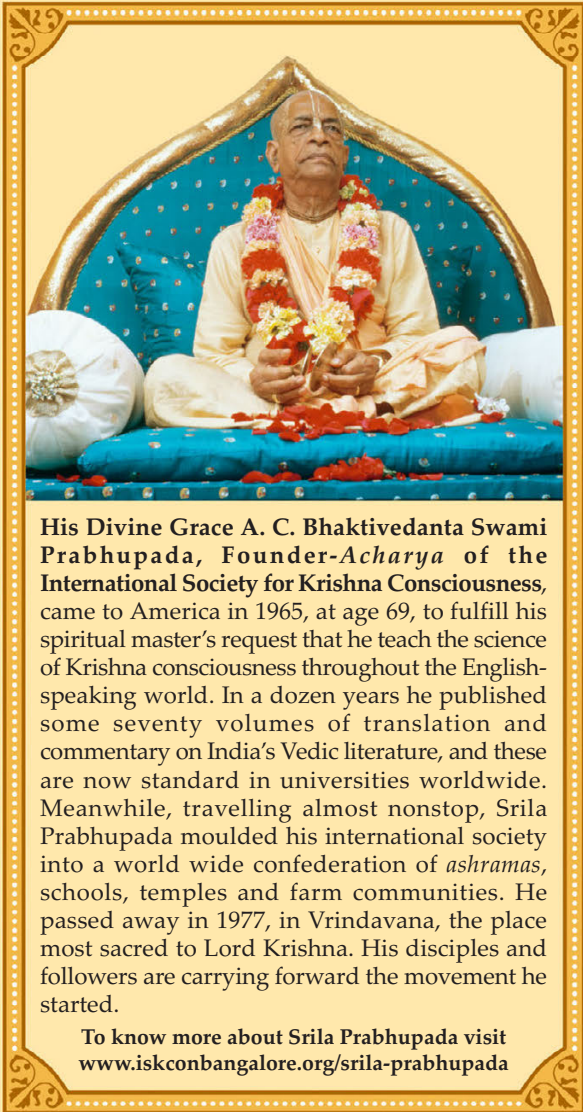


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His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age 69, to fulfill his spiritual master's request that he teach the science of Krishna consciousness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

To know more about Srila Prabhupada visit [www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada](http://www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada)

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# Our Only Duty

The Vedic literature is filled with injunctions, but one stands supreme.

A lecture given in New York, January 7, 1966

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

*krishna-bhakti—abhidheya, sarva-sastre kaya  
ataeva muni-gana kariyache niscaya*

“A human being’s activities should be centered only on devotional service to Lord Krishna. That is the verdict of all Vedic literature, and all saintly people have ascertained this.”

—Chaitanya-charitamrita, Madhya-lila 22.5

We have just studied the constitutional position of Krishna—His original standing as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, His expansions and incarnations, and how He is situated as the supreme controller of the spiritual and material manifestations. As far as possible, we have learned about Krishna through the grace of Lord Chaitanya.

Even Brahma, the primal living entity within the material world, cannot know everything about Krishna. Brahma is a living entity like us, but he is supremely powerful within the material universe. Just as President Johnson is the supreme power in this country even though he is a man like us, Brahma, although a living entity like us, is exalted as the supreme personality within the material world by his meritorious and devotional service to the Lord. But he is not the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Krishna. *Ekala isvara krishna, ara saba bhrtya*: Only Krishna is the master, and everyone else, however great he may be, is Krishna’s servant.

Even Krishna’s expansion Vishnu is subordinate to Krishna. The greatest manifestation of Vishnu is Maha-Vishnu, lying on the Causal Ocean of material creation. The material universes emanate from His breathing. This gigantic form of Vishnu, with four hands, is mentioned in the *Brahma-samhita*:

*yasyaika-nisvasita-kalam athavalambya  
jivanti loma-vilaja jagad-anda-nathah  
vishnur mahan sa iha yasya kala viseso  
govindam adi purusam tam aham bhajami*

“I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda. A portion of His plenary part is Maha-Vishnu.” And what is that Maha-Vishnu? “With His breathing, all the universes come into existence and are annihilated.” That is His breathing. With our breathing we take in and exhale many germs. Maha-Vishnu exhales and inhales many universes. And Maha-Vishnu is a plenary expansion of Krishna.

If we want to have a relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, how can that be achieved? That is now being explained by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The process of executing service by which we can attain our relationship with Krishna is called *abhidheya*. *Abhidheya* means “execution of obligation.” You may sometimes avoid duty and be excused, but you cannot avoid obligation. Obligation means something you have to do. Because you are meant for that thing, if you do not do it you will be in difficulty.

Our obligation as living entities is to serve the Supreme. We are part and parcel of the Supreme, just as the hand is part of the body. If I feel some itching, at once my hand comes, without my asking for it. The arrangement is so made that as soon as I feel some itching, the hand comes. That is obligation. Similarly, because we are part and parcel of the Supreme, we have an obligation to serve the Supreme, Krishna. If we are not doing that, our position is like that of a hand cut off from the body. My hand cut off from my body will not come to cure my itching. That means it is fallen. Its business is finished.

If the hand does not work under the obligation it has—to serve the body—then it is understood to be paralyzed, diseased, or infected. A doctor sometimes advises, “Cut it off. If you want to save the other parts of your body, then cut it off.”

Similarly, conditioned souls are now cut off from their original relationship with Krishna. They are forgetful. Our duty is to serve God. There is no other duty. That is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s preaching: “You have no other duty. To think you have other duties is illusion. If you have selected any other duty than to serve Krishna in Krishna consciousness, then you are foolish. You are doing something wrong; it is not for your interest.” This is the teaching of Lord Chaitanya, and of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* also.



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Somebody may argue, “Oh, if I completely engage myself in the service of Krishna, then how shall I live in the material world? Who will take care of my maintenance?”

That is foolishness. If you serve an ordinary person here, you get your maintenance; you get your wages. Are you so foolish to think that if you serve Krishna He will not maintain you? Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gita, yoga-ksemam vahamy aham*: “I personally take charge of your maintenance.” Why don’t you believe it? If I serve some master here, he pays me wages—“Take your wages”—\$25, \$10, or whatever it may be. And I am going to serve the Supreme and there is no maintenance for me? Oh, what foolishness! That is called forgetfulness.

That is the spell of *maya*, illusion. *Maya* will dictate, “Oh, you are going to serve Krishna? How will you maintain yourself, you foolish person. Don’t go there. Don’t go to the Krishna consciousness society. It is cheating.”

No, it is not cheating. It is factual. But if you want to gratify your senses, oh, there is no scope here for that. For that you can go to hell. But if you want to serve Krishna, there is every arrangement for you here.

If you want to cheat Krishna, then Krishna will also cheat you. Krishna says, *dyutam chalayatam asmi*: “Amongst all cheating processes, I am gambling.” Where has cheating come from? Cheating is in Krishna because He is the origin of everything. Whatever there is, even cheating, thieving—what is condemned in this world—that is also in Krishna. But in Krishna it is without contamination. That is the difference. When He cheats, His cheating becomes worshipable.

Krishna wanted to cheat Dronacharya. That story is in the *Mahabharata*. Krishna asked Yudhisthira, “Just go and lie to Dronacharya. Tell him, ‘Your son is dead.’” “Don’t you think Krishna was trying to cheat? So there is cheating in God. Everything is there, but in full. God is good; therefore His cheating is good. His thieving is good. Everything about Him is absolute. Unless you understand this point about the Absolute Truth, you cannot understand Krishna.

