

Inspire

Local updates & spiritual articles



10 April
Rama Navami

ISKCON Belfast April 2022



This month

The Ramayana
Deva Scott-Robertshaw

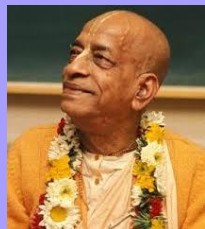
Appearance day of Srila
Syamananda Pandita
16 April

My life in Krishna
consciousness
Hg Bhagavati dd

Gaura Purnima
Festival Pictures

International Society for
Krishna Consciousness.
Founder Acarya His Divine
Grace AC Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada.

mmmm



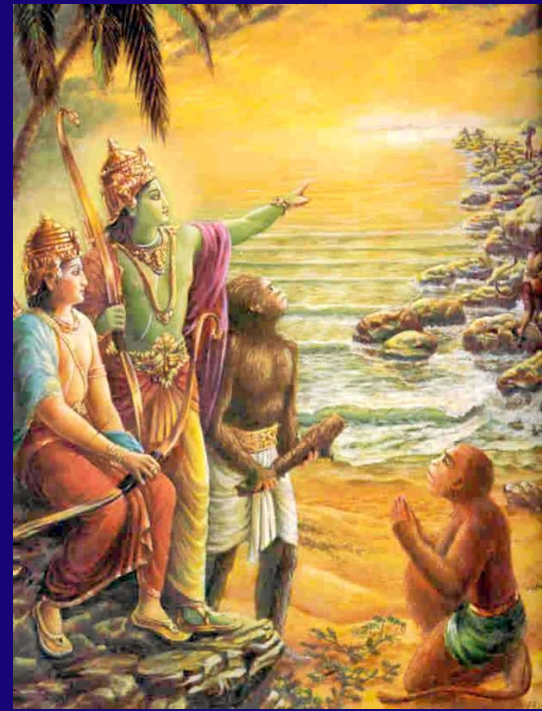
A summary of Lord Rama's life

As the waves of an ocean cannot be counted, so it is impossible to count the many incarnations of the Supreme Lord but out of them, the principle names are mentioned in the scriptures.

Lord Ramachandra is a powerful incarnation. He appeared more than two million years ago in Ayodhya, northern India, as the eldest son of King Dasaratha and Queen Kausalya. He was a perfect king who gave all protection to His citizens.

Just before King Dasaratha was about to install Ramachandra in His place on the throne, his younger wife, Sarmishtha, reminded the king that he owed her a benediction from an earlier time and as a ksatriya, he couldn't go back on his word. Her request that her son Bharata should be made king and Rama should be banished to the forest for fourteen years to keep Him out of her son's way. Ramachandra accepted His father's order without argument. His brother Lakshmana and His wife Sita accompanied him to the forest.

One day while Sita was sitting alone outside her cottage, the evil Ravana, king of Sri Lanka, kidnapped her and took her to his island. When lord Rama and Lakshmana found out, they made their way to the island, with the help of members of the animal kingdom, especially the monkeys, led by Lord Rama's great monkey devotee, Hanuman. They famously threw large stones onto the ocean. The stones floated and they crossed the ocean where a great battle took place. Lord Rama killed Ravana and rescued Sita. Rama and Sita returned to Ayodhya where Rama was rightfully enthroned as King.



Lord Ramachandra, Lakshman, Hanuman and a monkey soldier before setting off for Sri Lanka to fight king Ravana and rescue Sita.



Lord Ramachandra with his brother Lakshmana, His wife Sita and His faithful monkey devotee, Sri Hanuman



The Ramayana by Deva Scott-Robertshaw

The Ramayana is an epic poem, composed by the sage and poet Valmiki, telling the story of Lord Rama's life.

While the worship of Rama is often associated with India, the Ramayana has had a widespread and profound influence in south-east Asia. In Thailand, the Grand or Royal Palace in Bangkok is surrounded by a cloistered gallery showing the story of the Ramayana in 178 scenes, using a traditional form of Thai illustration. Known as the *Ramkien* in the Thai language, work on the mural began in the late eighteenth century and the illustrations are maintained on an ongoing basis in order to preserve them. Thailand was formerly known as the Kingdom of Siam and the Siamese capital was called Ayutthaya, after King Rama's capital of Ayodhya.



