

KRISHNA VOICE

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Sri Vaikuntha Ekadashi 2023

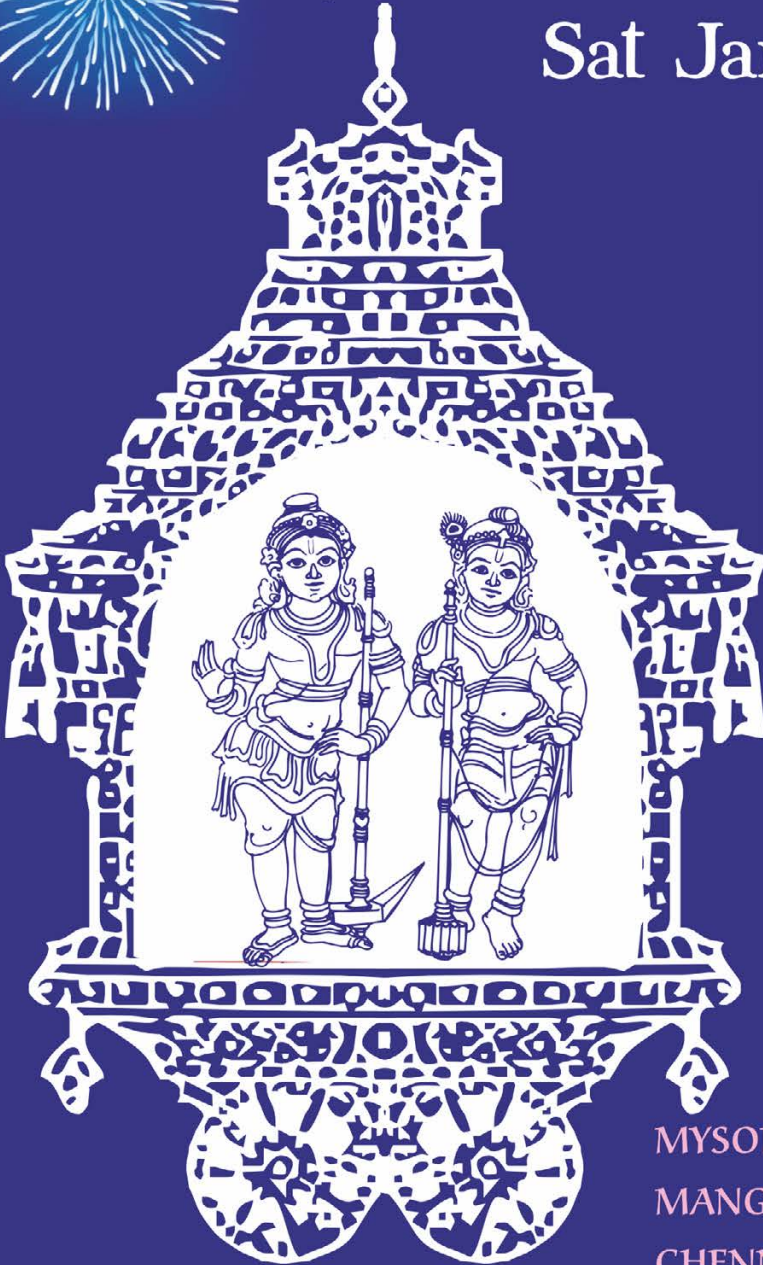


ISKCON
SRI SRI KRISHNA BALARAMA

RATHA YATRA

BANGALORE

Sat January 27 - 2024
5 pm



rathe ca vamanam
drstva punar janma
na vidyate

Simply by seeing the Lord on
the chariot, one makes
advancement for stopping the
repetition of birth and death.

MYSORE Sat, January 06

MANGALORE Sat, February 10

CHENNAI Sat, February 24

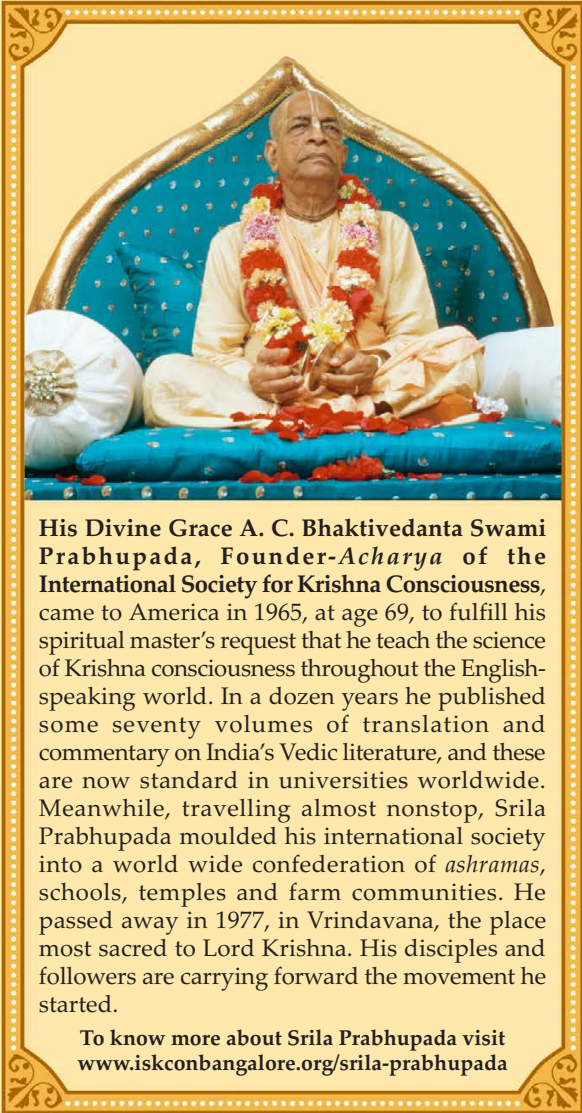
HUBLI Tentatively June / July along
with temple inauguration

KRISHNA VOICE



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

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

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Life Without Meaningless Work

What's wrong with working hard for success?

A lecture given in Vrindavana, India, on November 3, 1976

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

*putrams ca sisyaṃ ca nrpo gurur va
mal-loka-kamo mad-anugraharthah
ittham vimanyur anusisyad ataj-jnan
na yojayet karmasu karma-mudhan
kam yojayan manujo 'rtham labheta
nipatayan nasta-drsam hi garte*

Translation: If one is serious about going back home, back to Godhead, then he must consider the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead the summum bonum and chief aim of life. If he is a father instructing his sons, a spiritual master instructing his disciples, or a king instructing his citizens, he must instruct them as I have advised. Without being angry, he should continue giving instructions, even if his disciple, son, or citizen is sometimes unable to follow his order. Ignorant people who engage in pious and impious activities should be engaged in devotional service by all means. They should always avoid fruitive activity. If one puts into the bondage of karmic activity his disciple, son, or citizen who is bereft of transcendental vision, how will one profit? It is like leading a blind man to a dark well and causing him to fall in."

—Srimad-Bhagavatam 5.5.15

Two kinds of ruler or controller are mentioned here: the government and the spiritual master. As the government controls the citizens, the spiritual master controls the disciples, but the disciples obey the order of the spiritual master out of love. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* speaks of this kind of obedience when describing the *brahmachari*, or celibate student living in the ashrama of the guru. *Brahmachari guru-kule vasan danto guror hitam*. Whatever the guru wants, the *brahmachari* has to do. The disciple acts for the guru's benefit, as shown by the example of Arjuna in accepting Krishna as his guru. *sisyas te 'ham sadhi mam tvam prapannam*: "Now I am Your disciple and a soul surrendered unto You."

