



Spiritual Perspectives

Seeing the World through Spiritual Eyes
For Friends and Followers of Mukunda Goswami

July 2020

What ISKCON Can Learn from Black Lives Matter

By Radha devi dasi

Violent protests over police brutality toward minorities that started in the U.S. are now spreading around the world. The movement, affiliated with Black Lives Matter, was energized by the death of a black man, George Floyd, who died at the hands of a U.S. police officer. This police officer knelt on Floyd's neck for over 8 minutes, ignoring his pleas for mercy as well as those of by-standers who pointed out that Floyd was dying. Floyd joins a lengthy list of black citizens killed in the custody of various American police departments.

While Floyd's death puts the spotlight on dangerous racism in the U.S., institutional violence based on racial discrimination is a wide spread reality in Kali-yuga. People in Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, and South America have joined in with protests of their own alleging violence against minorities. While racial violence is a global reality, so too, is the emerging recognition that it is time for things to change.

As Vaishnavas, we have a unique opportunity to both share our spiritual knowledge and to learn from others how to identify and respond to racial discrimination. While it is tempting to believe that we have risen above bodily designations, we also have our own struggles with racial prejudice. ISKCON recently released a statement rightly condemning the brutal murder of George Floyd and sharing our perspective that all living beings are equally beloved children of God. But that same statement acknowledged that our community has its struggles with racism and other forms of oppression.

Some Vaishnavas have commented that the Black Lives Matter movement is rooted in

the material, seeking social, not spiritual change. Others assume that, as transcendentalists, we have already risen above the bodily consciousness and are immune to racism. Both of these perspectives fail to see the real opportunities inherent in the current outcry against racial discrimination.

ISKCON has an obligation to speak out on social issues because we have something important to share with the world. While the Black Lives Matter movement is focused on material solutions to racism, we have the spiritual solution. *Bhagavad-gita*, as many have noted, teaches that all people are equal brothers and sisters, children of the same Father. When we engage with the world on this issue, we have the chance to share this spiritual principle and also to show compassion for the sufferings of others. Such interactions are an important part of ISKCON's preaching efforts and something we can all do within our own circle of influence.

More importantly, this moment in world history offers us the chance to assess our own progress in eradicating bodily consciousness. His Holiness Bhakti-tirtha Swami many times observed that he faced racial discrimination in his ISKCON career. It is not so long since the time when *Bhagavatam* speakers might cite Vedic authority in concluding that Africans (and those of African descent) were a "lesser race."

In fact, many devotees of color have posted on social media recently that racial discrimination has not gone away in ISKCON. Our own devotees report that they are experiencing racism on a regular basis. Ultimately, we will not be rid of racism unless we take a hard look at our institution. Both our own inherent biases and the way that racism



Black Lives Matter has chapters in Toronto and London

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outside of our communities influences the experiences of racial minorities inside ISKCON make this hard look necessary.

Inherent bias affects ISKCON members just as it affects everyone else. It is human nature to feel closer to those who resemble ourselves. Numerous studies have found that people tend to rate others as more likeable and trustworthy when they are rating people from their own racial group. We may naturally gravitate to certain devotees without realizing that we are excluding others who are different from ourselves. Unless we have reached the level of *uttama-adhikari*, we have to be aware of our own biases and consciously counteract them.

In addition, ISKCON communities do not exist in isolation from the larger society. To the extent that people of color are denied educational and financial opportunities in general, that limitation will affect their experience within ISKCON. For example, travel to holy places and spiritual gatherings requires a certain level of financial resource. Those who can do so will

not only receive untold spiritual benefit, but will be perceived by devotees as being more devout, more committed to spiritual life. Those who have been denied access to equal financial opportunity will have their opportunities limited in ISKCON just as in the rest of their lives. The point is that, regardless of whether we see all people as inherently equal, social realities affect the experience of devotees of color.

For these reasons, we must care for devotees whose membership in minority groups may limit their experience of spiritual life. ISKCON South Africa has recognized the need to improve responses to racial prejudice in their region. In a recent statement, they committed to formal training on inclusion and unconscious bias and to identify and correct institutional barriers. This proactive response ought to be emulated throughout ISKCON. While discussions about racial discrimination are uncomfortable and looking at our own failings can be painful, these steps are essential to building a spiritual society.