Lord Chaitanya is now teaching how to make progress in the execution of devotional service, *abhidheya*. The next verse states:

*srutir mata prsta disati bhavad-aradhana-vidhim  
yatha matur vani smrtir api tatha vakti bhagini  
puranadya ye va sahaja-nivahas te tad-anuga  
atah satyam jnatam murahara bhavaneva saranam*

There are two kinds of Vedic literature. One is called *shruti*, and the other is called *smrti*. *Shruti* means the original Vedic injunctions, which come through disciplic succession from Krishna down to this day. The Vedic injunctions are axiomatic truths. For example, it is a Vedic injunction that cow dung is pure. Now, your reason may cause you to say, “Oh, you say there is a Vedic injunction that if you touch the stool of any animal you have to take your bath to purify yourself. And another Vedic injunction says that cow dung is pure. This is contradictory.”

No, not contradictory. These are Vedic injunctions. People who accept them without argument are benefited. How are these injunctions true? You may not have sufficient intelligence, but if you go deep into the matter you will find they are true. That is the nature of Vedic injunctions.

So you cannot argue about them. You have to accept them as they are. You cannot interpret them. What education, what intelligence do we have that we can interpret Vedic injunctions? They should be accepted as is. That is the meaning of *shruti*. You simply have to hear and act accordingly.

If you are a learned scholar in the Vedic injunctions, if you have heard from the bona fide souls, and if you are convinced, then you can write something that corroborates the Vedic injunctions. That writing is called *smrti*. You cannot write nonsense. You cannot manufacture anything. You should always remember, “I am a tiny brain here, so I have to receive knowledge from superior sources.” Then if you can expand whatever knowledge you have received, your writing is called *smrti*.

This *Chaitanya-charitamrita*, written by Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, a great devotee of Lord Chaitanya, is *smrti*. Why? Everything written here corroborates the Vedic literature. There is no suggestion that “I am a philosopher. I am a speculator. I think this will be like this.” Here you’ll see in every step that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is quoting from the *Vedas*. This is the Vedic way.

Now, a great sage is giving his conclusion. *Srutir mata prsta disati bhavad-aradhana-vidhim*: “I have inquired from so many Vedic scriptures. Now I conclude that worshipping the Supreme Lord is the only injunction, nothing more.”

That is confirmed by *Bhagavad-gita* also. In the Fifteenth Chapter Krishna says, *vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*. What is the purpose of the *Vedas*? To understand Krishna. That’s all. If you can understand Krishna to some extent, all your Vedic studies are finished. No more taking trouble.

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Now, here the great sage says, “I have consulted all the Vedic processes, all the Vedic literature, and I see that *bhavad-aradhana-vidhim*—the only injunction is to worship You, the Supreme Lord.” And in the *Bhagavad-gita* the Lord confirms, *vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*: “By Vedic study one has to understand Me. That’s all.”

If you try to understand Krishna as far as possible through reliable sources, through bona fide sources, then your Vedic study is going on in Krishna consciousness. The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* says, *aho bata sva-paco 'to gariyan ...* There is classification of human society. *Sva-paca* means “dog-eaters.” There are many animal-eaters, and the dog-eaters are condemned in human society. But the *Bhagavatam* says, “If a dog-eater vibrates the transcendental sound of God’s name, oh, he is glorified.” Never mind that previously he was a dog-eater. That doesn’t matter. The *Bhagavatam* confirms this. *Aho bata sva-paco 'to gariyan*: “Even the dog-eater becomes glorified.” How? *Yaj-jihvagre vartate nama tubhyam*: “His tongue is chanting Hare Krishna.” Never mind what he was. That chanting has purified him.

“Oh, how is that? Just a few days ago he was eating dogs. And because he is chanting Hare Krishna, he has become purified?”

At least in Hindu society, people are hesitant to accept this. The reply is, *tepus tapas te*: “In his previous life he has already undergone many severe penances prescribed in your *Vedas*.” *Sasnur arya*: “Oh, he is not a dog-eater. He belongs to the *arya*, the advancing Aryan society.” These are the injunctions.

Some way or other if one takes to Krishna consciousness he becomes purified at once. Never mind what he is. There may be classification in the social convention. He is big, he is small, he’s a *brahmana*, he’s a *shudra* [labourer]. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu never says, “I am a *brahmana*, I am a *kshatriya* [soldier].” He says, *naham vipro na ca nara-patih*: “I am neither a *brahmana* nor a *kshatriya* nor a *vaishya* [merchant] nor any material designation.” Then what are you? *Gopi-bhartuh pada-kamalayor dasa-dasanudasah*: “I am the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of Krishna.”

That is our transcendental position. As soon as we take to that position, everything is all right. But we have to take it very seriously. That is the meaning of *abhidheya*.

Now, this devotee says, *shruti mata*. The *Vedas* are called *mata*, “mother.” Why? Because the *Vedas* give the second birth. The first birth is given by the material father, and the second birth is by the spiritual master. The spiritual master is the father, and the *Vedas* are the mother. So a person is called *dvija*, “twice-born,” when he goes to the spiritual master and takes lessons from the *Vedas*. The sacred thread ceremony is called *upanayana*. *Upanayana* means “to bring nearer.” *Upa* means “nearer,” and *nayana* means “to bring.” To take a fallen soul nearer to the Absolute Truth is called *upanayana*. When the spiritual master sees that the disciple is quite competent to come nearer to God, he recognizes him and gives him the sacred thread. Then the disciple is called a *brahmana*. The sacred thread is the symbol that one has approached an *acharya*, a spiritual master. How is one understood to know the spiritual science? *Acharyavan puruso veda*—when one has a spiritual master.

I have explained that the Vedic literature is divided into two categories. The original knowledge coming in disciplic succession is the mother. Now the devotee explains in this verse that literature written with reference to the context of Vedic literature is the sister. *Smrtir api tatha vakti bhagini*. So one is the mother, and the other is the sister. *Puranadya ye va sahaja-nivahas te tad-anuga*. The *Puranas* are called *smrti*. The eighteen *Puranas*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, *Vedanta-sutra*—they are called *smrti*.

Another devotee of Krishna has written a nice song. He says, *srutim apare smrtim itare bharatam anye bhajantu bhava-bhitah*. People take shelter of the Vedic literature because they are afraid of conditional life. What is the end of Vedic literature? To get oneself liberated from the material entanglement. So the devotee says, “Let people who are afraid of material entanglement worship *shruti*, the *Vedas*, or *smrti*, or *Mahabharata*. Let them engage in that way. I am not going to do that.”

“What you are going to do?”

*Aham vande iha nandam yasyalinde param brahma*: “I shall worship Nanda Maharaja, Krishna’s father.”

“Why? You have given up the *Vedas* and *Puranas*—everything. Why are you going to worship Nanda Maharaja?” “Because he has captivated the Supreme Lord, who is playing as a crawling child in his courtyard. Nanda Maharaja is so great that God is obliged to come to him to play as a child and crawl in his courtyard. So I shall worship Nanda Maharaja.”

So if you approach such a devotee—who can bring God to crawl in his courtyard—that is your perfection.