For his personal benefit, Arjuna did not want to fight, but for Krishna's benefit, he fought. This is the example shown by Arjuna. When considering his own benefit, he did not want to kill his kinsmen: "Oh, if I kill my kinsmen I'll go to hell. I'll be responsible for so much trouble for others." He put forward many arguments when he was considering his benefit and not Krishna's. But Krishna wanted the fight, and Arjuna agreed, "I'll no longer act for my benefit; I'll act for Your benefit." That is the desirable mentality: *guror-hitam*, "for the benefit of the guru."

Why should the guru order, and why should one accept the order? That is stated here. *Mal-loka-kamo mad-anugraharthah*: "If one is serious about going back home, back to Godhead, he must consider the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead the summum bonum and chief aim of life." This is the ideal life. One should seek the benediction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna. By pleasing Krishna, one returns to Krishna's abode.

Now we are suffering in the material world. That is described in every book of Vedic knowledge. *Bhagavad-gita* states, *aprapya mam nivartante mrtyu-samsara-vartmani*. Persons who don't attain Krishna remain suffering in this material world of birth and death.

The aim of life is to go back home, back to Godhead. But people do not know the aim of life or why they are suffering. They have become so animalistic they cannot understand they are suffering. Their brains have become so dull.

In this world we are always suffering. Take, for example, this fan. We don't require it now, so if we run it, it will cause us to suffer. But in the summer it is required. It is pleasing, and we suffer without it. That means that either in summer or in winter we are always suffering.

Another example: The same water is pleasing during summer but the cause of suffering during winter. As long as we have this body we must suffer. That is the truth. We are getting different types of body, each body for a short period. The body will not last forever. But as long as it lasts, it will cause suffering. That we do not understand.



We can end our suffering only by surrendering to Krishna. Suffering is inflicted by *maya*, Krishna's illusory energy. But people are so dull they cannot understand that they are suffering. They accept suffering as enjoyment. In this way they are rotting in the material world. The aim of life is to stop suffering. The guru or the government should rule dependents with this aim in view.

Two Goals

Two things are required: to get the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and to go back home, back to Godhead. Unless we go back home, back to Godhead, there is no question of peace or happiness. We are trying to be happy within the material world by material adjustment. But happiness is not possible in that way.

Because we are giving this information, people accuse us of brainwashing. We are not brainwashing; we are clearing the brain. But nowadays people have become such rascals that they say, "There is no God. This is all mythology." Even prominent *sannyasis* say, "Don't concern yourself with talk of God and sin and piety. You can do whatever you like, because you are yourself God." But that is not the fact.

The spiritual master and the government are both controllers. The citizen is also considered *shishya*, "disciple" or "one who is controlled." The rules and regulations of the government and the spiritual master should be such that the dependent, either the disciple or the citizen, must know that material life is not real life. Real life is in the spiritual world. The material world is an illusion, a mirage. We are searching for happiness here, but Krishna says, "No, there is no happiness here."

Krishna personally instructs us, "If you don't want to continue suffering, then come to Me."

A person who understands this instruction is called a mahatma, a great soul. A person trying to be happy in the material world is a *duratma*, a rascal. Rascals do not know there is no happiness here. There cannot be any happiness, however expert you may be. If you are thrown into the middle of the ocean, you may be an expert swimmer, but you will not be happy.

Our situation in the material world is a struggle for existence. That understanding should come to our brain. That is not brainwashing; it is brain-clearing. If you want to end suffering, you must wash your brain or heart.

The government or the spiritual master should not give big programs for material happiness. There are always planning commissions by the government. Why? To engage people to work very hard.

Checking Anger

When you rule, there may be some disobedience on the part of your subordinates. Therefore it is the duty of the spiritual master not to be angry if the disciples or followers are fools. Sometimes they commit mistakes; they do not obey. But the ruler—the spiritual master, the government—has to tolerate.

People have a natural tendency to work and get some benefit. They plan, "I shall become a very rich man. I shall own so many houses, so much property, so much land." Why are such people so busy? They do not know that they cannot improve their economic position simply by working hard. That is not possible. Otherwise, everyone would become rich. In big cities like Calcutta, Bombay, London, New York, everyone is working very hard. But do you think everyone is in the same position? No. That is not possible, because of destiny. One man works hard day and night and simply gets two pieces of bread, that's all. We have seen in Bombay that people are living in such rotten conditions that even in the daytime they have to use a kerosene lamp. Does everyone in Bombay live luxuriously? No. And the same is true for every city.

You cannot improve your economic position simply by working hard. That is not possible. Whether you work hard or you don't work, whatever is destined to you you'll get. Therefore our energy should be used to please Krishna. We should not waste our energy on the false hope that "I shall become happy. I shall do this. I shall do that. I shall make money like this ..."

The story of the potter illustrates this point. A potter had a few pots, so he was planning, "Now I have these pots, and I will sell them and make some profit. Then I'll get ten pots, sell them, and make more profit. Then I'll get twenty pots, thirty pots, forty pots ... In this way I shall become a millionaire. Then I shall marry, and I shall control my wife. And if she is disobedient, then I shall put my foot down." Absorbed in thought, he accidentally kicked the pots, and all the pots broke. His dream was gone.

Similarly, with a few pots we are simply dreaming, "These pots will increase to more pots, more pots, more pots," then finished. Don't make imaginary plans in this way. The spiritual master and the government should be careful that people don't make imaginary plans to become happy.

This world is *karma-jagat*, the place where everyone is engaged in fruitive work. So what is the use of teaching them in that direction? Take, for example, sex life. Sex is natural. People do not require a university education to enjoy sex. There is a Bengali saying: "No one needs to be taught how to cry, laugh, or enjoy sex." These things are natural; they don't require any education.

Now leaders make big plans to teach people how to work hard. This is a waste of life. Educational institutions should be for teaching people how to become Krishna conscious, not to become this or that. That is a waste of time, because that programme will never be successful.

Therefore Vedic civilization teaches people to be satisfied in their own position as a *brahmana*, *kshatriya*, *vaishya*, or *shudra*. Whatever by God's grace one has, one is satisfied. One's energy is used to become eligible to receive the mercy of Krishna. That is wanted—to learn how to surrender to Krishna.

The great sages wrote many books, but they lived in cottages. Only the kings, because they had to rule, constructed big palaces. Everyone else lived very simply. They did not waste time in so-called economic development and building skyscrapers, subways, and so on. That is not Vedic civilization. This is asuric—demonic—civilization.

People are inclined to *karma-sukha*, the so-called happiness of karmic activity. So it is difficult to convince them that this is not needed. Real life is to become Krishna conscious, and for that purpose one should undergo austerities. You have to purify your existence. You are suffering. You are not meant for birth and death. You are undergoing birth and death and do not know what kind of life you are going to get next. You have no information. Today you may be a very big man, and tomorrow you may be a dog.

These things are going on, but people do not know. They simply work, making plans to be happy. But obtaining happiness through karmic work is not possible. Therefore in this verse the leaders are forbidden to engage people in karmic work. *Na yojayet karmasu karma-mudhan*. The leaders should engage people in acquiring Krishna's favour. If they teach them like that, Krishna will be very pleased.

