



# Spiritual Perspectives

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

March 2020

## Curing Loneliness

By Radha devi dasi

Loneliness is a growing social problem. A recent study by health insurer, Cigna, Inc., found that 3 in 5 Americans are lonely. This finding represents a 13% increase in loneliness since 2018. The survey subjects reported that they feel left out, misunderstood, and lack companionship. Studies in Britain, Australia, and Japan showed similar results.

Doctors and policy makers are alarmed by these results because loneliness leads to poor mental and physical health.

Loneliness has been linked to anxiety and depression as well as higher levels of stress hormones, insomnia, and dementia. New research from the University of California, Los Angeles, shows that loneliness triggers the same areas of the brain as physical pain. Loneliness is literally painful.

We often look to friends and family to help us cope with loneliness. Feeling connected to other people is the key to reducing the feeling of social isolation behind

loneliness. However, the 2020 Cigna study found that connections with co-workers were most effective in reducing loneliness. While it may seem odd that co-workers have a greater influence on our well-being than friends and family, this finding makes sense when we consider how much more waking time we spend with co-workers than with anyone else in our lives. It is startling to realize how much influence our work relationships have on the rest of our lives.

In traditional agrarian cultures, work life and family life occur simultaneously. Families work together on a farm or small business and other work “colleagues” are likely to be neighbors as well. The industrial revolution, with its emphasis on factory

work, moved our working days outside of the home, separating home life from economic life. This split has become more problematic as work consumes a larger portion of our time.

Social scientists recommend that corporations implement work programs to address the loneliness epidemic. However, this solution overlooks an obvious problem. We become co-workers based on factors outside of our control. Our friends and family are likely to share our world view and values. Our co-workers

have been assigned to us based on the need for workplace productivity. Bonding workers together benefits shareholders because the common value we share with colleagues is success at making a profit. However, making our jobs the place where we spend the most time and share deep personal connections means that other values, such as spiritual

development, will inherently become less of a priority.

Real connection involves the soul, not just the gross and subtle material bodies. Srila Prabhupada often reminded us that real happiness – real connection – can only be found in service to Lord Krishna. Relationships based on devotional service are deeper and more satisfying than those based on common interests like work or hobbies. Workplace efforts may help us feel somewhat more connected. However, the ultimate cause of loneliness is that we have forgotten our true identity as servants of God. Prioritizing our relationship with Krishna and basing relationships with others on mutual devotional service is the real cure for loneliness.



<https://bit.ly/3afUEcm>

# Jaladuta Cruise Offers Smoother Ride From Kolkata to Mayapur

By: Madhava Smullen, *ISKCON News*, February 13, 2020  
<https://bit.ly/391Zlq4>

With the famous annual Gaura Purnima festival at ISKCON's headquarters in Mayapur, West Bengal running from February 17<sup>th</sup> to March 11<sup>th</sup>, and thousands of devotees and pilgrims pouring into the spiritual city, there's now an alternative, more peaceful way to get there from Kolkata airport.

Avoiding the bumpy, risky roads and pollution, travelers can instead book the Jaladuta boat service organized by the Mayapur Tourism department and enjoy a relaxing cruise down the river Ganga.

The boat leaves from Vivada Jetty at Millennium Park 2, a twenty minute drive from ISKCON Kolkata. It then passes by villages and beautiful scenic countryside, before reaching Prabhupada Ghat in Mayapur, just a ten minute walk from the ISKCON temple.



<https://bit.ly/391Zlq4>

## *The Jaladuta Cruise boat service*

will utilize this facility. I cannot explain how beautiful it is. Compared to the road ride, it is very beautiful, stress-free and refreshing. Even though it takes a little time, it is well worth it.”

This is an ideal way, then, to get to the Gaura Purnima festival, which this year will include a four-day Kirtan Mela, a Navadvipa Mandala Parikrama in which devotees will visit the holy places of Mahaprabhu's pastimes, Ganga Puja, the Shantipur festival, a boat festival, an elephant procession, a Jagannath Ratha-yatra, and of course Gaura Purnima itself on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Throughout there will also be stage performances, daily feasts, and more.

For Jaladuta Cruise inquiries and bookings, write to [reservations@mayapur.com](mailto:reservations@mayapur.com)

For special offers on group bookings call +91-9733578071. Price: One way Rs.3000 p/p only with Breakfast.

Book your seat now – only limited seats are available.