Several ISKCON Temples Begin to Reopen with Restrictions

By Madhava Smullen for ISKCON News on June 13, 2020
<https://bit.ly/31BzKDM>



Devotees at the entrance to Villa Vrindavana in Italy

After months under lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some ISKCON temples around the world are gradually starting to reopen in phases, with safety restrictions in place according to their local government recommendations.

ISKCON of Philadelphia, USA:

After being closed to the public since March 22nd, the ISKCON temple in Mount Airy, Philadelphia reopened on June 6th for Darshan only during limited hours. The move took place

several days after the Governor of Pennsylvania declared that Philadelphia had entered into the “Yellow” phase.

Guests can attend the temple for Darshan from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Monday to Saturday, and from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 5:45 to 7:15 p.m. on Sunday. Everyone must have their temperature taken using a no-touch thermometer, and must bring and wear their own masks, use hand sanitizer, and sign in before entering. To ensure that social distancing is practiced, only four people at a time, or one whole family, are allowed into the temple

room. As recommended by several devotee doctors, obeisances must be offered in a standing position.

Caranamrita is served in disposable cups, and boxed *maha* sweets are available for guests. Sunday Feast *prasadam* is also distributed, take-out style, every Sunday evening via curbside pickups.

Meanwhile other activities continue online, including a daily morning *Bhagavatam* class and some evening classes over Zoom, daily deity *darshan* on social media, and over-the-phone book distribution.

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“Many in the community were patiently and eagerly awaiting the chance to see the Lord’s Deity form, and during opening weekend we had a good turnout,” says vice president Dronacharya Das. “At the same time, there are some devotees and guests that choose not to come out, and are waiting until they feel the situation is safer for them.”

As far as the future is concerned, he says, “If all goes well, the green phase will likely come within a month of the yellow phase. At that time, we will evaluate opening up the temple for morning and evening programs at a limited capacity, based on government guidelines.

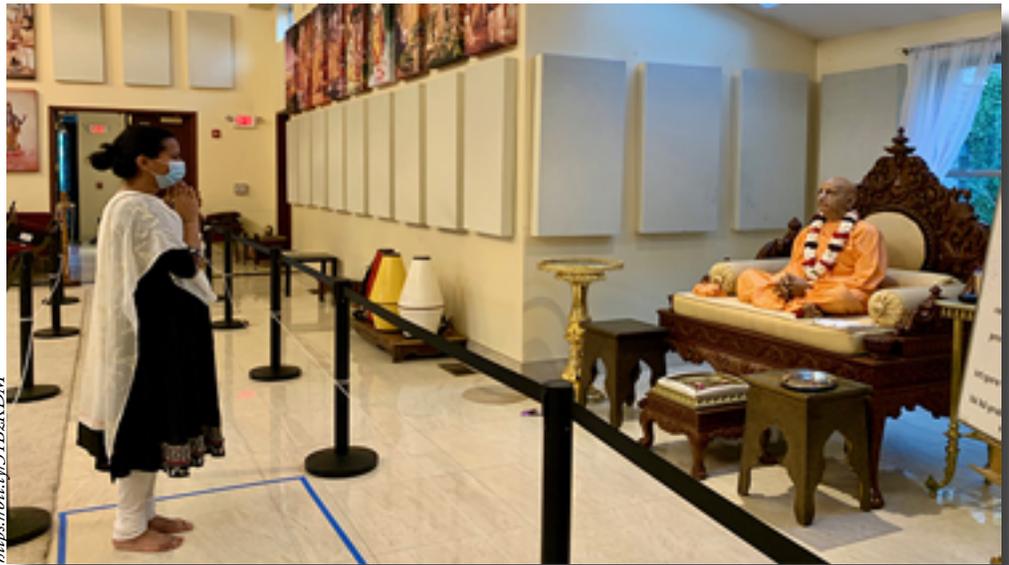
In order to manage the number of people attending temple programs, we will likely adopt an RSVP system.”

Krishna Valley, Hungary:

Krishna Valley was one of the first temples in ISKCON to close down during the pandemic, with the Hungarian Hare Krishna community deciding to go into self-quarantine even before Gaura Purnima on March 9th.

