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IPBYS Prison Program
Newsletter and Vaishnava Calendar – April 2015

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna – Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama – Rama Rama Hare Hare

Newsletter Contents:

A Note from the Editors

What You Cannot Even Imagine

Vaishnava Calendar

Vaishnava Song: Hari Bole Moder Gaura
Elo

Reader Contribution



IPBYS

INTERNATIONAL PURE BHAKTI
YOGA SOCIETY

·PRISON SEVA·

“What is written in your fate can change by chanting pure *harinama*.” – Shрила
Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja

A Note from the Editors

Dear Readers,

In honor of the festival of Gaura Purnima, last month's newsletter hoped to give you a taste of just some of the sweet pastimes of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who is Shri Krishna Himself, covered by the moods and complexion of Shrimati Radhika.

As an extension of our Gaura Purnima celebrations, this month we found a beautiful lecture by our Srila Gurudeva, which he spoke the night after Gaura Purnima in 2004. In it he reveals some of the moods of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the treasures He distributed, the deep value of *harinama*, as well as some instructions for our highest benefit, all in light of *Sri Siksastikam*, the eight verses that Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu wrote during His time here.

We hope that the following gives you a fuller understanding of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and that His teachings find some resonance in your own lives.

In service,

IPBYS Prison Program

What You Cannot Even Imagine

A lecture given by Shrila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja in Govardhan, India on 7th March 2004, the night after Gaura Purnima.

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was totally absorbed in *prema* (ecstatic transcendental love of God). At night He was not able to sleep. In the company of Shri Raya Ramananda and Shri Svarupa Damodara, He would somehow spend His nights – with great difficulty – and those nights seemed to be very long.

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

["O *sakhi* (friend), in separation from Govinda (another name for Krishna), even a moment seems like a millennium. Tears begin to shower from my eyes like rain from the clouds, and this entire world seems void." (*Sri Siksastakam*, verse 7)]

One second for Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was like hundreds of thousands of millenniums in separation from Krishna. In His meeting, millions of millenniums seemed to be like a moment. This mood is also seen in the life of

Shrimati Radhika. Along with Shri Raya Ramananda and Shri Svarupa Damodara, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu spent his last days in the Gambira in Jagannatha Puri. There, in the mood of Radhika, He composed eight verses known as *Sri Siksastakam*.

*ceto-darpana-marjanam bhava-mahadavagni-
nirvapanam
sreya-kairava-candrika-vitaranam vidyavadhu-
jivanam
anandambudhi-varadhanam prati-padam
purnamrtasvadanam
sarvatma-snapanam param vijayate sri-krsna-
sankirtanam*

["Let there be supreme victory for the chanting of the holy name of Shri Krishna, which cleanses the mirror of the heart and completely extinguishes the blazing forest fire of material existence. *Shri-krishna-sankirtana* (the congregational singing of the names of Krishna) diffuses the soothing moon rays of *bhava* (transcendental emotions), which cause the

white lotus of good fortune for the *jivas* (conditioned souls) to bloom. The holy name is the life and soul of transcendental knowledge, since Vidya (divya Sarasvati-devi, the goddess of knowledge) is Sri Nama Prabhu's (the personification of Sri Krishna's name) consort. It continuously increases the ocean of transcendental bliss, enabling one to taste complete nectar at every step. The holy name thoroughly bathes and cools the body, mind and soul." (*Sri Siksastikam*, verse 1)]

These eight verses of *Sri Siksastakam* correspond to Krishna's *asta-kaliya-lila* (pastimes performed in the eight periods of the twenty-four hour day). In the maha-mantra there are eight couplets: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. Herein there are sixteen names with eight couplets. In these couplets both the moods of separation and meeting that take place during those pastimes are present. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has described this in *Sri Bhajana Rahasya*.

All of you should try to understand and realize this. There is no need to ask everyday, "Maharaja, two years, ten years, twenty years have passed. What is new?" Rather hear *hari-katha* (discussions on Shri Krishna) more carefully. If you want to ask about the subject matter you may, but remain stable in chanting.

Both *sadya* (perfection) and *sadhana* (the path to perfection) – everything – is available in *harinama*. What you cannot even imagine is present in *harinama*. Chant, and you will find everything there.