Here it is said, *mal-loka-kamah*: "the desire to go to My abode." How can one go to Krishnaloka or Vaikuntaloka? Very easy. Krishna says, *man-mana bhava mad-bhakto mad-yaji mam namaskuru*: "Do these four things: Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me, and offer obeisances to Me, and without any doubt you'll come to Me."

Why do people not accept this proposal by Krishna? We have not manufactured this proposal. We are not brain-washing. These are Krishna's words. If you simply do four things—think of Krishna, become His devotee, worship Him, and offer Him obeisances—Krishna will be pleased, and you'll go to Him, without a doubt. So don't waste your time making big material plans.

There is a Bengali proverb:

Big, big monkey—big, big belly
Ceylon jumping—melancholy

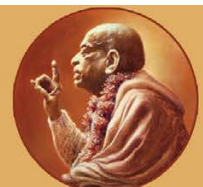
There were many monkeys, and one of them—chanting "Jaya Rama!" ["Glories to Lord Ramachandra!"]—jumped over the Indian Ocean. The others could only hang their heads.

So our plan is to chant "Jaya Rama!" and jump over the material world to the spiritual world. That is required, not working hard to improve our material condition. That will never be possible. *Tasyaiva hetoh prayateta kovido na labhyate yad bhramatam upary adhah*. You cannot get happiness within the material world. *Upary* means up to the higher planetary system, and *adhah* means down to the lower planetary system. We are wandering like this: sometimes up to Svargaloka, sometimes down to Patalaloka, sometimes in heaven, sometimes in hell.

So take the seed of *bhakti* by the mercy of guru, by the mercy of Krishna, and make your life successful. Don't engage yourself in material fruitive activities to improve your material condition. That will never be successful.

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



Become A Rascal And Suffer

An exchange between His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and some of his disciples that took place on October 18, 1975, during a morning walk in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Srila Prabhupada: In the Vedic system, sex is allowed only for begetting children. In other words, restriction. Sex is allowed, but with great restriction—under religious rules and regulations.

There are so many things, such as the *garbhadana*, or seed-giving, ceremony. Even when sex is employed properly, for begetting a child, it is not undertaken secretly, without anyone else's knowledge. There should be a ceremonial function, *garbhadana-samskara*. All the *brahmanas* and relatives come, and everyone knows, "Some time soon, this man is going to have sex for begetting a child." So there is a dignified heralding. Not that sexual activity is simply done in the heat of the moment, like cats and dogs.

Actually, even cats and dogs do not have sex secretly. Human beings do it secretly and use contraceptives, because they do not want the botheration of having a child. Therefore, their "scientific advancement" especially means how to kill the child: how to take and distribute contraceptive pills, how to arrange for abortions, and how to allow the young people, "Yes, you go on having sex, but take these pills so that you may not be bothered."

Why not stop all the botheration of sex altogether? That they cannot do, because they are animals. Because they have created an animal civilization, they cannot escape all this botheration. *Kandutivan manisijam visa-heta dhirah*. Why don't they teach people to become *dhirah*, sober? "Let me tolerate this itching sensation [the urge for sex]. Let me remain *brahmachari* [celibate], remain on the spiritual platform."



Their teaching is not good: "You should have sex repeatedly"—and then suffer the consequences. And in trying to avoid suffering the consequences, people incur more suffering. *Bahu-duhkha bhajah*: after sex—illicit or licit—the consequence is suffering. Even when the sex is licit, then you still have to take care of your wife, and you also have to take care of the children, and be always in anxiety about their food and clothing, their education, their upliftment, and so on and so forth. Always undergoing suffering.

And if the sex is illicit, then you have to undergo these sufferings: Because you commit the sin of killing the child by contraceptives or abortion, therefore in your next life you must be killed. And in the meantime you have to go to the doctor and pay his exorbitant fees, and so on. So where is the relief from suffering? Whether illicit or licit, sex means you have to suffer.

But *trpyanti neha krpana bahu-duhkha bhajah*. These rascals, once they have had sex, they cannot be done with it: "That's all right. I have already got one child to take care of." No. "I must have sex again and again." You would think that once someone had committed sinful activities such as killing the child in the womb, then he would say, "All right. Stop it now." No. "Again."

Trpyanti neha krpana: such a miserly person is never satisfied. He knows that following his sinful activity there will be suffering. Still, he'll not stop this sinfulness.

Therefore, a man should be educated to become sober: "Let me tolerate this itching. That's all. I'll save so much trouble." This is knowledge. To become a rascal and then more and more of a rascal and then suffer—is that civilization? Does civilization mean simply making people rascals, so that they can suffer and commit spiritual suicide?

Just tell people that they have created this civilization of "Become a rascal and then suffer." And all their sufferings are nature's arrangement. Nature says, "You have forgotten Krishna. Now you must come under my control. You've become a rascal. Now suffer." *Daivi hy esa guna mayi mama maya duratyaya*. Krishna says, "My material nature is very severe, very punishing." Why is she doing that? She is teaching us, "Surrender to Krishna. Otherwise, you will go on suffering like this." This is nature's way.

But the rascal—because he is a rascal—does not know that *prakrteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani*: "I am under the full control of *prakriti*, material nature, and her business is to keep me a rascal and make me suffer." And yet these rascals are thinking themselves advanced in education.

Disciple: Prabhupada, they will say that this suffering is actually pleasure.

Srila Prabhupada: That's all right. Go on with your

"pleasure." Who is stopping you? Enjoy this "pleasure." But if everything in this material world is made for your unrestricted pleasure, then why are you taking up a countermeasure? Why do you make a plan to kill the child? Because everything is pleasure? Why do you take up the contraceptive method—if the real arrangement here is not for punishment and spiritual correction but for your sensual pleasure?

That is the proof of what rascals they are. *Mudha nabhijanati*: Krishna says, "Rascals can never understand what is what." Try to understand why Krishna has said so many times, *mudhah ... mayayapahrta-jnana*: "These people are rascals, whose so-called knowledge is stolen by illusion." Krishna, the Supreme Lord, is speaking like that, so there must be some meaning.

Human civilization means giving spiritual relief. Enlightened life, comfortable life—not simply repeating the dark, sensual ordeal of the animals. That is human civilization.

Disciple: Srila Prabhupada, in everyday life we see that only the devotees are somewhat free from anxiety.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. That's a fact. We have little anxieties, simply because we have to deal with this rascal world. Otherwise, we have no anxiety. But we have taken this mission, to go and approach people and tell them the truth. Therefore, we have got a little anxiety. Otherwise, there is no question of anxiety.

Because we are mixing with these rascals—and we have to do that, we who have taken up this mission—therefore, we have some little anxiety. That is also not very much. But anyway, you must know, the whole world is full of rascals and fools. That is not an exaggeration. Or have you got a different opinion?

Disciple: No.

Srila Prabhupada: Hm? What do you think? Do you agree?

Disciple: They are *mudhas* [fools].

Srila Prabhupada [*laughing*]: Our verdict is final: "All rascals and fools." Therefore, when I ask these rascals, "Any question?" they are stopped. [*Laughter.*] "Come on—any question?" What question can they ask? I challenge them, "Any question?" They know, "We have been proved rascals."