The rural community’s temple and restaurant reopened immediately after the Hungarian government eased restrictions all over the country at the beginning of June. Currently, guests are allowed to visit all ISKCON Hungary’s temples and have lunch at ISKCON restaurants, as long as they use hand sanitizer provided at the entrance, wear masks, and practice social distancing inside the buildings.

With Krishna Valley receiving many phone calls from people who have been waiting a long time to enter the community, devotees are also set to organize several programs for tourists. “We will plan them very carefully, so that people can keep social distance



A devotee pays her respects to Srila Prabhupada at ISKCON Philadelphia, USA

and be safe,” says ISKCON Hungary spokesperson Gandharvika Prema Dasi.

Although the lockdown afforded devotees the chance to develop their online activities and start some innovative virtual initiatives, they are glad to finally be able to meet the people they got to know through the Internet over the last few months.

“As the saying goes, ‘separation makes the heart grow fonder,’” says Gandharvika Prema. “Many devotees feel so much relief to meet others and have some personal interaction after being stuck in separation for such a long time.”

ISKCON Melbourne, Australia:

Over three months since lockdown began in early March, Australia’s Melbourne temple is allowed to welcome twenty congregational members for *aratis*, under strict protocols such as mask wearing, social distancing, and booking online.

Classes and all other programs remain online only. Resident *brahmacaris* and *brahmacharinis* run ongoing temple services, as well as a free meal delivery program for those in need, distributing 500 to 600 *prasadam* meals a week.



Radha Syamasundara is ready to receive guests again in Krishna Valley

Some householders come to do specific services and leave as soon as they are completed.

According to Australian ISKCON Communications Director Bhakta Das, in one month the government will allow fifty people to enter, then beyond that one hundred, and so on.

“The temple is keen to open again, as our finances are severely impeded as you can imagine,” he says.

Villa Vrindavana, Italy:

Villa Vrindavana in Italy, one of the first countries to feel the effects of COVID-19, was closed down from Gaura Purnima (March 9th) until May 23rd. Over the May 23rd weekend, devotees reopened access to the temple, and since the beginning of June, Govinda’s restaurant is also open on weekends.

“In Italy we are in phase 3,” says temple president Parabhakti Das. “Activities are reopened, but people must still wear masks in closed spaces, and social distance must always be maintained even outside in parks and beaches. There is great concern for the future of the economy, because this emergency has put companies, institutions, associations and even religions in major crisis. Everyone has had to cancel and minimize all their programs.”

Most programs at Villa Vrindavana are now being held outside in the garden. Access to the temple is regulated – any visitors must report no COVID-19 symptoms, and must wear

masks and keep social distance. Sunday Feast *prasadam* is distributed in disposable paper plates.

“Devotees are very happy, especially for the association,” says Parabhakti. “Slowly, we are reopening ashram access to those who previously habitually came to do service, and we are planning the reopening of the guest house - all with reduced numbers compared to the past.”

Currently, the temple is only open to guests on the weekend, with programs continuing online throughout the week. Access will be expanded to all days shortly. All spring and summer festivals remain canceled. With Florence *Ratha-yatra* among them, resident temple devotees who have quarantined together throughout – and thus do not need to use protective measures amongst each other – held a forest procession with small Jagannath Deities recently. Villa Vrindavana’s well-known Sravanam Kirtanam kirtan festival will be held online in July.

Future phases, according to Parabhakti, will be gradual, and it will not be possible to return to normal life again soon.

“There is much concern about what will happen in the autumn when temperatures drop and there are more favorable conditions for the spread of viruses, so no one is really speaking of the long term,” he says. “What is certain is that people’s lifestyle will tend to remain different for the next few years. So we must prepare ourselves to find the most effective way to teach Krishna consciousness in these new scenarios.”

Here’s what the science says about the links between religion and health

By Erica Evans, www.deseret.com, June 13, 2020

<https://bit.ly/3dTMyaO>



SALT LAKE CITY — In April, a Virginia pastor died from the coronavirus after telling his congregation to ignore physical distancing rules. Even after the story made national news, some religious leaders continued to defy public health orders and hold services, including a Louisiana pastor who told his church members, “God gave you an immune system to kill that virus.”

The next month, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned the virus can spread easily at large religious gatherings, citing a case where two people with COVID-19 infected 35 others in March at church events in Arkansas.

