

South India Tour 2012 : Day 7

– Rameshvaram

Day 7 – May 29

Location – Rameshvaram (Tamilnadu, India)

Ramanujacharya fed mahaprasad to the fish in Chandra pushkarni and although their bodies stayed back but they attained their eternal constitutional form and returned to Vaikuntha. You also can attain your transcendental form.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Namacharya Haridas Thakur, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, all the Gaudiya Vaishnava acharyas and Srila Prabhupad are feeding the people of this universe the holy name. Ramanujacharya fed grains to the fishes – *Anna para bramha*. We have been fed Krishna in the form of His name. We are hearing His name, assimilating it and becoming Krishna conscious. So one day when we shall leave this body, whatever has to happen to this body, people will take care, but we will accept our actual svarupa, constitutional form and return back home, back to god head. This is our prayer. From one perspective we are leaving the association of this dham but what will go with us is the holy name. You will become old. Then you will not be able to do tirth yatra, yajna, etc. This holy name is simple and till the end of your last breath *naam sankirtana* is possible. So this is Veda vani – *harer naam eva kevalam*, so please become strongly established in the holy name. To not have complete faith in the holy name is also one of the 10 offences of the holy name. In spite of hearing all the glories of the holy name, still maintaining attachment to the material world is an offence against the holy name.

You are all chanting and dancing in the kirtana, then all your sins are getting destroyed. This body is called a tree and

there are the birds of sin on this tree. If you want to chase away birds on a tree, you clap your hands. Of course someone can throw a stone and fire a bullet, but easiest way is to just clap hands. Then we give up some hesitation and start dancing. When love increases for the holy name, for Krishna, then we give up hesitation. Then all the sins on the tree of this body start leaving us. Till we have less love, we hide and chant and do not bring our beads in public. Srila Prabhupada asked one lady in Delhi, do you chant? She said, I chant in my mind. Srila Prabhupada asked her, do you also eat in the mind?

The result of this yatra is the attainment of the holy name, or the taste for chanting and the taste for hearing Krishna katha. When there is chanting and dancing going on, we do not fall asleep. This is Yuga dharma. But during katha, we may fall asleep. Of course katha is also dharma.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has distributed the pearls and diamonds of the holy name. For the Vishvarup darshan (Mangla Arati darshan of Lord Ranganath) only 80 devotees can take darshan so all were running to grab the opportunity to see the form of the lord. Some were standing since morning 1:30 am. But as soon as the doors opened even the late comers stormed in ahead of them. There were no rules and regulations being followed. Everyone was just running and jumping over from the barricades to take darshan.

So there was day 1 of the yatra and then there is the last day of the yatra. So today is the concluding day of the yatra and some of you will be leaving today evening itself, whereas some will leave tomorrow morning and some tomorrow night. Have you stayed in such a big family even? It is said, 'One kitchen one family.' So this was a very big family. Not just this but everyone on this planet is our family. They all belong to Krishna and I belong to Krishna so they also belong to me.

Sadhu sannyasis leave behind a small family but then we get a

bigger family, *he vishva chi majhe ghar, vasudhaiva kutumbakam*. When we will go back to the dham, then all the dham vasis will become our family members. Our narrow vision broadens and we become more accommodative in yatra.

Today on our All India Padayatra is in Badrinath dham, while we are in Rameshvaram. Iskcon padayatra is active since last 27 years. So some members of our family are in Badrikashram.

Every Hindu wants that in this lifetime I must complete the four dham yatra. One of this is Rameshvaram. Three years ago we went to Badrinath and there Kedarnath is the jyotirlinga. Last year we went to Dwarka and there Somnath is the jyotirlinga, and here Rameshvaram is a jyotirlinga.

For Rameshvaram, some can say *Ramasya ishvarah* – the Lord of Rama is Shiva. Some can say *ramah ishvar yasya sah*. Ram is the *Ishvar* of Siva. So in two ways you can understand this word. Like Haridwar is also understood as Haradwar.