Thank you very much. 🙏

# SRILA PRABHUPADA SPEAKS OUT

## “Mysticism” Massacred

*This is the continuation of 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 Srila Prabhupada’s disciples translating the official’s remarks from French.*

**Official:** Many great masters like you from the East tend to smile at our explanation that the Absolute is beyond words. So what can I say?

**Srila Prabhupada:** Your knowledge is not perfect.

**Official:** Yes, my knowledge is not perfect, and like you, I am simply trying for perfect knowledge.

**Srila Prabhupada:** But unless you know your goal perfectly, how can you make progress?

**Official:** Well, our organization as a whole is the guru, and our organization as a whole knows the ultimate goal.

**Srila Prabhupada:** But you are part of that organization, and you do not know.

**Official:** The evolution of man—the goal of our order—is something mystical. It is not scientific, that it is so easily explained.

**Srila Prabhupada:** That means your goal is vague. It is not distinct.

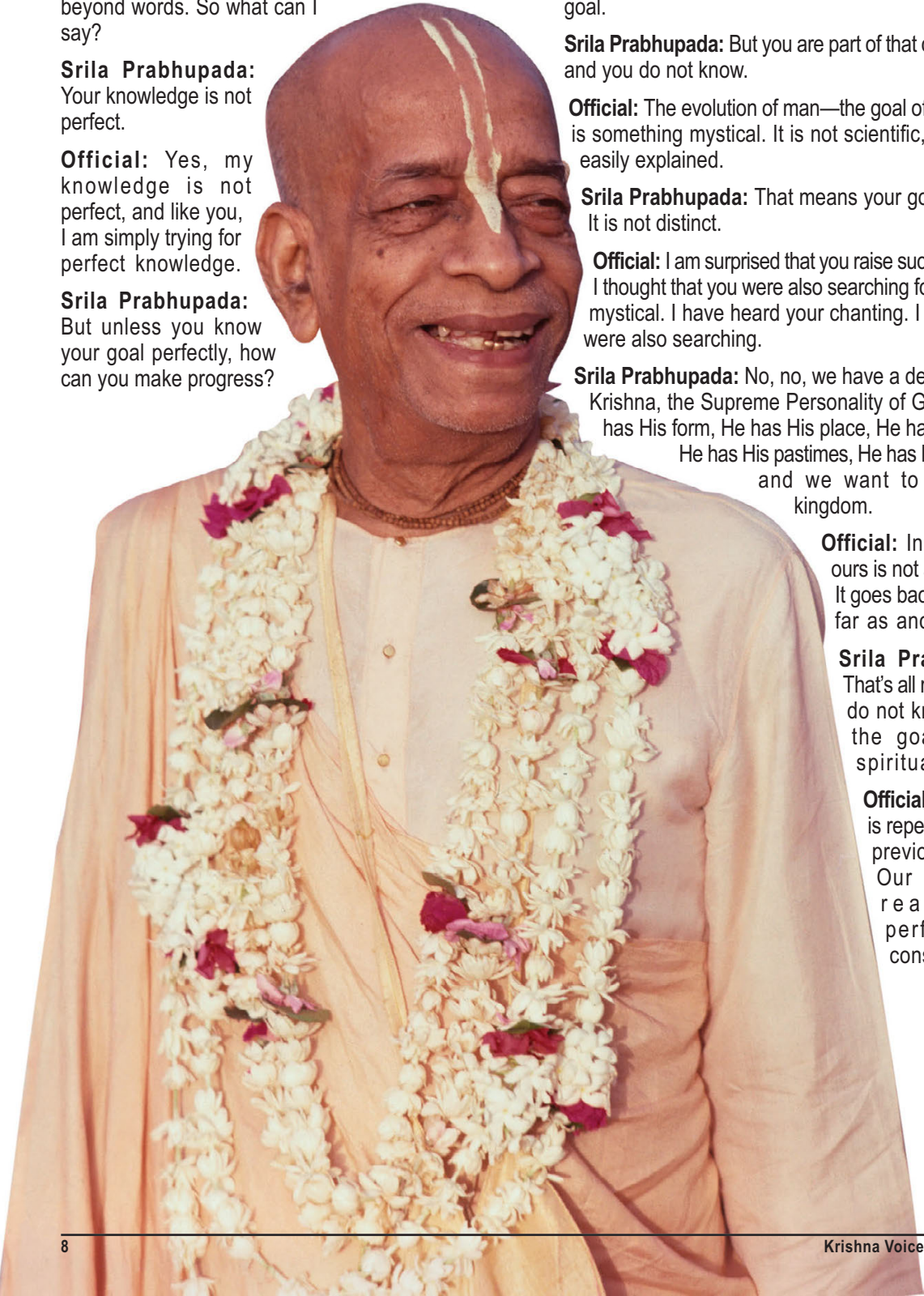
**Official:** I am surprised that you raise such objections. I thought that you were also searching for something mystical. I have heard your chanting. I thought you were also searching.

**Srila Prabhupada:** No, no, we have a definite goal—Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He has His form, He has His place, He has His name, He has His pastimes, He has His kingdom, and we want to enter that kingdom.

**Official:** In any event, ours is not a new order. It goes back at least as far as ancient Egypt.

**Srila Prabhupada:** That’s all right. But you do not know what is the goal of your spiritual pursuit.

**Official:** All I can do is repeat to you my previous answer. Our goal is to reach the perfection of consciousness,





at which point man is in communion, in unity, with the beyond, the inexplicable.

**Srila Prabhupada:** But you say you cannot express what is that “beyond.” You cannot describe what God is. That is imperfect knowledge.

**Official:** Communion with God, knowledge of God, is something subjective. It is something you experience, not something you describe.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Knowledge achieved that way is imperfect.

**Official:** According to every individual’s place of birth, his age, his upbringing, he will experience this communion with God differently.

**Srila Prabhupada:** No. God is God. If the experience actually comes from God, then it will be equally available for everyone.

**Official:** What we are looking for in our order is the ultimate realization—when all these other relative communions with God will disappear and there will be one common realization, one common experience of God.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Yes, that’s all right. But if you cannot describe what that ultimate goal is, then how can others be attracted?

**Official:** But in our society we have many different religions, many different groups, and we don’t ask anyone to leave being Christian or Jew or Muslim or Hindu or anything like that.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Nor are we asking in that way. We are asking, “What is that ultimate goal?”

**Official:** Ultimately, by following a process that our order gives its students, one reaches the goal.

**Srila Prabhupada:** Suppose you want me to go to London. That means you must tell me enough about London to make me interested in going there. Otherwise, what is the use of going to London?

**Official:** Our students feel the need for this ultimate perfection, and that is why they come to our movement.

**Srila Prabhupada:** But if they do not know what that ultimate perfection is, this is bogus.

**Official:** The ultimate perfection is realization of God.

**Srila Prabhupada:** But, for instance, if I say, “If you do this, you can make one million dollars,” first you have to know the value of one million dollars. Then you’ll endeavour. But if we don’t know what the value of that one million dollars is, why should we endeavour?

