



# July 2015 SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

*Seeing the World through Spiritual Eyes  
For Friends and Followers of Mukunda Goswami*

## It's All Relative

By Radha devi dasi

Modern multicultural thought asserts that what is morally right depends on one's cultural values. Morality is relative, the thinking goes, because no culture can claim supremacy over another. The limits of this analysis are clear. Few people are willing to accept genocide, for instance, as a cultural value (although one could certainly make a case for including it in any number of cultures, based on their history). But moral relativism persists in spite of obvious limitations. People generally have no trouble accepting inconsistent moral standards.

A recent protest against cruelty to dogs in China highlights the "duality of vision" that allows people to be morally and ethically inconsistent. The annual Yunlin dog meat festival has been going on for generations in south-east China. Dog eating is such a tradition there that no one remembers when it started, any more than they might remember when they began eating beef or pork. This year, however, animal rights protesters mounted a widely reported protest campaign. Indeed, dog eating is facing strong criticism in China as pet ownership grows.

Despite the growing love for dogs, however, compassion for other animals lags behind – a fact that traditionalists are quick to point out. "Don't you eat beef?" questions one Yunlin resident. "When you stop eating beef, we'll



*Caged dogs for slaughter in Yunlin, China*

stop eating dog meat." A dog meat trader counters accusations of cruelty to companion animals by pointing to a dog in the corner of her shop. "We don't eat our pets," she proclaims, while butchering the carcass of another dog.

The debate over dog meat highlights man's ability to differentiate between identical situations in order to justify desires for sense gratification. We distinguish between equally intelligent and loving species, such as cows and dogs. We can even distinguish between the dog who is my companion and the identical dog who is my food. Unfortunately, without a framework for understanding the identity of living entities and their relationship to each other, we can always find justifications for cruelty and exploitation. Those with power can and do define who is worthy of protection and who can be exploited.

As Vaisnavas, we may find such arbitrary distinctions laughable. However, our understanding of the relationship between living entities is rooted in the knowledge that the body is temporary and that every living entity has an eternal relationship with the Supreme. We know that we are all children of the same father. Without that knowledge, morality is relative and inconsistencies can be justified.



## SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Mukunda Goswami

### PRODUCTION MANAGER

Hari-kirtan das

### EDITORS

Mukunda Goswami  
Radha devi dasi

### PROOFREADING & EDITING

Haridasa das  
Padma malini devi dasi

### GENERAL CONSUL- TANT

Devaprastha das

### DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Raj Dutia

Articles published in this  
newsletter are not necessar-  
ily the opinion of *Spiritual  
Perspectives* or ISKCON.

# Kurma Rupa Das: “My Part Of The Bargain”

By ISKCON NEWS

<http://bit.ly/1Hvu7ba>

Kurma Rupa Das has lived in Vrindavana, India for many decades. He established Care for Cows, an international network that has been helping abandoned, sick or injured cows in Vrindavan for more than 25 years. He had been actively working to create awareness, educate, give guidance and support to likeminded charitable organizations worldwide. He passed away on June 28<sup>th</sup> in Vrindavana, India.

Please view a video by Syam Gopal Das and Vijay Radhika Dasi

([www.vrindavanexperience.com](http://www.vrindavanexperience.com))

here: <http://ISKCONnews.org/video/kurmarupadasmypartofthe-bargain,895/>



<http://bit.ly/1Mc2gMO>

*Cows living at the Food For Life Vrindavan center*

## Grand New Temple to be a Center of Education and Learning in Baltimore

By: Madhava Smullen, ISKCON NEWS, June 26, 2015

<http://bit.ly/1CLhUgu>

Construction has begun on a grand new ISKCON temple in Baltimore, Maryland, which devotees hope will reach more local people and provide the facilities to better care for the existing congregation.

ISKCON devotees first established a temple in Baltimore in the early 1970s, to which ISKCON founder Srila Prabhupada responded, “I am so glad... Baltimore is a very important city of your country and we must maintain our center there at all costs.”