During my lecture last night I quoted Krishna's chastisement of Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-gita*. *Asocyan anvasocas tvam prajna-vadams*: "Your words are very high-sounding, but do you know what you are doing? Talking like a low-class fool. Overlooking your inner soul, your real, spiritual self. Stupidly taking yourself to be this outer covering, this material body. But this material body is the very cause of all your suffering." And I said, "This is the position of everyone. Everyone is a fool, a rascal, ignoring life's actual problem." 🙏

I Have Found the Future of Vaishnavism

The Story of Rashikananda Prabhu

by Satyaraja Dasa

Rashika Murari Patnaik, also known as Rashikananda Prabhu, was born in 1590, fifty-six years after Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had ended His earthly pastimes. Rashikananda was born into a powerful *zamindar* (landowner) family in Royni, on the Suvarnarekha River in what is now the Medinipur district of southwest Bengal. This was a glorious time in the history of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, the disciplic succession of devotees of Lord Krishna in the line of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu: The six Gosvamis of Vrindavana had built a veritable storehouse of Sanskrit literature, in the form of poetry, history, aesthetics, and philosophy, unlike any the world has ever seen.

At this time, too, Jiva Gosvami had established a large Vaishnava community in Vrindavana and had sent his three best disciples—Narottama Dasa Thakura, Srinivasa Acharya, and Shyamananda Prabhu—throughout northern India to spread the Gosvamis' teachings. While on this noble mission, Shyamananda met eighteen-year-old Rashika Murari and initiated him into Krishna consciousness, giving him the name Rashikananda. The Gosvamis' teachings touched the heart of this pious young landowner, who gave his life to Krishna the moment he met his illustrious guru.

The meeting of Shyamananda and the youthful Rashikananda is retold in Gopijanavallabha's *Rashika Mangala*, a standard seventeenth-century text about the life of Rashikananda. Basically, Shyamananda and Rashikananda saw each other and recognized a connection that transcended time itself.

Rashika ran up to his future guru and fell flat at his feet, saying, "You are my eternal saviour, and Krishna has finally sent you to redeem me."

Shyamananda Prabhu smiled with great pleasure. "I have found the future of Vaishnavism!"

Rashikananda, like his guru, was a married man, and so his wife, Iccha Devi, also took initiation from Shyamananda Prabhu, receiving the name Shyama Dasi. *(Narahari Chakravarti's *Bhakti-ratnakara* gives evidence that Shyama Dasi was as important to the mission in Medinipur as her illustrious husband. She may have been the first Bengali woman to write religious verse in the vernacular.) Shyamananda told them to always chant the *maha-mantra*: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Soon after Shyama Dasi's initiation, the couple left Royni for nearby Kashipur, a popular city with a large influx of wealthy people. Sometime later, Shyamananda visited his two disciples in Kashipur and brought a beautiful Deity of Krishna for them: Gopijanavallabha.

Seeing how much his disciples loved their newly installed Deity, Shyamananda renamed the city Gopiballabhpur ("Gopivallabha's town") and blessed all of the townspeople to develop the same love for the Deity that Rashikananda and his wife had. He asked Rashikananda to spread Krishna consciousness vigorously and made Shyama Dasi head priest of the temple.

Shyamananda then left, but he had planted a seed. Rashikananda thrived, building an unparalleled organization for spreading Krishna consciousness. He and his wife worked as a team, and together they are said to have brought hundreds of thousands of pious people to the teachings of Lord Krishna.

Shyamanandi Vaishnavas

According to historian Ramakanta Chakravarti, "Rashik Murari was perhaps more successful in converting people into Vaishnavism than any other Vaishnava leader of his time." His enthusiasm was so pronounced that by the time of his passing away, the region of Medinipur had developed a distinct sect of Vaishnavas in the mood of Shyamananda, his guru. These "Shyamanandi Vaishnavas," as they came to be called, developed their own style of dress, cooking, *tilaka* markings, *(The clay markings devotees wear on their bodies to remind themselves and others that the body is the temple of the Lord.) and temple construction. Rashikananda popularized Vaishnavism to the point of creating an entire subculture based on its principles.

With Gopiballabhpur as the seat of Shyamanandi Vaishnavism, Rashikananda spent forty years helping people



*Sri Sri Radha-Govinda, Gopiballabhpur, West Bengal.
(Gopivallabha, the original temple Deity, also resides in the temple)*

see the good sense of Krishna consciousness. He made disciples among great kings and impious rogues, among the *brahmanas* and lowborn *shudras*. He completely ignored caste and outer qualifications (or disqualifications) and gave everyone a taste for Vaishnavism.

The classic histories of the period, such as *Shyamananda Prakasha* and *Rashika Mangala*, tell how he and his wife, with the help of influential disciples, put an end to animal sacrifice in non-Vaishnava areas and convinced people throughout Orissa and its bordering villages of the validity of Mahaprabhu's message. With his knowledge, purity, and charisma, he engaged Muslims, Buddhists, and various sects of Hindus in the service of Krishna.

Late in his life Rashikananda wrote a Sanskrit epic about the life of the person who had taught him all he knew. It was called *Shyamananda Shatakam*, and it remains the most authoritative work on Shyamananda's life. Radhananda, Rashikananda's eldest son, who inherited the Gopivallabha temple (from his mother), wrote a famous book called *Radha-Govinda Kavya*, a beautiful devotional poem modeled after Jayadeva's *Gita-govinda*. His eldest son was Nayananda, who, although like his grandfather an enthusiastic teacher, left no literary work for posterity.

Toward the end of his life, Rashikananda settled in Remuna, Orissa, where he was fascinated by the Deity of Gopinatha (Krishna). It is said that he would spend day and night just gazing at the beautiful Deity. He would utter the *maha-mantra* and sit transfixed, stuttering, shedding tears of love. He would point to the Deity as if to say to others, "Don't you see?" But no one could see what he saw. After having spent his life spreading the teachings of Lord Chaitanya and establishing a firm basis for the future of Vaishnavism, he was content to spend his time in the company of the Lord of his life. 🙏

Fasting

Jan 7 Ekadashi
Jan 8 *break fast*
Jan 21 Ekadashi
Jan 22 *break fast*

Festivals

Jan 6 Ratha Yatra in Mysore
Jan 27 Ratha Yatra in Bangalore

O Vaishnava Soul!

By Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

Alas, for those who spend their days
In festive mirth and joy.
The dazzling, deadly, liquid forms
Their hearts fore'er employ.

The shining bottles charm their eyes
And draw their heart's embrace;
The slaves of wine can never rise
From what we call disgrace.

Was man intended to be
A brute in work and heart?
Should man, the Lord of all around,
From common sense depart?

Man's glory is in common sense
Dictating us the grace,
That man is made to live and love
The beauteous Heaven's embrace.

The flesh is not our own, alas,
The mortal frame a chain;
The soul confined for former wrongs
Should try to rise again.

Why then this childish play in that
Which cannot be our own;
Which falls within a hundred years
As if a rose ablow.

Our life is but a rosy hue
To go ere long for naught;
The soul alone would last fore'er
With good or evil fraught.

How deep the thought of times to be!
How grave the aspect looks!
And wrapt in awe become, O, we,
When reading Nature's books.

Man's life to him a problem dark,
A screen both left and right;
No soul hath come to tell us what
Exists beyond our sight.

But then a voice, how deep and soft,
Within ourselves is felt,
Man! Man! Thou art immortal soul!
Thee Death can never melt.

For thee thy Sire on High has kept
A store of bliss above,
To end of time, thou art Oh! His—
Who wants but purest love.

O Love! Thy power and spell benign
Now melt my soul to God;

How can my earthly words describe
That feeling soft and broad?

Enjoyment, sorrow—what but lots
To which the flesh is heir?
The soul that sleeps alone concludes
In them it hath a share.