Lord Rama came to Chitrakut, Ramtek, and Nasik on the banks of Godavari. Then He went to Kishkindha, he was walking as a Vanvasi. On the banks of Godavari, Sita was kidnapped. And searching for Sita, Rama and Lakshman came to the banks of Pampa Sarovar and met Shabari. They saw Jatayu and performed his last rites. Then they met Hanuman at the same place. He took them on his shoulders, to the peak of Rishyamukh Parvat where Sugriva used to reside and Hanuman was his minister. Rama and Sugriva had the same problems. Their wives had been kidnapped. Both of them did friendship in the presence of Fire.

So first Lord Rama helped Sugriva and killed Bali. Then the army of monkey which belonged to Sugriva, helped lord Rama. Someone from the army found a bag of ornaments. There are some ornaments here that fell down from the sky and a lady was shouting Rama...Rama. She threw this bag here. When Rama heard this, he felt very strongly that this must be Sita. With this

thought His throat became choked and His eyes were full of tears. Thus He was not able to see the ornaments. So he called Lakshman and asked, do you recognise if these are Sita's earrings. *Na ham janami kundale*, no I cannot say, I have never seen her face. But when he held the ankle bells he immediately recognised, yes these are certainly the ankle bells of Mother Sita. I used to see them whenever I offered my obeisances. So they started searching.

Hanuman came here to Rameshvaram and Jatayu's brother Sampatti showed him the direction in which Raavan had taken Sita. So Hanuman took a flight from Gandhamadan Parvat with so much speed that some trees, stones etc. Flied along with him. Rama was very happy when Hanuman returned and with great pleasure He embraced Hanuman. This was the best gift. Would you also like to have the embrace of the Lord? You will have to serve him like Hanuman. It is not so cheap. Who says Rama will not embrace. We don't do service like Hanuman. Rama is ready to embrace. Then Rama proceeded towards Lanka with a huge army, mostly of monkeys and a few bears. Their commander was Jambavan.

With all his army the Lord came to Rameshvaram. Lanka is 800 miles or 100 yojanas from here. How to cross? Some said we can swim across, or go by boats. Then Vibhishan came and proposed let us make a bridge. When Hanuman had reached Lanka, he had heard the chanting of the name of Sri Rama. He was shocked to hear this chanting of Sri Rama in Lanka but then he came to know this is the house of Vibhishan. Vibhishan helped Hanuman and gave him the address of Sita in Ashoka van. Vibhishan was always giving good advice to his brother. Sri Rama is unconquerable. He is the King of Ayodhya, the place who's king can never be defeated. Please forget about fighting with Him.

Ravana became upset with him and told him, you are my enemy therefore you do not want to support me in my war, you go away from here. So Vibhishan left Lanka and came to Rameshvaram with Hanuman and with him also came four ministers. He was

received by Lord Rama in the place called Kodanda Rama .There the whole army of Lord was sitting and discussing about how to proceed. When they saw Vibhishan coming, they became ready to fight with him. But Vibhishan said, I have come to take shelter of you, please accept me. And lord Rama gave him shelter. And on today's day the temple is closed because today is Pattabhisheka (Coronation ceremony) of Visbhishan. Lord Rama did coronated Vibhishan even before Ravans' death.

Lord Rama sat on the peak of Gandhamadan Shikhar and fasted for three days, requesting the sea god, but there was no reply. So He became angry and He took his bow and aimed towards the sea. The whole Indian Ocean started getting distracted as if tsunami waves are coming. The aquatics were getting disturbed, so the sea god came forward and apologised. Then Rama put forward his proposal of making a bridge.

Then all the monkeys and bears started making a bridge. These monkeys were not ordinary; they were all demigods and great devotees. They would stamp the stone with the name of Sri Rama, by the touch of His name, all the stones started floating. What happened to the law of gravitation? The stones were nirjiva (dead matter) and by associating with the holy name, they started floating as if they got life in them. If we get associated with the name of Rama, we will be liberated as well. Everything outside the dham is bhava sagar. Keep chanting constantly and then when you go back to Mumbai, you will not drown in the ocean of ignorance or else you will drown.