In 1974, the current temple at 200 Bloomsbury Avenue in the suburb of Catonsville was acquired, and in 1976, Srila Prabhupada visited it, making it a dhama, or holy place in the eyes of ISKCON followers.

For at least the past two decades, ISKCON Baltimore has been a small center, and the congregation remains at only around 150 people today. But it has been growing, with more young Indians and Westerners becoming regular visitors due to several innovative outreach programs.

A 2,000 square foot house in a residential area a quarter of a mile from downtown Catonsville, the temple has become far too small for the current congregation – what to speak of having room to grow.

“Our temple room is very small. It can at most accommodate 30 to 50 people, with everybody really packed in,” says Lokadhyaksa Dasa, who oversees education and book distribution at ISKCON Baltimore with his wife Vidarbha Suta Dasi. “It’s basically the size of someone’s living room. During Sunday Feast programs, people have to sit in the corridor or outside on the porch.”

“There’s a huge group of people in the Baltimore area, both Indians and non-Indians, who we’re not able to reach out to”, adds Vidarbha Suta. “Because if they come they don’t return, thinking our temple is too small.”

On May 2<sup>nd</sup> – the auspicious occasion of Nrsimha Chaturdasi – a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the large new temple on the 2.5 acre site of the old one.

*Continued on page 3*



<http://bit.ly/1CLbUga>

*Planned temple room with Deities of Nitai Gaurasundara, Jagannath Baladeva Subhadra, and Sri Sri Radha Madhava*

Five to six hundred devotees from Baltimore and Washington, D.C. attended and offered prayers, as fire sacrifices were conducted in five yajna kundas and a Deity of Ananta Sesa was placed in the ground according to tradition.

The foundation of the new temple is currently being built by vice president Ananta Gauranga Dasa's own construction company, with contractors to be hired to complete the work.

Devotees hope to move the Deities into the new temple by ISKCON's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on July 11, 2016, if construction progress and funding allow. The target to complete the project is 2017.

The new two-story temple – which will be named New Kulina Gram Dham – will have around 10,000 square feet of space. To please the community's Deities of Nitai Gaurasundara and Lord Jagannath, Baladeva and Subhadra, it will be built using a blend of Bengali and Orissan architecture.

The temple hall will be nearly ten times the size of the current one, and will have three beautiful teakwood altars for Nitai Gaurasundara, Jagannath, and new Deities of Sri Sri Radha Madhava.

It will be topped with a ceiling showing a blue sky and clouds, and will have a wrap-around

balcony so that visitors can better view the Deities on festival days and be able to also shower Them with flowers.

On either side of the altars will be large screens showing the Hare Krishna maha-mantra and Srila Prabhupada lectures, while on the opposite end of the temple room will be a murti form of Srila Prabhupada on a handcarved teakwood and Turkish marble vyasasana.

The temple will also include a gift shop carrying devotional paraphernalia, books and clothing; a meditation room for mantra yoga classes and Sunday School; a multi-purpose hall for cultural functions, family events and weddings; a Govinda's pure vegetarian restaurant; and a state of the art commercial kitchen.

There will also be a small museum showing the history of ISKCON Baltimore and Srila Prabhupada's visit there. And at the front of the property, there will be a water feature, a Garuda Stambha, and "Prabhupada Gardens" with beautiful walkways, a variety of flowers and trees, and benches to sit on for a peaceful, meditative time.

All this will be in support of Srila Prabhupada's instructions like the one in a 1973 letter: "Thank

*Continued on page 4*

you very much for sincerely pushing on Lord Caitanya's Sankirtana Movement in the city of Baltimore," he wrote. "Try to always increase the distribution of my books more and more."

Keeping these words in the forefront, ISKCON Baltimore – classified as a "maha (extra) small temple" – was ranked second in book distribution in May and fifth in the year so far, just behind giants like Los Angeles and ISKCON Silicon Valley.

The center organizes weekly outreach programs at seven local universities including John Hopkins, George Washington, George Mason, Virginia Commonwealth and American University. Thousands of students at these colleges also receive Prabhupada's books and sanctified vegetarian food during biannual Festival of India events on campus.

