

Europe Visit Realization

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ISKCON Noida

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Sri Sri Radha Govinda dev ki jai

Srila Prabhupada ki jai

Whenever Srila Prabhupada would return back to India from overseas he would stay a lot of the time in Bombay and in those days I was a brahmachari there. I would have the good fortune to be in the association of Srila Prabhupada and we would go to the airport to see him leave for Hawaii.

Hari Hari, Gauranga. Srila Prabhupada ki jai!

Whenever Prabhupada would leave to go overseas we would also go to the airport to see him off and then we would eagerly wait for his return. Then we would then go back to the airport to receive him. I heard that you all also came yesterday to the airport, I didn't see this but that much I heard. Sometimes back then the flight information would be wrong and so we wouldn't go to receive Prabhupada and he would have to come by himself by taxi to Hare Krishna land.

This happened a few times. So in 1965 Prabhupada was alone and now how many members are there in Iskcon? When I saw at London ratha yatra there were 15,000 devotees. Prabhupada in 1966 started the first ratha yatra and then after a few years in London, I don't know, there may have been another one before this in maybe Montreal or another city in America and then there was the London ratha yatra.

1969 was the first London ratha yatra and the day before yesterday London had its fiftieth ratha yatra (shouts of Haribol). So London ratha yatra was the last part of my yatra, my trip.

Jagannatha ratha yatra mahotsava ki jai!

So Jagannatha stays with Radha Londonisvara who are the first deities in Iskcon. He is the Lord, the Isvara of London, just like in Paris the deities are Radha Parisisvara.

So Prabhupada gave these names to the deities and so Radha Londonisvara are in the city of London and in Bhaktivedanta Manor – have you heard of this name? There are deities of Radha Gokulananda. George Harrison, have you heard his name? Prabhupada used to say Harrison and so they used to ask 'Prabhupada you have not given him a name?' So Prabhupada used to say that he already had a spiritual name 'Hari's son.'

So Bhaktivedanta Manor is a special, important dham in England and it is a great place of pilgrimage where Iskcon has seventy acres of property. Did you hear that or not? Seventy acres in London where Radha Gokulananda are very big landLords with seventy acres of land. There big, big festivals take place and there is a Haveli project which they have begun.

There will be a multipurpose hall and this that, and just like there are many auditoriums here, they didn't have one and so they are now making that in a big Haveli. The Prime Minister of England went there last year and there was bhumi puja, a ground breaking ceremony. So a Haveli is being made for the Lord. So the biggest Janmastami in Europe is celebrated at Bhaktivedanta Manor and many years ago, more than ten years have passed, I attended one Janmastami over there.

There were seventy thousand visitors there on Janmashtami and you may say that 'we have three million over here in India' but you are all in India, bharat. In England seventy thousand visitors is a big thing. So after Janmastami celebrations the volunteers who overlooked the arrangements of the festival, for them there was a program to thank them and to glorify their service.

I was invited and Radhanath Swami was also there and we

thought there would be a few people there but there were eight hundred people who were Janmastami festival coordinators of so many departments. So there were eight hundred organisers and staff for Janmastami festival, Sri Krishna Chaitanya!

So in this way this movement is spreading in Europe and all over the world just like a forest fire. So when we go on yatra just like I had gone, we experience just where and how this movement is spreading. Before going to England I went to Hungary, have you heard of Hungary? Where Sivaram Maharaja has a farm project and it is a big place. The project of the farm is being made on around two to three hundred acres of land.

When I went there this year, they were celebrating the twentieth anniversary of Iskcon there. Radha Shyamsundara are beautiful deities there and the name of the place is new Vraja Dham – ki jai! So I was called there for Vraja Parikrama and Sivaram Swami has made a replica of Radha Kunda, Shyam Kunda, Vishram ghat, Nandagram and so many places like this there.

