



# Spiritual Perspectives July 2019

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

## When the Rain Fails

By Radha devi dasi

Krishna is known as Hari, one who takes things away. Sometimes people of Hindu backgrounds are hesitant to worship Him for this reason – fear of loss. However, the only thing Krishna really takes from us is our illusion that we are in control. While we make efforts to control the material energy, we ourselves are controlled by the three modes of material nature. The outcome of our efforts depends on our karma. In fact, the material world is set up to remind us of our lack of control as we go through life. Krishna's desire is that we recognize our own limitations and seek transcendental knowledge.

Currently, residents of Chennai, India are being reminded that we are not in control of this world through a desperate shortage of water. The city, formerly known as Madras, is in crisis after its four main water reservoirs ran completely dry. The acute water shortage has forced the city to scramble for urgent solutions, including delivering water by truck to homes and businesses. Residents have had to stand in line for hours to get water from government tanks. The allotment works out to about 8-10 gallons per day per family. By comparison, a family in the United States uses about 300 gallons per day. Hotels and restaurants have closed due to the lack of water and other businesses are encouraging employees to work from home. The situation has also led to violence. Last week, police arrested a man for stabbing a neighbor over water sharing.

“Only rain can save Chennai from this situation,” an official told BBC Tamil. While city officials continue to search for new water sources, they have had limited success. “The only way to make this better is to improve the groundwater level,” Nakkeeran, a social activist, said. “We’ve had dry years before

<https://bit.ly/2XDvUrs>

but the groundwater was our saviour.” Without rain, groundwater levels are unlikely to rise.

Despite our advanced technology and scientific knowledge, we cannot live without water. If a drought persists long enough, a location becomes uninhabitable. By Krishna's arrangement, life itself depends on rain. Why then does rain fail to fall?

Krishna created this material world to enable us to learn how to perform sacrifices. When we do so, we can “live very comfortably without anxiety,” as Srila Prabhupada says, and continue to make spiritual advancement as well. The water shortage in Chennai, like all crises, is another loving reminder that there is more to life than material energy.

Such times are especially good for sharing transcendental knowledge. Faced with such a severe situation, few can deny that our ability to control the material energy is limited. Krishna has provided the motivation for people to turn to spiritual knowledge. We can help them learn to live according to higher laws, including the need for *sankirtan yajna*, the recommended sacrifice for this age of Kali.



*Is Chennai's water crisis leading the city into panic mode?*

# Presidential Candidate Tulsi Gabbard Leads Kirtan at New York Ratha-yatra

By Madhava Smullen, *ISKCON News*, June 17, 2019  
<https://bit.ly/2X06Oz3>

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, U.S. Congresswoman from Hawaii, took a break from politics to lead kirtan at the ISKCON Ratha-yatra festival in New York on June 8.

Gabbard is currently campaigning for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States in 2020. She has recently been named by the Democratic National Committee as one of the twenty presidential candidates to participate in the first primary debate of the 2020 campaign, which will take place in Miami on June 26 and 27.

Tulsi Gabbard took time out of her busy schedule of events in New York to visit the main *kirtan* tent at the Ratha-yatra's post-parade festival in Washington Square Park. After being welcomed by Radhanath Swami, she listened to his speech and then ascended the stage.

"Jaya Lord Jagannath! All glories to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada!" she said, addressing the crowd of about three hundred. "I'm so grateful to be here with all of you today to celebrate Ratha-yatra. It's so nice for



*Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard leads kirtan at New York Ratha-yatra - photo by Hari Kirtan Kaufmann*

me to be able to set politics aside just for a few minutes, and to be able to rest my mind and my heart in the most wonderful names of God, and His unconditional love for all of us."

She then led *kirtan*, chanting the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*, for about fifteen minutes, accompanied by her husband Abraham Williams on acoustic guitar and ISKCON devotees on traditional instruments.

Beginning slowly and meditatively, the *kirtan* built to a peak during which Tulsi Gabbard, Radhanath Swami in the audience, and all the gathered devotees and festival-goers danced joyfully. Gabbard also fanned Lord Jagannath with a peacock feather fan during her visit.

Rep. Gabbard has described herself as a "Vaishnava Hindu" and was the first Congresswoman to swear into office using the *Bhagavad-gita*.

"I follow the Gaudiya Vaishnava branch of



*Rep. Tulsi Gabbard listens to Radhanath Swami's speech at New York Ratha-yatra - photo by Hari Kirtan Kaufmann*

*Continued on page 3*

Hinduism,” she said during a CNN Town Hall Meeting in March this year. “And the teachings and the practice that I live in my everyday life ... is this practice of what’s called Bhakti Yoga and Karma Yoga. Bhakti Yoga is developing a loving relationship with God. It’s a very deeply personal relationship. And Karma Yoga is seeing how can I dedicate my energy and skills and time into the service of others.”

<https://bit.ly/2X0G0z3>



*Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard speaks at New York Ratha-yatra - Photo by Dipika Ray*

## Indian High Court Declares Animals Legal Persons Entitled to Justice

By Hannah Bugga, [mercyforanimals.org](http://mercyforanimals.org), June 14, 2019  
<https://bit.ly/2YcU7m7>

The High Court of Punjab and Haryana has ordered that animals are now to be considered legal persons in the Indian state of Haryana. This means that animals in the state may no longer be treated as “objects” or “property” and are “entitled to justice.”