Stories like these show the potential danger of holding large meetings while the coronavirus continues to claim U.S. lives and could cast religious leaders who insist on public worship in a negative light. But Harold G. Koenig, professor of psychiatry and director of the

Ursula Quintana, and her mother, Joleen Rogers, attend Mass at the Cathedral of the Madeleine in Salt Lake City on Tuesday, May 12, 2020. Spenser Heaps, Deseret News

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Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health at Duke University Medical Center, has some positive news for people of faith. He argues that religiousness may actually reduce a person's risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19.

According to Koenig, people who participate in organized religion or have their own spiritual practices are less likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors like smoking and drinking and more likely to have good habits like eating well and exercising. Not only can religious and spiritual involvement impact people's physical health via their lifestyle choices, but it can also have a significant effect on their emotional well-being, said Koenig. All these factors combined can give a person's immune system a leg-up in fighting off viruses of any kind, he said.

"There's no question religion has an impact on both susceptibility to viral infections and recovery from it once you're infected," said Koenig, who was raised Catholic and now practices in a Protestant church. "This just makes sense when you think about it."

However, Nicole Fisher, president of Health & Human Rights Strategies, a health care and human rights-focused advising firm in Washington, D.C., warns that religion and spirituality are not protective measures against COVID-19 on their own.

"Viruses don't have any respect for religion, race, gender, politics or anything else. They look for a suitable host, and that can be anyone not taking proper precautions," said Fisher, who is spiritual but does not associate with a particular religion.

Still, there are clear links between beliefs, emotions and the body, Fisher said.

"Prayer alone cannot cure you," Fisher said. "But, with medical attention appropriate for how bad your illness is, prayer, meditation and faith can certainly bring a person peace of mind — which can undoubtedly improve mental and emotional health, which is oftentimes linked to physical health."

Behavioral health

More than a hundred studies have found that religious people are less likely to smoke, a habit which has a large impact on coronavirus outcomes.

According to Stanton Glantz, a professor of medicine and director of the University of California, San Francisco's Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education, research shows smoking nearly doubles a person's risk of COVID-19 disease progression, which could involve the need for critical care or death.

Glantz explained that the respiratory system has a very strong natural immune function, starting with microscopic hairs called cilia in the nose that trap viruses, bacteria and toxins. Deeper inside the lungs, cells called macrophages "gobble up" those things that can harm the body.

"Smoking disables a lot of that immune function and makes you more susceptible to getting infected. Then if you get infected, the infections are worse," said Glantz, who added that vaping has a lot of the same effects as smoking.

According to Koenig, most research involving religion and health looks at Christianity, which promotes healthy behaviors by teaching that the body is a temple. But there are a number of studies that also examine Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism, which all espouse similar beliefs about the sanctity of the body. Vegetarianism and yoga practices associated with Hinduism and mindfulness and breathing practices associated with Buddhism can also have direct health benefits, Koenig said.

A 2017 study by researchers from the Emory Rollins School of Public Health categorized subjects as Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, other religion or no religion. The study demonstrated a link between regular attendance at religious services with improved health and lowered mortality. They found that people who attended services frequently had a 40% lower hazard of mortality compared with those who never attended. Even those who attended services less frequently had a greater protection against mortality than those who didn't attend at all, but there were no differences by religious affiliation.

Emotional well-being

Stress increases susceptibility to viral infections, said Koenig, but individual spiritual practices and the support networks that come with organized religion can promote emotional well-being.

"A big part of going to church is the social support in the community that one receives," said Carolyn Aldwin, director of the Center for Healthy Aging Research at Oregon State University. "Social integration has a big effect on health outcomes."

Aldwin was raised Catholic and now attends an Episcopal church. To protect against the coronavirus, religious communities can support people who are older or immunocompromised by calling and checking in on them, or providing services like grocery shopping so they can avoid going out, Aldwin said.

The benefits of emotional self-regulation are also significant, said Aldwin, who has studied the effects of religion and spirituality on people with congestive heart failure.

"When you have something like congestive heart failure, which is very hard to regulate and difficult to live with, being calmer and happier, and maybe feeling supported may allow you to experience less distress and even live longer," Aldwin said.

