

# Inspire

Local updates & spiritual articles



ISKCON Belfast Mar/ Apr 2023



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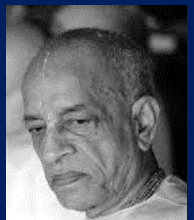
**Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu`s**  
appearance day  
7<sup>th</sup> March

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



## Caitanya Mahaprabhu's Appearance Day

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March is the appearance day of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who is Krishna in the role of His own devotee**

**Just after sunset on 18<sup>th</sup> of February 1486, in the town of Nadia in West Bengal, Lord Caitanya appeared.** His father was Jagannatha Misra and His mother was Saci Devi. His mother's father was a renowned astrologer who predicted that the child was a great personality so He was given the name Visvambara. On account of His beautiful golden complexion, local devotees called Him Gaurahari and His mother named Him Nimai after the Neem tree under which He was born. Everyone adored the child and when, as a baby, He cried, they soon found that the only thing that would pacify Him was chanting "Haribol, Haribol". Then He would smile and melt the hearts of everyone.

Before the Lord appeared in Navadvipa, no one was practicing bhakti (loving service to the Personality of Godhead). Because the local Vaisnavas worshipped Krishna, they were free from anxiety but they were unhappy to see others suffering. The great Vaisnava devotee, Sri Advaita Acarya worshipped Krishna with offerings of Ganges water and Tulasi leaves. He cried loudly, asking the Lord to appear. At Sri Advaita's specific request, Lord Caitanya appeared on this planet.

Krishna appeared as Lord Caitanya for two reasons; the internal reason was to experience the intense, transcendental love of His greatest devotee, Srimati Radharani and He explains His external reason in *Bhagavad-gita* 4.8:

*paritrāṇāya sādhūnām  
vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām  
dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya  
sambhavāmi yuge yuge*

**To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I Myself appear, millennium after millennium.**

Here Krishna shows His love for us, the unfortunate souls trapped in this world of repeated birth and death where our misfortune is that we cannot reciprocate the love He feels for us. In *Bhagavad-gita*, Krishna gives many instructions about how we can save ourselves. One such instruction is:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya  
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja  
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo  
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*



**Just abandon all kinds of religion and surrender unto Me. I will deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear.**  
*Bhagavad-gita* 18.66.

Lord Caitanya came to teach us how to follow those instructions. He urged everyone He met to surrender to Krishna and chant the Holy names, declaring that They are our only shelter.

Caitanya Mahaprabhu exhibited an exemplary life as a grhastha and later as a sannyasi. He established, clearly and emphatically, the principles of pure devotional service to Krishna.

Most of His followers were accomplished in all aspects of Vedic culture and they were scholarly, being well-versed in Vedic literatures, especially *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, on which Lord Caitanya based His teachings. He would systematically teach His disciples, especially Srila Rupa and Sanatana Goswamis, the whole philosophy of Krishna consciousness. His immediate followers wrote many books, all authoritatively based on the Vedic scriptures. His chief followers, the Six Goswamis, especially Srila Rupa, Sanatana and Jiva Goswamis, wrote dozens of scholarly spiritual books, proving bhakti, (loving service to God), to be the ultimate goal of the Vedas.

Lord Caitanya did not write any books but He left us eight verses called *Sri Siksastikam* (see below)



## Sri Siksastakam

**These are the only direct teachings left by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. They describe the progressive benefits of chanting the Holy Name and the mood in which we should chant. Just by reading these verses, the heart becomes cleansed.**

*ceto-darpana-marjanam bhava-maha--davagni-nirvapanam  
sreyah-kairava-chandrika-vitaranam vidya-vadhu-jivanam  
anandambudhi-varadhanam prati-padam purnamritasvadanam  
sarvatma-snapanam param vijayate sri-krishna-sankirtanam*

**All glory to the Sri-Krishna-*sankirtana*, which cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated for years and extinguishes the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death. This *sankirtana* movement is the prime benediction for humanity at large because it spreads the rays of the benediction moon. It is the life of all transcendental knowledge. It increases the ocean of transcendental bliss and it enables us to fully taste the nectar for which we are always anxious.**

*namnam akari bahudha nija-sarva-shaktis  
tatrapita niyamitah smarane na kalah  
etadrishi tava kripa bhagavan mamapi  
durdaivam idrisham ihajani nanuragaha*

**O my Lord Your holy name alone can render all benediction to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of names, like Krsna and Govinda. In these transcendental names You have invested all Your transcendental energies. There are not even hard and fast rules for chanting these names. O my Lord, out of kindness You enable us to easily approach You by Your holy names, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for them.**

*trinad api sunicena  
taror api sahisnuna  
amanina manadena  
kirtaniyah sada harih*

**One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and should be ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly.**