The bridge made by the Lord was 800 miles long and 80 miles broad. Once they reached there, both the armies fought with great valour and it are described in detail in Ramayana. Ravan was killed on the day of Dassehra.

Because Ravana was a Brahman Lord Rama had to atone for Brahman hatya (the sin of killing a Brahman). Before he left for Lanka lord Rama offered flowers and water to Shivlinga and

said, I am going to kill your devotee, so please forgive me. When the lord offers respect to His devotees, then his position increases even more.

First they sent hanuman to get a Shivalinga, but it was getting late, so Sita made a linga and by the time Hanuman came back, till then the Puja was done. He became disappointed that I brought Shivalinga from so much distance but the worship is already done. So he was pacified that the one you brought will be served first and then the one made by Sita will be worshipped. In this temple both the Shivlinga's are worshipped.

As long as we chant and hear Krishna katha, we are in the present tense. We are not affected by the kaal (Time). Hearing is not the end, it is just the beginning, now remember the katha and assimilate in your heart. And the yatra also does not get over here, it begins now.

South India Tour 2012 : Day 6 – Sri Rangam, Morning Class

Day 6 – May 28

Location – Sri Rangam (Tamilnadu, India)

Lord Shri Rama stayed on this planet for 11,000 years and we find the whole description in Ramayana. Shri Krishna stayed on this planet for 125 years. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu performed Lila for 48 years.

Here Sri Ranganath is performing pastimes daily in the form of deity with the Acharyas. Tirupati, Kanchipuram. Rameshvaram they all have become dham due to the presence of the Lord's form as archa vigraha. Tirupati Vaikuntha, Kanchipuram Vaikuntha, Sri Rangam Vaikuntha and Rameshvaram are Ayodhya. *Yad gatva na nivartante*. – Krishna says in Bhagvad Gita that one who comes to my dham, except you all, he does not want to go back.

There is Vaikuntha dwar (the Vaikuntha door) and whoever enters that on Vaikuntha Ekadashi gets transferred to Vaikuntha. From Vaikuntha you may go to Goloka, but do not go to Devi dham. Become Vaikuntha vasi. Become strong and then go ahead in life. Take the mood of Vaikuntha wherever you go. Do not degrade.

Srila Prabhupada left Vrindavan to preach in the western world, but his mind was always absorbed in remembering Vrindavan and Sri Sri Radha Damodar. Out of all the dham, most dear is Vrindavan. It is very unique. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu also did South India yatra and he came here to Ramesvaram, Kanchipuram, Adi Kesava, Trivandrum, Kolhapur, and Pandharpur and moved ahead. Although he was going to these dham, His main objective was to establish naam sankirtana. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is Sri Krishna Himself. *Sri Krishna chaitanya radha Krishna nahe anya*. He is Krishna so where would he stay. Thus His mind would always run towards Vrindavan. He accepted initiation from Ishvara Puri in Gaya. That time He wanted to go to Vrindavan. But could not go. Then he took sannyas at the age of 24.

We are entangled in Maya – I and mine. In these four syllables there is whole Maya – aham and mama. My house, my wealth, my family, if nothing then – my dog.

But our kartavya (only duty) is Hari Kirtanam. *Kartavyam hari kirtanam*. What should I be doing – chanting. This is one important lesson of this yatra. Once you go back- do not

forget this lesson. What is the use of running around in the yatra if you did not learn *kartavyam hari kirtanam*? If you have duties towards family etc. then do them also with this *kartavyam hari kirtanam*. If you cannot do this, then

gurur na sa syat sva-jano na sa syat pita na sa syaj janani na sa syat

daivana tat syn na pati ca sa syan na mocayed yau samupeta-martyum

One who cannot deliver his dependents from the path of repeated birth and death should never become a spiritual master, a father, a husband, a mother or a worship able demigod. (SB 5.5.18)

If you have become guru, mata, pitas, then you have to liberate your dependents. You have to remove them from the jaws of death of this lifetime as well as future deaths. This is actual *kartvya* or duty towards your near and dear ones. If you do not do this then whatever you do, even animals do. Food, clothing shelter is provided by parents in every species. Only human species can liberate their dependents. *Dharmena hina pashubhir samanam* without Krishna consciousness human being is equivalent to animal.