Left: A scene from the Ramayana mural at the Grand Palace, Bangkok Known as the *Reamkar* in Cambodia, the story of the Ramayana is seen in many Cambodian art forms including dance, drama,

scene sculpture and theatre. Carvings can be seen at the ancient Cambodian city of Angkor Wat, now in a semi-ruined state and classed as UNESCO world heritage site and it features a large central temple. The Western gallery of the temple depicts the story of the Ramayana in a carved stone bas relief. (Angkor Wat really is an amazing place to visit with its complex of temples dedicated to Vishnu.)



Left: A bas-relief fresco of a battle scene from the Ramayana at Angkor Wat, Cambodia.

In Java, the Ramayana, or Kakawin Ramayana as it is called, is

considered to be the highest form of artistic expression in Javanese culture. The Prambanan temple in Yogyakarta was built in the ninth century and is the second largest Hindu temple in south-east Asia.



The Prambanan temple complex in Yogyakarta, Java.

The Prambanan temple features an open-air stage where a ballet of the Ramayana is regularly performed. While the term ballet is used, it is very different to western ballet but refers to a dance-drama performance without dialogue. The Prambanan ballet derives from *wayang wong*, a traditional Javanese dance form that was used to tell the stories of the Ramayana and Mahabharata at the Javanese court.



Left: A scene from the Prambanam Ramayana ballet

Bali also has a traditional dance form called

kecak which is based on the Ramayana. It is performed around a fire with trained dancers playing the main parts, supported by a cast of amateur performers, usually a large number of local men.

The story of the Ramayana in its different versions is well-known and well-loved across south-east Asia and it is embedded in the fabric of the culture of many societies. Who knew there were so many Rama Bhaktas?



The glorious life of Syamananda Pandita

by Kanaka Manjari dd

16 April is the appearance day of Syamananda Prabhu. Krishna is so kind that he sends his special devotees to preach and to persuade the imprisoned souls to surrender to Him. Out of His mercy, He sent Syamananda, who became a powerful and successful preacher of the Gaudia Vaisnava philosophy.

After the disappearance of Lord Caitanya, three devotees in particular carried on His sankirtana movement – Syamananda Pandita, Narottama das Thakur & Srinivas Acharya. These three young men came to Vrndavana at, more or less, the same time in order to take shelter of Srila Jiva Goswami, who Srila Prabhupada calls “the greatest Vaisnava philosopher”.

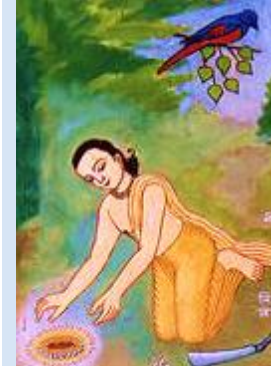
Sri Syamananda was born in Medinapura, Bengal in 1534. His mother was Sri Durika and his father was Sri Krishna Mandal. Before he was born, a number of other children had been born to his parents but none of them had lived. Therefore they gave him the name Dukhi Krsnadas (sorrowful servant of Krishna) in the hope that the Lord of death, Yamaraja would take pity on them and let this child live.

As he grew, everyone was amazed by the child’s beauty, manners and intelligence. He took his scriptural studies very seriously. As his spiritual master, Dukhi Krishnadas chose Hridaya Caitanya, a disciple of Guridasa Pandit, who had been an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya. Some time after initiation, he got permission to go to Sri Vrndavana dham, like so many great souls have done since Lord Krsna performed His transcendental pastimes there five thousand years ago. Indeed, they are happening even today and these pastimes can be seen by one who has the eyes to see. Krishna never leaves Vrndavana.