**Official:** All of our students—they know the value of realizing God in their heart.

**Srila Prabhupada:** How do they know? How do they know?

**Official:** We have many people who are aspiring after a richer, more spiritual life.

**Srila Prabhupada:** What is that spiritual life?

**Official:** High spiritual values.

**Srila Prabhupada:** These are simply words. What is that spiritual life? I want to know. You are simply speaking. You do not know what the aim is, what the goal is, what spiritual life is. This is useless. You have no tangible knowledge of anything that I have asked. I asked you, What is spiritual life? You cannot describe it. So how will you distinguish between spiritual life and material life? 🙏

(to be continued)

Fasting		Festivals	
Oct 6	Ekadashi	Oct 5	Dasara Festival (in Mysore)
Oct 7	break fast	Oct 9	Fourth month of Chaturmasya begins <i>Fasting from urad dal for one month</i>
Oct 21	Ekadashi		Karthika Month begins
Oct 22	break fast		Deepotsava begins (in ISKCON Bangalore)
		Oct 26	Govardhana Puja, Go Puja
		Oct 29	Srila Prabhupada - Disappearance <i>Fasting till noon</i>

# Srila Prabhupada Seva-Prarthanastakam

## “Eight Prayers Pleading for Srila Prabhupada’s Service

by Jaya Balarama Dasa

*yo megha-varna-purusam purusartha-data  
tat-drsti-sprsta-patitadhika-vipra-varyah  
svahlada-tyakta-guru-sevana-tapa-labdah  
sevam pradehi prabhupada nu kinkaro ‘smi*

*yah*—who; *megha-varna*—the color of a cloud; *purusam*—Person; *purusa-artha*—the goal of life for mankind; *data*—endower; *tat-drsti*—his glance; *sprsta*—touched; *patita*—fallen; *adhika*—more; *vipra-varyah*—the best of *brahmanas*; *sva-ahlada*—personal happiness; *tyakta*—abandoning; *guru-sevana*—the service of his guru; *tapa*—troubled; *labhah*—received; *sevam*—service; *pradehi*—please bestow; *prabhupada*—O Prabhupada; *nu*—truly; *kim-karah*—the servant (literally, what should I do?); *asmi*—I am.

He endowed humanity with the priceless goal of life, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose bodily hue resembles that of a lustrous monsoon cloud. The touch of his merciful glance elevates the most fallen to a platform superior to that of the most excellent *brahmana*. He abandoned his personal happiness of residing in Sri Vrindavana Dhama and accepted countless troubles to render service to his guru, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura.

O Prabhupada! Please bestow your service on me, for I am ready to accept your order.

*dharmasya roga-samanartha-bhavat-prasadat  
pascatyadesa-taranagata-vari-dutah  
acara-hina-saranah vyasanardra-ragah  
sevam pradehi prabhupada nu kinkaro ‘smi*

*dharmasya*—of spiritual practice; *roga*—disease; *samana*—curing; *artha*—for the purpose; *bhavat-prasadat*—by your mercy; *pascatyadesa*—western countries; *tarana*—delivering; *agata*—came; *vari-dutah*—he who boarded the ship Jaladuta; *acara-hina*—bereft of good behaviour; *saranah*—the refuge; *vyasana*—distressed; *ardra*—heart-melting; *ragah*—love.

He mercifully came to cure dharma, who had become diseased. Thus he boarded the steamship Jaladuta to deliver the Western countries. He became the shelter for those totally bereft of decent behaviour, his heart melting out of love for the souls in such distress. O Prabhupada! Please bestow your service on me, for I am ready to accept your order.

*sri-nama-jayu-parisevana-dhairya-karyah  
stri-suna-pana-dhana-vancana-jivadaryah  
gauranga-pada-kamalarpana-yoga-vakta  
sevam pradehi prabhupada nu kinkaro ‘smi*

*sri-nama*—the holy name; *jayu*—medicine; *parisevana*—distributing; *dhairya*—patience; *karyah*—duty; *stri*—loose women; *suna*—animal slaughter; *pana*—drinking intoxicants; *dhana-vancana*—gambling; *jivada*—physician; *aryah*—noble; *gauranga-pada*—the feet of Lord Gauranga; *kamala*—lotus; *arpana*—offering; *yoga*—union with the Supreme; *vakta*—preacher.

That noble person accepted the duty of a physician and forbearingly administered the medicine of the holy names of Krishna to those addicted to promiscuity, meat-eating, intoxication, and gambling. He preached the yoga of offering everything to the lotus feet of Lord Gauranga [Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu]. O Prabhupada! Please bestow your service on me, for I am ready to accept your order.

*tattvandha-loka-visayendriya-samvrtanam  
gitopadesa-pathanahnika-dipa-data  
diksanusiksa-japa-mantra-vidhana-dhata  
sevam pradehi prabhupada nu kinkaro ‘smi*

*tattva-andha*—blind to the truth; *loka*—people; *visaya*—sense objects; *indriya*—senses; *samvrtanam*—for those absorbed; *gita-upadesa*—instructions of the *Gita*; *pathana*—reading; *ahnika*—daily; *dipa-data*—giver of light; *diksa*—initiation; *anusiksa*—relevant instruction; *japa-mantra*—mantra meditation; *vidhana*—procedure; *dhata*—regulator.



For those blind to the truth, absorbed in the world of the senses and sense objects, he illumined their consciousness through the daily reading of Sri Krishna's instructions in the *Bhagavad-gita*. He gave initiation and instructions in the process of chanting the mahamantra and the Gayatri mantra. O Prabhupada! Please bestow your service on me, for I am ready to accept your order.

*pakaspade lavana-tiksna-rasadi-gandhaih  
dugdhan-na-vyanjana-phaladi-su-pakva-bharta  
ksiradi-rasa-rasanamrta-purna-dayi  
sevam pradehi prabhupada nu kinkaro 'smi*

*paka-aspade*—in the kitchen; *lavana*—salty; *tiksna*—pungent; *rasa*—flavors; *adi*—and so on; *gandhaih*—with the spices; *dugdha*—milk; *anna*—grains; *vyanjana*—vegetables; *phala*—fruits; *adi*—and so on; *su-pakva*—nicely cooked; *bharta*—master; *ksira*—sweet rice; *adi*—and so on; *rasa*—all tastes; *rasana*—tongue; *amrta*—nectar; *purna*—full; *dayi*—giver.

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In the kitchen he masterfully cooked grains, fruits, vegetables, milk products, and other ingredients, flavouring them with salt and spices such as chili. He thus served full plates of tasteful preparations, such as sweet rice, which were truly nectar for the tongue. O Prabhupada! Please bestow your service on me, for I am ready to accept your order.

*apanna-sasya-vitapi-sruti-sara-sastram  
bhasantarena bahu-desa-vibhakti-karta  
krishnasya hrt-vivaranam para-duhkha-duhkhi  
sevam pradehi prabhupada nu kinkaro 'smi*

*apanna*—ripe; *sasya*—fruit; *vitapi*—of the tree; *sruti-sara*—essence of the Vedas; *sastram*—scripture; *bhasa*—language; *antarena*—into another; *bahu-desa*—many countries; *vibhakti*—distribution; *karta*—doer; *krishnasya*—of Krishna; *hrt*—heart; *vivaranam*—uncovering; *para-duhkha-duhkhi*—one who feels sorrow because of the sorrow of others.

He translated *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, the ripe, juicy fruit of Vedic literature, and through his disciples he distributed it throughout the many countries of the earth. Thus he, whose only sorrow lies in seeing the sorrows of others, uncovered their hearts to reveal the presence of Krishna. O Prabhupada! Please bestow your service on me, for I am ready to accept your order.