This groundbreaking move comes almost a year after the High Court of Uttarakhand passed an order to “protect and promote greater welfare of animals.” Justice Rajiv Sharma, who recently

transferred from Uttarakhand, penned both orders. His recent verdict states:

“The animals should be healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behavior without pain, fear and distress. They are entitled to justice. The animals cannot be treated as objects or property.”

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Read more: <https://mercyforanimals.org/indian-high-court-declares-animals-legal>



<https://bit.ly/2YcU7m7>

*Photo Credits: IndiaFacts*

# Amazon Tribe Wins Lawsuit Against Big Oil, Saving Millions of Acres of Rainforest

By Breitenberg, *disclose.tv*, May 17, 2019  
<https://bit.ly/2ILJ3XL>



The Amazon Rainforest is well known across the world for being the largest and most dense area of woodland in the world. Spanning across nine countries, the Amazon is home to millions of different animal and plant species, as well as harboring some of the world's last remaining indigenous groups.

The Waorani people of Pastaza are an indigenous tribe from the Ecuadorian Amazon and have lived in the Rainforest for many generations. However, their Home came under threat from a large oil company - they didn't take it lightly.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/2FNaNJR>



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# ISKCON of DC Receives Security Grant to Help Protect Temple

By Madhava Smullen, *ISKCON News*, March 30, 2019

<https://bit.ly/2X2T8lu>

The ISKCON of DC temple in Potomac, Maryland will be one of twelve faith-based organizations to receive grant funding from the Faith-based Facilities Security Operating Grants program.

A total of \$200,000 has been approved by the local Montgomery County Council as a one-time grant to support County faith-based religious institutions' efforts to enhance security staffing and planning.

The funds are administered by the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Emergency Management (OEMHS). They are provided to support faith-based institutions which have experienced, or are at high risk of experiencing, hate crimes.

Along with ISKCON, the centers that will benefit include the Islamic Community Center of Potomac, the Islamic Society of the Washington Area, the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington Inc, the Guru Nanak Foundation of America, Olive Branch Community Church, Takoma Park Seventh-Day Adventist Church and other Muslim, Jewish and Christian centers.

"This faith-based security grant is another way Montgomery County affirms our support for our neighbors of every religion, race and ethnicity and demonstrates our steadfast commitment to protect basic human rights," says County Executive Marc Elrich.

"While there is no information about specific, recent threats in Montgomery County, the senseless and vile act that occurred in Christchurch, New Zealand reminds us that hate and evil can callously destroy peace without warning. These grants will provide faith-based organizations with additional resources to enhance their security."

In addition to the grant funding, OEMHS and Montgomery County Police will provide additional support to all applicants who indicated the need for assistance with security.

The Montgomery County Council approved the \$200,000 in grant funds as an amendment to the fiscal year 2019 budget in November 2018, which means funds will be available this spring, after formal Council approval and the signing of contracts with the faith-based facilities.



<https://bit.ly/2X2T8lu>

*Guests visit the ISKCON of DC temple*

# Personal

## Message...



The following is an adaptation from my 2000 Vyasa Puja homage to Srila Prabhupada.

Dear Friends,

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

You gave deeper meaning to “gorgeous,” “wildfire,” “rot,” “loafer,” “glowing,” “liberation,” “rascal,” “big,” “super excellent,” “simply wonderful,” “skyscraper,” “zero” and “kick out.” When you said “damn” and “go to hell” in public – terms sometimes thought unfit for ‘holy men’ – you gave uncommon substance to this usage.

Generally, you reserved “gorgeous” for the beauty of Krishna and his intimate connections. You spoke of Krishna’s gorgeous body, gorgeous Rukmini, and gorgeous Deities. However, you also referred to “gorgeous arrangements” for sense gratification.

You also spoke of lizards who could scamper up “polished” walls, vultures who could see dead bodies from “miles away,” U.S. freeways as smooth as “velvet,” and tiny fish who sport in waves where powerful elephants can’t even keep their balance.

You cited passages from poets past, Vyasadeva, Vidyapati, Chandidasa, Jayadeva, Narottama, Bhaktivinoda, Visvanatha Cakravarti, Christ, Cowper, Tennyson, Wordsworth, and Shakespeare.

Occasionally invoking Western proverbs, you incorporated the power of poets to deepen understandings and realizations of spiritual truths. When you talked about the importance of association, you mentioned that “a man is known by his company,” referring to the famous saying by Euripides. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Antya 3.11), you say that one should not be unnecessarily critical of devotees, and you wrote “Caesar’s wife must be above suspicion,” from a line in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*.

During your ten years of world travel, your English had changed such that “Indian English” or “Hinglish” – which included phrases like “liking it too much,” and “doing his level best” – had faded almost into oblivion. If time place and circumstance dictated a reversion to earlier, ethnic modes of speech, you were ready. In 1976 in Durban, South Africa, when you ended your “proper English” lecture, an Indian guest asked, “Whence did we come, why are we here, and what is the true reason for our existence, and where are we going?” You immediately asked the questioner, “Wherefrom just now you are coming?” Before the man could reply, and after a beat of silence, the audience roared with laughter. The man who asked the question, probably intimidated, fell silent. You then asked anyone to answer your question. After a long, excruciating silence, you explained to the audience -- that although he was “coming” from “home,” his real “home” was not South Africa or India but the spiritual world.

Hare Krishna!

Your servant,

*Mukunda Goswami*

Mukunda Goswami