Hridaya Caitanya wrote to Dukhi, saying that he should take shelter of Srila Jiva Goswami and accept his instructions as seriously as he accepted his own. Along with the two other students, Narottama Das and Srinivas, he was trained by Srila Jiva Goswami in the teachings of the six Goswamis, especially Srila Rupa and Sanatana Goswamis. Dukhi became very dear to Srila Jiva. He made rapid advancement and quickly came to the elevated platform of raganuga bhakti. The three boys studied but they also performed practical service. They

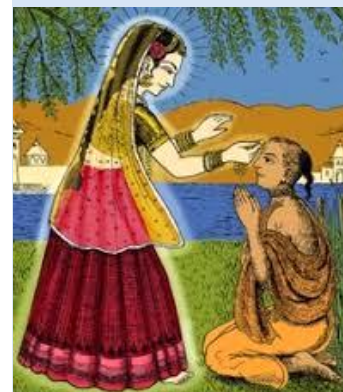
followed the teachings of scripture, which says that a disciple should not only hear from the spiritual master but one should also put those teachings into practice.

Part of Dukhi’s daily service was to sweep the paths at one of the places where Radha and Krishna perform Their lilas. One morning, when Dukhi was sweeping, he found a beautiful



ankle bracelet in the dust. (By the mercy of Srimati Radharani, it had been manifested to his vision). He understood that it was something special and while deciding what to do, he buried it nearby. When Radharani noticed it had disappeared, she asked her maidservant to look for it.

Lalita disguised herself and appeared before Dukhi Krishnadas, asking if had seen it. Dukhi became suspicious and asked “Who are you and where have you come from?” Lalita answered “I come from a local brahmin family who live nearby”. Dukhi said “Yes, I found an ankle bracelet but I want it to give it to it’s owner myself”. Lalita admitted her disguise and told him it belonged to Radharani. He took her to the spot and revealed the bracelet. She dipped Dukhi in the nearby lake and



when he got out, his complexion had become golden and Srimati Radharani was beside him. Radharani touched the anklet to his forehead and said:

“From now on, your name is Syamananda”, meaning ‘bliss of Lord Krishna’. The imprint of the bracelet on Syamananda’s forehead remained a permanent marking. Radharani also gave him a small deity of Krishna Who is still worshipped by devotees in Vrndavana.

Syamananda returned to his ashram and explained everything to Srila Jiva who understood that he had got the mercy of Radharani herself. Because Jiva accepted it, so did the other local devotees. But when Hridaya Caitanya heard he had changed his name and that he had different tilak markings, he became disturbed. Eventually he also came to understand the situation through Srila Jiva Goswami, who had no doubts about what had happened to Syamananda since he had observed him upon his return from the meeting with Sri Radha and he could see the change in him.

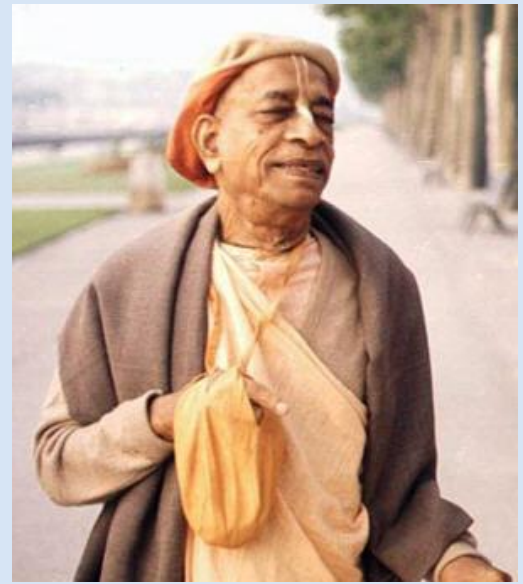
Syamananda became a great preacher. One of the places he preached was Orissa, where he converted many Muslims into Vaisnavas. Due to his well-organized sankirtana street parties and direct preaching, the whole state of Orissa became Krishna conscious. He also initiated many disciples, who expanded Lord Caitanya’s movement throughout India.

This is just a summary of the many pastimes of Sri Syamananda Pandita.