<https://bit.ly/391Zlq4>

*Comfortable seating on board and outside enjoying the refreshing breeze on the Ganga*

On board, there are comfortable reclining seats, two washrooms, and extra seats in the front gallery so that passengers can stretch and move around. Breakfast prasadam is served, and Krishna conscious entertainment is provided.

“Passengers can feel the nice, cool, fresh breeze of the Ganga, and can chant their japa in the association of Ganga Devi, who is filled with Krishna Prema by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's touch,” says Gopijana Vallabha Das of Mayapur Tourism. “There's a sattvik mood on board with kirtan playing, and devotional videos showing. It is a unique way to travel, and captures the mood of Mayapur throughout your journey.”

Jayapataka Swami adds: “Sрила Prabhupada wanted us to have a regular boat service between Kolkata and Mayapur. We hope that devotees

<https://bit.ly/391Zlq4>



*Mayapur Kirtan Mela 2019 during the Gaura Purnima festival*

# Cold Showers

By: Sutapa Das, [sutapamonk.blogspot.hu](http://sutapamonk.blogspot.hu), January 31, 2020  
<https://bit.ly/3a6qliW>

I remember returning from my first day on book distribution and being advised to do the unthinkable – “go and have a cold shower!” What! I’d already been standing in the freezing cold all day! The logic was that a warm shower cleanses your physical body, but a cold shower cleanses your subtle body – all the negative energy that we absorb from a day in the urban jungle is cleansed away by cooling waters. After an intense bout of mental warfare I did it, and it was actually amazing (but only after it was finished!). I’ve never seen the scientific evidence for it, but you can definitely feel the purifying effect. The same person told me that book distribution was like a cold shower – in fact, he said, progressive life is like a cold shower – the beginning is always the most difficult, but everything works out if you muster up the determination and drive to make the first steps. Building momentum takes bucket loads of energy, but once you’re flowing, it’s effortless.

Upon reflection, I see a crystal-clear correlation in my life – the best things I ever did were often the very things I passionately resisted in the beginning. The things I avoided, argued against and convinced myself were unnecessary – those were the things that brought me the invaluable jewels of growth. It’s amusing, but scary at the same time. It means I’ll probably have

to do a whole bunch of other uncomfortable things in order to experience the entirety of what life can be. The lesson is loud and clear: those who are convenience-focused are experience-starved. But why are the best things so hard to do? Why are good habits difficult to form? Why do bad habits appear so effortlessly? Why aren’t we able to spontaneously embrace the things that are so beneficial to us? Who made the system like this? It seems as though someone has stacked the odds against us!

The truth is that our mindset and consciousness makes it all topsy-turvy. Because we are incorrectly ‘inclined,’ we are flowing in the wrong direction, and all the beneficial things feel difficult and unnatural. In material consciousness, our habits, behaviours, thoughts and desires naturally drift towards the damaging. When we re-engineer our consciousness and correct our ‘inclination’ then everything flows naturally towards the positive and progressive. That, however, takes time, effort, determination and patience. Therefore, the biggest battle of the day is the battle with our own mind. If we win that one, we become empowered in the process of transformation and open the door to a whole new world. Ready for a cold shower tomorrow?

# Timings of the Four *Yugas*: The Shastric Evidence

By: Nandanandana Das, [www.dandavats.com](http://www.dandavats.com), February 19, 2020  
<https://bit.ly/2wLYcok>

When describing the length of the *yugas* or ages, and which *yuga* we are in and how far along we are in it, there is sometimes confusion about how to calculate them. Some people think we are already in the next *Satya-yuga*, known as the Golden Age. The problem is when the *yugas* are figured only according to the years in earth’s time, any calculations will never be accurate. They are described in the Vedic literature according to the celestial years, or years of the *devas*, not according to the time we experience here on earth. This is where we have to make adjustments. Nonetheless, there are specific references in the Vedic texts which make it clear how to calculate them. For starters, the *Mahabharata* (Shanti Parva, 231.12-20) explains it in detail:

“The *rishis*, measuring time, have given particular names to particular portions [of time]. Five and ten winks of the eye make what is called a *Kastha*. Thirty *Kasthas* make what is called a *Kala*. Thirty *Kalas*, with the tenth part of a *Kala*, make

a *Muhurta*. Thirty *Muhurtas* make one day and night. Thirty days and nights form a month, and twelve months form a year. Persons well-read in mathematical science say that a year is made up of two solar motions, meaning the northern and southern. The sun makes the day and night for men. The night is for the sleep of all living creatures, and the day is for work. A month of human beings is equal to a day and night of the departed *manes* [ancestors who have gone on to the subtle worlds]. That division consists in this: the light half of the month is their day which is for work; and the dark fortnight is their night for sleep. A year (of men) is equal to a day and night to the gods [*devas* or celestials]. This division consists in this: the half year for which the sun travels from the vernal to the autumnal equinox is the day of the gods, and the half year for which the sun moves from the latter to the former is their night. [Thus, an earth year is but a day for the *devas*.] Calculating by the days and nights of human beings about which I have told you, I shall speak of the

*Continued on page 4*

day and night of Brahma and his years also. I shall, in their order, tell you the number of years, that are for different purposes calculated differently, in the *Krita*, the *Treta*, the *Dvapara*, and the *Kali Yugas*. Four thousand celestial years is the duration of the first or *Krita* age. The morning of that cycle consists of four hundred years and its evening is of four hundred years. [Note: This says celestial years, or years of the demigods on the higher planets. Such years are much longer than those of planet earth. So 4000 celestial years, with the morning or *Sandhya* of 400 celestial years and the evening or *Sandhyansa*, or intermediate period, of another 400 years, equals 4800 celestial years or 1,728,000 human years.]

“Regarding the other cycles, the duration of each gradually decreases by a quarter in respect of both the principal period with the minor portion and the conjoining portion itself. These periods always keep up the never-ending and eternal worlds. They who know Brahma, O child, regard this as Immutable Brahma.” (*Mahabharata*, Shanti Parva, Chap. 231, Text 21-22)

This means that as each age appears, from the *Krita*, *Treta*, *Dvapara* to *Kali*, each *yuga* decreases by a quarter of the previous *yuga*, in addition to the conjoining *Sandhya* and *Sandhyansa* periods with each *yuga*. In this way, it is roughly calculated that a whole cycle of the four *yugas*, namely *Krita*, *Treta*, *Dvapara* and *Kali-yuga* together, total about 12,000 celestial years in length.

The *Mahabharata* (Shanti Parva, 231.29-32) continues: “The learned say that these 12,000 celestial years form what is called a cycle. A thousand such cycles form a single day of Brahma. The same is the duration of Brahma’s night. With the beginning of Brahma’s day the universal entities come into being. During the period of universal dissolution the Creator sleeps in Yoga-meditation. When the period of sleep expires, He awakes. What is Brahma’s day covers a thousand such cycles. His night also covers a thousand similar cycles. They who know this are said to know the day and the night. On the expiry of His night, Brahma, waking up, modifies the indestructible intelligence by causing it to be overlaid with ignorance. He then causes Consciousness to spring up, whence it originates Mind which is at one with the Manifest.”

In calculating the duration of the different *yugas*, there are a few differences between the *Puranas*. The *Brahmanda Purana* (1.2.29.31-34) specifically states that *Krita* or *Satya-yuga* is 1,440,000 human years in length, *Treta-yuga* is 1,080,000 years, *Dvapara-yuga* is 720,000 years, and *Kali-yuga* is 360,000 years in length. The *Linga Purana* (4.24-35) also agrees with



<https://bit.ly/2wL1YcoK>

this except for *Treta-yuga*, which it says is 1,800,000 years in length.

However, when explaining the various measurements of time, the *Vishnu Purana* (Book One, Chapter Three) and the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (3.11.19), along with the *Bhagavad-gita* (8.17) and the *Vayu Purana* (Chapter 57) and others, such as the *Mahabharata* as quoted above, all agree on the measurements of the durations of the *yugas*, as explained below.

In the explanations of the measurements of time found therein, one cycle of the four *yugas* together is 12,000 years of the demigods, called divine years. Each of these years is composed of 360 days, and each of their days is equal to one human year. So *Krita-yuga* is 4,000 divine years in length, *Treta-yuga* is 3,000 divine years in length, *Dvapara-yuga* is 2,000 divine years in length, and *Kali-yuga* is 1,000 divine years long, with the addition of the conjoining portions of the *Sandhya* and *Sandhyansa*.

In this way, each *yuga* is preceded by a period called a *Sandhya*, which is as many hundred years in length as there are thousands of years in that particular *yuga*. Each *yuga* is also followed by a period of time known as a *Sandhyansa*, which is also as many hundreds of years in length as there are thousands of years in the *yuga*. In between these periods of time is the actual *yuga*. Therefore, we have:

*Krita-yuga* = 4000 divine years, *Sandhya* = 400 divine years, *Sandhyansa* = 400 divine years. Total = 4,800 divine years x 360 days = 1,728,000 human years.