According to Koenig, positive emotions have the opposite effect on the immune system that negative emotions and stress have.

"If you have meaning and purpose, if you have joy and satisfaction with life, if you experience a sense of peace, all of that has a positive impact on the immune system in the exact opposite way seen with chronic stress, anxiety and depression," Koenig said.

Cardiologist Dhanunjaya Lakkireddy, medical director of the Kansas City Heart Rhythm Institute, has set out to test the health impacts of one particular spiritual practice: prayer.

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Lakkireddy's COVID prayer study is set up as a double-blind randomized control trial, where coronavirus patients who voluntarily enroll on the website will be assigned into either a control group, or a group that will be prayed for by various volunteer religious groups representing the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and Buddhist traditions. Lakkireddy and his colleagues plan to measure whether this remote intercessory prayer affects coronavirus outcomes like mortality, number of days in the ICU and days on a ventilator.

Lakkireddy was born into Hinduism and went to a Catholic school, but doesn't consider himself to belong to one religion in particular. He said the study required hardly any funding from the institute because he and others have all volunteered their time.

"I was always intrigued by this idea of a supernatural divine power that can impact what we do as human beings on this earth," said Lakkireddy. "As scientific and critical as I want to be in my thinking, the question about this divine force interested me."

But Aldwin is skeptical that any one aspect of spirituality, like prayer will prove to have a large impact on health with the coronavirus.

"People who are sincerely religious have multiple things going for them, it's the community which provides support, almost like a social safety net. There's the better health behaviors, the calmness and acceptance in the face of adversity," said Aldwin. "It's the whole package."

Gathering to worship

While some religious practices and belief systems may be correlated with healthy behaviors, the benefits could be instant-

ly negated if people of faith are gathering to worship in large groups without the proper precautions, like social distancing and wearing masks. Multiple coronavirus outbreaks have been traced to religious groups, like Orthodox Jewish communities in New York or the Shincheonji religion in South Korea.

"Religiousness, spirituality or faith, as in all facets of life and current health challenges, can be part of the problem or part of the solution," said Jeff Levin, University Professor of epidemiology and population health and director of the program on religion and population health at Baylor University. "Where there are messages coming from the pulpit, or coming from religious leaders, telling people to ignore public health messages, I just think it's incredibly foolish."

With coronavirus fatalities decreasing by the week across the country, U.S. churches are beginning to open back up. But most are trying to discourage the hugging and hand-shaking that typically accompanies fellowship. Some are implementing rules regarding how close people can sit in the pews, or eliminating the tradition of singing hymns because exhaling air with increased force can spread the virus farther.

Levin, who is Jewish, said he thinks these precautions are reasonable and wise.

"Churches and pastors and religious organizations shouldn't be a source of anxiety for people, or discouragement, they should be supporting people and letting people know we will get through this, just a little longer," said Levin. "We don't want to undo the good that we've done. There is still so much we don't know about the virus, and we are still learning that things could go south at any moment. It's not time for a victory lap at all."

Reviving Hope Amidst a Culture of Violence - A Statement by ISKCON on 'Black Lives Matter

By ISKCON North American Communications Ministry for ISKCON News on June 5, 2020

<https://bit.ly/2NI4jiS>

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) wishes to lend our voice to the outcry of millions of people across the United States and around the world, who are calling for justice for abused minorities and protection for all people.

The recent murder of George Floyd was a terrible crime. We pray to God, known in our tradition as Sri Krishna, for the soul of Mr. Floyd and for the well-being



<https://bit.ly/2NI4jiS>

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of his family, friends and community. Sadly, we know his death is but one crime among a long list of heinous violence committed against our black brothers and sisters.

America is a great nation, founded on meaningful principles. The Declaration of Independence states “We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness...”

Despite these lofty words, throughout America’s history the vision of equal opportunity, equal rights before the law, and equal protection by and from the government has not been the reality for many.

Over the last few days these underlying injustices and tensions again reached a boiling point. Thousands have taken to the streets in anger and frustration with a cry for reform—this too being a God-given and constitutional right. In some cities, governments and police agencies have acted respectfully, protecting and even supporting the protesters. In some places—most notably our nation’s capital—police and other agents sworn to protect citizens have instead fired tear gas and rubber bullets into crowds of peaceful protestors. Conversely, in some places protests have been infiltrated by criminals who commit theft, arson, and other wanton acts of violence.