*na dhanam na janam na sundarim  
kavitam va jagadisa kamaye  
mama janmani janmanisvare  
bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki tvayi*

**O almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor do I desire beautiful women nor do I want any number of followers. I only want Your causeless devotional service, birth after birth.**

*ayi nanda-tanuja kinkaram  
patitam mam visame bhavambudhau  
kripaya tava pada-pankaja-  
stita-dhuli-sadrisam vichintaya*

**O son of Maharaja Nanda (Krishna), I am Your eternal servitor, yet somehow or other I have fallen into the ocean of birth and death. Please pick me up from this ocean of death and place me as one of the atoms at Your lotus feet.**

*nayanam galad-ashru-dharaya  
vadanam gadgada-ruddhaya gira  
pulakair nichitam vapuh kada  
tava nama-grahane bhavishyati*

**O my Lord, when will my eyes be decorated with tears of love flowing constantly when I chant Your holy name? When will my voice choke up, and when will the hairs of my body stand on end at the recitation of Your name?**

*yugayitam nimesena  
caksusa pravrisayitam  
sunnyayitam jagat sarvam  
govinda-virahena me*

**O Govinda! Feeling Your separation I am considering a moment to be like twelve years or more. Tears are flowing from my eyes like torrents of rain, and I am feeling all vacant in the world in Your absence.**

*aslishya va pada-ratam pinastu mam  
adarsanan marma-hatam karotu va  
yatha tatha va vidadhatu lampato  
mat-prana-nathas tu sa eva naparah*

**I know no one but Krishna as my Lord, and He shall remain so even if He handles me roughly by His embrace or makes me brokenhearted by not being present before me. He is completely free to do anything and everything, for He is always my worshipful Lord, unconditionally.**

## Read about the divine personality

### Sri Syamananda Prabhu

On 6<sup>th</sup> April we will celebrate the appearance day of Syamananda Prabhu. Krishna is so kind that he sends his special devotees to preach and to persuade the living entities 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 dasa Thakur & Srinivas acarya. These three young men came to Vrndavana around 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. 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. Dukhi Krishnadas took shelter of his spiritual master, Hridaya Caitanya, a disciple of Gauridasa Pandit, who had been an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya. Some time after initiation, he got permission to go to Sri Vrndavana dham, as so many great souls have done since Lord Krishna performed His transcendental pastimes there five thousand years ago. Indeed, these pastimes are happening even today and they 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 Dasa and Srinivasa, he was trained by Srila Jiva Goswami in the teachings of the other 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 say that a disciple should not only hear from the spiritual master but one should seriously put those teachings into practice.



One of Dukhi's daily services in Vrndavana was to sweep the paths at a place 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 had lost it, she asked her maidservant to look for it.

Lalita disguised herself and appeared before Dukhi Krishnadasa, asking if he had seen it. Dukhi became suspicious and asked “Who are you and where have you come from?” Lalita answered “I come from a local brahman family.” Dukhi said “Yes, I found an ankle bracelet but I want it to give it to its owner myself.” Lalita admitted her disguise and told him it belonged to Srimati Radharani. He took her to the spot and revealed the bracelet. She asked Dukhi to bathe in a 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 'the bliss of Lord Krishna'. The imprint of the bracelet on Syamananda's forehead remained as a permanent mark. Radharani also gave him a small deity of Krishna who is still worshipped by devotees in Vrndavana.

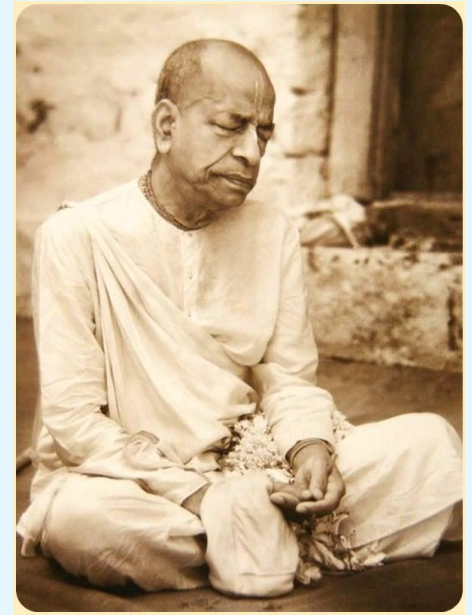
Syamananda returned to his asrama and explained everything to Srila Jiva who understood that he had got the mercy of Radharani herself. Because Jiva accepted it, so did the other local devotees. But when Hridaya Caitanya heard his disciple had changed his name and that he had a different tilak mark, 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.



Syamananda Prabhu's samadhi in Sri Vrndavana dhama

## On Chanting Hare Krishna



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 Kṛishna 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, purport.

