

Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience



The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

February 2011



# Becoming Wealthy on ₹ 80 a Day



# C O N T E N T S

Founded 1944. Vol. 8 No. 2 February 2011

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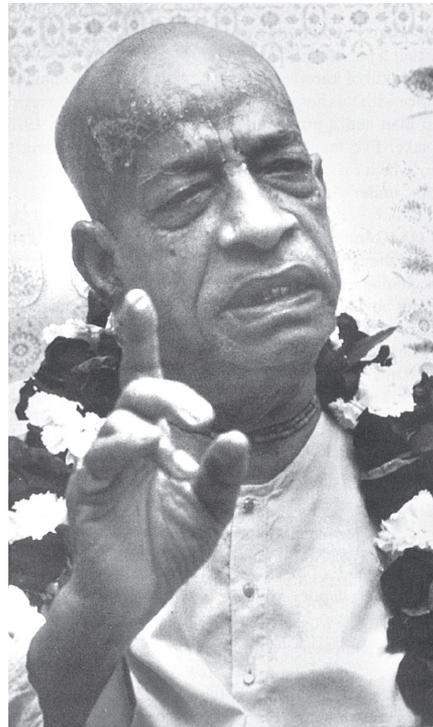
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*There are different  
standards of faith. One  
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faith is trying to give  
everything to Him...So  
which one is better?  
Anyone can judge.*

*—Lecture Śrīmad-  
Bhāgavatam 7.9.10  
Montreal, 10 July 1968*

### OUR PURPOSES

• To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary. • To expose the faults of materialism. • To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life. • To preserve and spread the Vedic culture. • To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu • To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

# BACK TO GODHEAD



The Magazine of the  
Hare Krishna Movement

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(under the direction of His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda) His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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## COLD WAR

For the last few months, BTG readers have been witnessing a cold war between Mr. Chandru and the BTG editorial team regarding the “Reincarnation” article published in April 2010. It appears that both the sides are trying to defend themselves with practically no conclusion coming out. This is creating not only a fruitless back and forth argumentative spirit but also confusion in the reader’s mind about the philosophical understanding among ISKCON devotees.

I support Chandru Prabhujī’s view. All the examples in the article at least suggest that the list of famous celebrities reincarnated as human beings. I doubt on the basis of the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda how is it even possible for such materialists and sense gratifiers to get a human form of life? Hence BTG should not publish such articles which are not authorized by *Guru*, *sādhū* and *śāstra*. This is my opinion but not conclusion. I believe, “to err is human”.

I request the BTG editorial team to put this matter in front of any ISKCON Guru whose remarks will be accepted as conclusive by both the sides and the readers as well.

—Mohan Kṛṣṇa Dāsa

Reply by Murāri Gupta Dāsa: In a personal letter to the editorial staff Mr. Chandru has expressed that his protest was in spirit of love and affection and that he did not want to continue the issue.

You have expressed doubts about how it is possible for materialists and sense gratifiers to get a human form of life. Well, according the biographies of Edwin Booth, (the past life match for Amitabh Bachchan) he was a vegetarian. His father Junius Brutus Booth was an international star who practiced Hinduism and vegetarian-

ism, and opposed slavery. In his farm, no animal was slaughtered. Apparently they were quite pious.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.18) mentions, “Those situated in the mode of goodness gradually go upward to the higher planets; those in the mode of passion live on the earthly planets; and those in the abominable mode of ignorance go down to the hellish worlds.”

In the purport Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: “The mode of passion is mixed. It is in the middle, between the modes of goodness and ignorance. A person is not always pure, but even if he should be purely in the mode of passion, he will simply remain on this earth as a king or a rich man.”

This may give a hint how a person living a passionate lifestyle but without heavy *tamo guṇa*, may still come to earth as a human.

## CORRECTION

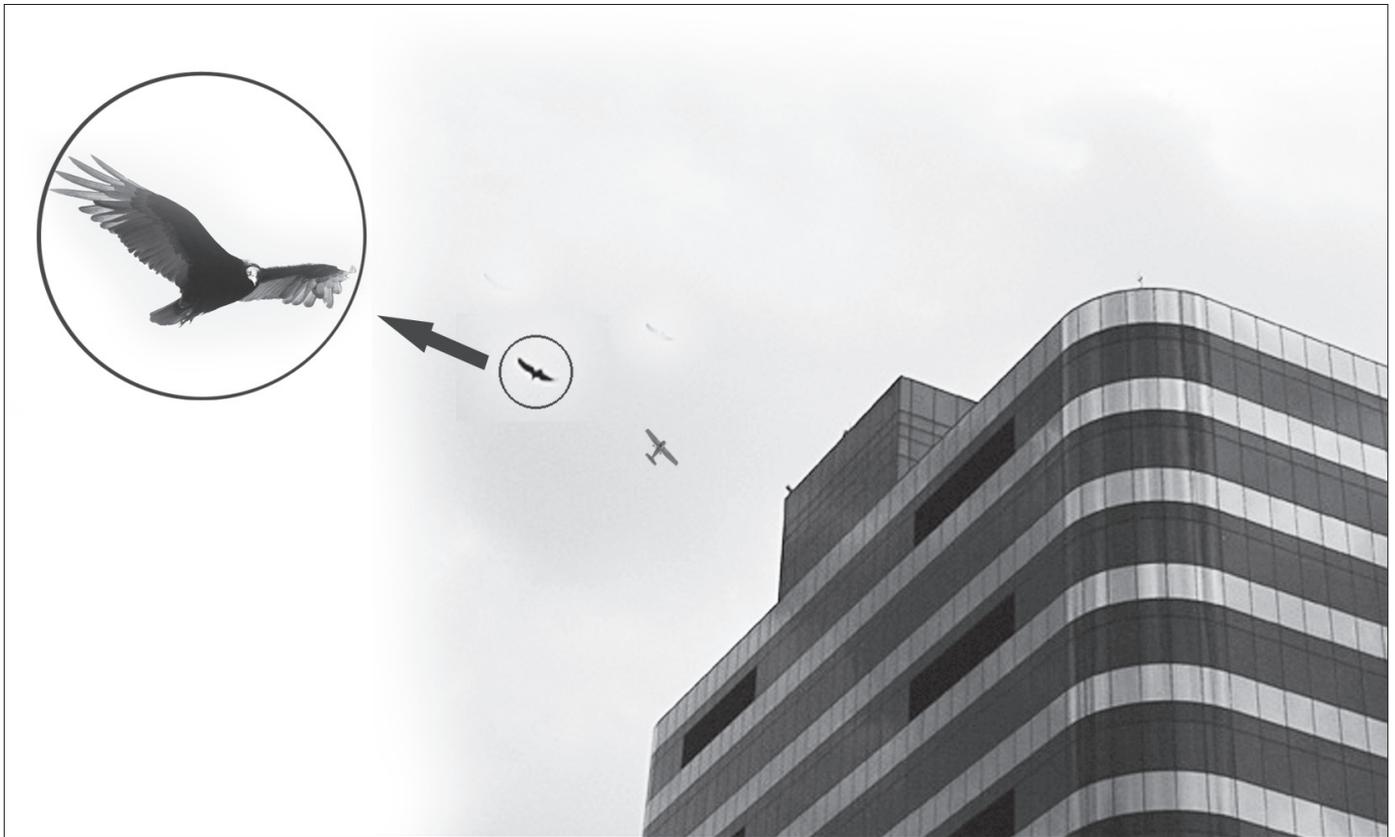
Since World Cup cricket is scheduled for February 2011, I was translating Śrīla Prabhupāda’s quotes about sports (BTG October 2010) for the February issue of Tamil BTG. Four out of six quotes in the section “The sporting tendency comes from Kṛṣṇa” are not from Śrīla Prabhupāda; they are from the later sections done by his disciples. I am not denying the works of his disciples, but that should not be promoted as Śrīla Prabhupāda’s work. It shows a little carelessness on the part of the editor.

—Śrī Giridhārī Dāsa  
(Editor Tamil BTG)

*Thank you for pointing out the error. We apologize.—Ed.*

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Some days back, when walking home, I happened to look up and saw something interesting. It was a vulture soaring in the clear sky. Nearby, an airplane too was zooming across. Thoughts of their comparison made me proud. Modern man had accomplished so much. He too could soar high into the sky just like strong birds.

I pondered a bit more.

A vulture is capable of flying quite high. However, what does it fly high for? To locate some dead carcasses, to discover some food for itself. Even though it can fly to awe-inspiring heights, its consciousness is immersed in dead matter. Similarly modern civilization has reached dizzying heights. But all it is attached to is dead matter. Our enjoyment is enjoyment of the senses—on the bodily platform. Human life is meant for raising our consciousness, not our bodies. Not fulfilling the designated purpose of this rare human form, we have instead become pre-occupied in raising our bodies instead of our consciousness. ☸

—Nanda Dulāl Dāsa

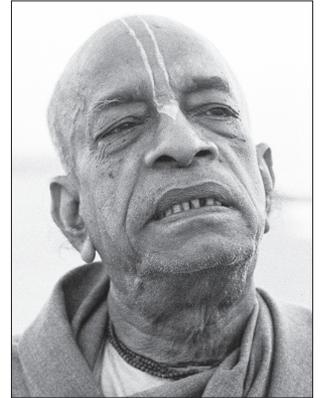
# TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

*Developing trust in shelter of God*

by His Divine Grace

**A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**

Founder-*ācārya* of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness



## WHAT IS REAL TRUST AND CONFIDENCE?

It is confidence in Kṛṣṇa, that “Kṛṣṇa has given me life, Kṛṣṇa has sent me here. So He’ll give me my maintenance. So according to my capacity, let me do something, and through that source, Kṛṣṇa’s maintenance will come.”

—Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.22, 3 August 1974, Vṛndāvana

The next item favorable for devotional service is *niścaya*, confidence. When one becomes disappointed in his service to the Supreme Lord, that disappointment must be rejected and replaced with confidence in attaining the ultimate goal, love of Godhead.

—*Nārada-bhakti-sūtra* 5

Transcendental qualities are certainly present in the *śānta-rasa* and *dāsyā-rasa*, but beyond these there is another quality, confidential attachment, which is pure transcendental love. This loving confidence in the Supreme Personality is technically known as *viśrambha*.

—*Teachings of Lord Caitanya* 1

## DEVOTEE’S CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD

When Bhīṣma and the others on the side of Duryodhana blew their respective conchshells, there was no heart-breaking on the part of the Pāṇḍavas.

Such occurrences are not mentioned, but in this particular verse it is mentioned that the hearts of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were shattered by the sounds vibrated



by the Pāṇḍavas’ party. This is due to the Pāṇḍavas and their confidence in Lord Kṛṣṇa. One who takes shelter of the Supreme Lord has nothing to fear, even in the midst of the greatest calamity.