Why such violence? The Vedic scriptures describe this time as the age of quarrel and hypocrisy. It is a time dominated by conceptions of us vs. them, white vs. black, abused and abuser, and of increasing hatred and divisiveness.

What can be done in the face of such divisiveness and suffering? Our Vaishnava philosophy invites us to recognize that we are not black, white, or brown. We are spiritual beings, sons and daughters of the Divine. Our exploitation of each other

arises from forgetfulness of this deeper connection—incensed by a blind and unfounded fear of the other.

Second, it is incumbent upon us to root out the culture of violence that ails our society. The statistics are clear—killing, violence and abuse are an increasingly dominant aspect of American culture. Speaking out against this, we decry all those who cause violence against the black community. We decry those who cause violence against other minorities, including Jews, Muslims, and Hindus, and against people both brown and white. We call for the protection of all human beings, and Mother Earth herself, and all her children.

Last, we must recognize that we are not proprietors of this Earth. Our planet is not here for us to claim, or to make war over. The entire world is a gift of God. Our bodies—whatever their color—are gifts of God. We should use the short time we have in this life to seek spiritual solutions to the myriad crises we face, and not blindly seek material objects for selfish gain.

Thus, we pray for George Floyd. We pray for all oppressed minorities across America and the world, and beseech the Lord for their protection. We also pray for those that promote hatred, those who have allowed their hearts to become callous to the suffering of others, that they might someday realize the terrible pain they cause and to learn to amend their oppressive ways.

And, while we seek profound change, we also value practical steps. Within our own communities, racism also sometimes raises its ugly head. Therefore, we are promoting expanded public dialogue and understanding. We also call upon governments, led by conscientious men and women to undo systemic racism wherever it festers, undo the culture of wanton violence, and undo the excessive exploitation of the Earth and her creatures, so that the ideals of America’s Founding Fathers may again give light to hope and not cynicism, to inspiration and not despair.

Kirtan Fest Global Conducts Kirtan Fest India and Bangladesh Online

By Ekalavya Das for ISKCON News on June 5, 2020
<https://bit.ly/38gmANJ>

The ISKCON Harinam Sankirtan Ministry was appointed this year by the GBC. The minister is Lokanath Swami. In one of its first initiatives, the Ministry began Kirtan Fest Global, a global brand to promote Kirtan Festivals throughout the world. What better place to start than Mother India?

Kirtan Fest Global organized the Kirtan Fest India Online for ISKCON India from 10th May - 17th May, 2020 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., which was live streamed on Facebook. The event was so popular that the organizers extended it from 7 days to 8 days for a total of 96 hours of Kirtan Fest India Online.

The purposes of the event were:

(a) To provide an opportunity to ISKCON India’s devotees to stay connected with each other even under this lockdown period through participating in non-stop 12 hour kirtans everyday.

(b) To foster their connection and service to the holy names of the Lord.

(c) To express our gratitude and appreciation to tens of thousands of doctors, nurses, police, government officers and all others who unselfishly put aside their own safety to protect those in need.

(d) To pray for the welfare of all living entities during this Corona pandemic crisis in India and other countries by satisfying Krishna through *Harinam Sankirtan*.

(e) To promote the Yuga Dharma: Congregational Chanting of Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.

This event was inspired by the wonderful success of the Festival of the Holy Name organized by the devotees in the

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Alachua Community. Pancharatna Das, a disciple of Founder-*Acharya* Srila Prabhupada, in conjunction with ISKCON Communications India, offered the service to the ISKCON Harinam Sankirtan Ministry.

An online group on Facebook was created by the name Kirtan Fest India Online. <https://bit.ly/KirtanFestIndiaOnline>

The slots for kirtans and the schedule was made available here: www.signupgenius.com/go/kirtanfestindiaonline

All slots for the entire event were filled up by Day 2.

Outreach: Over 25,000 people have commented or reacted to the sessions with over 3,263 members joining the Kirtan Fest India Online group. The event was promoted only one day in advance through the Dandavats and Whatsapp Network of devotees. There were 192 kirtan slots of 30 minutes each. One hundred and twenty two of the kirtans were performed by ISKCON Youth and ISKCON 2nd and 3rd Generation devotees.

