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Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit participated as Chief Guest at the inauguration of 11th Annual Sri Krishna Balaram Ratha Yatra festival organised by Hare Krishna Movement, Chennai at Elliot's Beach, Besant Nagar, Chennai today (21.12.2019) and addressed the gathering.

Hon'ble Governor said, "Hare Krishna!

I feel blessed to be here today at the 11th Annual Sri Sri Krishna Balaram Ratha Yatra organized by the Hare Krishna Movement, Chennai.

Five hundred years ago, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who was an incarnation of Lord Krishna, said that,

"pathivete ache yata nagaradi-grama
sarvatra prachara haibe mora nama"

"As many towns and villages are there on the surface of the globe, everywhere, this message of Hare Kanea Mantra and Lord Chaitanya's name will be there."

Today that prophecy stands true because of one great saint – Srila Prabhupada, and his movement – The Hare Krishna Movement. Today I do not think there is any city in the world which does not have a Hare Krishna temple or where the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra is not being chanted, or where the topics of the Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam are not being discussed or where Krishna prasadam is not being distributed. This is a matter of great pride for every Indian.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu once said about real duty of every person born in this great Nation - Bharat:

"bharata bhumite manunhya janma haila yara

janma sarthaka kari' karo paropakara"

"One who has taken his birth as a human being in the land of India [Bharata-Varnha] should make his life successful by working for the benefit of all other people".

This is also the message of Srimad Bhagavatam which states that every position that a human being takes in his life – whether as a father or a mother or a

teacher or as a husband, is only meant for giving the highest benefit to his dependents, that is freedom from the miseries of birth, disease, old age and death.

Srila Prabhupada's life was paropakara personified. His life was dedicated only for giving this highest benefit to all sections of society. When Srila Prabhupada went to the west in 1966. He said, "I have not come to your country for money, but I have come to your country to give you something sublime—not to take from you, not to exploit you, but to give you something sublime. That is my mission."

Despite his old age, failing health and lack of monetary resources, Srila Prabhupada boldly preached the message of Lord Chaitanya which is the message of the Bhagavad Gita, the message of Srimad Bhagavatam, in its purest form without any cosmetisation. Before Srila Prabhupada, many monks from India had already been to the West and had given discourses and introduced the westerners to the Indian philosophy. However, it was Srila Prabhupada who succeeded in making such a large section of people across the globe - cutting across diversities in caste, religion, nationality, race and nationality – embrace the Vedic lifestyle and practices. He was convinced and often stated – "Religion without philosophy is sentiment, or sometimes fanaticism, while philosophy without religion is mental speculation."

Though Srila Prabhupada had been told that the westerners would be happy to know the philosophy but would not be able to practice the disciplined life Sanatana Dharma, Srila Prabhupada was convinced that Sanatana Dharma in its purest form would appeal to every soul. Srila Prabhupada was convinced that the Hare Krishna maha mantra, the message of Chaitanya, the message of the Bhagavad Gita and the message of Srimad Bhagavatam, was not sectarian and was meant for alleviating the suffering of every living entity transcending all barriers. True to his name "Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada" preached both Bhakti and Vedanta.

And the result was there for everyone to see. At the height of the Hippy revolution which also coincided with the period of scientific and technological advancement in the West and its emergence as a financial superpower, Srila Prabhupada was successful in transforming misguided youngsters into a bunch of dedicated youngsters with completely clean habits, who embraced not just the philosophy of Sanatana Dharma but also its entire lifestyle and culture. He forcefully preached that real advancement of civilization was in understanding our real identity as Atma (Soul) or Spirit and it is only when we work on the spiritual platform that we are able to experience complete satisfaction and peace.

Today our country, too, is in need of a revolution in consciousness. We are technologically advanced and are marching towards being one of the financial superpowers in the world. But we are also seeing a section of youth being misguided and lacking in direction. I am convinced that the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness, which is the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam in its purest form, is not a mere armchair philosophy but a concrete plan of action that we all should imbibe in our daily lives to address present problems in the society. As we have seen globally, mere law enactment and enforcement are not sufficient to curb the evils in the society; it requires a Change of Consciousness in society and its leaders. As Srila Prabhupada says,

The Vedic society is based on the principle of love — between husband and wife, father and son, the King and the citizens, and so on. Civilization must be founded on love, not law. By law you cannot make a person love you. First, he must love you, then he will gladly follow your law. Modern civilization lacks this basis of love, so everything is superficial. If devotion to Kanea [God] is made the basic principle, people will be happy.

Srila Prabhupada's Hare Krishna Movement has actualized the Vedic statement "Vasudheiva Kutumbakam" – that the whole world is God's family, and I reckon that its teachings and practices should set the benchmark for world peace and everyone should take cognizance of this movement and imbibe its teachings and practices in their daily lives.

In today's age characterized by dog-eat-dog competition, declining values of sympathy and compassion, it is remarkable to see such a large number of youngsters giving up lucrative careers and high academic achievements to dedicate themselves to the service of God and humanity. That love, sympathy and compassion can be the driving factor in every moment of our lives is being demonstrated by this great movement. Indeed, it is amazing to note that the Hare Krishna Movement is one of those few movements which continues to grow even after the physical passing away of its founder.

I have been privileged to be associated with the Akshayapatra programme in Nagpur, Guwahati and now in Chennai as well. I also consider it a privilege to have inaugurated the breakfast programme in Chennai. It is remarkable that one institution is feeding over 1.8 million children every day, making it the largest NGO-run feeding programme globally. The Raj Bhavan will always support your

activities. I also invite all sections of the society to contribute towards this noble cause.

This Ratha Yatra festival is an occasion to introduce the masses of people to the sublime process of self-realization through the process of chanting and singing Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare and dancing and distributing sumptuous Krishna prasadam. I invite everyone to participate whole-heartedly in this festival and I wish the Hare Krishna movement success in all its efforts towards serving God and humanity. May Lord Krishna bestow his blessings upon all of us.
Hare Krishna!"

On this occasion, Shri Madhu Pandit Dasa, President, ISKCON Bangalore and Chairman, The Akshaya Patra Foundation, Shri Chanchalapati Dasa, President, Vrindavan Chandroday Mandir and Vice Chairman, The Akshaya Patra Foundation, Shri Jai Chaitanya Dasa, President, Hare Krishna Movement Chennai, Shri Dushyanth Shridhar and other dignitaries participated.

Raj Bhavan, Chennai -22

Sd/-

Date : 21.12.2019

Addl. Director (PR)