And then, my friends, no more enjoy
Nor weep for all below;
The women, wine, and flesh of beasts
No love on thee bestow.

But thine to love thy brother man
And give thyself to God,
And God doth know your wages fair—
This fact is true and broad.

Forget the past that sleeps and ne'er
The future dream at all,
But act in times that are with thee
And progress thee shall call.

But tell me not in reasoning cold
The soul is made alone
By Earth's mechanic lifeless rules
And to destruction prone.

My God who gave us life and all
Alone the soul can kill,
Or give it all the joys above
His promise to fulfill.

So push thy onward march, O soul,
Against an evil deed,
That stands with soldiers Hate and Lust—
A hero be indeed.

Maintain thy post in spirit world
As firmly as you can,
Let never matter push thee down—
O stand heroic man.

O Saragrahi Vaishnava soul,
Thou art an angel fair;
Lead, lead me on to Vrindaban
And spirit's power declare.

There rest my soul from matter free
Upon my Lover's arms—
Eternal peace and spirits love
Are all my chanting charms.

*Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura was a great spiritual teacher
and the father of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura,
the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A.C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. 🌸*

Early to Bed...

by Rohininandana Dasa

Srila Prabhupada taught that devotees of Krishna don't "live to sleep, but sleep to rest the body." They work hard for Krishna and rather unwillingly lie down for rejuvenating sleep. As it is said, "Sleep is sweet to the labouring man." Devotees don't want to sleep long, like a bear, or sneak in more than they need.

Devotees act to wake up in another sense too: they try to wake up to their true position as spiritual persons, eternal servants of Krishna. They don't wish to fall back into the dreamy slumber of being "English," "American," or "Chinese," "man" or "woman," "Christian," "Muslim," or "Hare Krishna monk." Of being young or old, awake or asleep, fresh or tired, ill or well. They want to be firmly situated in the absolute conception that they have nothing to do with the material body. To achieve this they adjust all relative aspects of their life.

So devotees get up early to take advantage of the special energy and clarity of the early-morning hours. They also try to go to bed early. As an old proverb says, "One hour's sleep before midnight is worth three after."

How much sleep do I need? Five, six, seven, eight hours?

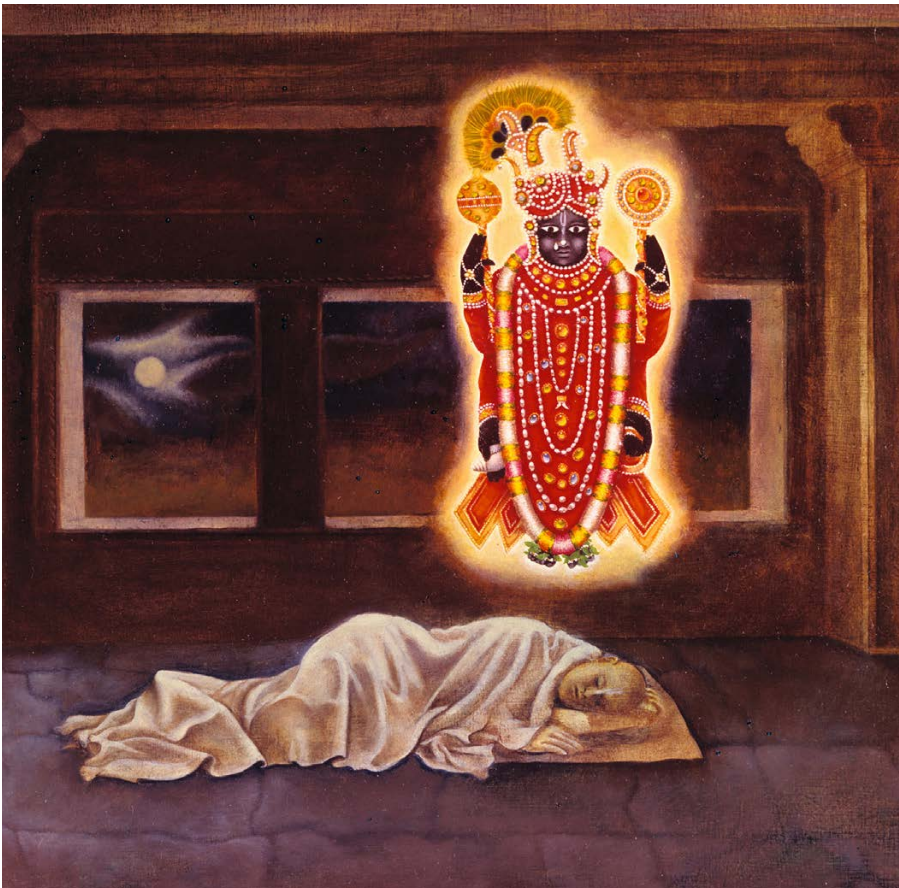
Srila Rupa Gosvami, one of Lord Chaitanya's chief disciples, generally slept for only one and a half hours, and sometimes he didn't sleep at all. Srila Prabhupada went to bed at 10:00 P.M. and rose before midnight to write his books. And he would rest for only another hour or two during the day. Just imagine how much extra time we would have if we could consistently do the same.

But Lord Krishna recommends moderation and regulation. So we should find out how much sleep we need and work from there to gradually decrease it. (With practice, roughly six hours should be about right.) We are servants of Krishna, not sleep. By practice we can conquer sleep, become Krishna conscious, and attain success in life.

Besides seeing sleep as an opportunity to renew failing energy, devotees see sleep as a reminder of irresistible death, which forces everyone, pauper or king, to lie down. Devotees acknowledge that they are not the controller

of anything, even their eyelids. Before sleeping a devotee may humbly pray, "My dear Lord, if You like I will awaken here in this place, or perhaps I will awaken in another place. But wherever I may be, or in whatever form You give me, please allow me to serve You."

A few suggestions: Try reading or hearing about Krishna in the evening. Before going to sleep, resolutely consider what time you intend to rise and why—you may find you don't even need an alarm. And last, when you wake up, loudly chant "Hare Krishna!" and feel how the spiritual energy quickly dissipates the effects of the mode of ignorance. Sweet dreams.



Thirupuliyangudi Perumal Temple

by Sampatkumara Ramanuja Dasan (Adv. Ashwin.S)

Located 22 km from Thirunelveli is one among the Nava Thirupatis, the nine abodes of Srīman Narayana.

The Pastime

The pastime of this temple is associated with Indra.

Indra reigns as the deity of storm and deluge, wielding dominion over the climate and dispensing life-giving rains across the cosmos. As sovereign of the celestial mists, he commands the *megha* (clouds), earning the epithet Maghavan, the grand master of the cloudy skies.

The venerable moniker “lord of sacrifice” could allude to either Indra or Vishnu. Vishnu presides as the foremost among the original divinities, a triumvirate that includes Brahma and Shiva, while Indra holds sway over the gods who govern the day-to-day affairs of the cosmos. Both are revered through the rituals of *yajna*.

Although Indra holds the esteemed position of primary divinity of the celestial sphere, within the terrestrial realm he retains the same imperfections that plague all embodied souls - four inherent flaws. Yet, he is lauded as *bhagavan*, a term traditionally reserved for the Supreme Divine Being. This is a testament to the immense authority vested in King Indra.