Baltimore devotees hold Harinama Sankirtana at Baltimore Harbor, one of the city's biggest tourist spots, every Sunday afternoon.

They also feed prasadam to people at the local homeless shelter every week, and recently started a kirtan and japa meditation program at The Children's Home in Catonsville – which cares for abandoned, abused and neglected youth aged 13 to 21.

"We do special programs for girls who are kept in extreme isolation because they come from really disturbed backgrounds," says Lokadhyaksa. "They're really loving the kirtan and japa, and we've been doing henna with them too. Every week, they can't wait for us to come back to them."

Since September last year, Lokadhyaksa and Vidarbha Suta have been running a weekly Bhakti Lounge in their temple's converted garage that introduces a local Western audience to Srila Prabhupada's books, kirtan, japa, and prasadam.

With a turnout of ten to twenty people every Sunday, seven or eight have become regulars. Some of the couples were met while distributing books; others came through meetup.com, a website for finding different groups.

"Right now we're doing a systematic study of the *Bhagavad-gita*," says Lokadhyaksa. "They're really loving Prabhupada's purports. So that's a great encouragement to us."

All these programs are expected to grow exponentially with the new temple to facilitate them.

"With our limited resources and space, it's kind of constricting us, but with the new temple, we'll be able to attract a lot more people and help the local community more," Lokadhyaksa says. "We've asked the Mayor's office how we can help – we hope to hold more programs at local shelters, prisons and more."

"The goal of this temple is to base everything on Prabhupada's books," adds Vidarbha.

"We really want to make this not just another temple, but a place for education and training for the local community."



*Srila Prabhupada's planned Vyasasana*

*Continued on page 5*

# The Future of Hinduism in America's Changing Religious Landscape

By: Anantanand Rambachan, The Huffington Post, May 29, 2015  
<http://bit.ly/1H8ATnw>

The recent PEW Research Center findings on America's religious landscape revealed that approximately 56 million Americans are religiously unaffiliated and belong to the category of religious "nones." There are more "nones" than Catholics or mainline Protestants and the "nones" are second only to evangelical Protestants. "Nones" are comparatively younger and more educated.

In addition, the PEW survey estimated that the number of Hindus rose from 0.3 percent of the population in 2007 to 0.7 percent in 2014. 77 percent of Hindus in the U.S. are college graduates. Good questions have been raised by Murali Balaji about the challenges of gathering accurate numerical data for American Hindus. He suggests that the actual numbers may be higher.

Although we may rejoice at our growing percentage of the adult population, the rise of the "nones" is particularly worrying for Hindus. Hindus are not immune from these wider trends in the United States. When I was a child attending a Hindu elementary school in Trinidad, we recited a series of questions and answers about Hinduism from a small catechetical text. One of the questions was, "Why are you a Hindu?" The answer followed: "Because I was born a Hindu." It may have been a good answer in its time, but it will not work for a new generation of Hindu Americans. Affiliation with the Hindu tradition will not be guaranteed by birth.

---

***"The principal challenge to the religious commitment of a new generation of Hindu Americans is the rejection of a religious worldview or indifference to religion."***

---

## Alfred Ford School of Management to Teach Conscious Leadership

By: Madhava Smullen, ISKCON News, June 25, 2015  
<http://bit.ly/1e4MG8d>

The newly established Alfred Ford School of Management – named after the businessman, great-grandson of auto magnate Henry Ford, and disciple of Srila Prabhupada – will offer an MBA (Master of Business Administration) degree with a focus on conscious leadership.

The School is affiliated with ISKCON's Bhaktivedanta College in Radhadesh, Belgium. Administrators of that College began working with Alfred Ford (Ambarisa dasa) back in 2009, after the 2008 financial crisis showed that there was a need for a different approach to business management.

The School – which will be conducted online only with one week onsite at Bhaktivedanta College – will cater to ISKCON members, Indian youth, and alternative audiences looking for a

more ethical and conscious business administration degree.

Applicants will be required to have a Bachelors Degree in economics or a similar field, and some experience in management will be welcome.