—*Bhagavad-gītā* 1.19, purport

According to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, a follower of Caitanya Mahāprabhu is *jīvan-mukta*, or a liberated soul. Thus the devotee is not worried about his future destination, for he is confident that the Lord will quickly

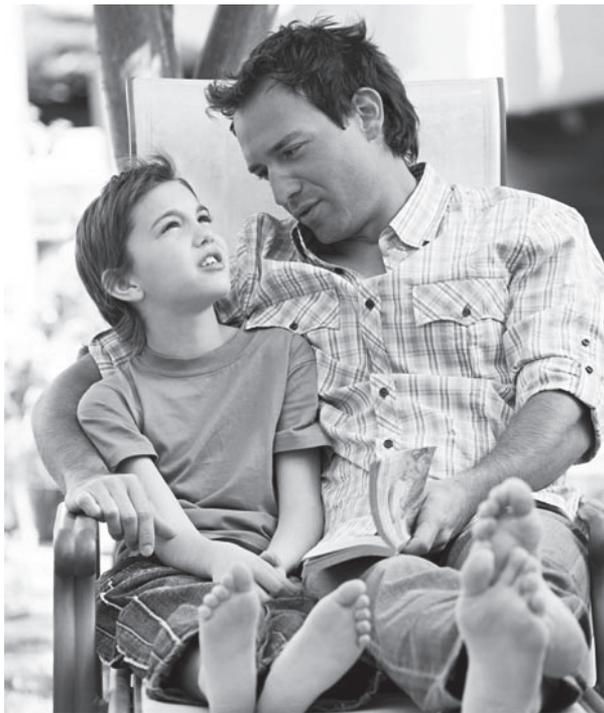
take him across the ocean of material existence. Such confidence is referred to in the *Upadeśāmṛta* by the word *niścayāt*, meaning firm conviction about the potency of the process of devotional service.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.33, purport

### BECOMING THE LORD'S TRUSTWORTHY SERVANT

The secret of success in understanding the intricacies of knowledge of the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, is the causeless mercy of the Lord. Even in the material world, the father of many sons discloses the secret of his position to the pet sons. The father discloses the confidence unto the son whom he thinks worthy. An important man in the social order can be known by his mercy only. Similarly, one must be very dear to the Lord in order to know the Lord.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.32, purport



### PATIENCE AND CONFIDENCE

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī also confirms that one should be very enthusiastic and execute devotional service with patience and confidence. Patience is necessary for developing the confidence that “Kṛṣṇa will certainly accept me because I am engaging in devotional service.” One has only to execute service according to the rules and regulations to insure success.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.29.16, purport

### DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE

Initially, one must develop confidence by hearing the science of devotion from a qualified spiritual master. Then, as he associates with devotees and tries to adopt the means instructed by the spiritual master in his own life, his misgivings and other obstacles are vanquished by his execution of devotional service.

—*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. *Adi* 1.60

### SECRET OF SUCCESS

If a sincere devotee renders service to the Lord or to the *arcā-vigraha*, the form of the Lord, all his activities prove successful because the Lord is present within his heart and understands his sincerity. Thus if a devotee, with all confidence, goes on discharging the prescribed duties of devotional service, he will ultimately attain success.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.30.29, purport

A devotee, therefore, should execute his devotional services with full energy, endurance, and confidence. He should perform his scheduled duties, he should be pure in heart, and he should serve in association with devotees. All six of these items will lead the devotee to the path of success.

—*Light Of Bhāgavata* 43

So one must have confidence that “Because I am following the standard method, so my spiritual life will really be perfected.” We

must have this confidence. And that is a fact. *Utsāhāt*, first enthusiasm; second, patience; and then third, with confidence, *niścayāt*.

—*Lecture on Bhagavad-gītā* 2.46-47 New York, 28 March 1966

### MISPLACED CONFIDENCE

All the learned scholars have given their opinion. The mind is by nature very restless, and one should not make friends with it. If we place full confidence in the mind, it may cheat us at any moment. Even Lord Śiva became agitated upon seeing the Mohinī form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Saubhari Muni also fell down from the mature stage of yogic perfection.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.6.3

### BETRAYAL OF CONFIDENCE

One who betrays the confidence of a living entity who takes shelter of him in good faith, whether that living entity be a human being or an animal, is extremely sinful. Because such betrayals now go unpunished by the government, all of human society is terri-

bly contaminated.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.2.5-6,  
purport

### SYMPTOM OF CONFIDENCE

The word *śraddhāvān* (faithful) means understanding Kṛṣṇa to be the summum bonum—the eternal

we can accept a devotee from any part of the world and recognize him as a *brāhmaṇa* as soon as he is qualified due to following the principles of Vaiṣṇava behavior.

—*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *antya*  
3.221

tempting to follow other paths will only succeed in making one restless.

—*Nectar Of Instruction* 3,  
purport

### BACK IT BY KNOWLEDGE

To trust is very good, but simple trust will not endure unless it is backed up with scientific knowledge of God. One may know that he has a father, but unless he knows who his father is, his knowledge is imperfect. And that education in the science of God is lacking.

—*Science of Self-  
Realization* 6a

The Americans say they trust in God. But without the science of God, that trust is simply fictitious. First take the science of God very seriously, then put your trust in Him. They do not know what God is, but we do. We actually trust in God.

—*Science of Self-  
Realization*, 6d



*The Americans say they trust in God. But without the science of God, that trust is simply fictitious.*

truth and absolute transcendence. If one has full faith in Kṛṣṇa and confidence in Him, one becomes eligible to discharge devotional service confidentially. According to one's faith, one is a topmost, intermediate or inferior devotee.

—*Caitanya-caritāmṛta* *Madhya*  
22.64

Advaita Ācārya had confidence in the *śāstric* evidence and did not care about social customs. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, therefore, is a cultural movement that does not care about local social conventions. Following in the footsteps of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Advaita Ācārya,

God cannot be partial. Everyone is God's son, so how can God favor one son above another? That is not possible. But human beings discriminate. We write, "In God we trust," but one who trusts in God must be equally kind and merciful toward all living entities. That is God consciousness.

—*Teachings of Queen Kunti* 11

The devotee thinks, *avaśya rakṣibe kṛṣṇa*: "Kṛṣṇa will surely protect me and give me help for the successful execution of devotional service." This is called confidence. . . . Complete confidence in the path of devotional service will enable one to attain his desired goal, but at-

### RESULT OF DEVELOPING TRUST

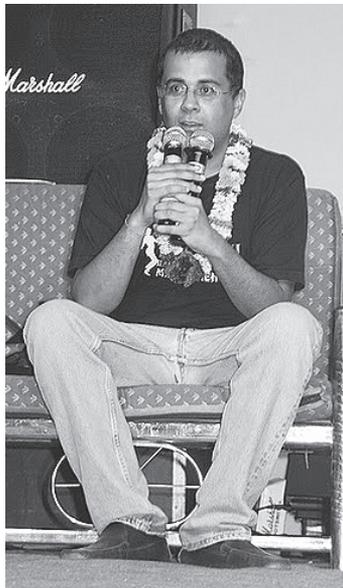
It is all Kṛṣṇa's money. When He sees us very faithful and trustworthy, He gives up His money for expenditures. Simply pray to Kṛṣṇa that you may be able by His Grace to serve Him nicely.

—*Letter to Subala*, 8 July 1969,  
Los Angeles

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare  
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma  
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

**CHETAN BHAGAT  
MOTIVATES YOUTH**

On 14 December 2010, famous author Chetan Bhagat spoke at an AIDS Awareness event organized by the Bhaktivedanta Hospital Youth Foundation in Mumbai. Hundreds of college students listened as Bhagat, whom *Time Magazine* considers one of the “World’s 100 Most Influential People,” described how important it is to cultivate spirituality in youth. “We need good academics, great career and a good partner, but we also need good values,” said Chetan.



Chetan described his fondness for Kṛṣṇa and said that all the male leads in his novels are named after him: “It’s my way of spreading the word.” Each of his four books has sold over a million copies and two were made into movies. Chetan regularly visits Kṛṣṇa temples in Mumbai and Australia and often uploads pictures of the Deities to his Twitter feed which counts over two hundred thousand followers.

**ISKCON MEMBER APPOINTED AS  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN**

ISKCON devotee Śaunaka Ṛṣi Dāsa has recently been appointed Hindu Chaplain to Oxford University, the first to take on such a role in the history of the famous 900-year-old school. “There are no official Hindu Chaplains for the University, yet there are thirty-six college ch a p l a i n s ,



attached to Oxford’s thirty-eight colleges,” he explains. “I was asked by the Hindu Students’ Society of Oxford University to become their chaplain. This request was then recognized by the Student Ministry Forum, a group comprising of all the different College chaplains, who asked me to join them and gave me the title, ‘Hindu Chaplain to Oxford University.’”

**ISKCON REPRESENTATIVES ATTEND  
MEXICO CLIMATE SUMMIT**

Secretary Gyṛgy Kirs alongwith strategy director Vadim Sviridovich from ISKCON Hungary’s Eco-Valley Foundation (EVF) attended the COP16 Climate Summit in Cancun, Mexico from 29 November to 10 December 2010.

The United Nations invited EVF—which helps people to start and maintain sustainable communities similar to ISKCON Hungary’s highly successful Krishna Valley—to attend as an observer organization.

“We met representatives of TERI, (The Energy and Resources Institute), a scientific institute based in Delhi, India, whom we have developed a partnership with,” Gyṛgy says. “We also met some representatives of Yale University in the U.S., who were interested in our efforts to propagate sustainable living.

**WORLDWIDE RATHA-YĀTRĀ  
CELEBRATIONS**

**Ludhiana, Punjab:** ISKCON Ludhiana had its 15<sup>th</sup> annual Ratha-yātrā on 19 December, 2010. Five hundred locals and members of the ISKCON Youth Forum (IYF) had held a huge “Scooter Rally” on the streets of Ludhiana to promote the festival.



**Chandigarh, Punjab:** On 27 November 2010, ISKCON Chandigarh celebrated Ratha-yātrā.

*Contributed by Bhakta Kalpish, Kṛpāmoya Dāsa and Madhava Smullen*

# Apatheism

## A New Trend in Wishy-Washy Disbelief

*“God might exist—but who cares?” is an all-too-common attitude in modern culture*

By Satyarāja Dāsa

There’s a new theological term being bandied about by scholars and historians of religion: apatheism. It refers to people who just don’t care, particularly when it comes to God. And if you think about it, that’s not a select few. In our modern age of quarrel and hypocrisy, people in general really don’t care about God—they don’t care to discuss Him, think about Him, or consider if He exists.