In the cosmic scheme, Indra governs the realm of manual dexterity. With the emergence of the Universal Form's hands, came the power to seize and release, and in their wake, Lord Indra was brought forth. Known as Vajradhara, he wields the thunderbolt (*vajra*) with unmatched prowess, his favoured armament.

King Indra bears the title of *shata-kratu*, denoting his completion of one hundred illustrious horse sacrifices (*ashvamedha-yajna*). Those who yearn for potent virility revere Indra. Also known by the name Sachipathi, the celestial monarch embodies the passionate aspect of the Divine, his thousand eyes earning him the name Sahasraksha.

Atop Manasottara Mountain rest the sanctuaries of four divine beings. To Sumeru's east lies Devadhani, the esteemed residence of King Indra, while to the south, Samyamani hosts Yamaraja, the august overseer of mortality. To the west dwells Nimlochani, the domain of Varuna, master of aqueous realms, and to the north, Vibhavari, home to the lunar deity.



The entrance of the temple



Lord of Thirupuliyangudi in Garuda seva

Indra, who presides over the universe's eastern quarter, stands as the celebrated monarch of Svargaloka, the heavenly paradise. His domain, known as Indraloka, is a realm of divine splendour.

Beside Indra is his consort, Indrani, with the sage Brhaspathi serving as his priestly counsellor. His noble steed is the regal elephant Airawat of alabaster hue, adorned with two pairs of formidable tusks.

Once, Indra, the ruler of the celestial realm, incurred a curse from his spiritual mentor, Brhaspathi, due to his misconduct, leading to his rebirth as a hog on earth. Some time later, when Brahma sought to bring him back to the heavens, Indra, now in hog form, had completely forgotten his former royal status and declined to return. This serves as a striking example of the illusionary power of *maya*, as even Indra himself had forsaken his exalted celestial existence and settled for the life of a hog.

Arjuna once pleased the fire-god by igniting the Khandava Forest, and as a reward, the fire-god bestowed upon

him a divine weapon. However, this act angered Indra, who, along with other demigods, engaged in a fierce battle with Arjuna. Despite their combined efforts, they were defeated by Arjuna, causing Indra to retreat to his celestial abode. Additionally, Arjuna pledged his protection to Mayasura, who in turn gifted him the renowned conch-shell known as the Devadatta. Furthermore, Indra, impressed by Arjuna's valour, bestowed upon him numerous other valuable weapons.

During a battle, Ravana shattered the elephant carrying the king of the heavens, Indra, causing its broken parts to illuminate the surroundings. Fuelled by pride in his own strength, Ravana began to roam amidst the fighting soldiers, believing himself to be the conqueror of all directions. However, his jubilant laughter and very life force abruptly ceased upon the resonating twang of the bow of Ramachandra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The celestial planets are ruled by King Indra, who is responsible for the distribution of water over the world and between the many planetary systems. Indra, the king of the celestial planets, is the one who is responsible for the rain and the lightning. It is common practice to strike the summits of hills with lightning bolts in order to splinter them into smaller pieces. With the passage of time, these fragments will eventually be dispersed throughout the surface of the earth, and the land will eventually be suitable for agricultural use. One of the most favourable conditions for the cultivation of grain is terrain that is level. There were times when the King Indra would grow enraged at the people who lived on earth if they did not make sacrifices to satisfy him.

King Prthu, an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, on the other hand, could not rely on the kindness of the celestial King. There is evidence to suggest that King Prthu would personally make arrangements for the distribution of rains in the event that Indra did not fulfil his responsibility in an appropriate manner. It is predicted in this passage that if there were to be a shortage of rain, King Prthu would be able to make up for the shortage by using his divine abilities. As a result, the planet world presented Maharaja Prthu with a request to level the surface of the world by dividing the high land and mountains into smaller pieces.

During the time when Lord Krishna was in Vrindavana, He also displayed these kinds of remarkable abilities. After receiving instructions from Krishna, the cowherd men of Vrindavana decided to cease providing sacrifices to Indra, the celestial king. As a result of Indra's lack of familiarity with Lord Krishna in Vrajabhumi, he became enraged with the Vrajavasis and attempted to exact revenge. As a result, the whole of Vraja was in danger of being obliterated by persistent torrential rainfall over a period of seven days. Despite the fact that Lord Krishna was only seven years old at the time, out of His compassion, He used just one hand to balance the hill that is known as Govardhana as an umbrella, to protect the Vrajavasis and their animals. Because of this, Lord Krishna is sometimes referred to as Govardhana-dhari.

Once upon a time, Garuda, the Lord's carrier, stole a nectar jar from the demigods in heaven. He did this in order to free his mother, Vinata, from the grasp of his stepmother, Kadru, who was the mother of the serpents. Vinata was the queen of the serpents. As soon as Indra, the King of Heaven, became aware of this, he unleashed his thunderbolt against Garuda. The thunderbolt caused Garuda, who was ordinarily indestructible due to the fact that



Bhumipala Perumal

Garuda vahana of Bhumipala Perumal



Thirupuliyangudi Kaisinavendhar Perumal with His Consorts

he was the Lord's mount, to lose one of his wings, which was then smashed to pieces. This was done with the intention of showing reverence for the infallibility of Indra's weapon. The people who live on higher worlds are so perceptive that even when they are engaged in combat, they adhere to the fundamental principles and guidelines of kindness. In this particular instance, Garuda wanted to demonstrate his respect for Indra. Garuda donated his wing to Indra since he was aware that Indra's weapon would have to destroy something.

Every single one of the demigods transformed Indra, the king of heaven, into a calf, and then they milked the beverage *soma*, which is a kind of nectar, from the land. This resulted in their being very strong in terms of mental speculation as well as physical and sensual strength.

Indra, the king of heaven, is filled with a tremendous deal of envy whenever a great sage is forced to endure extreme austerities in order to gain material power. Each of the demigods has a position of responsibility for the administration of world affairs, and they are all very well-qualified individuals who engage in religious endeavours. They are able to acquire responsible positions, such as those of Brahma, Indra, Chandra, and Varuna, despite the fact that they are ordinary living beings. Indra, the King of heaven, is exceedingly concerned if a great sage is forced to face terrible austerities. This is because the nature of this material world is such that it worries him. As a result of the widespread presence of jealousy across the material world, everyone develops a healthy fear of his neighbours. Because this material world is the arena of activity for all types of jealous individuals who have come here to compete with the wealth of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, every businessman is terrified of his companions. This is because this material world is the field through which they compete. Therefore, Indra was quite concerned about the terrible austerities that were carried out by the great sage Kandu, and he sent Pramlocha to reverse the vows and the austerities that the sage had been doing.

King Indra proved successful in breaching the vow of the renowned philosopher Kandu, who fell captivated by the beauty of the heavenly society maiden Pramlocha and gave birth to a female child. King Indra was able to accomplish this feat. According to this article, the infant in question has lotus eyes and is quite lovely. In light of the fact that she had been successful in her task, Pramlocha went back to the celestial planets, leaving the newborn infant in the protective care of the trees. Fortunately, the trees consented to take care of the kid and welcomed her as their own.

An incident that was quite similar to this one occurred in the case of Vishvamitra. In the *shastras*, there are a

number of additional episodes which demonstrate that Indra has always been jealous. At a time when King Prthu was celebrating a number of sacrifices that were superior to those of Indra, the latter grew very resentful, and he interfered with King Prthu's sacrifice.