*Treta-yuga* = 3000 divine years, *Sandhya* = 300 divine years, *Sandhyansa* = 300 divine years. Total = 3,600 divine years x 360 days = 1,296,000 human years.

*Dvapara-yuga* = 2,000 divine years, *Sandhya* = 200 divine years, *Sandhyansa* = 200 divine years. Total = 2400 divine years x 360 days = 864,000 human years.

*Kali-yuga* = 1,000 divine years, *Sandhya* = 100 divine years, *Sandhyansa* = 100 divine years. Total = 1,200 divine years x 360 days = 432,000 human years.

This equals 4,320,000 human years in one cycle of the four *yugas* together, and 1000 cycles of these *yugas* equals 12,000 divine years and 4,320,000,000 human years in a day of Brahma.

It is also explained that *Kali-yuga* began with the disappearance of Lord Krishna from the planet. This has been calculated to be 3102 B.C.. Since *Kali-yuga* is described as being 432,000 earth years in length, with 5,000 years and more already passed, then the age of *Kali-yuga* has approximately 426,000 more years to go. I hope this has clarified what is sometimes a confusing issue.

# ISKCON to Open Largest Pujari Facility

By: Subhasish Chaudhuri, <https://www.telegraphindia.com>, February 14, 2020

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

ISKCON will open the world's largest pujari facility in the world on a single-floor spread over 2.5 acres at the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium at Mayapur in Nadia. Devotees from over 77 countries are expected to attend the inaugural ceremony that will also mark the countdown to the opening of the Vedic planetarium, ISKCON's flagship Rs 700-crore project slated to be completed in March 2022.

"This is going to be the largest floor for worship and other *seva* facilities in the world," ISKCON spokesperson Subroto Das said.

The huge floor of the "*seva* facilities" is fitted with over 20 specially-designed rooms for worship, cooking prasada, stitching deities' attire, training priests from across the world and rendering several other *seva* services. The architectural pattern of the centrally air-con-

ditioned and CCTV-monitored *seva* facility is a viewer's pleasure. It is made with marble stones brought from Bolivia and France and specially-designed glass-fibre-reinforced gypsum.

The ISKCON authorities said the floor would remain open for public viewing for one hour every day after its inauguration on February 13. Three deities — Sri Radha Madhava, Sri Pancha Tattva and Sri Nrsimha — will be brought to the floor later.

The initiative is being viewed as a major step towards the opening of the entire Vedic planetarium in 2022.

Read more here: <https://www.telegraphindia.com/states/west-bengal/ISKCON-to-open-largest-pujari-seva/cid/1744141>

## SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

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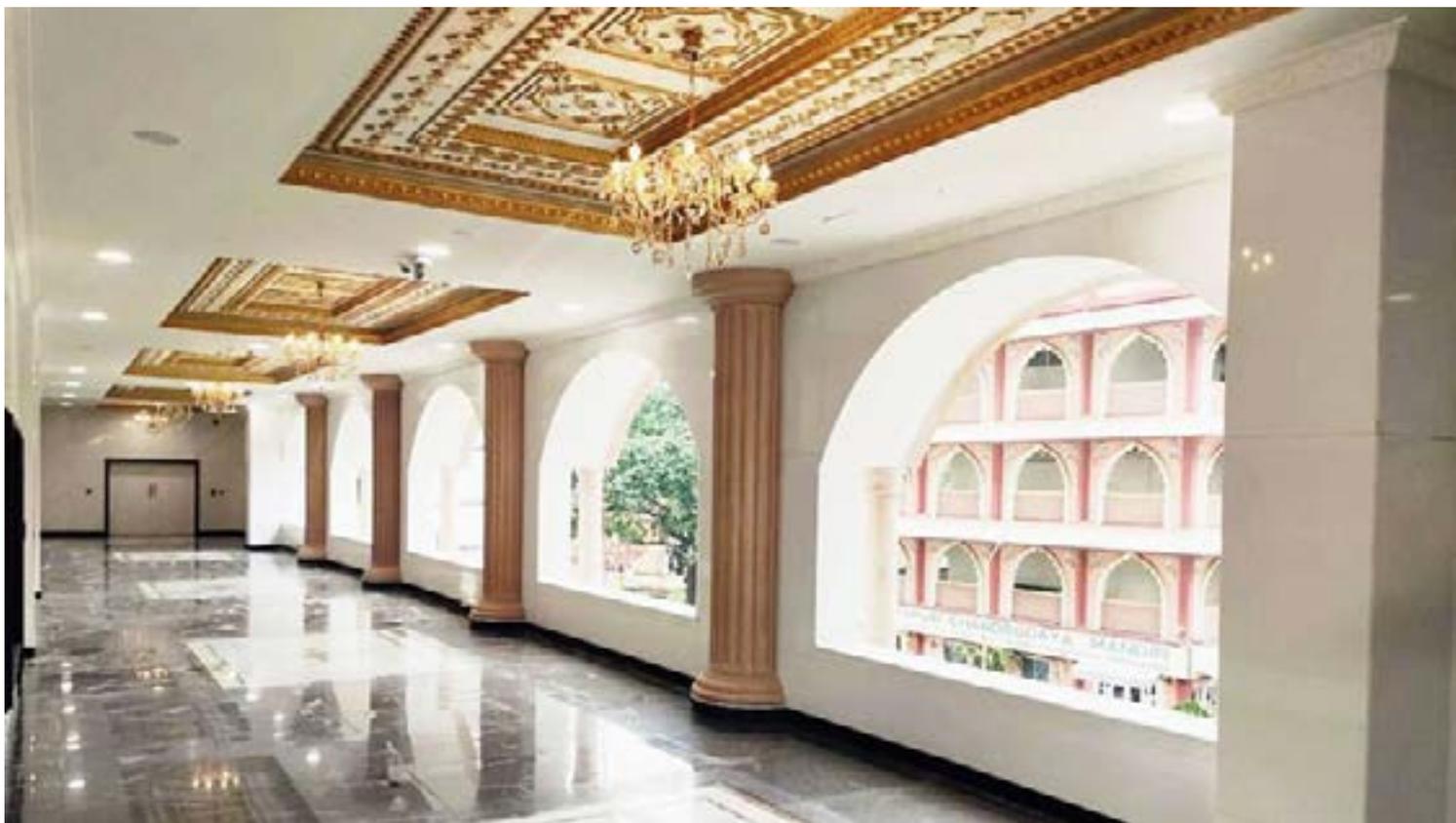


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The new TOVP Pujari Floor

# Personal Message



Dear Friends,

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

In American universities, the system is that one becomes an “assistant professor” before becoming a full professor.

This is similar to the systems of *diksa* guruship in ISKCON. The difference is that Srila Prabhupada’s guru-disciples remain as assistants throughout their entire lives. In other words, the process of *parampara* or disciplic succession is that one ALWAYS remains subordinate to the predecessor spiritual master. Stated somewhat differently, the instructing spiritual master, or the initiating spiritual master is eternally a servant of the master who went before.

This ISKCON system stipulates that one must have a living guru. Just as an assistant professor is still a professor, there is always the personal touch. The assistant teacher has personal contact with the students within the “classroom.” In ISKCON’s case the classroom is the *param* guru’s ashram. The ISKCON ashram is global, with Srila Prabhupada being the *param* guru of the ashram.

Because the *acaryas* in ISKCON’s *parampara* always have LIVING persons as *diksa* and *siksa* gurus, an important precedent is set. This system separates the ISKCON ashram from pseudo-Vaisnava sects – sects that exist not only in India (13 specific ones are named in the *Caitanya-caritamrita*), but in the West as well. Some traditions, which include nominally Vaisnava ones, do not accept the principle of a living guru guiding disciples according to the disciple’s inclinations and background. These ersatz Vaishnavas believe that books and other writings alone are all that are needed for one to advance spiritually. Although there is some merit to such mentalities, it is not the recommended process for devotional service, which requires personal interaction between student and teacher. Throughout Vedic literature, there are numberless examples of spiritual leaders remaining perpetually submissive to their more advanced gurus. It is stated in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (11.2.46),

An intermediate or second-class devotee, called *madhyama-adhikari*, offers his love to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is a sincere friend to all the devotees of the Lord, shows mercy to ignorant people who are innocent and disregards those who are envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Showing mercy to the innocent is proof that one must instruct Krishna consciousness to people with no knowledge of the science of Krishna (“envious” in this verse refers to the minority of people who become at once irritated at the very sound of God). “Mercy” means instruction, or face-to-face, communication.

Your friend,

Mukunda Goswami

Mukunda Goswami