*maya-vimudha-kali-bhanjana-deva-gata  
kalyana-drsti-purusottama-dana-patrah  
tivrena bhakty-abhilasena ku-desa-panthah  
sevam pradehi prabhupada nu kinkaro 'smi*

*maya*—the illusory energy; *vimudha*—bewildered; *kali*—quarrel personified; *bhanjana*—defeating; *deva*—the Lord; *gata*—the singer; *kalyana*—auspicious; *drsti*—glance; *purusa-uttama*—the best of persons, Lord Jagannatha; *dana-patrah*—recipient of charity; *tivrena*—by the intensity; *bhakti*—devotion; *abilasena*—by the desire; *ku-desa*—the degraded countries; *panthah*—traveller.

His singing of Krishna's glories illusioned the illusory energy and disrupted Kali's plans for disruption. By his earnest devotional hankering, he invoked the charitable glance of Lord Jagannatha, and thus the Lord also traveled to bless the degraded countries of the West. O Prabhupada! Please bestow your service on me, for I am ready to accept your order.

*ananda-sagara-rasayana-dhira-murte  
sri-radhika-madana-mohana-trpta-sphurte  
tat-pada-sisya-nayanatma-su-tusti-purte  
sevam pradehi prabhupada nu kinkaro 'smi*

*ananda-sagara*—the ocean of bliss; *rasayana*—elixir; *dhira*—sober; *murte*—form; *sri-radhika-madana-mohana-trpta*—having satisfied Sri Radhika and the bewilderer of Cupid; *sphurte*—brilliantly manifest; *tat-pada*—Their feet; *sisya*—disciples; *nayana*—leading; *atma*—self; *su-tusta*—well satisfied; *purte*—fulfilled.

O Prabhupada! Your form is filled with sobriety, yet you taste the elixir of the ocean of bliss. Your form is brilliantly manifest because you give pleasure to Sri Sri Radhika-Madana-Mohana [Radha-Krishna], and you are filled with satisfaction by leading your disciples to Their lotus feet. O Prabhupada! Please bestow your service on me, for I am ready to accept your order.

*murari-sevakanam hi  
satatam dautya-sevane  
krpayamasu namresu  
tava dhulih sadastu re*

*murari-sevakanam*—of the servants of Murari; *hi*—indeed; *satatam*—always; *dautya-sevane*—in serving your mission; *krpaya*—by your mercy; *amasu*—upon us; *namresu*—humble; *tava*—your; *dhulih*—dust; *sada*—always; *astu*—let it be; *re*—oh.

O Srila Prabhupada, kindly allow the dust of your lotus feet to perpetually fall upon us, who are the humble servants of Lord Murari [Krishna] and are forever engaged in assisting your mission.

*Jaya Balarama Dasa wrote these verses as an offering to Srila Prabhupada on behalf of ISKCON's Murari Sevaka farm community in Tennessee. ☪*

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# The Art of Reading Transcendental Literature

By Rohininandana Dasa

When Suta Gosvami spoke the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to the sages in the Naimisharanya forest, the atmosphere was so intensely respectful that even the birds ceased their songs. The sages didn't cough or shuffle their feet; they were enraptured. Lord Krishna Himself had appeared in the form of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

Those sages have long since crossed the great ocean of material illusion and happily returned home, back to Godhead, on the boat of transcendental sound. Although we stay here, apparently marooned, we can also take advantage of the boat. It still lies on our side, and the simple act of approaching this mystical boat reduces the material ocean to a puddle. As the sages crossed, so can we, by following in their footsteps, by hearing as they heard.

We'll find the boat of transcendental sound safely moored in the harbour of Srila Prabhupada's books. We can recognize this boat by its brilliance, which destroys the darkness of ignorance and doubt; by its beauty, which captivates the mind and heart; and by its breadth, for it easily encompasses the entire world in a small corner of its hold.

We cannot replicate the scene in the forest of Naimisharanya, but we can learn and perfect the art of reading Srila Prabhupada's books. We can read as he wrote, pondering each word.

Srila Prabhupada's books are transcendental sound. When he spoke into the dictaphone, Lord Krishna and the members of the disciplic succession spoke through him. That spiritual sound was then transformed into the printed word, which, when read and assimilated, can once again manifest the full potency of the original sound.

Nondevotees cannot unlock the code of spiritual words, for Lord Krishna, the Absolute Truth, reveals Himself to whomever He chooses. On the pretext of mere scholarship, we cannot force our way into the mysteries of Krishna. Yet even the least educated person with the right attitude can understand the highest philosophical truths.

The *Chaitanya-charitamrita* relates the story of a devotee in South India whose *guru* advised him to read the *Bhagavad-gita* every day. He would read at the local temple, and because he often made mistakes in reading and pronunciation, people made fun of him. But he didn't care. He felt happy as he attended to his *guru's* order. In fact, as he read, tears sometimes welled up in his eyes, and his body trembled in ecstatic emotion.

Lord Chaitanya once visited the devotee's village and saw him reading.

"Excuse Me, My dear sir," the Lord said, "How have you developed such ecstatic love? What portion of the *Bhagavad-gita* gives you so much bliss?"

The devotee shyly replied, "I am illiterate and therefore do not know the meaning of the words. Sometimes I read correctly and sometimes incorrectly, but in any case I just picture Lord Krishna as Arjuna's charioteer. When I think how the Supreme Lord so humbly serves His devotee, I cannot help but cry."

Lord Chaitanya declared, "You are the actual authority in reading *Bhagavad-gita*. Whatever you know constitutes its real meaning."

This fortunate, humble person had faith in his *guru's* words and the scripture. To have faith in the *Gita*, one must have faith in Krishna, the speaker of the *Gita*. In the Introduction to *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, Srila Prabhupada says that to understand the *Gita* one must at least theoretically accept Lord Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Unless we do, how can we take His statements seriously?

Taking the *Bhagavad-gita* seriously is like stepping outside into the full sunshine. As the sun does not need anything else to prove its existence, so the *Bhagavad-gita* is its own proof. For the doubtful there is enough logic and reason to help coax them out of the darkness of their houses of skepticism and ignorance.

## Some Practical Suggestions

To help us develop the necessary reverence toward the scriptures, we can keep our books in a special place. In Burma some temples place the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* on the altar as the main *murti*, or form of God. Imagine a



complete set of *Srimad-Bhagavatams* installed in your home! Once one of Srila Prabhupada's disciples asked if he and his wife could worship small Deities as they traveled and preached. Srila Prabhupada advised them to worship his books.

The books should not be put on the floor or the seat of a chair, or used as a resting place for other things. Sometimes devotees keep the book they are currently reading wrapped in a piece of fine cloth.

It's also a good idea to offer prayers before we begin reading. In our ISKCON temples, before reading the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* devotees chant *om namo bhagavate vasudevaya*: "O my Lord, O all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You." It's also good to have a prayerful attitude as we read. We can follow the example of Sanatana Gosvami, who prayed to Lord Chaitanya that whatever the Lord had taught him would be manifest in his heart.

The sages of Naimisharanya, the devotee Lord Chaitanya met, and Srila Prabhupada all had a service attitude as they heard, read, or wrote transcendental literature. When we read, let us remember that we are also Lord Krishna's servants.

When we read, it is important to remember that we are not alone. In a purport in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Srila Prabhupada thanks Narada Muni for kindly appearing on the pages of this great literature. In other words, when we read Srila Prabhupada's books we are directly associating with Srila Prabhupada, all the previous spiritual masters, and the Supreme Lord Himself.