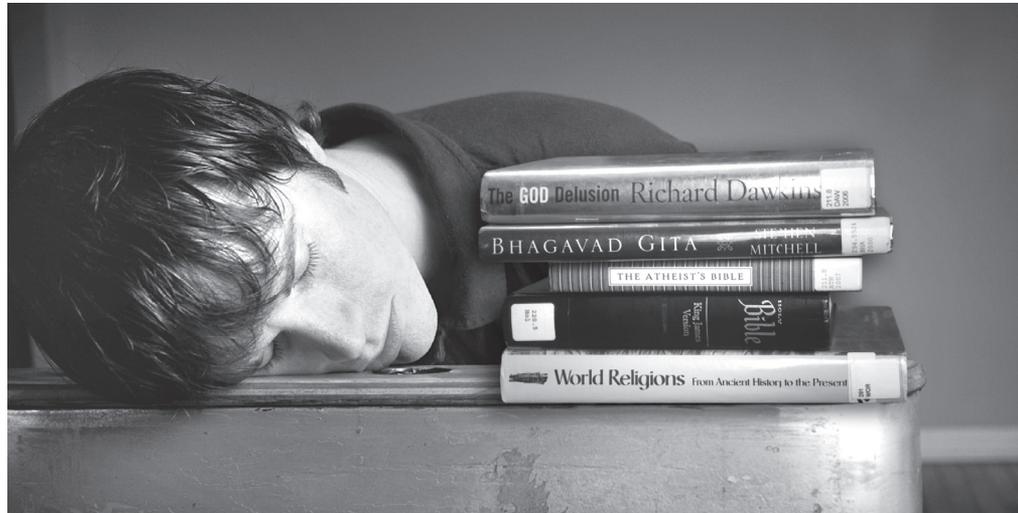
Unlike agnosticism, with which one might readily compare it, apatheism takes no position on whether God exists, or on whether one can know if there is a God or not. It simply states . . . nothing. It’s indifferent, implying, at least on a subtle level, that God is irrelevant, a thing of the past, a nuisance not worth our time. “Why even think about it? Why even care?”

As philosopher Jonathan Rauch explains in his recent article in *The Atlantic* (“Let it Be,” April 3, 2010):

*Apatheism concerns not what you believe but how. In that respect it differs from the standard concepts used to describe religious views and people. Atheism, for instance, is not*

*at all like apatheism; the hot-blooded atheist cares as much about religion as does the evangelical Christian, but in the opposite direction. . . . Tolerance is a magnificent concept, John Locke’s inesti-*

*to know for certain whether or not God exists. But if one concedes that a Supreme Being does indeed exist, then how does it make any sense to ignore Him or say that He is un-*



*mable gift to all mankind; but it assumes, as Locke did, that everyone brims with religious passions that everyone else must work hard to put up with.*

Frankly, the entire idea lacks merit. It is almost understandable to disbelieve in God—based on disappointment or a bleak worldview. Or to propose that it is impossible

important? This is His world; He created it. Consider this: If you visit someone’s home, doesn’t it make sense to know who your host is and to have cordial dealings with him or her? What are we doing here if we don’t know who the proprietor is? And if there is any mystery to existence—and there clearly is—it seems knowing God would be a

large step toward solving that mystery.

### PRIMORDIAL APATHY

Of course, apathy toward God is not a new thing. In many ways, it's the very source of material existence. When living beings become indifferent to God, they become bound to material existence. And a primary function of *maya*, the illusory energy, is to allow them to do so. We want to be an imitation God, the material world is created so we can play out our delusional drama, and we incarnate, time and again, for that very purpose. In an interview published in *The Harmonist*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said:

*This inferior potency has been stupefying the jivas [souls] that are apathetic towards God since before the beginning of time and causing misunderstanding in them, sometimes assuming the form of "twenty-four items of entity" of Kapila (the originator of the Sāṅkhya system), sometimes as the "atom" of Kaṇāda (of the Vaiśeṣika system), sometimes also as Jaimini's principle of "elevation" (in the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā system), sometimes again as the "sixteen objects" of Gautama (in the Nyāya system), sometimes as "superhuman power and absolute oneness with God" of Patañjali (of the Yoga system), and sometimes as the pretence of search after Brahman (of the Śāṅkara school).*

What all of this means in simple English is that numerous schools of thought—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura here enumerates the major schools in India as examples—were conceived so that living beings could forget God or develop apathy toward Him, thus allowing them to play out their imitation Godhood.

Modern atheists, agnostics, and,

yes, atheists partake of many of the same notions as these traditional Indian thinkers and their schools, if in a less systematic fashion. But the conclusion is always the same: How can I forget the fact that I am constitutionally a servant of God and that life is meant for serving Him?

After all, who really wants to be apathetic about something (or someone) as important as God? He is our source and gives life real purpose.

### THE LIVING DEAD

The word *apathy* has Greek origins and literally means "without feelings." Can one experience life—be truly alive—without feeling? Victor Hugo wrote, "It's nothing to die; it's frightful not to live." In other words, it is more than the act of dying that frightens us—it is the prospect of not living. Are the apathetic really alive, or are they, in a sense, the living dead? As the German social psychologist Erich Fromm phrased it, "In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the problem was that God is dead; in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the problem is that man is dead."

Apathy is a double-edged sword that wounds both the apathetic and the society in which they live. Apathy has horrific negative power. And atheism is the worst form of apathy, because it's directed toward the entity who most warrants our attention, our concern, our interest.

What causes apathy? It is usually frustration and a sense of powerlessness, making people withdraw from life or give up on things that could be important—like God. However, the ultimate cause is their attitude, the way they react to the world and things around them. The cause of apathy is not any particular thing itself, but people's condi-

tioned response to everything.

As Rauch tells us in his *Atlantic* article:

*In America . . . the proportion of people who say they never go to church or synagogue has tripled since 1972, to 33 percent in 2000. Most of these people believe in God (professed atheists are very rare in the United States); they just don't care much about him. They do care a bit; but atheism is an attitude, not a belief system, and the overriding fact is that these people are relaxed about religion.*

*Even regular churchgoers can, and often do, rank quite high on the atheism scale. There are a lot of reasons to attend religious services: to connect with a culture or a community, to socialize, to expose children to religion, to find the warming comfort of familiar ritual. The softer denominations in America are packed with atheists.*

Rauch's words are insightful. He enumerates well the shallow reasons for approaching God. These reasons are not wrong or inappropriate; they are just inferior. Prabhupāda talks about this as well:

*This is . . . the recommendation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.6) . . . : "The supreme occupation [dharma] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self."*

*Yato bhaktir adhokṣaje. The word bhakti comes from the same root as bhaj, the root of the word bhajate [worship]. The test of a first-class religion is whether or not we are developing our love for God. If we practice religion with some ulterior motive, hoping to fulfill our material necessities, our religion is not first class but third class. It must be understood that first-class religion (please turn to page 16)*

# Letter to a Sister

*Spirituality offers a balm during life's greatest trauma*

By Ṣaḍbhujā Dāsa

*(This article is adapted from a letter written by the author to his bereaved sister who lost her father. Explaining death in a simple and personal manner, the author comforts her by describing the Vedic wisdom behind this crisis.)*

DEAR PRATEEKSHA,

I was deeply affected by the fact that you have to deal with such an immense, terrible, and sudden loss—all alone and so far from family.

Therefore I thought to share some thoughts and realizations with you that may help. This letter might be quite long, but kindly go through it fully and very carefully. After all, spirituality is the greatest balm (and perhaps the *only* one) in times like these.

## SOME BASIC TRUTHS OF LIFE

The truth of the matter is that we are all spirit souls (*ātmā*) living within a body. Our soul never changes, although the body keeps changing. For example, our bodies have definitely changed over the last twenty or thirty years from infancy to adulthood. And our bodies will continue to change as we age—our teeth will fall out, our hair will turn grey, etc. At death we, the soul, will leave the body altogether. But through all these external

changes we remain the same person—the same eternal, unchanging soul.

You can think about it like a driver with a brand new car. Initially, the car performs well, but after prolonged wear and tear, the car slowly breaks down and ultimately stops working altogether. Then the driver buys a better car. We are drivers sitting in the car of the body. As long as the body performs well we remain in the body, but the moment the body is unable to function properly, higher au-

thorities guide the driver (soul) into a new vehicle or body.

The driver is never lost even when he disappears from our sight. Rather, the driver has simply moved to another vehicle to continue his journey towards God's kingdom. It is simply the useless vehicle he has discarded.

## DEALING WITH THE CRISIS

When somebody close to us leaves this world, we feel unimaginable pain. No words of solace can



*Death is like moving from one room to another.*

heal that loss. But if you contemplate what I said above, you can at least gain some relief knowing that your loved one has not really been lost. Rather, he has just moved onto a better destination.

Imagine that your best friend is in the next room, calling out to you to come in. To get to the other room, you have to walk through a door. You are not afraid because you love your friend and know she will protect you. Death is like that door. Our best friend, Kṛṣṇa, is calling out to us. He will love and protect us. But before we approach that sweet Lord, we first have to walk through a series of doors. Prem Maman has walked through one of these doors. Sooner or later we will all have to follow suit.

Another aspect that adds to the pain is to think we can never connect with our loved one again, never engage in a relationship with him/her. This is very untrue. Although we can no longer touch that person physically, we can still have a spiritual relationship with the departed person—and this is much more satisfying than a physical relationship.

How to create a spiritual relationship? We just have to intensify our lost connection with Kṛṣṇa or God. When our connection with God is in-

tensified, automatically our connection with all of God's daughters and sons intensifies on a spiritual platform. An example: when we water the root of a tree, all parts of the tree (the leaves, the twigs, branches, etc.) get nourished. We don't have to nourish each twig or leaf separately. Just water the root and everything is taken care of. Similarly Kṛṣṇa is the root of creation. We souls all have an eternal relationship with Him. When we intensify our relationship with Kṛṣṇa, ultimately, everybody who is connected with us benefits (materially and spiritually).

Therefore to continue the relationship with the departed person, we need to intensify our relationship with Kṛṣṇa. How to do that?

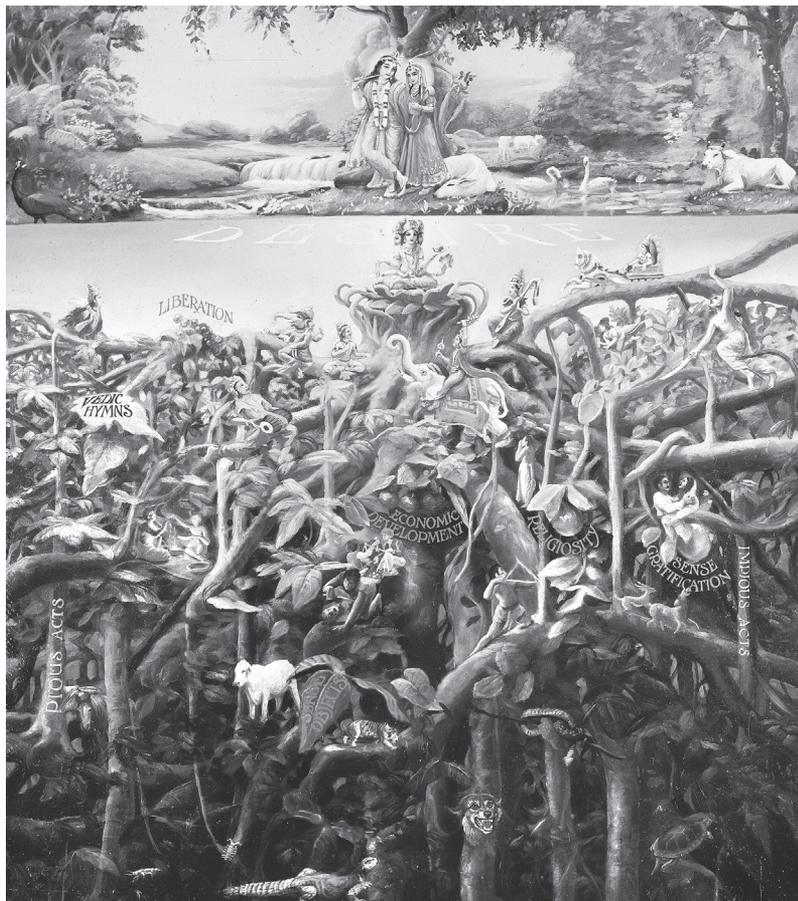
We will discuss later.