All the pastimes of Shri Krishna are present in His names:

*suditastsrta-janarti-rasaye ramya-cid-ghana-
sukha-svarupine
nama! gokula-mahotsavaya te krsna! purna-
vapuse namo namah*

["O Krishna-nama (the name of Krishna, which is non-different from Him), You destroy the suffering of those who take shelter of You. You are the playful embodiment of *saccidananda* (eternity, bliss and knowledge), You are the



Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu by the ocean in Jagannatha Puri

great festival of Gokula, and You are all-pervading. I offer my humble obeisances unto You time and again." (*Sri Krishna-Namastakam*, verse 7)]

*yasomati-nandana, vraja-vara-nagara,
gokula-ranjana kana
gopi-parana-dhana, madana manohara,
kaliya-damana-vidhana*

["Krishna is Yasoda Maiya's beloved son, and the topmost lover in Vrajabhumi. As Kana (an affectionate name for Him) He delights Gokula and is the wealth of the life of the *gopis* (cowherd maidens). He is an inveterate thief, stealing the hearts of all, and He punished the Kaliya serpent." (*Yasomati-Nandana*, verse 1)]

*amala harinama amiya-vilasa
vipina-purandara,navina-nagara-vara
vamsi-vadana, suvasa*

["These spotless holy names are filled with all of Lord Krishna's sweet pastimes. He is the King of all the forests of Vraja. He is the ever-fresh and



The ever-fresh, ever-youthful, all-attractive Krishna

and ever-youthful lover, always wearing very beautiful garments, attracting the *gopis* with His bodily fragrance, and holding the flute to His lips.” (Yasomati-Nandana, verse 2)]

*vibhavari-sesa, aloka-pravesa,
nidra chadi' utho jiva
bolo' hari hari, mukunda murari,
rama krsna hayagriva*

[“Night is over; the light of dawn is coming – Arise, O soul, give up your sleep! Chant the names of Hari! Mukunda! Murari! Rama! Krishna! and Hayagriva! Hari steals all our *anarthas* (unfavorable qualities in the heart), sins and miseries. Mukunda easily gives liberation and more than that, *prema-sukha*. His smiling face is beautiful like the very fragrant white *kunda* flower. Murari killed the Mura demon, who represents all the bad things in our hearts. Rama – Krishna’s expansion as His elder brother Balarama. Krishna – the attractor of all living beings. Hayagriva – the incarnation of Rama and Krishna with the head of a horse who gave the Vedas and Upanisads.” (Vibhavari-

Sesa, verse 1)]

All these are the truths of *harinama*. The pastimes, forms and features of Krishna implied by the above-mentioned names are present in the names themselves. The names themselves are the performers of the pastimes and the possessors of the forms. Everything is in *harinama*. We are praying for mercy when we utter each name.

*harinama, tuwa aneka svarupa
yasoda-nandana, ananda-varadhana, nanda-
tanaya rasa-kupa*

[“O Harinama, you possess unlimited forms, such as Yasoda’s beloved son, He who increases the bliss of Gokula, the son of Nanda, and the deep well of *rasa*.” (Harinama Tuwa, verse 1)]

Chant these names with great love, under the guidance of Vaisnavas. *Anugatya* – *anu* means to always stay in the *dhama* (the holy land, physically, or more importantly, to reside there within our hearts), under proper guidance.

Ceto-darpana-marjanam – your consciousness will be cleansed and you will see your own spiritual form. All *anarthas*, such as *nama-aparadha*, *guru-aparadha* and *vaisnava-aparadha* (offenses to *harinama*, *guru* and *vaishnavas*), will be removed. Even *laya* (sleep), *viksepa* (distraction), *apratipatti* (indifference or disinterest in spiritual topics), *kasaya* (tendency towards bad habits) and *rasasvada* (taste for material enjoyment) will be removed. First, take shelter of a bona fide Guru. Guru should be of a high standard. Take *harinama* and *diksha* initiations from such a Guru, with full faith. After *anartha-nvrtti* (the stage of clearing of obstacles), the names chanted will become more pure, but *namabhasa* (that stage of chanting when offences are clearing and pure chanting is approaching) will not give perfection. Only fully pure chanting gives perfection. When offences lessen, *bhava*, transcendental emotions, will come.