The program will be offered in ten modules online at [aford.be](http://aford.be). The modules will be presented in ten minute video lessons, consisting of short theory lectures and practical case studies. They will be prerecorded so that students will be able to do them at their own pace and according to their own schedule. The course will take a minimum of 18 months, but can be spread out over a maximum of five years, making it extremely accessible to people of all lifestyles.

There will be two intakes of students per year for the program – one in October (starting this

*Continued on page 6*



Homepage of *aford.be*

year), and one in March/April 2016. Ten students will be selected for each intake.

The program will be a standard MBA degree, teaching organizational behavior, project management, financial management, accounting, entrepreneurship, technology and operations, global strategy, marketing strategy, critical thinking and impactful communication. At the end of 2016, specializations in IT and finances may be added.

The program's unique feature will be its focus on conscious leadership, an approach to business that is not profit and self-centered, but oriented more towards giving oneself, and serving people and the environment.

"It's an expansion on what is already going on in business academia, where we can hear about conscious business, humble leadership, and servant leadership," says Dinadayal Dasa. "And ultimately it leads to a more sattvic or mode of goodness approach, which long-term is the most beneficial approach to life. It's the steady approach that yields long term benefits rather than the short term one looking for immediate results. These principles are present in the bhakti tradition as well as in other traditions too."

Teaching these concepts are faculty – some of them ISKCON devotees – who have graduated from some of the best universities in the world, are leaders in their fields, and have many years of experience.

But that's not all. According to Dinadayal, they're also ethically conscious people with proven records not only in their business practices and education, but also in their personal characters.

They include Raj Heda, who has over 18 years of experience in Fortune 500 companies, and has worked with IBM and massive open online course provider edX;

Ramchunder Singh (Govardhan dasa) from South Africa, who is the managing director at Waterfall Energy; Meena Rani, who has worked with American Express and is now the assistant accountant at MB Law in the UK;

and Maika Puta from Berlin, a young PhD in her late twenties whose groundbreaking research in the affect of the three modes of material nature on work has been very well received in German academia and psychology.

Meanwhile the final module, an experiential five-day seminar on Conscious Leadership on-site at Bhaktivedanta College in Belgium, will be taught by Chelakara Ramnath (Rasanath Dasa), who was an investment banking associate at Bank of America in New York and made headlines by leaving Wall Street to become a monk at the Bhakti Center in Manhattan.

Rasanath has combined his two worlds and is now cofounder of UPBUILD, which provides consulting to top companies, along with filmmaker and coach Ari Weiss (Hariprasad dasa), who will also be teaching the Conscious Leadership Seminar with him.

The Alfred Ford School of Management is accredited by Universidad Catolica De Murcia (UCAM) in Spain and the internationally known Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). So graduates will have their MBA degrees recognized by these institutions.

According to Dinadayal, 30% of MBA degree holders seek a career change or upgrade, while 50% seek salary increases. MBA holders also find themselves more confident and in possession of a more rounded knowledge of the business world.

Beyond that, the Alfred Ford School of Management sends graduates into the world with an important message.

*Continued on page 7*

“Spiritual seekers often feel like they’re facing an unsolvable puzzle of how to have higher spiritual aspirations and also function in this world and be materially successful,” Dinadayal says. “We’re saying, you can be successful in this world – you can have a good career, you can move on in life – and still be on the spiritual path. That’s definitely something we want to offer to people.”

To apply now please visit [aford.be](http://aford.be).



## Americans Are Less Confident In Organized Religion Than Ever Before: Gallup Survey

By Cathy Lynn Grossman, *The Huffington Post*, June 16, 2015

<http://huff.to/1JmZCPI>

(RNS) That Americans have less confidence in organized religion today than ever measured before is a sign that the church could be “losing its footing as a pillar of moral leadership in the nation’s culture,” a new Gallup survey finds.

“In the ’80s the church and organized religion were the No. 1” in Gallup’s annual look at confidence in institutions, said Lydia Saad, author of the report released Wednesday (June 17).