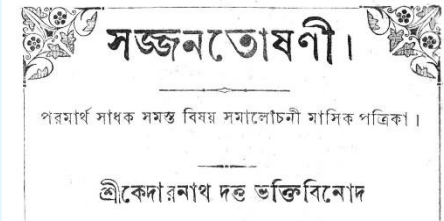
# The Importance of Being Inspired

(Following in the footsteps of  
Srla Bhaktivinode Thakura)



by Aditya Varna dasi

ISKCON Belfast's monthly newsletter *Inspire*, faithfully follows in the footsteps of our predecessor acharya Srla Bhaktivinode Thakura.



In 1882 he launched his monthly newsletter, *Sajjana Tosani*; (that which satisfies the virtuous/gives pleasure to the devotees). In the first edition he outlined the purpose

of his newsletter as follows:

- *Sajjana Tosani* does not discuss worldly news
- It wishes to propagate the message of Sri Chaitanya
- Reviews books
- Highlights cow protection
- Stresses the importance of holy places
- Describes the efficacy of *Nama-hata* preaching (home programmes)
- Advertises upcoming festivals. ([bhaktivinodeinstitute.org](http://bhaktivinodeinstitute.org))

His pioneering missionary spirit encouraged all devotees in whatever circumstances to play their part, however small, in spreading love of God. His outreach and encouragement, to the householder devotees in particular, set the stage for our modern ISKCON movement.

His desire to flood the world with transcendental literature was followed by our founder acharya A C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who established his movement following these principles. He employed all modern means and technology stating that 'Utility is the Principle' ie. we should accept everything that is favourable for use in Krishna's service.

In her article 'The Six Elements of an Effective Newsletter' ([Emfluencemarketingplatform.com](http://Emfluencemarketingplatform.com)), Lindsay Davis outlines what will make it interesting:

- Good content,
- Audience knowledge,
- Strong subject,
- Visually appealing templates,
- Call to action,
- Contact and social information

From even a cursory glance through *Inspire* newsletter, we can quickly see that it covers all these bases, especially in terms of its visual appeal.

ISKCON Founder Acarya, His Divine Grace Srla Prabhupada, expressed delight when he received newsletters from various temples:

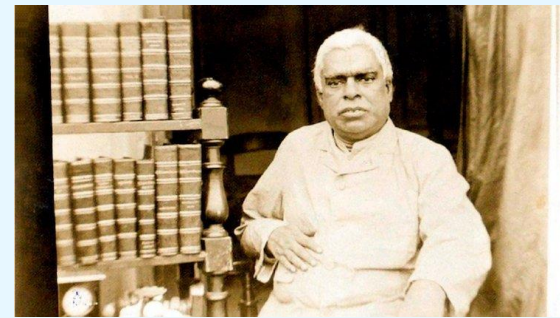
"The newsletters which you have sent are very nice. Thank you very much" *Letter to Ramanuja; 1976. Vedabase*

"I was expecting your newsletter which is very interesting since it's beginning and I wish that you may continue the practice." *Letter to Vamanadeva 1970 L.A. Vedabase*

Thanks to the staff of *Inspire* for all their hard work on this monthly newsletter and to all the contributors who have made it interesting.

Your servant

Aditya Varna dd



"*Sajjana Tosani* does not discuss temporal worldly news. All that news is being published in various transient newspapers every day. The purpose of this magazine is to discuss some of the statements concerning the eternal dharma of the soul. *Srla Bhaktivinoda Thakura. Sajjana Tosani Vol 2 issue 4.*





## Krishna, where are You

By Narayani dasi

Where are You Krishna? Are you a person who actually loves me?

I`m afraid to look inside myself. Maybe there`s nothing there – only emptiness and aloneness.

But when I chant Your name, then You are here with me. I ask You what you want of me.

You say *man-mana* - Give Me your mind. *Bhava mad-bhakto* - become My devotee. *Mad-yaji* - give Me your worship. *Mam namaskuru* - give Me your obeisances. *Mam ekam saranam vraja* – Give Me your full surrender.

You tell me “I want you. Why don`t you accept Me? Why don`t you accept My love?” But I am so unfortunate; I have built so many walls between us. Sometimes I feel so proud. Sometimes I feel so unworthy. I feel that no one, not even Krishna loves me. I am a child, lost in the darkness, crying “Krishna, please pick me up.”

I am afraid to give myself to Krishna because I will lose something. My heart is on fire and your merciful words, Srila Prabhupada, are extinguishing that fire. I feel like breaking those walls and running after Krishna as passionately as I pursue material things. But Krishna is faster than my mind.

I try to give myself to Krishna, to leave myself open to His love. My heart begins to melt but I cannot let go because then I feel too vulnerable and open. How can I face the world like this?

Sometimes I wonder, is this chanting making me sentimental? Or sahajiya? Or just plain crazy? I want to please you Srila Prabhupada, to bring others to you. How do I know if I`m on the right path?