There is also a river flowing through and they have called this the Yamuna river and so on the banks of the river Yamuna are all the seventy full-time devotees in which the grhasta's are included because there is a varnasrama community there. Even in the village close by to the temple there are devotees living there, so including all these vaisnavas, some two hundred and fifty to three hundred devotees are involved in this project over there.

There is a big goshala in a beautiful setting and it is not just a hut-like structure but rather the goshala is like a palace in the service of the cows. There are also so many artists there who paint beautiful paintings and our temple here is like a mosque in comparison. The variety that is there in this world, Muslims do not believe in that wonderful variegatedness.

But over there the temple devotees, the artists had painted in

such a way that wherever you look, there were paintings and it was beautiful. There were Krishna lila paintings and Chaitanya lila ones, and you may have seen some of these paintings in Sivaram Maharaja's books, have you seen Maharaja's books?

Sivaram Maharaja has written many books, he is a big writer. Na paraye 'ham is one and he has written many other books and in those books there are many paintings because there is a big arts and painting department there in the Hungary temple. So everywhere there are paintings, all so beautiful. There are other painters who paint the face of Lord Krishna or the Gopi's or some other personality but they do not know how to do it properly.

They paint a Chinese nose or something similar and they just whimsically make it up. The features are not like the Indian paintings that good artists in India are able to paint. Even so, nowadays the artists in India cannot paint as well as what I saw in Hungary, the most wonderful painters. They also get bus loads of visitors to see the temple grounds and we are talking about local people here.

There are no Indians in Hungary, if there are then there are a very few so the visitors who come are local Hungarians or else devotees who have come on yatra to New Vraj Dham. You are going to Kuruksetra on yatra and they go to Vraj Dham yatra. I saw when I was there that there are many bus loads of visitors coming everyday.

They show them the whole place and take them to have darshan and see the paintings. I also saw that they would put the visitors on a bullock cart and show them the whole farm there. They have a bullock cart where twenty people can sit together and then in the bullock cart they give a guided tour of Vraj Dham or Krishna valley, as it is called. It is organic farming and are you listening? That means no chemicals and no chemical fertilisers.

Our Iskcon devotees, our god brothers and sisters and my god nephews and nieces you could say, they are understanding that chemical fertilisers have a soil which is spoilt. Nowadays in India the prime minister keeps speaking about the 'health of the soil.' So we have spoilt the earth by using chemical fertilisers and in doing so, we also intake these fertilisers. Whatever grains and fruits and vegetables there are, they all have these chemicals in them.

This is the outcome of most of the illnesses and so the devotees in Hungary have taken serious note of this matter and they have organic farming in which they use cow dung as the compost. This is what is used in the farming over there. So all Iskcon centres which have a farm will in the future, at least for the coming ten thousand years, they will continue to preach Krishna consciousness in this way.

So Krishna consciousness and the temples are not there for just a visit, in the sense that they will disappear or be renovated into something else after a while. No, these places are being made where the roots are going deeper and so they will have to stay, they will stay. So this kind of solid foundation is being made for Krishna consciousness. By going there one can see and experience the deepness of Krishna bhakti, Lord Krishna's personal beauty and strength.

So before going to Hungary I was in Germany where there are many projects in the major cities mainly but also in small places all over the country. One of these is 'Goloka Dham' where Sacinandana Swami Maharaja has a base there. There is also a forest there where a river flows through and on the banks of this river is where the arrangements are being made for this Goloka Dham.

Radha Madana Mohan are the worship-able deities there and they are very beautiful. They capture the mind (mohan) and so this place is known for its deity worship and I also once worshiped the deities there. In other places too I have done

this and also here I have done alter service. So then Kirtan took place because also Sacinandana Maharaja has Kirtan Melas over there quite often.

So all the devotees from all over Europe gathered there for kirtan mela and in this way kirtan mela mahotsava began and many singers and Kirtan leaders from Russia and here and there and from India all reached there for this occasion on Kirtan Mela Mahotsava. Just like you all arranged over here kirtan mahotsava half and hour ago. So these kirtans are spreading everywhere and in this way Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's prediction is becoming true.