*nasta-prayesu abhadresu
nityam bhagavata-sevaya
bhagavaty uttama-sloke
bhaktir bhavati naisthiki*

["By regular attendance in classes on the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact." (*Srimad Bhagavatam* 1.2.18)]

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura describes "*ceto-darpana-marjanam*" in *Sri Bhajana Rahasya*. When one serves a bona fide Guru, *paramarthika* (transcendental) *sraddha* (faith that simply by serving Krishna, all subsidiary activities are automatically accomplished) will manifest. When this faith becomes mature, *nistha* (steadiness) will come, and then *ruci* (taste). When you chant after *ruci*, then *ceto darpana marjanam* (cleansing the dust from the mirror of the heart) will manifest. Your soul will become uncovered from the dirt of materialism.

A woman has left her husband, a son gets married and leaves home, a husband and wife are fighting, someone is sick and cannot even walk, someone dies – so many obstacles come, and this is called *mahadavagni* (the great fire of material existence). This great fire is extinguished by *harinama*. Therefore, under the guidance of Guru and Vaishnava, perform *bhajana* (one's personal spiritual practice, the chanting of *harinama*).

Shri Prahlada Maharaja told his father:

sri-prahlada uvaca
tat sadhu manye 'sura-varya dehinam
sada samudvigna-dhiyam asad-grahat
hitvatma-patam grham andha-kupam
vanam gato yad dharim asrayeta

["Prahlada Maharaja replied: O best of the *asuras*, King of the demons, as far as I have learned from my spiritual master, any person who has accepted a temporary body and temporary household life is certainly embarrassed by anxiety because of having fallen in a dark well where there is no water but only suffering. One should give up this position and go to the forest (*vana*). More clearly, one should go to Vrindavana, where only Krishna consciousness is prevalent, and should thus take

shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Srimad Bhagavatam*, 7.5).]

This will not happen automatically. In the material concept of life one is always thinking, "I have this problem or that problem. I have this sickness, etc." Someone told me today that they have not been able to get rid of their sickness even after fourteen years. If one chants with *ruci*, taste, there is not a single problem in this world that cannot be removed. Your destiny can be changed. What is written in your fate can change by chanting pure *harinama*, and this pure chanting comes by service to Guru and Vaishnava. Guru will change your fate.

As soon as you take birth you begin to die, but don't be afraid of death or problems. Problems will come; but by chanting, when all the *anarthas* (obstacles caused by offences and past sins) are removed, the forest fire of this world will be cooled.

When a *kumudini* lotus flower gets beams of light from the moon, it blossoms. Similarly, by chanting *harinama* by the aforementioned process, the beautiful qualities that are dormant in you will blossom.

You should come to the platform of *ruci*, and then there will be no fatigue or laziness. There will be no *anarthas* to disturb you in your chanting.

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is sometimes absorbed in separation and sometimes in meeting.

evam-vratah sva-priya-nama-kirtya
jatanurago druta-citta ucchaih
hasaty atho roditi rauti gayaty
unmada-van nrtyati loka-bahyah

["By chanting the holy name of the Supreme Lord, one comes to the stage of love of Godhead. Then the devotee is fixed in his vow as an eternal servant of the Lord, and he gradually becomes very much attached to a particular name and form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As his heart melts with ecstatic love, he laughs very loudly or cries or shouts. Sometimes he sings and dances like a madman,



Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, full of ecstatic love for Krishna (prema) and in deep separation Him, running into the forest in search of Krishna, with His own devotees following behind.

for he is indifferent to public opinion." (Srimad Bhagavatam, 11.2.40)]

Why is Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu displaying such emotions as crying, laughing, and rolling on the ground? People of this world do not understand this. Nobody but a *rasika* devotee, a devotee who is tasting all varieties of *rasas* (various transcendental loving sentiments), can understand. Ordinary people may think He was simply crazy.