Syamananda Pandita’s samadhi in Sri Vrndavana dham

On Chanting God’s names



The Supreme Personality of Godhead is so kind to the conditioned souls that if they call upon Him by speaking His holy name, even unintentionally or unwillingly, the Lord is inclined to destroy innumerable sinful reactions in their hearts. Therefore, when a devotee who has taken shelter of the Lord’s lotus feet chants the holy name of Kṛṣṇa with genuine love, the Supreme Personality of Godhead can never give up the heart of such a devotee. One who has thus captured the Supreme Lord within his heart is to be known as bhāgavata-pradhāna, the most exalted devotee of the Lord
Srimad Bhagavatam 11.2.55



Hg Bhagavati dd My life in Krishna consciousness

I was born in Liverpool, UK, in 1955. After finishing university, I travelled around the world looking for a meaning to life but I found nothing with any satisfying depth until I went to Ireland.

In 1984 I travelled to Donegal and I met someone who had been to the installation of Sri Sri Radha Madhava in Dublin. They told me about chanting Hare Krsna and Krsna consciousness and gave me a Bhagavad gita that they had purchased from Krsna katha prabhu at the installation. I immediately began to read the Bhagavad gita and chant. In January 1985 I visited the temple in Dublin and I joined up on the spot. Very soon after joining, I had a vivid dream of Srila Prabhupada, where he welcomed me and told me that now I could dance and sing. Under the supervision of Prthu prabhu and his wife Ramboru dasi, I was engaged in cooking for the restaurant in Dublin, going on Harinama and fundraising. In 1986 I was married to Krsna katha prabhu and in 1987 I was initiated by Satsvarupa Maharaja. A few months later I was happy to give birth to Deva.

In 1992 I took second initiation and I began temple deity worship. I resided at Inish Rath, serving SS Radha Govinda from 1992 until 1996 and I moved to Belfast in 1996 to serve SS Radha Madhava. Then in 2017, I relocated to New Mayapur in France. I have always been engaged in deity worship, Harinama and book distribution and this sometimes caused tension with my parallel duties in family life. My daughter, Deva and my husband, Krsna katha kindly tolerated my thirst for an active, outgoing spiritual life, even to the extent of my neglecting their needs.

At New Mayapur temple I continue to do deity service for only a few hours a week, due to my being forced to slow down by old age. New Mayapur is a busy temple with many guests so there are always preaching opportunities. I had to learn French!

I sorely miss Belfast and Sri Sri Radha Madhava but somehow Krsna Balarama are holding me here. Deva and Krsna katha have visited more than once and we all agree that New Mayapur is a special place on the ISKCON world map. Srila Prabhupada personally negotiated the purchase of the building and surrounding forest. He visited three times and his quarters are kept as they were in those days, as a memorial to our great saviour and founder Acarya. Srila Prabhupada ki jaya!



New Mayapur temple



Deities in ISKCON temple, New Mayapur. Top-bottom: Sri Sri Krishna Balarama, Sri Sri Radha Govinda Madhava & Sri Sri Gaura Nitai



Gaura Purnima celebrations 20 March



Abisheka for Their Lordships Sri Sri Gaura Nitai



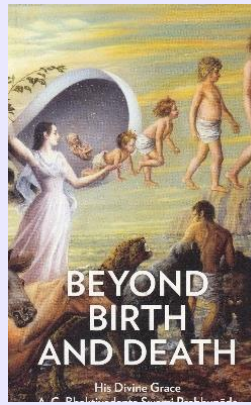
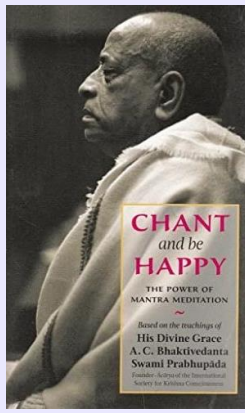
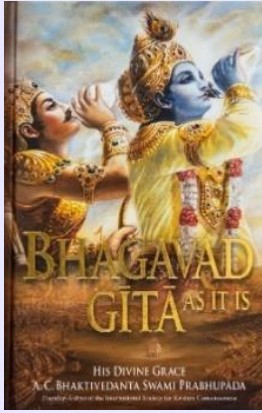
At Gaura Purnima festivities, over 200 plates of prasadam were served and everyone joined in singing the holy name to worship Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.



Hg Susakha das and Rajiv prepare prasadam

Below: Celebrating Holi at the temple





Could you sponsor a book?

We are currently distributing Srila Prabhupada's books door-to-door, on the streets and to local charities.