Is my love for this body decreasing and my love for Krishna increasing? This chanting is my heartbeat.

If I stop chanting I will die.

One can offer prayers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead directly but if one repeats the prayers offered by great devotees like Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā, one can please the Supreme Personality of Godhead very easily. *Srimad-Bhagavatam 4.30.3.*



### Lord Brahma`s prayer

My dear Lord, You are the only worshipable Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and therefore I offer my humble obeisances and prayers just to please You.

O son of the king of the cowherds, Your transcendental body is dark blue like a new cloud, Your garment is brilliant like lightning, and the beauty of Your face is enhanced by Your guñjā earrings and the peacock feather on Your head.

Wearing garlands of various forest flowers and leaves and equipped with a herding stick, a buffalo horn and a flute, You stand beautifully with a morsel of food in Your hand. *Srimad Bhagavatam 10.14.1*



## This month's recipe

### Banana and Walnut cake

By Syama dasi



#### Ingredients

- 1/3 cup butter
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 3 tbs milk
- 1tsp lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp almond essence
- 2 cups plain flour
- 1 tsp bicarbonate soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup mashed bananas
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 cup toasted coconut

#### Vanilla Butter Icing

- 3 tbs butter
- 2 cups icing sugar
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 2 tsp vanilla essence

#### Method:

Preheat oven 200 c

1. Cream butter and sugar and stir in milk, lemon juice and almond essence.
2. Sift flour, soda and salt in separate bowl.
3. Beat flour into the liquids.
4. Stir in mashed bananas, toasted coconut and walnuts.
5. Pour batter into two lined 8 inch cake tins
6. Bake in oven of 200 degrees centigrade for 10 mins
7. Turn oven to 180 degrees and bake another 25 mins until cooked
8. Remove from oven and cool completely before spreading the icing.

#### Vanilla Butter Icing

Cream together butter, sugar, salt and vanilla.

If the icing is too dry to spread, add a little cream or milk. If it is too wet, add more icing sugar.

## Temple updates

Website & Facebook  
Click on the links below



Web  
site



Facebook



Thank you to everyone who has recently made a contribution. Your help is essential for temple maintenance and preaching programmes.

Please consider setting up a monthly standing order:

**Ulster Bank**  
**ISKCON Belfast**  
**Account No: 40933052**  
**Sort code: 98-05-90**

or

**Paypal:** (ctrl & click on the link below)



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**Landline:** 02890620530

**Email:** info@iskconbelfast.co.uk

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

**Website** <https://iskconbelfast.co.uk>



## Vaisnava calendar March & April 2023

- 03 Mar 2023 - **Amalaki Vrata Ekadashi**
- 04 Mar 2023 - **Disappearance of Sri Madhavendra Puri**
- 07 Mar 2023 - **Gaura Purnima**
- 08 Mar 2023 - **Festival of Jagannatha Misra**
- 15 Mar 2023 - **Appearance Day of Sri Srivasa Pandita**
- 18 Mar 2023 - **Papamochani Ekadashi**
- 19 Mar 2023 - **Disappearance Day of Sri Govinda Ghosh**
- 26 Mar 2023 - **Appearance Day of Sri Ramanujacharya**
- 30 Mar 2023 - **Rama Navami**
- 01 April 2023 - **Kamada Ekadashi**
- 02 April 2023 - **Damanaka Ropana Dvadasa**
- 06 April 2023 - **Sri Balarama Rasayatra**
- 06 April 2023 - **Sri Krishna Vasanta Rasa**
- 06 April 2023 - **Appearance Day of Sri Vamsivadananda Thakura**
- 06 April 2023 - **Appearance Day of Sri Syamananda Prabhu**
- 15 April 2023 - **Beginning of Salagrama and Tulasi Jala Dana**
- 15 April 2023 - **Disappearance Day of Srila Vrndavana Dasa Thakura**
- 16 April 2023 - **Varuthini Ekadashi**
- 20 April 2023 - **Appearance Day of Sri Gadadhara Pandita**
- 23 April 2023 - **Aksaya Tritiya – Candana Yatra Starts**
- 25 April 2023 - **Appearance Day of Sri Sankaracharya**
- 29 April 2023 - **Appearance Day of Srimati Sita Devi**
- 29 April 2023 - **Appearance Day of Srimati Jahnava Devi**

## Book Distribution



In January 2023, 73 books were distributed in the temple and by street and door-to-door distribution.

## Monthly Outreach Programmes

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month.**

Mantra night at the Women`s Resource centre, Lower Crescent  
- 6.30pm

### **4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of each month.**

Harinama in the city centre outside Dunnes Stores - 1.30pm

If times change, you will receive emails or WhatsApp messages.

Call [07424483907](tel:07424483907) with queries or suggestions.

We are endeavouring to have the temple fit for purpose as soon as possible so that we can continue with regular Sunday programmes.