Due to the fact that Bali Maharaja had such immense strength, he engaged in a battle with Indra and ultimately won victory. There is little doubt that Indra had a great deal of wisdom; yet, rather than request that Vamanadeva accept him in His service, he made use of the Lord to beg for material riches that would be completed at the conclusion of one era of Manu. Seventy-two *yugas* are the amount of time that is estimated to be required for Manu to reach his age, which is the span of his life. As a result of the fact that one *yuga* is equal to 4,300,000 years, the total number of years that Manu will really live is 309,600,000. Only up until the moment when Manu's existence comes to an end, are the demigods able to enjoy their material privileges. There is no way to surpass time. The amount of time that is granted to a person, even if it is millions of years, diminishes very fast. The demigods are only able to obtain ownership of their tangible belongings within the confines of time. As a result, Bali Maharaja expressed his regret that despite the fact that Indra had a great deal of knowledge, he was unable to make effective use of his intellect. This was due to the fact that, rather than requesting permission from Vamanadeva to participate in His service, Indra used Vamanadeva to beg Bali Maharaja for material prosperity.

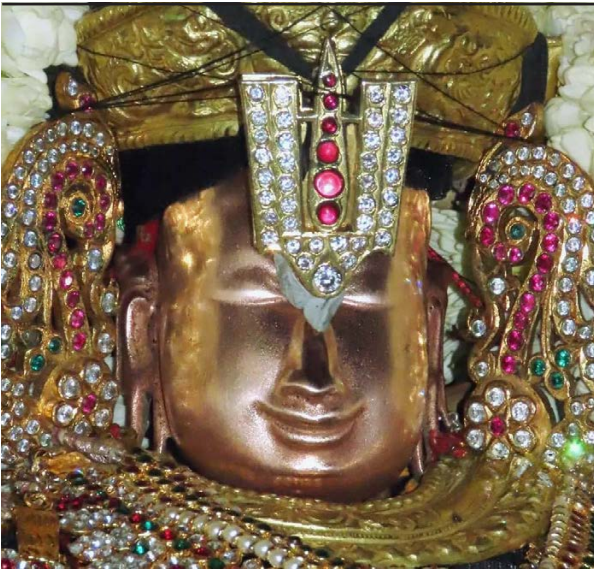


The left side of the vimana from where devotees can have darshan of the lotus feet of the Lord

Brhaspathi, Indra's prime minister, was likewise a scholarly person; nonetheless, neither of them requested to be able to provide loving devotion to Lord Vamanadeva. Indra was a learned individual. Consequently, Bali Maharaja expressed his sorrow for Indra.

Once upon a time, Indra, the King of the demigods, was seated with his wife Sachidevi and receiving acclaim from a number of demigods, including the Siddhas, Charanas, and Gandharvas. At that moment, Brhaspathi, the spiritual master of the demigods, joined the gathering. Because Indra was so preoccupied with his personal wealth, he failed to show respect to Brhaspathi. As a result, Brhaspathi became aware of Indra's vanity and promptly left the gathering in order to teach him a lesson. Then Indra realised that he had neglected to show reverence to his spiritual teacher, and he felt very regretful. Leaving the palace, he attempted to seek forgiveness from his guru, but he was unable to locate Brhaspathi anywhere.

As a result of his disrespectful conduct towards his spiritual teacher, the demons were victorious against the demigods in a fierce battle and took control of Indra's throne after Indra's wealth was completely destroyed and he was subjected to their rule. After some time had passed, King Indra and the other demigods sought refuge in the presence of Lord Brahma. Having gained an understanding of the circumstances, Lord Brahma reprimanded the demigods for the crime they had committed against their spiritual teacher. In accordance with the instructions given by Lord Brahma, the demigods chose



Bhumipala Perumal



The darshan of lotus feet of Lord and Sridevi

Vishvarupa, a *brahmana* and the son of Tvasta, to serve as their priest. They then carried out *yajnas* while under the priesthood of Vishvarupa, and as a result, they were successful in vanquishing the demons.

While King Indra, who was invisible to everyone, resided in the lake for one thousand years in the delicate fibers of the stem of a lotus, he was always thinking about methods by which he might be liberated from the sinful reaction of murdering Vrtrasura, a *brahmana*. Previously, the fire god would bring him his fair portion of all *yajnas*; but, due to the fire god's fear of entering the sea, Indra was in a state of near-starvation. By virtue of the power of Rudra, the deity of all directions, Indra's transgressions were reduced to a lesser extent. On account of the fact that Indra was shielded from the consequences of his transgressions by the goddess of fortune, Lord Vishnu's consort, who dwells in the lotus clusters of Manasa-sarovara Lake, Indra was able to avoid the consequences of his actions. Indra was finally freed from all the reactions of his immoral activities because he worshiped Lord Vishnu in an unwavering manner. After that, the *brahmanas* summoned him to return to the celestial planets and restored him in his previous position.

Puranjaya accepted the stipulation that Indra would be his carrier in exchange for his promise to eliminate all of the demons. Indra was unable to accept this suggestion because of his pride; but, later on, at the request of Vishnu, the Supreme Lord, Indra accepted it and went on to become a renowned bull carrier for Puranjaya.

The temple

The Lord assumes the Bhujanga Shayanam position in the sanctum sanctorum, where He reclines on the snake couch facing east. In addition, He is resting on a measuring vessel. He is seen with Goddess Sridevi, also known as Lakshmi and Bhoodevi. Lord Brahma is sitting on a lotus flower whose stalk emerges out of the Lord's navel. Varuna Theertham is the temple tank, while Vedasara Vimana is the *vimana* over the main shrine. Two *prakaras* make up the temple.

Festivals

The Garuda Sevai Utsavam is the most important festival, common to all the Nava Thirupathi temples, including the Thirupuliyangudi Perumal Temple. This festival witnesses nine Garuda Sevas, when the festival Deities of all the nine temples are carried in processions on their Garuda Vahanas.

Nammazhwar has sung about the Lord in this temple:

O Lord reclining in Thiruppulingudi surrounded by surging Parunal waters, pray look at us with Your lotus eyes, and part Your silent lips. From the days of yore, through Your grace and the lotus-lady's grace, we have thronged Your temple and served You in many ways as bonded serfs.

O Lord reclining in Thiruppulingudi surrounded by golden walls and fertile fields! Through generations as bonded serfs, we have served Your golden feet, never transgressing the limits of Your holy domain. May Your lotus feet that measured the Earth decorate our heads one day.

O Lord reclining in Thiruppulingudi! May the three worlds gather and worship You, You lie sleeping day after day, how long – till Your body sores. O Lord, hear Your bonded serf of unbroken service petition to You; Pray open



The Lord of Thirupuliyangudi with His Consorts



Bhumipala Perumal

Your lotus eyes and wake, and be seated with Your consort Lakshmi.

Reclining in Thiruppullingudi, seated in Varagunamangai, and standing in Vaikuntam, You enter my heart and clear my thoughts. Lord, such is Your grace! May the three words also see You, and may we shout and dance in joy. Pray come and show Your cloud-hued form, and let Your coral lips redden!

O Lord reclining in Thiruppullingudi in cool waters where conch and corals abound! Pray come and stand before me, Your coral lips reddening, flashing a smile of dazzling pearls, Your lotus eyes half closing! Did You not come riding the Garuda-bird to save the leg-bitten elephant?

O Lord in the happy fields of Thiruppullingudi, Kalsinivenda, terribly angry monarch, like a dark cloud on a golden peak, You come riding the angry bird, stood and fought a fierce battle and killed Mali and Surmali. With Your conch and other terrible weapons, You do end our woes!