“Prati padam” means that this bliss increases with each and every step. It increases every day. Just like waves appear in the ocean, one will be tossed in the ocean of *prema* by the waves of *ananda* (bliss), and in the end he will drown in that ocean. Now he has complete perfection. He goes to Vrindavana and achieves the *rasa* for which he has aspired and practiced.

How will *ceto-darpana-marjanam* (the cleansing of the mirror-like heart) start?

*namnam akari bahudha nija-sarva-saktis
tatrarpita niyमितah smarane na kalah*

*etadrsi tava krpa bhagavan mamaṇi
durdaivam idrsam ihajani nanuragah*

[“O Bhagavan (God), Your holy name bestows all auspiciousness upon the living entities. Therefore, for the benefit of the *jivas*, You eternally manifest Your innumerable names, such as Rama, Narayana, Krishna, Mukunda, Madhava, Govinda, and Damodara. You have invested those names with all the potencies of their respective forms. Out of causeless mercy, You have not even imposed any restrictions on the chanting and remembrance of such names. Nonetheless, I am so unfortunate due to committing offenses that I have no attachment for Your holy name, which is so easily accessible and bestows all good fortune.” (Sri Siksastakam, verse 2)]

Shri Krishna has so much power. In a blink of an eye, within one second, through the various Lord Brahmas He can create and destroy millions of universes. He is *rasika* (a taster of divine sentiments), beautiful, sweet and causelessly merciful.

Harinama doesn't consider any prohibitions, such as not chanting in the day or in the night, while eating or not eating, with or without having bathed, on *japa* (chanting) beads or without, while walking or sitting. There are no rules. Harinama is so merciful, but it is my misfortune that I cannot chant. *Durdaivam* means offenses. You have no taste because you are diseased, and the disease you are suffering is like jaundice. Sweet candy tastes bitter to a jaundiced person. Chanting is the medicine of this jaundice of ignorance. Always chant *harinama* and pray to Lord Krishna; "Please help me."

How will I become free from this offensive chanting? What is the remedy for this? There is a remedy:

*trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna
amanina manadena kirtaniya sada harih*

["Thinking oneself to be even lower and more worthless than the insignificant grass which is trampled beneath the feet of all, being more tolerant than a tree, accepting no honor, but offering respect to all others according to their respective positions, one should continuously chant the holy name of Shri Hari." (Sri Siksastakam, verse 3)]

If you have a desire to chant *harinama* and want to know how to achieve the stage of *prema*, then try to understand this:

*ye-rupe la-ile nama prema upajaya
tahara laksana suna, svarupa-rama-raya*

["Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu continued, "O Svarupa Damodara Gosvami and Ramananda Raya, hear from Me the symptoms of how one should chant the Hare Krishna maha-mantra to awaken very easily one's dormant love for Krishna."(Caitanya-caritamrta, Antya 20.20)]

Every day people ask me, "Tell me something fresh." I tell them, "Open your heart. Hear from me with an open heart." You say, "I want to be like Maharaji," but you won't try to be. You must do some endeavor. Become *trnad api* – more humble than a blade of grass. If you step on grass it pops up. Be more humble than that. Be like a

tree. If one hits a tree with a stone, it will give fruits. If one dries it, still it will not ask for water – and it gives shade. It will give whatever a person wants – leaves, wood, etc. Many diseases are cured by *neem* leaves, and from the barks of many trees varieties of medicines are made. A tree never says, "I won't give this to you." Animals will run away if you want their hair or eyes, but a tree will never run away if you go to take something from it.

Tolerate insults. Don't become absorbed in this "itching" of problems. According to other's qualification give them respect, thinking that Krishna is in their heart. Fighting is caused by personal desire for respect. If someone insults Shрила Sukadeva Gosvami, he will not fight. Even when Draupadi was attempted to be stripped naked, she did not say anything against her assaulters. Even if one has no good qualities, still the Lord is inside of him – so we should give him respect.