### BUT WHY DOES GOD DO THESE THINGS?

This is a very important question. Many times, crises cause people to lose faith in God or to even become atheists. But Prateeksha, please have faith that nobody on earth—including your dad, mom, sister, relatives, or friends—loves you as much as God loves you. When you feel pain, please have faith that God feels your pain much deeper than any other person. He will always be your best friend.

We may not be able to understand right now how or why things happen in our lives the way they do. In fact, we are not supposed to understand this. If we could understand all of God's actions, what would be the difference between us and God? God is always supreme, and we are always insignificant before Him. But if we have faith that God—our best friend—has a higher purpose in creating the particular scenes of our life, then it is easy to overcome any of the crises we may face.

You can think of it as a person who is irritated by a traffic jam. If you take that same person and fly him into the air where he can look down on the traffic and everything around it—where he can see where the road clears and how there



*In the Bhagavad-gītā (chapter 15), Lord Kṛṣṇa compares material existence to an inverted banyan tree.*

are places of beauty, and even places where conditions are much worse than his own—he learns how insignificant his own concerns are. This is because he sees a bigger picture. Please understand that we are not seeing the big picture right now. But by adopting spiritual practices,

our spiritual practices as an umbrella to protect us from becoming overly affected by the troubles we may experience.

#### 4) HOW TO INTENSIFY OUR SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP

Intensifying our spiritual rela-

HARE KṚṢṆA  
HARE KṚṢṆA  
KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA  
HARE HARE  
HARE RĀMA HARE RĀMA  
RĀMA RĀMA HARE HARE

There are no rules for chanting. Simply chant the above names and listen to what you are chanting. That's all that's required. In fact, these names can be chanted anywhere (even in the bathroom!) and at any time. There is no need even to bathe before chanting. Simply chant and hear. Only two qualities are required while chanting: that you remain humble and sincere. Immediately you can feel God's presence in your life.

So try to incorporate a daily quota of chanting (maybe 10 or 50 or 108 times) the above Hare KṚṣṇa mantra in your life and experience immediate wonderful effects.

In fact, try the following: The next time you feel unbearable pain about Maman, please chant the *mantra* softly, attentively, and prayerfully to yourself. You will feel immediate solace. Please trust me on this.

Please forgive me for such a long letter. But if it helps you even a little, please bless me that I can continue forever on the path of spirituality.

I do not access my email regularly, so I may not be able to keep in regular touch with you, but please be assured that I keep you, Ammu, and Ammai in my prayers.

Your loving brother,  
Shibi Ettan

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*We can use spirituality as an umbrella to protect ourselves from life's problems.*

we can learn to see it—to see more of God's will and intentions. Then we will know that today's problems are insignificant.

Unfortunately, life will always be full of difficulties. We can never expect a smooth ride in life. Right now where I am it is raining. I cannot stop the rain, but I can carry an umbrella to protect myself from it. So whoever we are (Mr. Ambani, the president, the prime minister, or a simple housewife), we can use

relationship is the easiest part. The scriptures recommend that to elevate ourselves to the spiritual platform we should simply chant God's names. God and His names are nondifferent, so when we chant His names we immediately touch Him. There are countless names for God, but the scriptures tell us that of all of them, the following names give us the greatest benefit:

# THE QUALMS OF ARJUNA

Five thousand years ago, on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra  
 Kṛṣṇa the All-merciful Karuṇāsindhu, became the charioteer of Pārtha  
 Kṛṣṇa, the friend, philosopher and guide of Arjuna, his persona grata  
 The Lord is therefore Pārthasārathi, the charioteer of Pārtha

Arjuna wished to see who had come to the battlefield and desired to fight  
 Who were his friends or relatives who wished to test their might?  
 Who were the warriors and soldiers who desired to be his enemies?  
 Arjuna requested Kṛṣṇa to draw up his chariot between the two armies

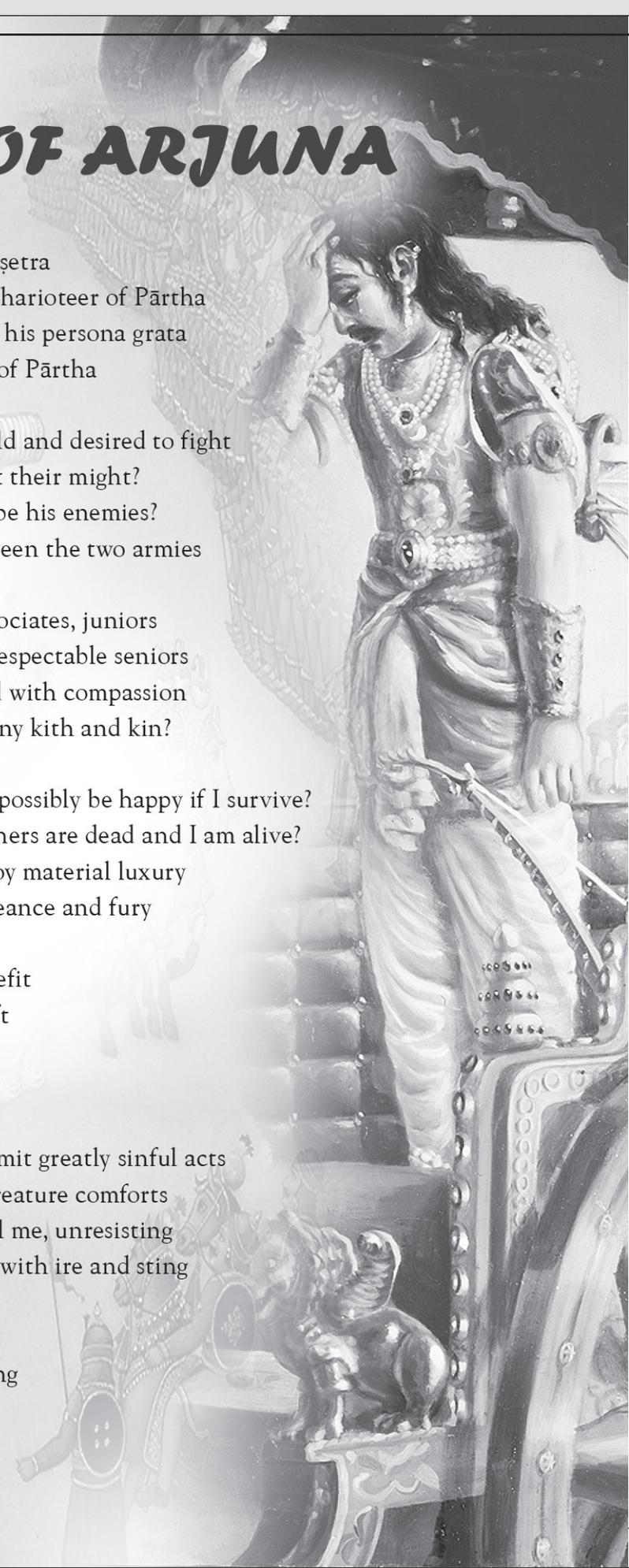
Arjuna saw different grades of friends, relatives, associates, juniors  
 Sons, nephews, uncles, grandfathers, teachers and respectable seniors  
 Seeing them all on the battlefield, Arjuna was filled with compassion  
 How could he aim his arrows at them and kill so many kith and kin?

“O Govinda, even if I emerge victorious, how can I possibly be happy if I survive?  
 What good are kingdoms, riches and comforts, if others are dead and I am alive?  
 I am not prepared to kill, though I may live and enjoy material luxury  
 I would rather be killed, than be overtaken by vengeance and fury

Let those who are evil try to kill us for material benefit  
 They may be ignorant, avaricious, and morally bereft  
 But why should we, with knowledge of the sin  
 Do likewise and engage in this heinous action?

Alas, how strange it is that we are preparing to commit greatly sinful acts  
 Driven by the desire to enjoy royal happiness and creature comforts  
 I consider it better to let the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra kill me, unresisting  
 Than to raise my weapons and kill those before me, with ire and sting

My hair is standing on end, my body is trembling  
 My bow is slipping from my hands, my skin is burning  
 My helmet is slipping from my head, O Mādhava!  
 I shall not fight, O Govinda!”



# SEARCH FOR Happiness

Part  
2

By Vraja Vihārī Dāsa

*Humans and animals—is happiness the same for them?*

## HOW ARE HUMANS SPECIAL?

How are humans different from animals? One may imagine that an animal can't think logically, can't reason, question, or use intelligence. These are special gifts awarded to humans alone. However, on closer inspection it's obvious that animals also use intelligence. For instance, have you seen a cat sneak into the kitchen when nobody is watching? She knows exactly when to enter and where the milk is kept. In the *āśrama* where I stay, we were each given a couple of hangers to hang our shirts after we washed them. We would leave our shirts hanging on the terrace of the *āśrama*. Gradually, all *āśrama* residents lost their hangers, and we wondered who had stolen them and when. As the weeks passed we forgot about the incident. Then one day as I was standing on the terrace, I saw something that shocked me. On the top branch of a tree next to the *āśrama* was a beautiful bird's nest. I say

“beautiful” because it was so unusual: it was made entirely of clothes hangers! I called the other inmates, and we all witnessed the amazing skill of these simple birds. Where did these birds learn to make a nest, leave alone an expert one made of hangers? We've never heard of birds studying civil engineering at the premier Indian Institute of Technology. No, animals have an inborn intelligence. The only difference between their intelligence and ours is that they can't think or use their intelligence beyond what we call the 'SEED' purposes: the propensity to sleep, eat, enjoy, and defend.

## THE 'ABCD' DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HUMANS AND ANIMALS

Humans have the same SEED propensities, but they stand out against animals due to their four specially endowed propensities, which I've named 'ABCD.'