These local charities include shelters for homeless people and those with addictions and other problems. The books are being very much appreciated by people who find themselves in difficult circumstances. They are getting comfort from them because they give spiritual knowledge, relief from anxiety and they are exciting to read.

If you haven't got the time to go out and distribute books, you can **donate the money for a book** and rest assured that local devotees will distribute it for you. One quickly gets spiritual advancement from book-distribution and there is no difference between sponsoring a book and personally distributing it. The founder of ISKCON, Srila Prabhupada said: "Just by holding one of these books, one gets spiritual benefit."

"You distribute Srila Prabhupada's books - for sure you are going to get Srila Prabhupada's mercy. There's no doubt about it." *Bhakti Vikasa Maharaja. Online lecture about book-distribution.*

One book could make all the difference to someone's life. To donate, please call or send a WhatsApp or text message to 07555281792 or donate to the temple directly, specifying book-distribution:

Ulster Bank

Current acct: 40933052

Sort code: 98-05-90

Thank you to those who have already kindly donated money for book-distribution. Because of your donations, 171 books and 265 "On Chanting Hare Krishna" pamphlets were distributed last month.

Temple updates

Website & Facebook



Website



Facebook page

All donations are appreciated. If you'd like to help with the upkeep of the temple and important preaching programmes, please donate via Paypal (*ctrl & click on the link below*)

Donate



Or Bank transfer:

Ulster Bank:

ISKCON Belfast.

Account No: 40933052.

Sort Code: 98-05-90

Join us at the weekends:

Saturday 12.00pm

Kirtana followed by reading of
Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita
by HH Satsvarupa Swami
and vegetarian snacks

Sunday 2.00pm

Bhagavad Gita class
followed by arati, kirtana and
vegetarian feast

Temple mobile: 07424483907

Landline: 02890620530

Email: info@iskconbelfast.co.uk

**Address: 2A Brooklands Grange,
Dunmurry, BT17 0SA**

Harinama in Belfast city centre 26 March



Join us on the last Saturday of every month for ecstatic
Harinama in the city centre



Ekadasi cake A tried and tested recipe in the temple kitchen. **Ekadasi is a fast day** held on the eleventh day of the waxing and the waning moon, running from sunrise to sunrise. Although traditionally Vaisnavas fasted completely without drinking even water and stayed awake overnight to chant and hear about Lord Krsna, Srila Prabhupada instructed his followers to simply avoid eating grains or cereals and beans and he recommended that we chant extra rounds of japa on Ekadasi.

Ingredients:

1 1/4 cups milk powder
 1 1/4 cups potato flour
 1 cup caster sugar
 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
 1/4 cup butter
 1/2 cup grated coconut
 2 medium mashed bananas
 1/2 cup buttermilk
 Finely grated rind of one lemon and one orange
 Jam & cream

Method:

1. Butter and flour one 10-inch cake tin.
2. Set oven to 170c/330f.
3. Sift milk powder, potato flour, sugar and bicarb soda.
4. Melt butter in a small pan and toast the coconut in it.
5. Mix the rind, mashed banana, yogurt, and coconut together. Add the dry ingredients and stir with a spoon – just enough for the mixture to come together.
6. Bake for 20-30 minutes. Test with toothpick. If the toothpick is dry, the cake is ready.
7. Allow the cake to rest for ten minutes and turn it out onto a cooling rack.
8. When cool, split and fill with jam and whipped cream.

Vaisnava calendar April 2022

For more info, Ctrl & Click on the links below:

- 06 April – App day of Sri Ramanujacharya
- 10 April - Rama Navami
- 13 April - Kamada Ekadashi
- 14 April - Beginning of Salagrama and Tulasi Jala Dana
- 16 April - Sri Balarama Rasayatra
- 16 April - Sri Krishna Vasanta Rasa
- 16 April - App day of Sri Vamsivadananda Thakura
- 16 April - App day of Sri Syamananda Prabhu
- 23 April – Dis day of Sri Abhirama Thakura
- 25 April – Dis day of Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura
- 26 April - Varuthini Ekadashi
- 26 April 2022 – App day of Sri Gadadhara Pandita

Chant



And be happy