They say that seeing is believing, so our faith is strengthened when we see something. So when we go on yatra we get to see that Kirtan is spreading everywhere and so we can imagine how

Prithivi te ache joto nagar adi gram
sarvatra prachar hoibe mora naam (Chaitanya bhagavata, Antya 4.126)

Translation

All over the world, as many towns and villages are there, this Krsna consciousness movement should be preached.

So this Goloka is in the middle of nowhere and there are no towns or cities. Nagar adi gram, no? So these Hare Krishna people have initiated this farm project not in any town or city, but in the middle of these in villages or remote places and there Harinam preaching is happening. When I was in Hungary I met some padayatris and in Europe, Croatia is one of the places where padayatra takes place.

England is another place as is Czech Republic and Hungary. In these countries every year they go on padayatra for two weeks or a month. Just like you all devotees go from here to Vrndavan on yatra they do the same and as you know, padayatra

is a wonderful way of performing Harinama. So twenty years ago we went from Glasgow to Moscow through these European countries.

Do you know where Glasgow is, who knows general knowledge? Yes in Scotland very good. Near England there is another small country, Scotland wherein there is a city called Glasgow. And so where is Moscow? Yes, in Russia. So for five years the devotees were walking from Glasgow to Moscow and yes, it took them five years to reach.

So they were continuing forward in each day and month of these five years. We visited many countries, twenty or thirty as there are many countries in Europe. We were walking so this was not an air yatra. Once I remember we were performing padayatra in India and I read one sign which said 'air yatra of the four places of pilgrimage.'

So we Indians have become spoilt and we are imitating the westerners even in this sort of thing with four dham air yatra. So in padayatra we were walking and chanting at every step from Glasgow to Moscow. Harinama preaching has reached far away places and remote villages.

What to speak of India which is the mother of all padayatras, but the Iskcon padayatris have performed all together two hundred and fifty thousand kilometres of padayatra. Two hundred and fifty thousand kilometres. Somewhere or another some devotees are performing padayatra. There is ratha yatra and padayatra and in Germany there was kirtan mela.

So before forty years there was a thousand year old building which Iskcon bought. It is one of the famous buildings or monuments of Belgium and they made that monument Radha Gopinath temple. Over there they run the Bhaktivedanta college which you must have heard of as it is world famous.

There is a guest house there as well and they hold seminars frequently and when I visited, the devotees from Birmingham

and London were there also and I gave seminars for them there for two days. There was katha and kirtan and there was kirtan lila, kirtan with lilas where katha was what they wanted to hear with kirtan in between and in this way we had special kirtans.

There is a goshala there as well and I had a disciple's meeting there and there was also a disciple's meeting in London. Then in Goloka Dham there was a disciple's meeting and in Holland when I went there were disciple gatherings. I was meeting my disciples wherever they were and I was going and in Radhadesh there was again a disciple's gathering.

You may have heard the name of Hridaya Chaitanya Prabhu, he is the in-charge of that project and he has been in Radhadesh for around forty years. He is also giving his time and work to Mayapur at the moment and he is GBC and travels to France and other places although his base remains in Radhadesh. I met Anuttama when there was an AGM, annual general meeting.

The trustees had come, Yadunandan Maharaja and many other were there and in this way many such meetings and gatherings take place over there. So when I was there we had one ratha yatra which was near Amsterdam. So it wasn't in Amsterdam but near Amsterdam and it went through the market place with a small cart.

We had kirtan and I became a driver of Jagannatha's cart. Actually I was assisting the driver and the mayor of the town was the chief guest and he had come with his wife, the lady mayor. So they very much liked the festival and the procession and they were saying very favourable things about Iskcon. Ratha yatra mahotsava ki jai!