'A' refers to the Ability to enquire into higher pleasure; B is the

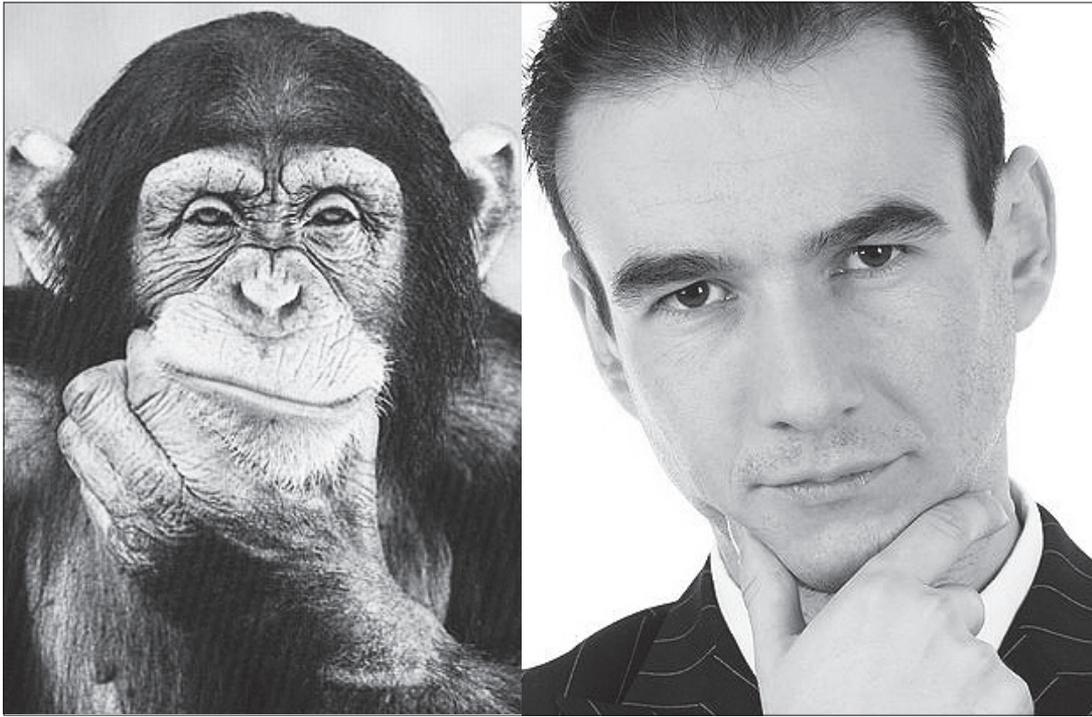
capacity to feel a Bliss that is superior to the happiness of satisfying the body; C is the ability to make Choices that bring us those higher pleasures; and D is the Determination to practise the above three.

Let's briefly examine each of these four:

The ability to enquire about higher and nobler goals is the exclusive prerogative of humans. Animals can't think beyond the basic needs of SEED. Humans, however, can pursue sublime goals and have been encouraged to do so by the wisdom books of every age and culture. Such enquiry sends us on a journey to higher realms of happiness; failure to enquire pulls us down to live only to satisfy our basic animal needs. A life not centred on more fulfilling and meaningful pursuits is beset with the same hardships and dullness that plague animal life.

## THE FOUR LEVELS OF HUMAN HAPPINESS

Bliss is the second difference that sets humans apart from ani-



Although there are a few similarities between man and animal, there is a gulf of difference too.

bering and offering loving service to God. This last type of pleasure is called *bhakti-rasa*, the taste one derives from loving reciprocations with God. So when a human being practises loving devotional service to God, he or she experiences the culmination of all happiness. Therefore this grade of bliss, called as *bhakti-rasa* is there for all human beings to explore and exploit to the fullest capacity.

mals. There are higher levels of pleasure which humans can experience *vis-à-vis* the animals, due to their more developed consciousness. Essentially humans have four basic levels of happiness, and these are experienced by different people according to the different levels of their spiritual advancement. The lowest experience is called *pārthiva-rasa*. This term refers to the highest possible pleasure one could experience if his or her physical faculties are fully developed. *Pārthiva-rasa*, enjoyment of the flavors of the earth, is at its fullest when one's senses are strong and one has unlimited resources to enjoy them. More elevated than this is *svargīya-rasa*, emotional flavors—pleasures experienced not through the physical body but through relationships, especially relationships involving love. Even if one's physical senses are not strong, *svargīya-rasa* gives a kick and keeps us mentally happy. A thousand units of *pārthiva* plea-

sure can at best match one unit of *svargīya* happiness. Even those debilitated by serious physical illness, and thereby unable to enjoy bodily pleasures, can be happy if they experience the pleasure of society, friendship, and love.

However, if we multiply the taste one gets from *svargīya-rasa* by ten thousand, one approaches the happiness that can be derived from *brahman-rasa*, or the pleasure spiritualists who seek liberation experience when they attain it. These spiritual practitioners reject the material world and its pleasures and instead focus on the eternal truth within and without, Brahman.

Deep absorption in permanent reality gives a spiritual seeker a happiness that transcends in quality the pleasures offered by both the body and one's society. However, even the highest attainment of Brahman happiness is insignificant—a drop in the desert—compared to the ocean of pleasure found in remem-

#### HAPPINESS THROUGH CHOICE OR INSTINCT?

The third difference that sets humans apart from animals is the ability humans have to make proper choices and take responsibility for seeking higher pleasures. Animals can't make choices; they act on instinct. When faced with a stimulus, animals respond instinctively; they have no freedom of choice. Humans, however, can pause, reflect, and then respond to a stimulus based on independent choice. The existence of free will is a special human endowment that gives them the power to choose their response. For example, if you slap a child on the back, the child may cry instantly; there is no gap between stimulus and response. However if you slap a grown up man on the back, he will pause before he responds to the stimulus. In the space between the stimulus and response, he may analyse if the slap was friendly, sarcastic or out of ha-



*Humans are always faced with a choice. How we exercise this choice will determine our destination.*

tred. Depending on his perception of the reality he shall then exercise his choice. Thus humans can make a conscious choice to seek higher happiness; they don't have to necessarily act out of basic animal instinct. They have the power to say 'no' to the pulling of the mind. And that power is tapped through the fourth endowment.

The fourth difference ('D' in ABCD) is Determination. Once having made a choice to seek spiritual pleasures, we need to exercise determination. Humans have tremendous potential to practise determination, even in the most trying circumstances of life. Animals, even if they exercise determination, it's essentially for meeting the requirements of SEED. Humans on the other hand can pursue a determined effort to experience a higher, transcendental pleasure.

The similarities between humans and animals are 'SEED' (Sleeping, Eating, Enjoyment, and Defending). The differences can be re-

membered as 'ABCD' (Ability to enquire, Bliss, Choice, and Determination). ❀

*To be continued... Are humans more miserable than animals?*

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Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare  
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma  
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

*(Continued from page 9)*

*is that by which we can develop our love of Godhead. ahaituky apratihātā. This perfect religion should be executed without ulterior motive or impediment. That is the yoga system recommended in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and in this Sixth Chapter of Bhagavad-gītā. That is the system of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.*

*(The Path of Yoga, Chapter 8)*

In short, people become apathetic toward God because they approach Him for lesser reasons. As Hari Śauri Dāsa, who spent a considerable amount of time as Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal secretary, writes:

*Prabhupāda went on for some time, condemning the attitude with which people generally approach God. He explained that in India they sing a traditional ārati song which repeats the words sab ko sampatti de bhagavān. De bhagavān means "God, give me." And in the West, he explained, the Christians also have the same idea. "The whole world," Prabhupāda observed, "they have accepted God as order supplier: I order, You supply. The Christian church also, "God, give us our daily bread."*

*(A Transcendental Diary, Volume 1)*

This is the real cause of apatheism: not knowing who God is or how to approach Him. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was conceived to remedy this situation. If we become acquainted with the all-attractive form of Kṛṣṇa, apathy will remain a million miles away. If we learn how to enthusiastically engage in His service—instead of asking what He can do for us—apathetic spirituality will fall to the wayside. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the surest cure for apatheism. One need merely try it to see for oneself. ❀

# In your own words ...



What can parents do to make their child interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

First, it is very important that the parents themselves be Kṛṣṇa conscious. When one is Kṛṣṇa conscious himself then one can think of many ways to give it to others.

The child can be put to bed and awakened to the accompaniment of Kṛṣṇa bhajans or chanting of the holy names. Pictures of baby Kṛṣṇa in the form of posters and calendars can adorn the walls of the child's room. A Deity of baby Kṛṣṇa may be gifted to the child so that the child befriends Kṛṣṇa from his early life and spends more time in his 'friend's' association as days pass by. Different festivals like *dīpotsava*, *puṣyābhiśeka* can be celebrated which increase the child's remembrance of the Lord. During the day, different pastimes of Kṛṣṇa can be narrated to stimulate the child's attraction for Kṛṣṇa. Children can be supplied with different coloring books to help them paint and

remember Kṛṣṇa.

Rama Ramji,  
Pune

I have a belief that children do not learn from what we speak, but from what we do. Thus, as parents we must lead our kin by example and not just by words.

I try to do this by chanting the holy name of Lord during my day-to-day activities viz. bathing, while waiting at some client's reception

etc. My wife and I haven't watched television or films etc nor have we heard any film music since last five years. We have replaced this with hearing *kīrtanas*, and *bhajanās*. Instead of reading newspapers or novels etc. we read *Bhagavad-gītā* daily. Our children have become interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness naturally and are eager to attend programs with us.

Nainesh Varma,  
Ahmedabad.

## VEDIC THOUGHTS

Human society, at the present moment, is not in the darkness of oblivion. It has made rapid progress in the fields of material comforts, education, and economic development throughout the entire world. But there is a pinprick somewhere in the social body at large, and therefore there are large-scale quarrels, even over less important issues. There is need of a clue as to how humanity can become one in peace, friendship, and prosperity with a common cause. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam will fill this need, for it is a cultural presentation for the respiritualization of the entire human society.

—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda  
Preface to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

## IN YOUR OWN WORDS

QUESTION FOR THE FORTHCOMING ISSUES

What do you think is the symbolism of spring? Hope, rebirth, youthfulness... Write about it.

Deadline for submission is Feb. 25  
Answers will be published  
in April 2011

Word limit: 150 words/ 15 lines  
E-mail: ed.btgindia@pamho.net

The BTG Yatra Seva has been organizing conducted tours of spiritual places (dhams) as part of a sincere effort to revive the true Indian culture in these changing times. Pilgrims on these well-planned tours shall gain much spiritual insight from authentic guidance based on in-depth study of the scripture.

We welcome all spiritual seekers to participate in this blissful exploration of THE SPIRITUAL INDIA.