As with chanting, it's best to read daily, either a certain number of pages or for a certain amount of time. We can make a thorough study, noting interesting or difficult passages, or we can simply read our way through, confident of our spiritual purification. If we are surrounded by our children, we can paraphrase and dramatize the stories.

Srila Prabhupada explains that besides reading, when we discuss spiritual topics with others we become even more enlivened and make rapid spiritual progress. He tells us that the way to assimilate the knowledge of the revealed scriptures is to hear and explain them. Giving this essential knowledge to others will help us understand it ourselves. And anyone who makes a gift of the knowledge of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* will surely attain the highest perfection of life by returning home, back to Godhead. 🙏

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## Saviour of Varuna

# Thenthiruperai Temple

by Sampatkumara Ramanuja Dasan (Adv. Ashwin.S)

Located along Thiruchendur-Thirunelveli route, is the beautiful temple for the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sriman Narayana, Makara Nedunkuzhaikathar of Thenthiruperai.

### The Pastime

The Vedic scriptures describe Varuna as the celestial deity associated with the sky, the sea and the truth. We learn about him through several scriptures. He is the demigod of the oceans, the protector deity of the Western direction and is ubiquitous. Varuna means “one who covers” in Sanskrit. We will examine Varuna’s pastimes, arsenal, and relevance with respect to this temple in this article. Varuna is one of the *ashtadikpalakas* or eight directional deities. He is Sage Kashyapa’s son. Aditi, who is akin to the earth goddess, is his mother.

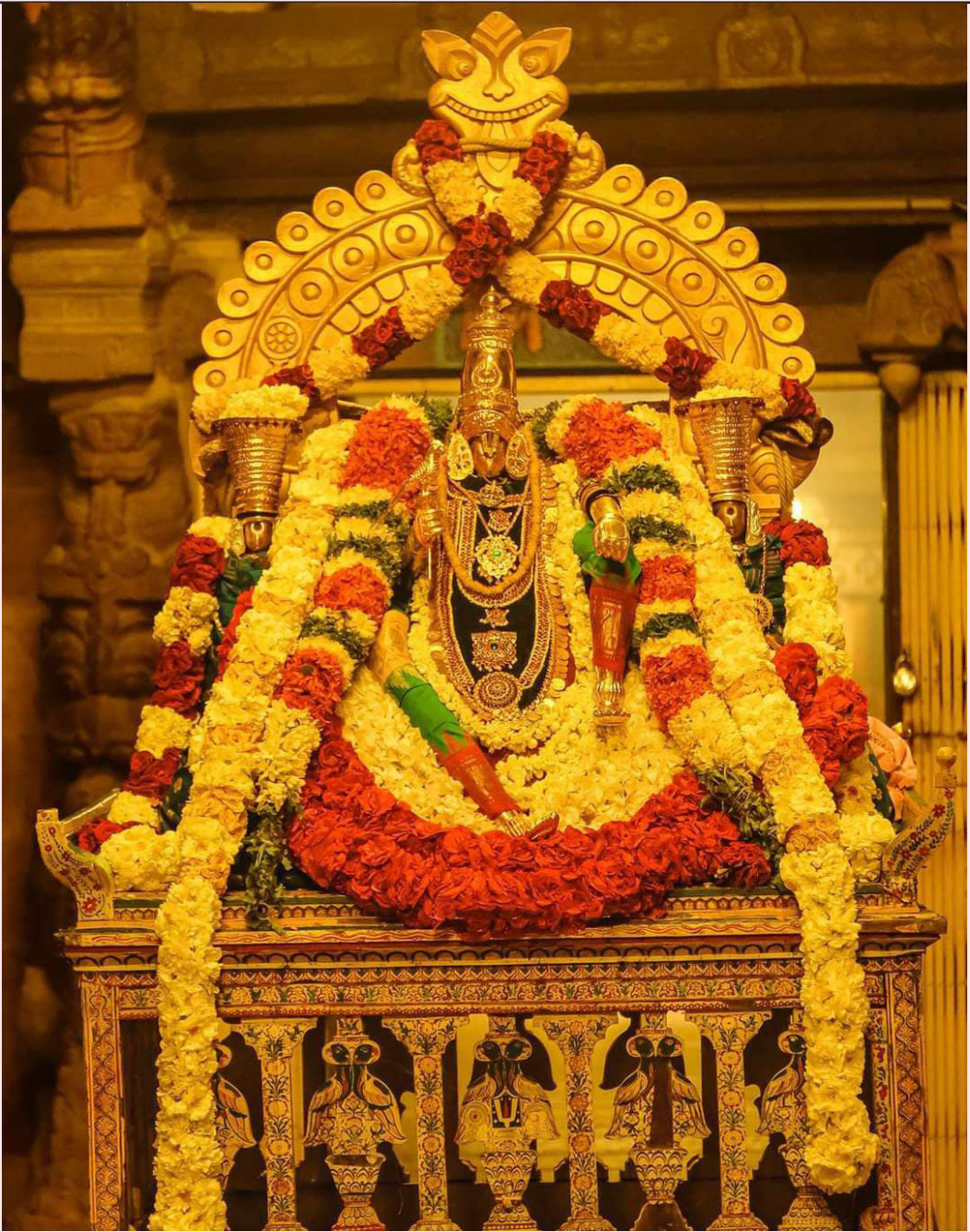
There is a pastime of Varuna in *Valmiki Ramayana*:

The mighty demon king Ravana had abducted Sita, the consort of Lord Ramachandra and the Lord was waiting on the sea shore of Rameshwaram, lost in thought. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Ramachandra glanced out over the ocean with sadness. Beautiful sunny weather pervaded the day as soft waves with white foam rolled onto the shore. Cormorants, herons, and pelicans gracefully stood on one foot or took lengthy strides through the shallows while they fished. Little empty white shells that were exceedingly delicate and fragile rolled up amid the waves onto the yellow sand.

Sri Ramachandra gazed out over the wide, vast ocean which appeared to be larger than one had ever seen, with no way to cross it. He looked across to the kingdom of Lanka (now Sri Lanka), which was thirty miles (fifty kilometres) away. It was Ravana, the demon-king of Lanka, who had kidnapped Rama’s beloved consort Sita Devi a few months before, while the Lord and His brother Lakshmana were away in the jungle and she was alone. Sita had been carried away in Ravana’s *pushpaka vimana* and was now being held hostage somewhere on the island of Lanka.



*Thenthiruperai Temple entrance*



*The Lord and His consort of the temple in simhasana vahanam*

It had taken Lord Sri Ramachandra a long time and a lot of work to find out where Sita was, who had kidnapped her, and then to go there with His brother Lakshmana by His side. As there was no way to cross over to Lanka, Sri Ramachandra fasted on the seashore for three days, appealing to Varuna to come and assist Him in finding a way to cross over to Lanka. The waves washed up on the shore, but Varuna did not respond. There was no reaction, only the never-ending, continuous sound of the waves lapping the shore.

On the fourth day, Sri Ramachandra, reacting to his misfortune and this most unjust impediment in his path, shouted out to Varuna, demanding that he come immediately. "Varuna! Varuna!" he called, over the sound of the waves. But Varuna was presumably not happy to be addressed in this manner, and he did not respond. Sri Ramachandra, enraged by the deafening quiet, took up His bow and began shooting arrows into the sea. Lord Sri Rama was no average hero, and these were not ordinary arrows. Years previously, His master, Vishwamitra, had taught Him the mysteries of heavenly weaponry, and now He unleashed weapons of supernatural potency. The marine animals began to perish, and the seas began to burn.