And so like this I also went to Czech Republic where two countries were divided from the original Czechoslovakia, one is Slovakia and the other Czech Republic, so two countries. In both these countries our Iskcon has a project and one city is

Prague which is a famous city just like Rome and Paris.

So Prague is also very popular and famous and people come to see this city from all over. We also went as they took me to see but we went along with kirtan and there were thousands of tourists from all over Europe and so we had nagar kirtan in Prague as we took the kirtan party there. There were around a hundred devotees with mrdangas and kartals.

At some places we stopped to preach and make people aware of who we were and what Hare Krishna is and they were also distributing books. So like this for the first time they saw the Hare Krishna's and heard Hare Krishna and they must have gotten some ideas and they must have had thoughts. In this way they slowly come and become affiliated with Hare Krishna, they come in contact with Iskcon.

I wanted to know, in London when they had their fiftieth ratha yatra I was wondering if there was anyone present there who may have been at the first London ratha yatra. So I was searching for some people who may have been there at the first ratha yatra and who were present at the fiftieth ratha yatra.

So I wasn't asking everyone but I asked a few people and one of them told me that 'I did not attend the first ratha yatra but I saw the whole event on television at home.' He said that when he saw it he was thinking in his mind that 'I wish that I can one day see and join such a procession.'

A few years later he became a devotee in Iskcon and he became the temple president of Bhaktivedanta Manor (shouts of Haribol). So we can see how it can begin. He just saw this on television and he had a thought and he was attracted so that was the beginning, the Lord stole his mind, chita chor. So then we had another kirtan in a quite famous place in Czech Republic, it's called 'down town.'

Do you understand 'down town?' It's a business area where business happens, like in a central place in the city. So

every Saturday there is kirtan there and since I have been going on overseas yatra, it has been happening. Also for your information, this yatra I have just come back from is the fortieth anniversary of my overseas travels (shouts of Haribol).

In 1978 I went overseas to New York for the first time, my temple president had taken me, Giriraj Prabhu. So that was in 1978 and now it is 2018 and so it is the fortieth anniversary of my overseas yatra. So since I have been going, just like in London every Saturday I definitely go to the harinam kirtan. They have also in London, a down town kirtan in Piccadilly Circus which is the special area over there.

When I was there Saturday approached and we went out for kirtan in London and they had a very nice sound system with a band playing along with us with other instruments as well. So the Soho Street temple of Sri Sri Radha Londonisvara is where the kirtan starts. Downstairs they have a Govinda's restaurant that used to be called 'healthy wealthy and wise.'

Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise. Have you heard this? Those who go to sleep early and then wake up early, what will happen to them? They will become healthy, wealthy and wise. So there is a Govinda's restaurant there and that is where the kirtan starts and then it returns and finishes at the same place outside the restaurant.

There are three hundred customers coming daily to Govinda's restaurant and they have a thali option as well. So there is a farm community and goshala at the Czech Republic temple which means they do farming and the production of wheat is then milled. There is a grinding mill and after grinding the devotees sell that wheat in five kilogram packets.

We sometimes see beehives hanging from the trees and so over there is tons of honey from these hives that they fill into jars and then they sell that. It's the real thing, natural and

all pure and organic honey. In Prague there are two Govinda's restaurants and by the farm there is one restaurant as well. I saw that it is always overcrowded, this Govinda's restaurant.

And one of those restaurants does home delivery and in this way they provide a healthy and hearty meal to people who cannot come for some reason to the restaurant. So this revolution of Krishna consciousness is spreading and will continue to do so. In 1965 this movement started with one personality, Srila Prabhupada and now there are innumerable devotees on this earth.

They are all our family members, gaudiya vaishnavas who follow the regulative principles of no meat eating, no fish and eggs and no illicit sex and chanting of Hare Krishna. They read Srila Prabhupada's books and they also distribute these books. I also met the brahmacari's of Bhaktivedanta Manor and there are thirty of them there and many of them are book distributors.

Gaura prem anande hari haribol
Srila Prabhupada ki jai