

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT SRI JAGANNATH RATHA YATHRA ORGANISED BY ISKCON
CHENNAI AT SRI RANI MAHAL, CHENNAI ON 14.01.2019 AT 3.00 P.M**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

Justice Dr. Anita Sumanth

Thiru. Bhanu Swami

Thiru. Sumithra Krishna Das

Thiru. Sukadev Swami

Thiru. Vasudevan

Thiru. Gaura Krishna Das

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me great happiness to be here today at the Jagannath Ratha Yathra organised by ISKCON, Chennai. ISKCON or the International society for Krishna Consciousness was established in 1966 by Swami Prabhupada to bring together devotees being guided by the teachings of the Bhgavat githa and the Srimad Bhagavatam.

These great texts describe in detail the eternality of the self, our relationship with the Supreme Person, the Supreme Person's actual identity, and the activities by which anyone can enhance his innate spiritual consciousness.

The evolution of the movement of Krishna consciousness is indeed very interesting. When

SrilaPrabhupada met his own spiritual master, SrilaBhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur in 1922, he was 25 years old. SrilaBhaktisiddhanta urged his devotee to preach Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's message of Krishna consciousness in English.

After forty years of struggling within India to carry out his guru's order while maintaining family and business responsibilities, SrilaPrabhupada accepted the renounced order of life, sannyasa. He began writing translations and commentaries on the Srimad-Bhagavatam. At the age of sixty-nine, with forty rupees and a trunk of his Bhagavatam commentaries—the first ever in English—his aim was to introduce "India's message of peace and

goodwill" to the western world. This has inspired lakhs of people to devote their lives to Krishna consciousness, launching one of the fastest-growing spiritual movements in the history of the world.

Krishna consciousness means an awareness of and affection for the Supreme Person, Krishna.

Sri Krishna was the supreme light who came into this world to dispel darkness. His glory is shining luminously illuminating our lives and showing the path for mankind to follow.

The avatar of Lord Krishna was marked by mellifluousness, radiance and smile and success.

As the beautiful Madhurashtakam stotra of Sri Vallabhacharya says, "Everything about the Lord of

Sweetness, Madhuradhipathe, is sweet: his face, his words, his flute-playing, his gait, his actions, his friendship”...all of these are a sweetness that does not satiate.

Sri Krishna Bhagawan’s personality, because of this divine nature, is uniquely multi- dimensional.

He is the divine child protecting the people while playing pranks in Gokula. He is the divine flute player whose music enthralls all beings even while tending to cow in Brindavan.

He is then the warrior who challenges Kamsa and brings the tyrant’s cruel reign to a stop.

Sri Krishna as the king of Dwarka is the friend of the Pandavas and helps them in their times of

distress. He is the divine diplomatic messenger who goes to the Kauravas to talk peace.

He is the counsellor, strategist and the protector of the forces fighting to establish goodness by destroying the forces of evil. And most importantly he is the revealer of the Srimad Bhagavad Geetha to Arjuna in the face of the latter's sudden decision to shrink away from his duty on the battle field.

There are many lessons that one can learn from the Bhagavad Gita and I mention here a few of them. The importance of Karma is beautifully set out as follows "Karmanye Vadhikaraste, Ma phaleshou kada chana, Ma Karma Phala Hetur Bhurmatey Sangostva Akarmani"

You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you must do it without any expectations about the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty.

The Gita also teaches us to have unflinching faith in God

Yada Yada hi dharmasya
Glanir bhavati bharata
abhyutthanam adharmasya
tadatmanam srijamy aham
paritranaya sadhunam
Vinasaya ca duskrtam

dharmasamsthapanarthaya

sambhavami yuge yuge

“Whenever and wherever there is a decline in dharmic practice, and a predominant rise of adharmic at that time I descend Myself. In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of Dharma, I advent Myself era after era.

Another message of the Gita is about the importance of being detached. When a man dwells in his mind on the object of sense, attachment to them is produced. From attachment springs desire and from desire comes anger.

From anger arises bewilderment, from bewilderment loss of memory; and from loss of memory, the destruction of intelligence and from the destruction of intelligence he perishes.

The Bhagavad Gita forges a harmony between different strands of Indian thought: jnana, karma and bhakti.

The practice of Krishna consciousness, or bhakti-yoga, are meant to free us from the root cause of all anxiety by reawakening our normal, eternal spiritual happiness. The goal of bhakti-yoga is to recover our natural sense of connectedness (yoga) with that one supreme God by serving Him with love (bhakti).

Practice of Bhakti Yoga isn't dependent on one's personal belief. Anyone can experience the benefits of bhakti-yoga. Those who do so gradually become more interested in eternal, spiritual life and less attracted to temporary, material pursuits.

The city of Puri is most well known for its grand temple of Jagannath. Jagannath, meaning 'The Lord of the Universe', is seen here along with his brother Baladev and sister Subhadra.

The most famous festival of Puri which is one of the Char Dhams is the Rath Yatra. During the festival the Rathas which are built anew every year are pulled by the devotees to take the deities along

the main street of Puri to another temple a few Km. away.

The Rath Yatra symbolises the return of Krishna (Jagannath) along with His brother and sister (Balarama and Subhadra) from Dwarka to Vrindavan.

The first Rath Yatra that was conducted outside the Indian Subcontinent by ISKCON was at San Francisco, USA in 1967. Since then Rath Yatras have been taking place in all the major cities of the world such as New York, London, Parrys, Sydney, Tokyo, Houston, Mumbai, Chennai etc.

I feel delighted about being present at the Rath Yatra today Swami Prabhupada through his deep

understanding of philosophy illumined the path to be followed by all of mankind. His writings and way of life will certainly continue to serve as an inspiration for succeeding generations to come. I congratulate ISKCON Chennai for having organized this function and wish them well. I am sure that all well meaning people who wish for peace and prosperity to prevail will be benefitted by reading the teachings of Swami Prabhupada. May many more people be benefitted by his words of wisdom and may the name and fame of this great saint be remembered and respected for many more centuries to come.

Nandri Vanakkam

Jai Hind