So keep these memories of yatra fresh by hearing, remembering, reminding each other of the yatra, tell others, *kathyanatas ca maam nityam tushyanti ca ramanti ca*.

Saints and acharyas have worshipped the arca vighraha of the dham and they have done many other works of preaching. This is the responsibility of Acharya. They are the representatives of the lord. Thus they advertise about the lord. Here is the lord so they advertise and then they write books, their realisations, they print. So in this dham Ramanujacharya preached almost 1000 years ago. After 5 years in 2017 is Ramanujacharya's 1000 birth anniversary. In 1017 Ad Ramanujacharya was born. So 2017 is 1000 th Birthday.

Acharya has vani and vapu. Even if they leave the body, they still remain amongst us in the form of their instructions, their messages. So Ramanujacharya's body is still here. No other acharya has such darshan in the world. Tukaram does not even have a Samadhi. There are samadhis of so many acharyas. But Ramanujacharya is sitting right here smeared with saffron, sandal paste, camphor, sitting in lotus position. He is a very dear acharya. Very dear to the lord. When he was in Kanchipuiram, he was very dear to Varadaraja.

At that time the Acharya of Sri Rangam was Yamunacharya. He was the spiritual master of Yamunacharya. Of course he had many gurus – Shailapurna, Mahapurna, Goshthipurna many such saints. He took shiksha from Yamunacharya. When Yaminacharya left, there was no acharya in Sri Rangam. So the devotees and the other priests were thinking who will be the acharya after Yamunacharya. Ranganath thought if Varadaraj's acharya could come here and take up the responsibility, it will be very nice. So this was the thought of devotees as well as the Lord Himself.

So the lord wrote a letter to Varadaraj Swami, please send Ramanujacharya to Sri Rangam. The letter was taken by the devotees. Varadraj read the letter but refused to send Ramanujacharya. He is dearer to us than our life and breath. So Varadaraj replied, sorry we cannot send him. So Ranganath devised a plan to bring Him here. He sent some devotees who are good singers and they performed for Vradaraja Swami by singing beautiful compositions and glorifications and dance. So they performed dance and singing in front of Varadaraj and he became very pleased. He said ask from me whatever benediction you want, I will give. The performers asked, are you sure you will fulfil your promise? Vradaraj said yes, why not, sure.

Please send Ramanujacharya to Sri Rangam. Varadaraj had not even thought that they would ask for Ramanujacharya. You can take Sridevi, Bhudevi or my crown, etc. But they did not want

anything else. So although he did not want to agree, but to keep up to His name He had to agree.

So those devotees brought Ramanujacharya to Sri Rangam. In the evening it was time for the Lord to take rest. But Sri Ranganath immediately ran towards Ramanujacharya to welcome Him. But the utsav vigraha moves out only when there is palanquin. At night there were no preparations for a procession. But the Lord insisted and the pujari had to carry him on his shoulders and the lord came out to greet Ramanujacharya. For 20-30 years he remained as the Acharya here.

We also visited the Jagannath Mutt during harinaam sankirtana. Murali Bhatta was telling that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu carved the deity of Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra, which are now present in Jagannath Mutt. Sometimes we feel that there are so many topics that with just one mouth we cannot speak all these topics. Thus there are prayers by devotees, praying for thousands of mouths. Ananta shesha has thousands of mouths and He is glorifying Krishna with all those mouths. Near every mouth of Ananta Shesha there is a crowd to hear the glorification of the Lord. Every mouth is chanting a different topic – Krishna's name, form, qualities, pastimes, abode, then Ram Lila, description of Ayodhya, Vaikuntha, Goloka, so on and so forth. *Advaitam achyuta anadi annat rupam.*

Reading from CC-ML- 9.110

One time Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was discussing Krishna katha with Venkat Bhatt

Being a Vaisnava in the Ramanuja-sampradaya, Venkata Bhatta worshiped the Deities of Lakshmi and Narayana. Seeing his pure devotion, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was very satisfied.