O! Lord reclining in cool Thiruppullingudi waters amid fire-like lotus blooms! O Lord of celestials too, You destroy our woes and rule us. Come and sit before us one day, that we may rejoice and express our hearts, that Your devotees may enjoy the commotion, that this foolish world may also be witness.

O Lord of moon-touching-mansions-Thiruppullingudi! Lord of Srivaikundam! May the whole world rise and worship your feet, vying with one another, to praise with all the love in their hearts and power in their speech! Come before our eyes one day, choose a niche and sit with us.

O Lord of Thiruppullingudi, where fish dance in golden paddy fields, choose a niche and sit here too, praised by all the worlds, that we devotees may hover like bees and sip the nectar of Your fresh blossom face. O Lord who routed asuras by the score, wielding many fierce weapons!

O Lord of happy-fields in Thiruppullingudi, my ambrosia who destroys terrible asuras! Lord wielding many fierce weapons. Lord who destroyed the gods' woes. The peerless lotus-goddess Lakshmi and Earth goddess press Your lotus feet. That I too may press Your feet, come to me or call me unto Yourself!

This decad of the sweet songs by gushing Porunal's Valudi-land-Satakopan addressing the Lord who churned the ocean, asking Him to come to him or call to himself - those who master it will secure the feet of the Lord.

O Lord lying still in beautiful Kolar and Pullingudil what makes You sleep so soundly? Are You weary from the battle of Lanka or from taking long strides over the Earth and sky? 🙏

Photo courtesy: Santhanakrishnan, Srirangam

VEDIC THOUGHTS

The greatest enemies to progressive spiritual culture in human society are the old fossils of political parties who are blind themselves and who try to lead other blind men. They bring about disaster in a peaceful human society.

*His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Light of the Bhagavat, page 101*

A pure devotee of the Lord ... will not give up his shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord for a single moment—indeed, not for half a moment—even in exchange for the benediction of ruling and enjoying the opulence of the entire universe.

*Sri Havir Rsi
Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.2.53*

The conditioned soul sometimes personally appreciates the futility of sense enjoyment in the material world, and he sometimes considers material enjoyment to be full of miseries. However, due to his strong bodily conception, his memory is destroyed, and again and again he runs after material enjoyment, just as an animal runs after a mirage in the desert.

*Sukadeva Gosvami
Srimad-Bhagavatam 5.14.10*

The highest, best, and most spiritual ideal of the Divinity is to be found in Krishna. To bring arguments against Him is simply to deceive one's self and deprive one's self of the blessings that God has kept in store for man.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, His Life and Precepts

The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know anything else but Me, and I do not know anyone else but them.

*Lord Sri Krishna
Srimad-Bhagavatam 9.4.68*

In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.

*Lord Kapila
Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.25.25*



॥ श्री ॥

Vaikuntha Ekadashi

Srila Prabhupada's
ISKCON
BANGALORE



Abhisheka (above) and arati (below)





॥ श्री ॥

Vaikuntha Ekadashi

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Vaikuntha dwara (above) and pallakki utsava (below)





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Kalyanotsava (above) and laksharchana chanting (below)

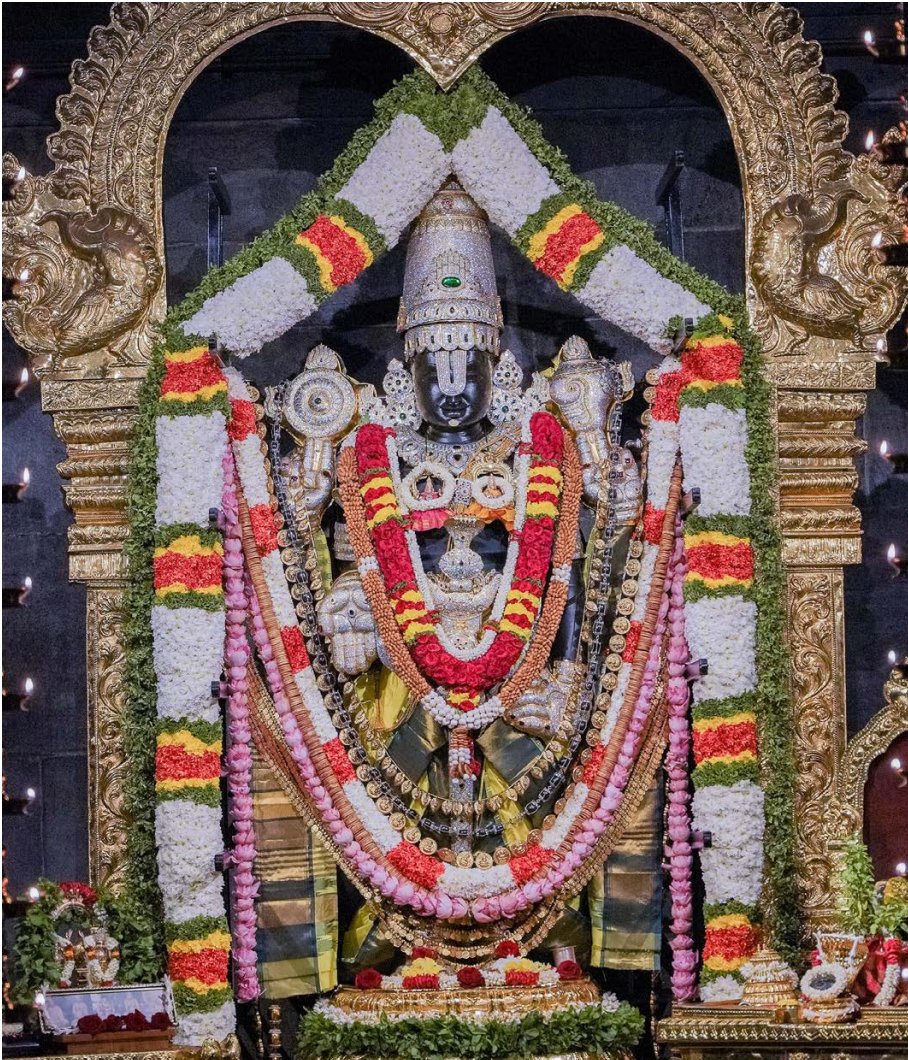




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Vaikuntha Hill: Darshana of Sri Rajadhiraja Govinda (above)
Sri Rajagopala, Smt. Rukmini and Smt. Satyabhama at the Vaikuntha Dwara (below)





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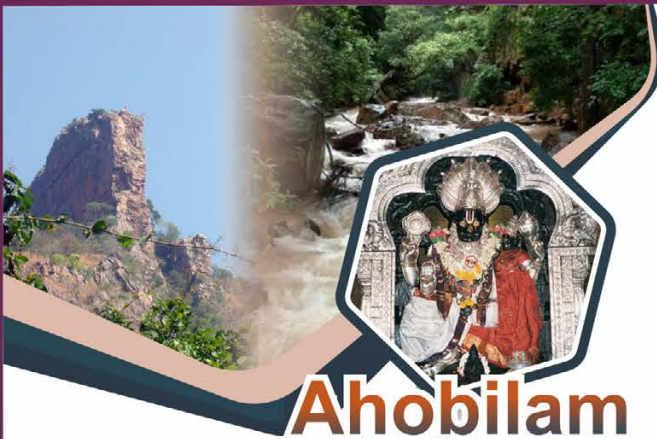
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