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

["O Jagadisa, I do not desire wealth, followers such as wife, sons, friends and relatives, nor mundane knowledge expressed in poetic language. My only desire, O Pranesvara, is that in birth after birth I may have *ahaituki-bhakti* unto Your lotus feet." (Sri Siksastakam, verse 4)]

Na dhanam na janam – you should have no desires for followers, wives, relatives and friends. *Sundarim kavitam* – you should not think, "When I become learned, then I will chant." There is no need for going to a University. Rather, come to the school and college of Shрила Haridasa Thakura. Some of Shрила Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's disciples went to college, and all of those who did so destroyed their spiritual lives. There is no need for this. Whatever qualities you have, engage these in the service of Bhagavan, God. Some persons who were living in the *matha* (temple) went to learn various melodies and rhythms for *kirtana* and *mrdanga* (a type of drum), and after this they went out to teach professionally – only to make money.

You are very insignificant. Be humble. Think yourself just a small particle of dust at the lotus feet of the Lord, nothing else. Be attached to the dust particles at Lord Krishna's feet. This dust is important. Don't think, "There is so much dust in the whole world, so why go to Gurudeva to take dust?" We want to be like that dust. Don't be proud, thinking, "I know so much." Tomorrow you may die, but you do not know this. What will happen next? You don't know this. With full faith, therefore chant *harinama* under the guidance of Guru and Vaisnavas. Desire to be a dust particle – first of Shri Gurudeva's lotus feet – and he will make you a dust particle of Shri Krishna's feet.

Pray always for *prema*:

*nayanam galad-asru-dharaya
vadanam gadgada-ruddhaya gira
pulkair nicitam vapuh kada
tava nama-grahane bhavisyati*

["O Lord, when will my eyes be filled with a stream of tears? When will my voice choke up? And when will the hairs of my body stand erect in ecstasy as I chant your holy name?" (Sri Siksastakam, verse 6)]

Always call out while chanting, "Alas Shri Krishna, Oh Shri Radha!" If tears do not flow from your eyes, then call out, "Oh Nityananda! Oh Haridas Takura! Alas, Sachinanda Gaurahari!" You have given mercy to so many non-devotees like Jagai and Madhai, and millions of devotees so please give mercy to me.

*yugayitam nimesena caksusa pravrsayitam
sunyayitam jagat sarvam govinda-virahena me*

["O *sakhi*, in separation from Govinda, even a moment seems like a millennium. Tears begin to shower from my eyes like rain from the clouds, and this entire world seems void." (Sri Siksastakam, verse 7)]

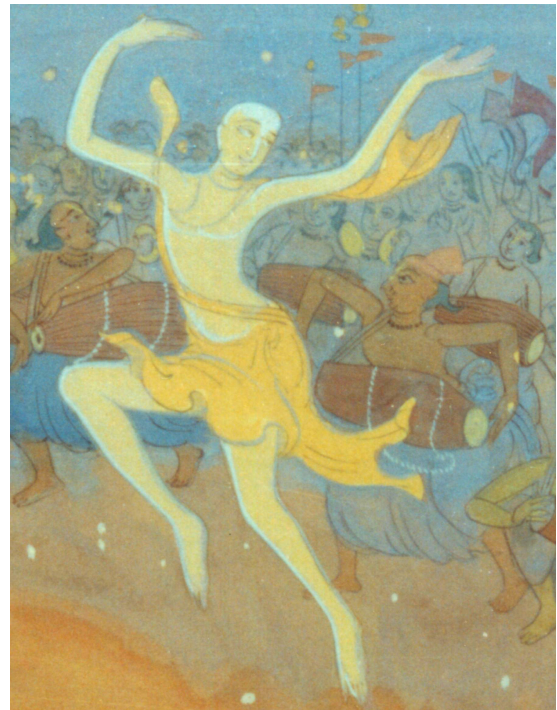
When will we reach the stage of separation of Govinda, when one second will feel like millions of millenniums, and millenniums will feel like a moment in His *darsana* (vision). This can happen only when Shrimati Radhika will be merciful.

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

["Let Krishna tightly embrace this maidservant who is attached to the service of His lotus feet, and thus make Me His very own. Or let Him break My heart by not being present before Me. He is a debauchee and can do whatever He likes. Even if He cavorts with other lovers directly in front of Me, He is still My *prananatha* (the Lord of my life). I have no one other than Him." (Sri Siksastakam, verse 8)]

At that time, when you will reach that stage, your *bhakti* will touch *madanakya-mahabhava*. This verse is of that stage.