The army of monkeys that had aided Sri Ramachandra and accompanied Him on His search for Sita stood nearby, shocked and concerned at this display of anger against the sea and its innocent animals. His brother, Lakshmana,



begged him to halt this senseless slaughter.

Varuna emerged out of the waters just as Sri Rama was ready to unleash the cosmic force of the all-powerful weapon, the *brahmastra*, which might have annihilated all of existence. He bowed to Sri Rama who was, in fact, Sriman Narayana's *avatara*, and calmly stated that there was nothing to be worried about, that he would keep the waves still until a method for the Lord's soldiers to cross the sea was found and until they had finished their passage.

Then, as he had done time and again throughout the lengthy voyage, Hanuman, Lord Sri Ramachandra's ever faithful and loyal servitor, devised a solution. He assured the Lord that there was nothing to be concerned about. Yes, the ocean was vast, but the army of monkeys would construct a bridge connecting Rameshwaram and Lanka. The problem would be simple to fix. The *vanara* (monkey) army got to work, and after a while, the bridge (which still remains today) stretched all the way from Rameshwaram to Lanka, allowing Lord Sri Ramachandra to cross, with His army of *vanaras* and bears.

### Weapons used by Varuna

Varuna always carries a noose, which he employs to tie sinners and those who have lied or acted against their word. Varuna rides a chariot drawn by seven swans. He also holds a lotus, conch, jewel vase, and noose in his hands. Varuna is seen riding a Makara or a sea monster in various depictions.

In a battle between the *devas* and *asuras*, Varuna lost his weapon and submitted to his master, Brihaspathi, whom he had previously shown contempt for. Brihaspathi pardoned Varuna and urged him to worship Makarabhusanar and Sriperai at Thiruperai in order to be absolved of the transgression. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Sriman Narayana blessed



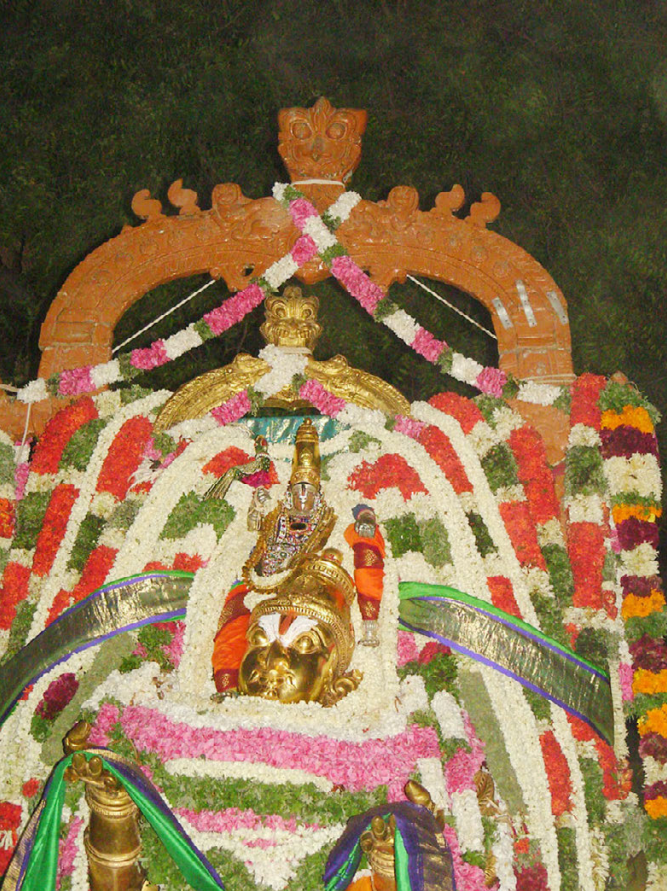
*The gem studded armour is offered to the Lord on festival occasions*

Varuna with a palmful of water, which became his sword.

A subsequent account confirms the tradition that by making a full prayer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sriman Narayana in this temple, great hunger and a lack of water might be alleviated. When the king of Vidarbha adopted this move at the urging of his minister, his nation had been suffering from severe water scarcity for almost twelve years. Dismal mists swarmed, downpours fell, putting an end to the starving. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Sriman Narayana was euphorically dubbed 'Nikaril Mukilvannan,' which translates as the excellent Sriman Narayana of black mists. Sukran (Venus), the planet in charge of water, revered the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sriman Narayana in the same way as Varuna had. As proof of this, it is said that Varuna visits this temple on the full moon day in the month of Panguni and worships Vishnu and it rains on this day every year without fail in this temple.



*Mahalakshmi Thayar in this temple*



*Thenthiruperai Perumal in Garuda seva*



*The Mohini alankara of the Lord*

This interesting pastime of the temple demonstrates the truth about the disagreement between and Sridevi, Srīman Narayana's two consorts. When the Supreme Personality of Godhead Srīman Narayana was charmed by Bhoodevi, He focused all of His energies on Her, slightly ignoring Sridevi. The disturbed Sridevi bemoaned Her desolate plight to Sage Durvasa, pleading with him to grant Her the splendour and beauty of Bhoodevi. The sage proceeded to Bhoodevi's home, but She was lost in thoughts and failed to receive him.

The chafed sage cursed Her. Bhoodevi begged pardon and demanded a remedy. According to the sage's advice, Bhoodevi conducted Her *tapas* while reciting the Ashtakshara mantra in this temple, intending the term 'Sriperai' to mean 'the group of Lakshmi.' When She was making Her prayers after the rain on a full moon day in the month of Panguni, She unearthed a couple of fish-shaped earrings and presented them to Srīman Narayana who appeared Himself. The Lord then took the name 'Makarantun Kuzhaikkaadar' meaning the one who wears Makara Kundala and opted to reside over there at Bhoodevi's request. Since Bhoodevi or Sriperai made Her *tapas* at this location, it became known as Thirupperai. Because there is another *divya kshetram* nearby, Thirupernagar, this city was dubbed Thenthirupperai.

### **The Temple**

The temple is located on the banks of the Thamiraparani river, on the Thiruchendur-Thirunelveli road. The temple is built in the Dravidian architectural style. Its shrines are all housed behind rectangular granite walls pierced by a three-tiered *gopuram*. The presiding Deity is seen standing, with Sridevi and Bhoodevi on either side. Inside the main sanctum sanctorum are the main Deities of Bhoodevi and Sridevi, as well as the festival Deities.

### **Festivals**

Annual Brahmotsavam is celebrated along with the nine Garuda sevas.

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

*O ladies, how shall I explain this? Alas, you do not see the way my heart sees. My lotus Lord with discus and conch is riding away on His Garuda. He is there in Thirupperai, where Vedic chants and festival sounds and sounds of children playing merrily never subside, so thither shall I go.*

*O Sakhis of fragrant tresses, O ladies, O people of the neighbourhood! I cannot stop this galloping heart, it is not in my bridle, alas! Night and day it runs after the coral-lipped Lord of celestials, Krishna, who sits amid honey-dripping groves in Thirupperai, surrounded by cool fertile fields.*

O Friends, my heart has lost its shame and reserve to the Lord who sits in Thirupperai, where festivals continue for days and months. How can I forget His fall radiant crown, conch and discus, and the lotus eyes and coral-lips that I have enjoyed so long?