Planning and Execution: Initially, a group of seven devotees planned and executed this online event. The team grew to 15 members as the event started, working round the clock - moderating, promoting, scheduling, following-up, dealing with ad hocs if *Kirtanias* did not show up, inviting senior *Kirtanias* and other related tasks. For many organizers and participating devotees this was their first real hands-on experience in organizing an online event. The event served to increase their own horizon and bring to their awareness the vast potential and opportunity that the internet offers for outreach preaching. His Grace Jagannatha Kirtananada Prabhu (JPS) served as the project manager.

Participation: Devotees from different nations with different cultures, different genders, different age groups, different ashrams, different levels were seen coming together in *Harinam Sankirtan*. One devotee remarked in a message: "A beautiful and inspiring endeavor. The best part is seeing all these devotees whom one has never seen, or heard before. Truly reaching every home in every town and village. Heartfelt congrats to the ISKCON *Harinam Sankirtan* Ministry and the organizers."

What's Next?: The event was part of the Kirtan Fest Global initiative which is promoting the chanting of holy names in different

nations. The next step is to begin organizing Kirtan Fest Online initiatives in different countries. Tentative plans are being made for Russia, and the UK. Gradually more countries may be introduced. The current facebook group will be rebranded with the name of the next country, while retaining all the present members. In this way, the group will continue to grow. If the local laws allow public gatherings in the future, live festivals and kirtan concerts may be organized under the banner of Kirtan Fest. Devotees in Bangladesh have approached Kirtan Fest Global. Kirtan Fest Bangladesh Online is currently in progress. It is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Bangladesh Time GMT (+6) June 1 - 6, 2020.

You can join the initiative here: <https://bit.ly/KirtanFestBangladesh>

Vote of Thanks: We are so grateful to all the devotees who came forward to participate and reciprocated with our efforts to serve, to the organizing team who worked tirelessly for making this happen and to Srila Prabhupada for giving us the most valuable gift of the holy names.

We consider being engaged in the service of the holy names our most cherished treasure.

"The holy name of Krishna is transcendently blissful. It bestows all spiritual benedictions, for it is Krishna Himself, the reservoir of all pleasure." (*Caitanya Caritamrta Madhya Lila* 17.133

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All festival videos can be accessed at the following link.

<https://bit.ly/KirtanFestIndiaOnline>

ISKCON Harinam Sankirtan Ministry
Website: www.KirtanMinistry.com

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

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<https://bit.ly/38gmzANJ>

Personal Message



Dear Friends,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

The term “pure devotional service” appears 2761 times in Srila Prabhupada’s teachings.

Srila Prabhupada didn’t coin the phrase, “purity is the force,” but he accepted it wholeheartedly, as is clearly evidenced in his books, lectures, and conversations.

Here are a few examples:

“Similarly, in this institution if there is a bad disciple, he can burn the whole institution into ashes. The Governing Body Commission’s duty is therefore to see that every member is following the rules and regulations and chanting sixteen round regularly on the beads. I hope the GBC in cooperation with the Sannyasis in their touring program will be able to keep vigilance systematically in order to keep the Society as pure as possible.” (letter to Bali Mardana, August 25, 1970, Tokyo).

“I am glad that you have admitted about the GBC members not very appropriately discharging their duty. I do not mind this discrepancy but you should be alert; you and all GBC members. We are now growing in volume all over the world dealing with public money. People have respect for our movement. Now it is time for GBC members to be very very careful so that people may not point out any black spot in the behavior of our society. I have issued a letter to all the GBC members only for this purpose that each one of you should always think how to improve the cause and advance our society and as soon as there is some good point you can communicate with your colleagues and give some decision and put it before me so that I can give my final approval. So you should not remain for a moment without thought of improving ISKCON activity. So far you are concerned, being the zonal secretary of that quarter of the world, your duty is to see that all our different centers within your jurisdiction must be going very accurately. The accounts are not being kept very scientifically and if there is extravagant spending that should be changed. We should simply accept the bare necessities of life. The balance money and energy should be employed for pushing forward Krishna’s mission.” (letter to Tamal Krsna Goswami, September 1, 1971, London).

Srila Prabhupada was uncompromising right up until the time of his departure from this world.

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