In your present stage you must develop this mood with Sri Guru: "If you are satisfied in giving me *sannyasa* (renounced order) you can do so, or if you want me to be naked I will do so. But please don't remove me from Your lotus feet. You can crush me or You can show me affection. You may not show me that you love me anymore. You may love somebody else more than me. But still, whatever you do, you are my master." Perform your *bhajana* like this. All of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings are in these verses.



Shriman Mahaprabhu blissfully performing *harinama*.

Vaishnava Calendar

The Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition celebrates many festival days throughout the year, following the Vedic lunar calendar, and as such the dates on which the festivals fall differ each year. Listed below are the dates on which we fast (*Ekadasi* and others, indicated in italics) and the break fast times, spanning three months for five US time-zones (EST, CST, MST, PST, HST). Also included are several other significant festival dates, including the appearance days (birthdays) and disappearance days (when a saint leaves their body) of prominent pure Vaishnava saints, as well as the birthdays of Krishna's incarnations (also known as appearance days).

The Vedas describe several reasons for fasting on *Ekadasi* (the 11th day after the full or new moon). Shрила Bhaktivinoda Thakura's song, *Shuddha-Bhakata*, describes the day of *Ekadasi* as "mother of devotion", because *Ekadasi* is Krishna's merciful manifestation as a day. By fasting from grains and beans, consuming only what we need for our sustenance and making the focus of the day our devotional practice, we are directly serving Krishna. By offering all of our actions to Krishna and honouring the spiritual practices of the day we will come to know Him. As such we also fast in the style of *Ekadasi* on His appearance days.

Restricted and Permitted Foods on *Ekadasi*

The essence is to eat simply, once or twice, so that one can spend as much time as possible hearing, chanting and remembering Shri Shri Radha-Krishna. Never eat meat, fish, eggs, onions, garlic, carrots, red lentils, green flat lentils, mushrooms or products thereof.

Restricted foods on *Ekadasi*:

- ~ Tomatoes, eggplants, cauliflower, broccoli, bell peppers, beets, bitter melon, ladies' fingers and banana flowers
- ~ Peas, chickpeas and all types of beans, including products made from beans (e.g., papadams, tofu, tempeh)
- ~ All leafy vegetables (e.g., spinach, salads, cabbages) and leafy herbs like parsley, coriander leaves, celery and curry leaves
- ~ Grains (e.g., millet, barley, farina, pasta, rice, corn) and all types of flour made from grains and beans (e.g., rice flour, chickpea flour, urad dahl flour)
- ~ Starches from corn or grains, and products made from or mixed with these starches like baking soda, baking powder, certain soft drinks with corn syrup, custard, certain yogurts and puddings, certain varieties of cream and cottage cheese, certain sweets and candies, and tapioca balls
- ~ Oils made from grains (e.g., corn oil, mustard oil, sesame oil) and products fried in these oils (e.g., fried nuts, potato chips and other fried snack foods)
- ~ Honey, and sweets made with starches

Spices used on *Ekadasi*: black pepper, fresh ginger, pure salt and fresh turmeric, all taken from a new and clean package

Spices not used on *Ekadasi*: hing (asofetida), sesame seeds, cumin, fenugreek, mustard, tamarind, fennel, cardamom and nutmeg

Foods that can be taken all days of the year, including *Ekadasi*:

- ~ All fruits (fresh and dried), all nuts and all oils made from nuts
- ~ Potatoes, pumpkin, cucumber, radish, squash, lemon, avocado, olives, coconut, buckwheat, all sugar
- ~ All pure milk products

Festival Days, Fasting Dates and Break Fast Times (Daylight-savings time not considered)

April 2015

Wednesday 1st Break fast 06:13-09:53 [EST], 05:50-09:48 [CST]

Friday 3rd Appearance day of Shri Syamananda Prabhu (an associate of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu)

Tuesday 14th *Ekadasi* [MST, PST & HST only]

Wednesday 15th *Ekadasi* [EST & CST only]

Break fast 06:02-10:18 [MST], 05:20-09:39 [PST], 06:13-10:14 [HST]

Thursday 16th Break fast 05:16-10:13 [EST], 05:33-09:37 [CST]