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DWARAKA, AHOBILAM, ŚRIRANGAM, AYODYĀ,  
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# Spirituality for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

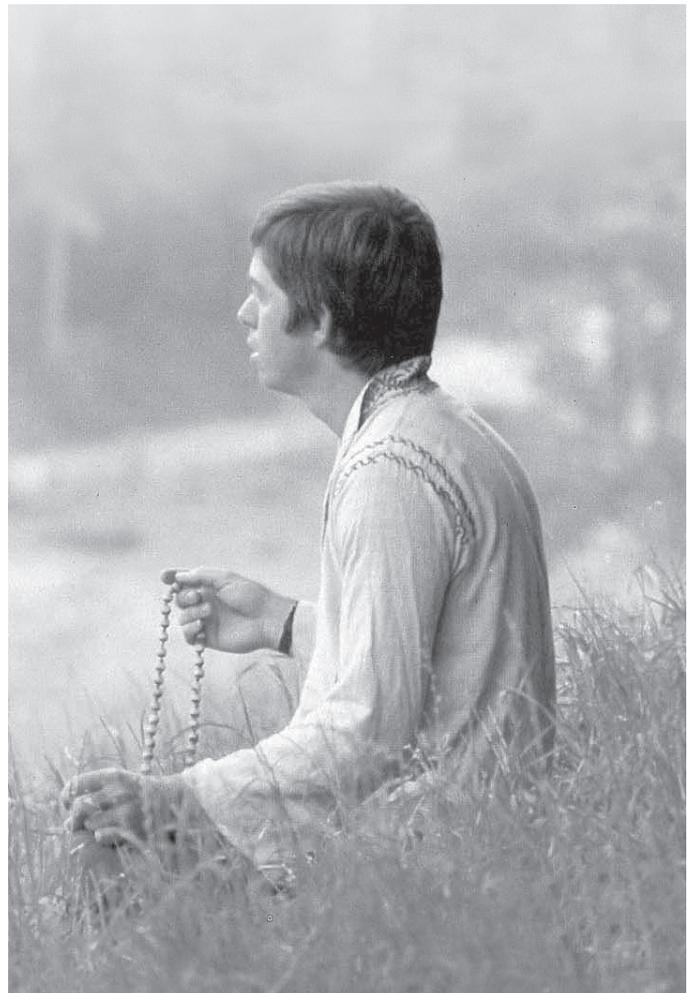
*Questions and answers about practical spirituality*

By Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa

**Question:** Is spirituality practical in our fast-paced, modern, twenty-first century life?

**Answer:** The practical purpose for all our activities, even in our fast-paced modern life, is to achieve happiness. Spirituality points to the best form of happiness—a happiness that can never be taken away from us. The Vedic texts explain that as souls, we all have an eternal loving relationship with the all-attractive Supreme Lord. In loving and serving God, we can relish supreme and everlasting happiness. The more we love God, the happier we become. The scriptures of great religions like Christianity and Islam also describe love of God as the ultimate goal of life. Hence love of God is the nonsectarian, universal, spiritual goal of life.

Love for God certainly directs our vision to the other world, the eternal spiritual world beyond the temporary material world. But this otherworldly goal does not make us lose sight of our responsibilities in this world. Rather, it builds the most solid foundation for us to live practically in this world. Just as when we flip the master switch in a house all the lights in the house automatically turn on, love for God results in love for all living beings. We realize that we are all brothers and sisters in the one universal family of God. When we love all living beings we no longer desire to exploit or manipulate others for our selfish interests. Instead, our love for God inspires us to love and serve each other. This creates a culture of warmth, trust, and service, which encourages moral behavior. This contrasts sharply with the modern culture of alien-



*Chanting is possible for everyone in all circumstances.*

ation, suspicion, and exploitation, which fosters immorality.

When we follow a genuine spiritual path, even in its early stages it triggers our inborn value system. We intuitively realize that God is our greatest well-wisher and that the rules He has made for us are in our ultimate interest. So we voluntarily and lovingly choose to lead a life of moral and spiritual integrity, as ordained by God. And as we find inner happiness by loving God, we become free from selfish, lusty, greedy, and egoistic drives. No longer do we feel we are missing something because of our morality. Morality ceases to be the “difficult but right” choice. Rather, morality becomes the natural path towards spiritual growth.

The most comprehensive yet concise textbook for gaining spiritual education is the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and the easiest yet quickest spiritual practice to awaken our dormant love for God is the chanting of the holy names of God like the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Thus the process is practical and easy, and the results too are practical and beneficial. So let’s rid ourselves of this misconception that spirituality is impractical.



Just like a child may think that a currency note is an ordinary paper, one may think the holy name to be an ordinary sound

**Question:** What is the most practical way to practice spirituality?

**Answer:** Mantra meditation, the prayerful chanting of the holy names of God, is the most practical and powerful method of spiritual advancement for our current age.

Out of His love for us, God manifests Himself as His holy name. The *Padma Purāna* declares, *abhinnatvām nāma-nāminoḥ*: “There is no difference between the name of God and God Himself.” So the holy name is no ordinary sound; it is God Himself.

Here’s an example to illustrate how a thing can be much more valuable than what it appears to be. A mother tells her four-year-old child to tear and throw into the dustbin all paper he finds on the floor in their bedroom. The child gleefully gets down to work, tearing and throwing away the papers. Suddenly the mother notices a five-hundred-rupee note that had fallen from her husband’s pocket as he rushed to office that morning. The child also notices that note and picks it up to tear it. The mother screams in alarm, “Stop!” Taken aback, the child asks, “Didn’t you tell me to tear all the papers lying on the ground?” The mother hastily takes the note from his hand, keeps it safely in her purse, and replies, “But this is not ordinary paper.” The child appears surprised. It looks just like the papers that he has torn. Seeing his incredulity, the mother says, “With this piece of paper you can get five hundred chocolates for your birthday.” When the boy actually gets some chocolates

from the shop, then he realizes that the five-hundred-rupee note is no ordinary paper.

Similarly, those with undeveloped spiritual consciousness think that the holy name is just like any ordinary sound. But when they chant the holy names themselves and experience profound peace and immense joy, they understand that the holy name is different from any ordinary sounds. For no ordinary material sound can bring such joy, just as no ordinary paper can purchase five hundred chocolates.

God, out of His unlimited love for us, makes Himself easily available to us in a portable form that we can literally carry on the tip of our tongue. Śrīla Prabhupāda would say that when we chant the holy name, the Lord dances on our tongues.

Not only can chanting make a huge difference in our own lives, it can make a significant difference in the world too. There are a significant number of criminals, addicts, and others habituated to self-destructive behavior who want to become better human beings but don’t know how to change themselves. If they could be taught to chant, they would be able to overcome their lower natures and become better human beings, and thus help make our world a much better place.

**Question:** Chanting the holy names of God like the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* involves doing the same activity repeatedly. Isn’t that boring?

**Answer:** No. Let’s understand why.

Most people’s daily life is boring. In fact, people often watch TV not because the TV programs are so interesting but because their daily lives are so boring. Why does life

seem boring to us? Because we are intrinsically spiritual beings and our most essential need is love. The experience of loving and being loved is the ultimate foundation of all happiness. To the extent love is absent in an activity or a relationship, to that extent it becomes either boring or a burden. Even if we somehow invest love into what we're doing, there is often a lack of adequate reciprocation, and that disappoints us. That's why we continuously try out new things: new video games, new gadgets, new clothes, new cars, new houses, new foods, new jobs—even new spouses. Though all these new concoctions disappoint us eventually, we are addicted to the intoxicating pleasure offered by their novelty. Due to our addiction to newness we assume that doing something repeatedly, like chanting, will be boring.

But this assumption overlooks something essential: love.

A mother offers her breastmilk to her baby hundreds of times. Does she find it boring? Obviously not—at least not when the mother loves the baby. When the mother offers her love through her milk, the more the activity is repeated, the deeper her love becomes and the greater her fulfillment.

Similarly, when we chant the holy names of God, do we find chanting boring? Certainly not—at least not if we chant lovingly. When we offer our love to Kṛṣṇa by chanting His holy names, He reciprocates by flooding our hearts with His unlimited oceanic love. So every instance of chanting takes us deeper into that delightful ocean of divine nectar and thus the more we chant lovingly, the more we find chanting relishable.

The mother-baby analogy illustrates how a repetitive activity doesn't have to be boring. But, like all analogies, it has limitations. By

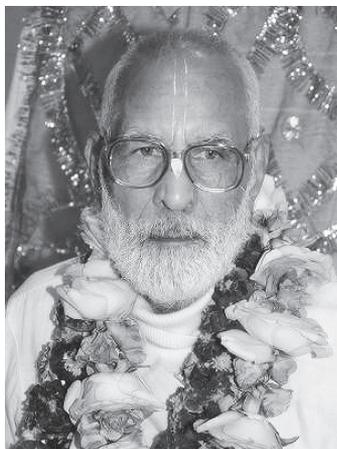
chanting, we don't nourish God; he nourishes us with His supreme love. Also, intensity of the mother-baby relationship dwindles as the baby grows up and needs other food, and as the breast-milk stops. The intensity of the soul-God relationship, on the other hand, becomes ever-increasingly intense as our devotion for God deepens.

In fact, when we develop a taste for the divine love that becomes accessible by chanting, we can find inner delight in all situations—including deadly boring situations. Then we realize that chanting leads not to boredom but to freedom from all boredom. ❀

*Caitanya Caraṇa Dāsa holds a degree in electronics and telecommunications engineering and serves full-time at ISKCON Pune. To subscribe to his free cyber magazine, visit [thespiritualscientist.com](http://thespiritualscientist.com)*

## IN MEMORIAM

*A message from the GBC Executive Committee*



We, the Executive Committee of ISKCON's Governing Body Commission, wish to hereby express our bereavement on hearing of the passing of Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

As a disciple of His Divine Grace Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Gosvami Mahārāja, who was the Godbrother and *sannyāsa* guru of His Di-

vine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja had been a long time acquaintance of our Śrīla Prabhupāda. He assisted him in his early days in the

United States, assistance for which Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed his appreciation.

At this time we remember Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja as a dedicated and powerful preacher. He traveled around the world to deliver the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and spread Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission. He also translated important Vaiṣṇava texts.

Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja lived a long and fruitful life in devotional service and was an inspiration to many. We pray the Lord will give comfort to his disciples and followers in this difficult time.

On behalf of all the members of ISKCON, we offer him our respectful obeisances.

*The GBC Executive Committee:  
Madhu Sevita Dāsa, Hṛdaya Caitanya Dāsa, Bhakti  
Caitanya Swami*

# TOLERANCE

## The Impenetrable Armour

*A must-have for modern times*



India is known for its unique method of struggling for political independence. The world over, nations have fought bloody wars to win independence, but India won its own independence by following the principle of *ahimsā*, nonviolence and tolerance. Whether India succeeded more by default than choice can be questioned, but no one doubts that at the time, the British were much more powerful than the Indians.

Well, if Mike Tyson were to challenge me to a boxing bout, I would tell him that I am from the land of Gandhi! Gandhi's ideology, when he was alive and expressing it, is known today as *gandhigiri*. And it was revolutionary. If someone slaps you on one cheek immediately offer him the other cheek too. This is the height of tolerance, and it's what gave us our freedom sixty-three years ago.