Constantly associating with each other, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Venkata Bhatta gradually developed a friendly relationship. Indeed, sometimes they laughed and joked together. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu told the Bhattacarya, "Your worshipable goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, always remains on the chest of Narayana, and she is certainly the chastest woman in the creation. "However, my Lord is Lord Śrī Krishna, a cowherd boy who is engaged in tending cows. Why is it that Lakshmi, being such a chaste wife, wants to associate with My Lord? (CC ML 9.109-112)

Venkat Bhatt might not be aware but Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu knew that there is a forest called Belvan or Srivana in Vrindavan, where Lakshmi Devi is performing austerities to get the association of Krishna. Or wants entry in the rasa dance. She felt, can I also sometime play with the lord like the Gopis do.

"Just to associate with Krishna, Lakshmi abandoned all transcendental happiness in Vaikuntha and for a long time accepted vows and regulative principles and performed unlimited austerities." (CC ML 9.113)

Still she could not get Krishna. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu told him what the wives of Kaliya said.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu then said, "'O Lord, we do not know how the serpent Kaliya attained such an opportunity to be touched by the dust of your lotus feet. Even the goddess of fortune, for this end, performed austerities for centuries, giving up all other desires and observing austere vows. Indeed, we do not know how the serpent Kaliya got such an opportunity.'" (CC ML 9.114)

So they felt great happiness that glories to our husband on whom Krishna has stepped. But although Lakshmi is performing austerities in Srivana since so many years, she could not receive this favour. The srutis personified also attained

Krishna and they became Gopis. But Lakshmi could not attain. So Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu asked Venkat Bhatt right here in Sri Rangam, what is the reason for this.

Venkat Bhatt could not give any answer to this so Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu told some reasons. She is supposed to accept the dressing of the Gopis. Her opulent dressing will not work in this case. Gopis are not so bothered about their appearance. Once they hear the sound of Krishna's flute, they just run towards Krishna as soon as possible. But Lakshmi is always dressing up very opulently and if flute vibrates, she will say keep playing, but I am not ready yet. So there is a difference between Gopi bhava and Lakshmi bhava. With Lakshmi bhava Narayan is attained, but to attain Krishna, much higher bhava is needed. So Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was making him understand that she does not accept Gopis bhava, and not just that, she also needs to follow in the footsteps of Gopis. *Ei nivedana dhara sakhir anugata kara seva adhikar diye kara nija dasi* -make me the follower of Gopis and Radharani and give me the adhikar to do service.

Lalita vishakha adi jata sakhi vrinda, ajnanya koribo seva charanarvinda—when shall I go to serve Radha and Krsihna. Whatever instructions they will give me I will do that service. So Lakshmi is finding it difficult to accept this *anugatya* – following in the foot steps of Gopis. Gopis are very innocent and simple by nature. But Lakshmi is sometimes strict. We know that from many pastimes.

In Chandrapushkarni, Lakshmi goes every day to pick flowers but because they are too high, lord Narayana steps on the branch and she can pick them. With these same flowers Lord Narayan decorates Lakshmi's hair.

Near that Chandrapushkarni King Dharma Varma also performed austerities. It is here only that when the fish of Chandrapushkarni ate the remnants of Ramanujacharya, they left the fish body and attained their original four handed form and

went back to Vaikuntha.

One should pray intensely at all these places. All prayers are fulfilled here. But we do not even know what to pray for. We must see how the pure devotee of the Lord prayed.

Kulashekhar alavar wrote the prayer *krsna tvadiya pada pankaja*. He was a king and then he gave up everything. His prayers are found in his book called Mukunda mala stotra. Srila Prabhupada wrote his commentary on this. It is a famous work. Whoever will read this mukunda mala, they will obtain the topmost designation i.e. the dust of the lotus feet of the lord.

When Prahalda Maharaj was told to ask for a benediction, he said I am your servant and not a merchant. If at all you want to give me something, then please take away all material desires from my heart.