Confidence, she said, “is a value judgment on how the institution is perceived, a mark of the amount of respect it is due.” A slight upsurge for Catholic confidence, for example, parallels the 2013 election and immense popularity of Pope Francis.

Overall, church/organized religion is now ranked in fourth place in the Gallup survey — behind the military, small business and the police — while still ahead of the medical system, Congress and the media, among 15 institutions measured.

“Almost all organizations are down but the picture for religion is particularly bleak,” said Saad. In the mid-’70s, nearly 7 in 10 Americans said they had “a great deal or quite a lot” of confidence in the church or organized religion. That has bobbed downward decade by decade to a new low of just 42 percent, according to the report.

However, the most significant influence on the religion statistic is the high number of Americans disconnected from organized religion and likely to have little or no confidence in it, Saad said. A Pew Research survey this year finds nearly 23 percent of Americans say they don’t identify with any religion. The Gallup data — which com-

bined this group with non-Christians — finds only 10 percent of these had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in religion.

There is also a distinct decline in confidence in the church among Protestants and Catholics. Gallup tracks an overall downward drift of more than 20 percentage points for both traditions since the 1970s, to 51 percent of Protestants and Catholics alike — “the first time it has been the same for both,” said Saad.

Scandals have an impact and so do the personalities in the news. During scandals involving prominent televangelists in the late ’80s, Protestant confidence in organized religion slid from a high of 73 percent in 1985 to 51 percent in 1989. Confidence moved briefly back upward before the downturn in recent years.

Similarly, Catholic confidence reached nearly its lowest ebb (41 percent) during the peak of the Catholic sex abuse scandal in 2002. Catholic views may have recovered 10 percentage points in part because of the “Francis factor.”

The report cites the tremendous popularity of Pope Francis as a reason Catholic confidence has stabilized at above 50 percent for the first time in more than a decade. The survey research was underway when the Vatican announced a new tribunal to hold bishops accountable in confronting clergy sexual abuse.

The survey of 1,527 U.S. adults was conducted by landline and cellphones June 2-7, 2015. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points overall.

# Personal Message...



Dear Friends,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

It's really necessary to "pass the baton." That means having an understudy, so to speak, who will carry on after I depart this world, become too old or too ill to function, or for any other reason become unable to execute my devotional duties. I realize this pertains mainly to those who manage – as GBCs, temple presidents, regional secretaries, gurukula headmasters and the like. However it's really important that all of us are at least aware of "the culture of succession." Recently Darnell Lattal, president and CEO of Aubrey Daniels International wrote, "Every day for the next 18 years, 8,000 Americans will turn 65. That demographic includes today's 47-year-olds. The AARP\* estimates only about 37 per cent of companies have considered how this brain drain will affect them in the next five to ten years." Srila Prabhupada himself was concerned about the future of ISKCON. He incorporated the movement in the USA, the UK and India initially, and subsequently in many other countries around the world. He created the GBC as ISKCON's ultimate managing authority in 1974. He sent many inexperienced devotees to far away places often in remote locales to act as missionaries for the Hare Krishna Movement. He told us that prime ministers and presidents left office or departed this world often thinking that their nations would not survive their absence. But the countries continued. On January 23, 1975, at a cornerstone laying ceremony in Mumbai, he told his audience, "I am now very old man. I am eighty years old. My life is finished." He went on to implore those present to carry on his work. This was sort of a last wish.

Plagiarism is a serious offense in academia. The word is derived from the Latin word "plagiare" that means "to steal." Plagiarism may be defined as the attempt to pass off the ideas, research, theories or words of others as one's own. Nonetheless, we are proud to stand upon the shoulders of the previous acaryas who have showed us the way forward. At the end of each chapter of the *Caitanya-caritamrta*, the author, Krishna Dasa Kaviraja prays for the mercy of the six goswamis of Vrindavan to empower him to make his work successful. Thus ISKCON devotees are unashamedly fully dependent on the great leaders who have gone before.

Your servant,

*Mukunda Goswami*

Mukunda Goswami

\*American Association of Retired People

For lectures go to: <http://mukundagoswami.org/lectures>