So it seems that tolerance is India's main forte. Rabindranath Tagore described India as a melting pot of cultures and religions. Highest among that is religious tolerance. No wonder we have the second-largest population of Muslims in the world. Even religions like Baha'i and Judaism, which are banned in their countries of origin, are thriving here. Tolerance is an important quality completely embedded in our Indian psyche since time immemorial.

But now, sixty-three years into India's independence, along with India's quickly developing technology and booming economy, tolerance has begun to go missing. The present Gen X or whatever you may call them, have started to feel that the tolerance our ancestors prided themselves on is now as outdated and

uncool as history itself. This is the age of instant gratification. No one wants to adjust, adapt, accept, or comply with any condition they haven't themselves created. The result? A growing frustration among the youth, leading to an alarming number of suicides be-



*Lack of tolerance leads to growing frustration*

tween the ages of twelve and nineteen. Psychologists and counselors understand that today's youngsters lack the important ability to tolerate—or, in common parlance, they have zero tolerance levels. Intolerance is rampant between individuals, families, corporations, and nations, leading to divorce, property disputes, riots, and ultimately, war. So at every level tolerance is much needed in this age of fast cars and fast foods, instant messaging and high-speed internet.

We need to get back to basics and learn a few lessons from the biggest management guru of all—Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.

### MANAGEMENT FROM GĪTĀ

In the *Bhagavad-gita* Kṛṣṇa offers four broad management principles through which we can understand the importance of tolerance.

1. *Tolerance is a must in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, because we live in a world of dualities.*

As there are poor people scrounging for food in dustbins, so there are millionaires growing fat on their excess. Happiness/distress, honour/dishonour, victory/defeat—are equally unavoidable.

2. *Understand that you are not your body but eternal spirit soul.*

If you understand that you are a soul and not your body, you'll have more strength to tolerate the body's inconveniences. This obsession we have with the comfort of our bodies leaves us focused on I, me, and mine, the root of selfishness and the cause of intolerance between individuals and nations alike. Today's generation is growing up with this 'I and me' culture.

Today's slogan? "My way or the highway." No wonder marriages now last for a short time.

3. *The world is temporary and full of suffering. Live with it.*

The root cause of all suffering is our own mind and senses, home of six enemies: lust, anger, greed, pride, envy, and illusion. We need tolerance to fight these enemies, which can cause havoc in our lives. Look at how lust made Tiger Woods, once a successful sportsman, husband, and father into a complete social reject. And what about that couple who killed their child out of anger? Greed led to the Satyam Computers scam. Envy causes both fanaticism and riots. Bollywood and the advertising industry tend to weave such a phantasmagoria that we think we live in a different world, but we don't. So better to learn tolerance and help yourself escape from your own version of the six enemies.

4. *A man's greatness is estimated by his ability to tolerate provoking situations.*

This is a quality that has been seen only in great political and

spiritual leaders—Gandhi, Jesus Christ or Mother Theresa and in today's modern age H.D.G A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON. In fact every page in our scriptures are filled with such examples. These persons have worn tolerance as if it were armour, and it has protected them and those they are protecting from all kinds of trouble.

Inevitably, we have to ask how to apply these principles in our lives. Seems like a colossal task. But by learning from day-to-day examples we can imbibe this most elusive quality of tolerance in all situations and provocations. Nature has a lot of answers for difficult questions if we are observant. So let us look at the practical application of tolerance by examining the following examples from nature.

1. *The ocean:* Although vast, the ocean is so deep that it remains undisturbed even though hundreds of rivers constantly flow into its waters. Similarly, a tolerant person has depth, and remains undisturbed even when rivers of material desire and temptation flow



*The ocean remains undisturbed even though hundreds of rivers constantly flow into its waters*

into the mind.

2. *The tree:* Trees are exemplary in their tolerance. They stand under the scorching sun yet continue to shelter others from that same



sun. Trees provide fresh fruit, flowers, and shade even though people come and cut their branches for firewood. Trees endure so much inconvenience, silently, without expectations.

3. *A building:* The most important part of a building is its foundation. We can't see much of that foundation, but that doesn't make it any less vital. Similarly, a healthy life is



founded on values, principles, and the principles of spiritual integrity, love, and forgiveness. The quality of tolerance depends on the principle of forgiveness.

4. *The lotus flower:* A lotus flower is beautiful even though it grows in a swamp because it has deep roots and leaves and flowers that rise above the mud. As lotus flowers are not touched by their circumstances, so we too can remain unaffected by our circumstances

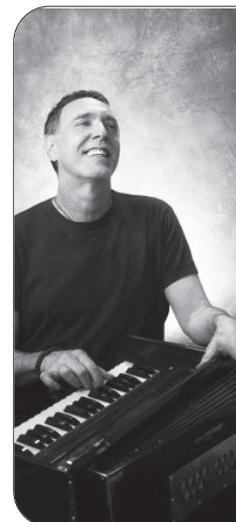
if we take nourishment from deep spiritual realization and learn to be in this world without being of it.

I don't expect that the next time someone stomps on your feet on a crowded train that you will



*A tree teaches tolerance, a lotus detachment from surroundings, and a building the importance of having a strong foundation*

smile and offer your other foot for another stomping. But after you read this article, you can at least understand that the foundation of a healthy life depends on your depth of tolerance and forgiveness, which are the only qualities that can bring you tranquility in this world. ☸



**Hare Kṛṣṇa  
Hare Kṛṣṇa  
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa  
Hare Hare  
Hare Rāma  
Hare Rāma  
Rāma Rāma  
Hare Hare**

# Becoming Wealthy on ₹ 80 a Day

*An alternative to culturally biased views on poverty shows  
how people with low monetary incomes can be happy.*

By Dhaneśvara Dāsa

*Mahā-Viṣṇu Dāsa (below) chants  
among vegetables at Gitagrad, a  
developing eco-spiritual  
community in Ukraine.*



People naturally see everything in terms of the world they are accustomed to. This cultural bias manifests in many ways, such as when the people of so-called prosperous countries set out to measure and fix poverty. Thinking that monetary income determines poverty, they project their conception on the rest of the world. They look at the world in terms of income and find that more than half of humanity is poor. Good souls that they are, they want to fix the problem.

But is the experience of a poor person in a poor country the same as that of a poor person in a rich country? No. As a general observation I'd say that most people in "poor" countries are relatively comfortable while the poor in "rich" countries are not.

I have met Indian villagers who would be classified as poor under United Nations guidelines (making less than Rs 50 a day), and I can say from direct experience that these people do not think of themselves as poor or feel the effects of poverty as a person in America would at the same level of income. The same is true of the "poor" people I know in Eastern Europe.

What makes the difference? In a word, culture, which includes values and expectations. A house in an Indian or Ukrainian village is vastly different from one in urban or suburban America or Europe, but people live there just as happily as wealthier people living in luxury houses. The same is true for their daily needs. Villagers in India and Ukraine produce a good deal of their own food. They also have fewer clothing requirements than their Western counterparts, and fewer financial demands for things such as cars, insurance, or frivolous consumer goods—

because these things are not a necessary part of their culture. Nonetheless the UN wants to change their culture, and that of many other people around the world, in order to raise them above "poverty" by making sure they have more than Rs 80 a day. That seems like a laudable goal, but perhaps we might pause to consider just what having more money is likely to do.

We have an example from recent history. Anthropologist Helena Norberg-Hodge was the first foreigner allowed to make her home in Ladakh, Kashmir. Beginning in the 1970s, she had the privilege of living there six months a year for three decades and came to know, and document, life in the traditional villages before the intrusion of Western culture. The Ladakhis lived in an agrarian subsistence economy. Though not an easy life by Western standards, with evident joy they met their basic physical, social, spiritual, and creative needs within the security of a caring, sharing community. Their happiness did not depend on income or possessions; it was simply experienced as a matter of daily living. Being mutually dependent, the villagers maintained a deep-rooted respect for one another's fundamental needs. And an acceptance of the natural limitations of the environment kept them free from misplacing values of worth.

At the time when this was observed, the Ladakhis might well have been considered poor by international standards because their income was minimal and most of their needs were met as a product of their own hands. Nonetheless,

they were a satisfied and joyful people. But something changed that. Norberg-Hodge explains how it was the tourists who brought poverty to Ladakh:

*A Western tourist can spend more money in a day than what a Ladakhi family might in one year. Seeing this, Ladakhis suddenly feel poor. The new comparison creates a gap that never existed before because in traditional Ladakh, people didn't need money in order to lead rich and fulfilling lives. Ladakhi society was based on mutual aid and cooperation; no one needed money for labor, food, clothing, or shelter. . . . In the traditional economy, Ladakhis knew that they had to depend on other people, and that others in turn depend on them. In the new economic system, local interdependence disintegrates along with traditional levels of tolerance. In place of cooperative systems meeting needs, competition and scarcity become determinants for survival. Perhaps the most tragic of all the changes I have observed in Ladakh is the vicious circle in which individual insecurity contributes to a weakening of family and community ties, which in turn further shakes individual self-esteem. Consumerism plays a central role in this whole process, since emotional insecurity generates hunger for material status symbols. The need for recognition and acceptance fuels the drive to acquire possessions that will presumably make you somebody. . . . It is heartbreaking to see people buying things to be admired, respected and ultimately loved, when in fact the effect is almost always the opposite. . . . [They are] set apart, which furthers the need to be accepted.\**

Ironically, it was money that

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\* Helena Norberg-Hodge, *The Pressure to Modernize and Globalize*, from *Case Against the Global Economy*, by David Korten, p. 41.



*Bhadravana Dāsa (above) prepares curd for the temple and devotees in the city of Kharkov. Ekanātha Bhakti Dāsa (right) leads Kārtika home from the pasture (right).*

includes these three targets:

1. To halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than Rs 40 per day.

2. To achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.

the approach, they limit the means of attainment. The manner in which the targets are stated presupposes a business-development model of production for a market economy and employment of the people they wish to help. Their efforts are in earnest, and last year, in a vague report, the UN Secretary General said that although “significant progress” had been made, urgent and increased efforts were needed to meet the goals by 2015. Hundreds of millions of dollars are being invested in accomplishing these goals. But if the cultural bias were lifted, these same goals could

brought poverty to Ladakh. Prior to Westerners’ arriving with a lot of money to spend, Ladakhis didn’t consider themselves poverty-stricken, although their income was probably less than Rs 50 a day. Only by comparing themselves to these foreigners—what they possessed and how they lived—did the Ladakhis begin to see themselves in a different light, as being in poverty and needing what they didn’t need before: money and whatever it buys. Sadly, they were purchasing alienation and isolation at the same time.

In other places around the world, our cultural bias makes us want to eliminate poverty in the sense that we know it. But like the Lakadhis’ experience, will that simply create poverty where it didn’t exist before? One of the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the elimination of global poverty,



3. To halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Although these seem worthwhile targets, they are culturally biased; by determining

be accomplished with much less money.