Saturday 18th Appearance day of Shri Gadadhara Pandita (the incarnation of Shrimati Radharani in *Chaitanya-lila*, the pastimes of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu)

Monday 20th Akshaya Tritiya (an auspicious day to start new projects) [HST only]

Chandana-yatra festival (deities of Krishna, specifically Jagannatha, are decorated in sandalwood paste for 21 days) [HST only]

Tuesday 21st Akshaya Tritiya (an auspicious day to start new projects) [EST, CST, MST & PST only]

Chandana-yatra festival (deities of Krishna, specifically Jagannatha, are decorated in sandalwood paste for 21 days) [EST, CST, MST & PST only]

Sunday 26th Appearance day of Shrimati Sita-devi (consort of Lord Rama) [PST & HST only]

Appearance day of Shrimati Jahnava-devi (consort of Lord Nityananda) [PST & HST only]

Monday 27th Appearance day of Shrimati Sita-devi (consort of Lord Rama) [EST, CST & MST only]

Appearance day of Shrimati Jahnava-devi (consort of Lord Nityananda) [EST, CST & MST only]

Wednesday 29th *Ekadasi*

Thursday 30th Break fast 04:56-10:07 [EST], 05:19-09:29 [CST], 05:41-10:11 [MST], 05:02-09:31 [PST], 06:02-10:09 [HST]

May 2015

Saturday 2nd Nrsingha-caturdasi – The Appearance of Lord Nrsinghadeva - (an incarnation of Shri Krishna) Fast till dusk and then *Ekadasi* preparations only

Sunday 3rd Appearance of Shri Shri Radha-Ramana Deva Ji

Appearance of Shri Madhavendra Puri

Appearance of Shri Shrinvasa Acharya

Break fast 05:43-09:33 [EST], 06:15-09:27 [CST], 05:38-10:10 [MST], 04:59-09:30 [PST], 06:00-10:08 [HST]

Friday 8th Disappearance of Shri Ramananda Raya (A dear associate of Sriman Mahaprabhu)

Thursday 14th *Ekadasi*

Friday 15th Appearance of Shri Vrindavana das Thakura

Break fast 05:35-06:32 [EST], 05:07-05:42 [CST], 05:28-10:06 [MST], 04:50-09:26 [PST], 05:54-10:06 [HST]

Wednesday 27th Disappearance of Shri Baladeva Vidyabushana

Appearance day of Shrimati Ganagamata Gosvami

Ganga dasahara – worship of Ganga-devi

Thursday 28th *Ekadasi* [HST only]

Friday 29th *Ekadasi* [EST, PST, MST & CST only]

Break fast 10:03-10:05 [HST]

Saturday 30th Break fast 05:30-09:25 [EST], 05:00-09:15 [CST], 05:20-08:15 [MST], 04:42-07:15 [PST]

June 2015

Tuesday 2nd Snana-yatra – the bathing of Lord Jagannatha

Thursday 11th Disappearance day of Shri Shrivasa Pandita (a close associate of Shriman Mahaprabhu)

Friday 12th Ekadasi

Saturday 13th Break fast 05:29-09:25 [EST], 04:59-09:19 [CST], 05:18-10:05 [MST], 04:40-09:26 [PST], 05:49-08:26 [HST]

Tuesday 16th Disappearance day of Shri Gadadhara Pandita (the incarnation of Shrimati Radharani in *Chaitanya-lila*, the pastimes of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu)

Disappearance day of Shrila Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakura

Wednesday 17th Purusottama month begins (leap month in the Vedic calendar) – *fasting* from tomatoes, eggplant, sesame, mustard seeds and oil, honey and urad-dahl, for one month.