O Ladies, why blame me? Lost in the boom of His wonderful conch, I bade my heart, "Go retrieve my lost lustre from the Lord in Thirupperai, where He sits amid Vedic chants that rise like the ocean eternally." Alas! My heart too remained there; now whose help have I?

I lost my femininity to my Krishna who smote a devil-cart, drank the ogress breasts, went between dense Marudu trees, and threw a calf against the wood-apple tree. Ladies, come forward, quick! No use blaming me now; show me the way to Thirupperai of fruit-laden groves.

Save time and take me there, my love swells like the ocean! My cloud-hued Lord appears before me, but is not within my grasp. He sits on earth in Thirupperai, amid large water tanks, whisked by fertile ears of paddy, with endless Vedic chants.

Longingly, O Sakhis, my heart enters Thirupperai where the Lord resides. He destroyed the walled city of Lanka girdled by the ocean. Alas! I do not see my heart return, now whose company have I? None to call Him back either; whose help have I, alas! I see only what my heart sees.

O Sakhis! For the very reason that you all gather and join hands with my Lord in heaping blame over me, my love grows. If I were to tell you how, it would exceed the Earth and sky. I must go then to my Lord and join him in Thirupperai lapped by waters.



The festival Deity is one of the oldest Deities of our country



The painting depiction of the main shrine

My Sakhis! I must go. O ladies, pray do not stop me, of what use is this? I have no contentment of heart anymore. My Lord of dark ocean-hue, the Lord who swallowed the Earth and ocean, resides in Thirupperai, surrounded by fertile fields.

O Sakhis! I will search town and country, I have no shame. The Lord in Thirupperai is surrounded by mountain-like jewelled mansions. He is Makara-Nedun-Kulai-Kadan, the Lord wearing Makara earrings. He is the discus Lord who killed the hundred Kauravas; how long ago He stole my heart!

Those who master this song of the thousand songs by Kurugur Satakopan, on the Lord of Thirupperai who takes many forms and names through countless ages every time to protect the world will secure the golden feet of the discus Lord. 🌸

Photo courtesy: Santhanakrishnan, Srirangam

# VEDIC THOUGHTS

*The Vedic statements are self-evident. Whatever is stated there must be accepted. If we interpret according to our own imagination, the authority of the Vedas is lost.*

*Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu  
Sri Chaitanya-charitamrita, Madhya-lila 6.137*

*To prepare oneself for the next life is common sense, and it is a principle of the Vedic civilization, but presently people throughout the world do not believe in a next life. Even influential professors and other educators say that as soon as the body is finished, everything is finished. This atheistic philosophy is killing human civilization.*

*His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada  
Chaitanya-charitamrita, Adi-lila 9.43, purport*

*Just as a deer, because of ignorance, cannot see the water within a well covered by grass, but runs after water elsewhere, the living entity covered by the material body does not see the happiness within himself, but runs after happiness in the material world.*

*An unnamed brahmana  
Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.13.29*

*The ideal place to execute Krishna consciousness is Vrajabhumi, or Vrindavana, where the people are naturally inclined to love Krishna and Krishna is naturally inclined to love them.*

*Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami  
Sri Chaitanya-charitamrita, Madhya-lila 4.95*

*What relish can there be for material enjoyment when we are exposed to hunger, thirst, disease, decrepitude, emaciation, growth, decline, and death. The universe is tending to decay; grass, trees, animals spring up and die. Mighty men are gone, leaving their joys and glories. Beings still greater than these have passed away. Vast oceans have dried, mountains have been thrown down, the polar star displaced, the cords that bind planets rent asunder, the whole earth deluged with flood. In such a world, what relish can there be in fleeting enjoyments? Living in such a world, are we not like frogs jumping in a dried-up well?*

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura  
Immanent and Transcendent (The Scorpion and the Fire)*

*The great personality Brahma, with great attention and concentration of mind, studied the Vedas three times, and after scrutinizingly examining them, he ascertained that attraction for the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Krishna is the highest perfection of religion.*

*Sukadeva Goswami  
Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.2.34*

*For a person who has suitable shoes on his feet, there is no danger even when he walks on pebbles and thorns. For him, everything is auspicious. Similarly, for one who is always self-satisfied there is no distress; indeed, he feels happiness everywhere.*

*Narada Muni  
Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.15.17*



# Sri Radhashtami

Srila Prabhupada's  
**ISKCON**  
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*Abhisheka (above) and arati (below)*





# Sri Radhashtami

Srila Prabhupada's  
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*Pallakki utsava (above) and special offering of 108 cakes to Srimati Radharani (below)*





# Sri Radhashtami

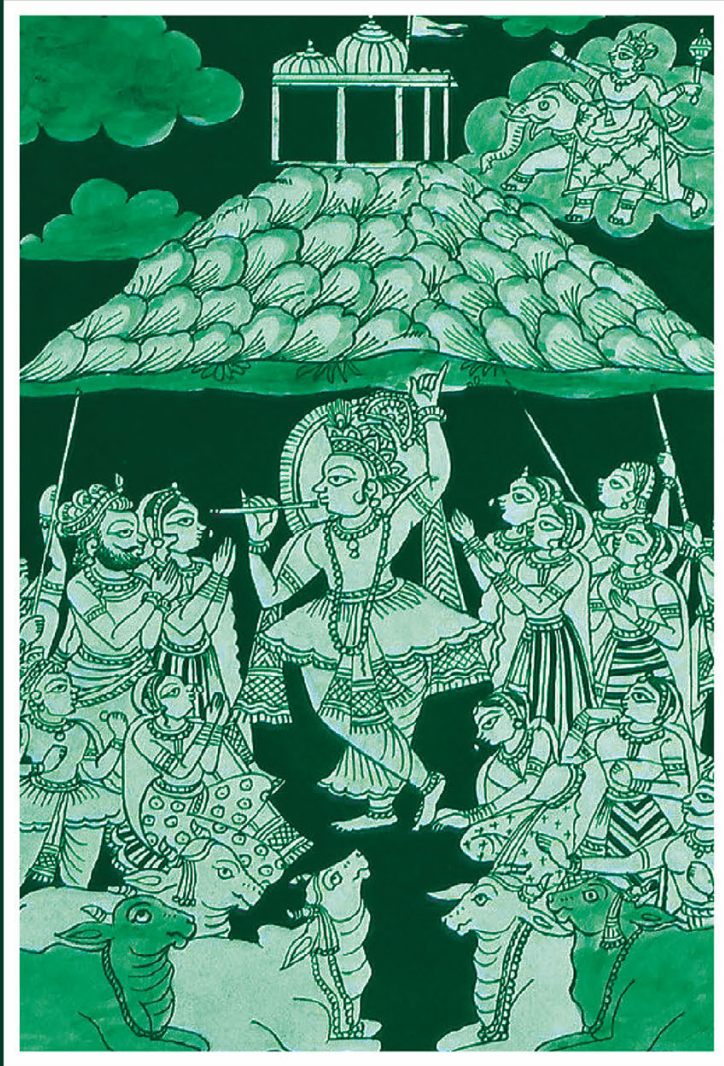
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Vaikuntha Hill: *Abhisheka (above) and arati (below)*



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