### AN ALTERNATIVE THAT WORKED

In the past half-century, nearly every development model has



The author (above) lives in this house (right), which like other houses at Gitograd, was a gift from devotees.



failed to bring sub-Saharan Africa to a level where it can compete in an international market and at the same time give people needed jobs. But the efforts of one young man have stood all of these international-development concepts on their head. A second-generation devotee of Kṛṣṇa, Alexander Petroff\*\*, twenty-five years of age, went to the war-torn, economically struggling Democratic Republic of Congo with a proposition for the government. He wanted to build a self-sufficient, environmentally sustainable village. The government agreed to his proposal and gave him forty hectares of land on which his organization, Working Villages International (WVI), created a development model called Village Self Reliance. Village Self Reliance is founded on the two ideas of *swadeshi* and

sustainable agriculture. The Gandhian principle *swadeshi* refers to local production for local consumption—people producing for their own needs. According to the principle of *swadeshi*, whatever is made or produced in the village must be used first and foremost by the members of the village. Any excess can then be sold. With this approach, at the very least people have jobs and are fed. Sustainable agriculture is accomplished by using organic methods without external inputs, and using bullocks for plowing instead of fuel-thirsty tractors.

Starting with \$70,000 from private donations, within two years WVI employed 400 workers supporting 350 families and producing 50,000 lbs. of rice per month, becoming the second-largest rice producer in the province. They also grew tons of

vegetables. Instead of solving problems at the symptom level, WVI addressed the root causes of hunger, unemployment, and violence using a development model that can be adjusted to almost any region in the world. So in two years, not fifteen, one young man working with local people on a very modest budget accomplished not only the economic targets of the MDG, but many of the other targets as well.

Instead of jumping through a lot of hoops to adjust the income, why not simply adjust the culture by removing the external demands? This is easier because in many parts of the world a simple culture already exists. We have an uphill battle, however, if we want to change the culture by luring people into being consumers, having jobs, commuting to work each day, and changing their lifestyle to one of artificial dependence on others. In fact, by choosing the latter approach it is likely that although external economic targets may be

\*\* Alexander is the son of Noma Petroff, aka Hare Kṛṣṇa Dāśī, whose Back to Godhead column “The Land, the Cows, and Kṛṣṇa” ran from 1991 to 1999.

realized, the people will be less happy and less secure, just as the Ladakhis were after the arrival of Western culture.

### FOLLOWING PRABHUPĀDA'S MODEL

Changing the culture to one of simplicity is the easiest way to achieve security and happiness. That is what ISKCON's founder-*ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, encouraged his followers to do. He called it simple living and high thinking—live simply in order to sufficiently care for the needs of the body, and reap the benefits of doing so, including saving time to be used in activities of self-realization. Devotees of Kṛṣṇa all around the world have experienced the satisfaction that

comes from devotional service to the Supreme Lord. If our time is properly used in worship of the Lord, then our simple living can also be fulfilling and satisfying.

“But,” we may protest, “we can't all go backward to a simple village life. It's not possible!”

Not everyone will, of course, but certainly many can, especially those who never left, and there are a lot of them. And why not, if they can become secure and fulfilled? Having lived in villages in both India and

Ukraine, I have found that it's not so difficult, and there are many enjoyable aspects of village life that are impossible to achieve in cities.

Right now I live in a simple three-room house in a village near Novo Vodolaga, Ukraine, about an hour's drive outside the city of Kharkov. This is the site of our developing eco-spiritual community, Gitagrad. The houses in this village, built some fifty years ago during Soviet times, are ready-made for simple living. One central wood stove is used for both cooking and heating. There is no running water in the house, meaning no bathroom, and the toilet is outside. We chop wood and carry water—the epitome of simple life throughout the world.

Why am I, an American formerly accustomed to modern amenities, living in these “primitive” conditions? Because I want to follow the instructions of my spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who wanted his followers to live simply, saving time for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and to learn first-hand the challenges and advantages of doing so. Having lived in Ukrainian villages for about a year, I can say that after accepting and adjusting to the simple mode of living, I do not find it taxing or onerous compared to a more modern standard. One of the reasons for living in a village is to



*One stove (above left) in the author's home heats the whole house and cooks food. The author and Sakhi Vṛnda (age 4) gather fallen ripe apricots to make jam (left).*

become free from the modes of passion (*rajo-guṇa*) and ignorance (*tamo-guṇa*) that disturb the mind, distracting it from self-realization. If I have learned anything from my experience in the village, it is that it is almost entirely free of *rajo-guṇa* and *tamo-guṇa*. Village life is self-regulating based on the demands of agriculture and the cows. They have their own time to which we must adjust, instead of attempting to adjust external circumstances to us, as we generally do in artificial city life.

Our effort here is to live a simple life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, providing for ourselves by the natural economy what is typically purchased. Nature has its own

economy, one that is strong and resilient. The cow does not charge for her milk, or go on strike. Mother Earth does not ask anything in exchange for her gifts. Both give freely, out of love, and all they ask in exchange is simple reciprocation and care. If we take care of them and treat them properly, they will continue to give their gifts despite what goes on in man's world.

This is what I have called Spiritual Economics, as explained in my book of the same title. Spiritual Economics describes the gift economy that the Lord has arranged—an economy of loving

reciprocation that does not require money, that artificial creation of modern man. Indeed, we are striving to increase our spiritual economy more and more, and

more worthy goals to attain than an external income of \$2 a day, or even \$500 a day. When we can live a simple, natural life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we will then have



*Bhakta Sasha draws water from the farm's one well (above).*

when we can come to the point of living completely according to Spiritual Economics, we will have achieved our goals. Ironically, when we arrive there we will have achieved what the UN considers a state of poverty, living on less than \$2 a day. But we think that instead of that being a social tragedy, it will be a wonderful success.

Like poverty, the concept of wealth is a cultural consideration. Not all wealth is measured by money. Wealth is actually better measured by personal happiness and fulfillment. We think that the internal, non-tangible experiences of happiness and fulfillment are

become very wealthy. ☸

*Dhaneśvara Dāsa received an M.S. degree in engineering from the University of Florida in 1973 and joined ISKCON in Gainesville the same year. He has been living and teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Eastern Europe for the past five years. His book Lessons in Spiritual Economics from the Bhagavad-gītā: Part 1, Understanding and Solving the Economic Problem is available from his website ([www.spiritual-econ.com](http://www.spiritual-econ.com)). You can keep up with his adventures in simple living by subscribing to his blog: <http://gitagrad.blogspot.com>.*



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## VAIṢṆAVA CALENDAR

1 Jan. 2010 - 15 Feb. 2011

- 8 Feb:** Vasanta Pañcamī, Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā Devī – Appearance, Sarasvatī Pūjā, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura – Disappearance, Śrī Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi – Appearance, Śrī Raghunandana Ṭhākura – Appearance, Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī – Appearance
- 10 Feb:** Śrī Advaita Ācārya – Appearance (Fast today)
- 11 Feb:** Bhīṣmāṣṭamī
- 12 Feb:** Śrī Madhvācārya – Disappearance
- 13 Feb:** Śrī Rāmānujācārya – Disappearance
- 14 Feb:** Fasting for Bhaimi Ekādaśī (Fast today for Varāha Dvādaśī)
- 15 Feb:** Break fast (Mumbai) 07:07 am - 10:57 am, Varāha Dvādaśī: Appearance of Lord Varāhadeva (Fasting is done yesterday)
- 16 Feb:** Nityānanda Trayodaśī: Appearance of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu (Fasting till noon)
- 18 Feb:** Śrī Kṛṣṇa Madhura Utsava, Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura – Appearance
- 22 Feb:** Śrī Puruṣottama Dāsa Ṭhākura – Disappearance, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura – Appearance
- 28 Feb:** Fasting for Vijayā Ekādaśī
- 1 Mar:** Break fast (Mumbai) 06:58 am - 10:53 am, Śrī Iśvara Purī – Disappearance
- 3 Mar:** Śiva Rātri
- 5 Mar:** Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī – Disappearance, Śrī Rasikānanda – Disappearance
- 9 Mar:** Śrī Puruṣottama Dāsa Ṭhākura – Appearance

## 'CEREAL' KILLER

What do you like for breakfast? Aloo paratha with dahi/lassi, kachori/samosa, aloo tikki; or poha, puri bhaaji, khichadi, moori kismis chiwda; or idli sambar/ chutney, dosai, vadai, pongal, bise bele bhaath—the list goes on and on.

If you are from India then you have very well understood that I have taken you on a breakfast tour beginning with the northern part of India and from then on to the western, eastern and finally the southern part. This insistence of Indians on beginning their day with a hot, freshly prepared breakfast is now under assault. Breakfast-cereal manufacturing multinational companies, flush with their multi-million dollar advertising and marketing budget are (and I am paraphrasing here) “Willing to suffer losses for twenty years if needed,” but are determined to change the way Indians eat their breakfast). For a housewife to cook breakfast for a family in this day and age is becoming difficult. It is far easier to just buy a box of cereals, put it on the table and tell the family members to pour some milk on it. Easy? Sure. Healthy? Maybe. Good for your family? Surely not.

The devotion and sacrifice that people make for each other is very much what gives substance, meaning and beauty to the family. A mother's love is a prominent aspect that nourishes the whole family. And the expression of that love or that sacrifice when seen by the family has a powerful effect. Sad to state that it is not appreciated until many years later.

Why is it important that one should eat food that is prepared with love and devotion?

The Vedas state that eating food also constitutes a *yajña* (act of sacrifice). Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that “Performance of *yajñas* has many side benefits, ultimately leading to liberation from material bondage. By performance of *yajñas*, all activities become purified, as it is stated in the Vedas: *āhāra-śuddhau sattva-śuddhiḥ sattva-śuddhau dhruvā smṛtiḥ smṛti-lambhe sarvagranthīnām vipramokṣaḥ*. By performance of *yajña* one's eatables become sanctified, and by eating sanctified foodstuffs one's very existence becomes purified; by the purification of existence finer tissues in the memory become sanctified, and when memory is sanctified one can think of the path of liberation, and all these combined together lead to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the great necessity of present-day society”.

Thus it is not just the external appearance of our breakfast that risks change—the very foundation beneath the culture is threatened.

Science explains how a simple thing can bring about a huge change. Climatologists have coined the term—Butterfly effect—to explain how a tiny change in the beginning can have disastrous effects later. To put it graphically—a butterfly flapping its wings in Tokyo might change the weather in Chennai.

The media is under the control of these companies and they are looking at India as a vast virgin territory ready to be exploited. Even in the United States where there is such a hue and cry over factory processed food made easily available everywhere, the government spent two million dollars educating the general public about the hazards of this food. On the other hand, the advertising and marketing budget of just the top five food processing companies was close to one billion dollars.

So, dump that cereal box and have something hot for breakfast tomorrow. ☸

—Śyāmānanda Dāsa