Saturday 27th Ekadasi

Sunday 28th Break fast 06:22-09:28 [EST], 05:22-09:22 [CST], 05:21-10:08 [MST], 04:43-09:33 [PST], 05:52-10:10 [HST]

Vaishnava Song

Hari Bole Moder Gaura Elo

By Shrila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

hari bole moder gaura elo
elo re gauranga-chada preme elo-thelo
nitai-advaita-sange godrume posilo (1)

Our Shri Gaura came chanting, “Hari! Hari!” Shri Gauranga-chandra came looking greatly disheveled, as if mad, due to *prema*. Along with Nityananda Prabhu and Advaita Acharya, He entered the land of Godruma.

sankirtana-rase mete nama bilailo
namer hate ese preme jagat bhasailo (2)

Intoxicated by *sankirtana-rasa*, He freely distributed the holy name to everyone. He arrived at the marketplace of the holy name and inundated the entire universe with *prema*.

godruma-vasira aja dukkha dure gelo
bhakta-vrinda-sange asi' hata jagailo (3)

Today, all miseries of the residents of Godruma have gone away because Shri Gauranga, having come with all His devotees, caused the marketplace of the holy name to appear.

nadiya bhramite gora elo namer hate
gaura elo hate, sange nitai elo hate (4)

Wandering all over the land of Nadiya, Shri Gauranga came to the marketplace of the holy name. Sri Gaura came to the marketplace along with Nitai.

nace matoyara nitai godrumera mathe
jagat matay nitai premera malasate (5)

Maddened with ecstasy, Nitai dances in the fields of Godruma. Due to *prema*, Nitai moves His powerful arms like a challenging wrestler and thus overwhelms the universe in rapture.

(tora dekhe ja re)
advaitadi bhakta-vrinda nache ghate ghate
palaya duranta kali podiya bibrate (6)

All of you come and see! The Vaishnavas, headed by Advaita Acharya, are dancing along the banks of the Ganga, going from one *ghata* (bathing spot) to the next. At such a sight, the wicked personality Kali (the Lord of this age, *kali-yuga*, the age of quarrel and hypocrisy) falls into great distress and runs for his life.

**ki sukhe bhasilo jiva goracader nate
dekhiya suniya pasandira buka phate (7)**

Oh, in what indescribable happiness did all the *jivas* (souls) float while Shri Gaura-chandra was dancing! By seeing and hearing such pastimes, the hearts of the atheists shatter.

Reader Contribution

Last month, one of our prison seva pen-pals received this touching letter from an inmate in Texas. The writer's sentiments and experiences of chanting harinama were so beautiful that it actually brought us to tears.

It is so inspiring to us in our own spiritual practice to hear how the maha-mantra, which is none other than Shri Shri Radha Krishna, has made such a loving appearance in your life. Thank you for sharing something so personal, and we hope you don't mind that due to it being so eloquent and moving, we wished to share it with our other readers, especially as it's the perfect way to end this month's newsletter on Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His gift of pure love through harinama-sankirtan.

Dear Readers, we hope that you will feel equally encouraged by the following letter and inspired to continue writing to us with your own contributions to the prison seva community.



The course of study I asked about talks about what we are made of. I find them very informative yet, I think because I was raised Catholic, I find that I need to get used to new information. The difference is that now, every detail is explained and makes sense. Still, questions arise and there is no-one to go to with these discussions.

I understand that Prison Seva is in the process of becoming recognized as an official religion. It is not recognized in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. I'm interesting in helping in any way I can along this process.

I am not able to follow the fasting because eating pork or meat are the only options. Not that I do eat it any how, but other religions are able to receive special meals during their festivals. Sabbatarians receive lent meals, also Jewish followers get kosher meals. Why not us? It is important to me to observe all aspects of my faith.

This also brings me to requesting japa-beads. I was approved by my chaplain in December of 2013 to receive them. Only, I have been unable to locate where I can acquire them. They need to be to the c/o of the Chaplaincy Department. I cannot receive them directly. I understand that I need to request them in conjunction with an explanation as to why. Here it is:

I am coming on my 30th day of praying the maha-mantra. It is my intention to continue this practice beyond the required minimum because of the inspiring effect I have felt thus far. I note myself much more blessed than I have been in the past. It's as if someone is listening, aware of my needs, aware of my efforts, aware of me. I believe that because I have been chanting the Holy Names, my life is taking on a new purpose and meaning. Accordingly, I sense an immense love towards me and coming from within as well.

I am fortunate in many areas of my life and it all began as I chanted the maha-mantra. For this opportunity I am infinitely thankful.

Hare Kṛṣṇa!