



Spiritual Perspectives

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

December 2021

Opening Doors For ISKCON

By Radha devi dasi

Perhaps the most significant development at the UN's October 2021 climate change conference in Scotland went virtually unnoticed by the world. Faith leaders have increasingly become advocates for climate change. At COP 26 (shorthand for the 26th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) world leaders showed an increasing awareness of the extent to which our spiritual and moral understanding of the world affects our actions. Religious faith is one of the most powerful tools in the fight for climate change and those active in the field seem to have woken up to that fact.

Faith leaders kicked off COP 26 and made their presence known at an interfaith Prayer and Meditation Vigil with prayers and statements from Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Bahai, Hindu, and Buddhist leaders. The group sought to draw attention to their COP 26 multi-faith statement that asks governments to swiftly and justly transition the global economy from fossil fuels toward renewables and to compensate communities already affected by climate change.

In spite of doctrinal differences, faith groups are uniting around the push for net-zero emissions as an opportunity to achieve cleaner environments and more sustainable, just ways of sharing our planet. This push rests on the common understanding that consumer consumption is not the goal of life and that all of us need to share the burden that climate change is bringing.

ISKCON in particular was welcomed into the COP 26 activities in a variety of ways. The Govardhan Eco Village, a project associated with the Chowpatti temple in Mumbai, recently received official recognition as a UN associated non-governmental association. ISKCON UK was invited to send delegates to COP 26 by the office of Members of Parliament and COP 26 President Alok Sharma where they were able to attend seminars, share best practices and network with other organizations. Gopal Patel (Gopal-lila dasa), the Director of Bhumi Global, a Hindu based environmental organization, and a member of the "ISKCON at the UN" team, was invited to speak at faith-based events during the conference. Both the UK team and Gopal-lila were able to share with the larger faith community how Vaishnavism provides a firm platform for positive environmental change. Understanding

that the goal of human life is spiritual and that restraint is essential to happiness helps redirect human activity away from the rampant consumerism that has led us to (or even past) the brink of climate catastrophe.

The opportunity for ISKCON to participate in the global conversation on climate change was not serendipitous. Rather, this opportunity was the fruit of devotees' hard work over many years in building relationships with politicians, climate activists and other faith groups. Other faith groups have been advocating for a spiritual approach to environmental issues and ISKCON can offer a coherent framework for understanding the gross and subtle effects of too much consumption.

As Vaishnavas, we know that material politics and activism are not on the same level as spiritual activities. It can be tempting to dismiss such activities as a waste of time. However, those seeking to improve the world will often find that Vaishnava philosophy can contribute to their work. By cultivating these relationships, ISKCON is opening doors that will allow us to reach a global audience on issues like climate change. Before we dismiss "material welfare work," we should remember that almost everything can be used in Krishna's service.



Some members of the UK Eco Bhakti team with members of the Ahimsa Farm

<https://bit.ly/3Lo3abt>

What Defines a Person's Importance, Birthplace or Activities?

By: Sunanda Das, *ISKCON NEWS*, November 15, 2021
<https://bit.ly/3lqUGGw>

Below is a narration of a conversation between His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada and Bhavananda Prabhu in Mayapur, 1977:

In 1977 I was on the roof of the Lotus Building with Srila Prabhupada. He was walking the perimeter and chanting japa. At one point he stopped on the North side and was looking across the rice fields towards the Yoga Pitha temple. In 1977 it was open fields all the way to the Yoga Pitha. Imagine there were no other buildings of any sort. Prabhupada turned to me and said, "What is more important about a man? Where he was born or the activities he performed?" I replied that I thought the activities were more important. Prabhupada replied, "Exactly. So that is the birthplace temple of Lord Chaitanya and this ISKCON campus is the preaching activities of Lord Chaitanya. I want you to build a temple that is so wonderful that no one will go to the birthplace temple but everyone will come here to ISKCON."

This story is a wonderful example of Srila Prabhupada's preaching mood and dedication to the spreading of Krishna consciousness, specifically in this case through the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium. And that mood permeated everything he said and did during his lifetime of serving the order of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati.

It also represents Prabhupada's keen philosophical perspective of all aspects of life in relation to Krishna consciousness. He wasn't a dreamer or a mere sentimentalist, but a thinker and visionary on the most practical and down-to-earth level, what to speak of the most sublime spiritual level. Everything had its place in a proper Krishna conscious perspective and could also be explained in a practical and implementable way.

He said in simple and clear words, "I want you to build a temple that is so wonderful that no one will go to the birthplace



Artist rendition of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium

temple but everyone will come here to ISKCON." This is the order and command from Lord Caitanya's Senapati Bhakta, our Commander in Chief. It must be fulfilled by all of us, his dedicated followers and servants.

We humbly beg all the worldwide ISKCON community to continue to offer your support to this project, now scheduled for its Grand Opening in 2024. Make a donation if you haven't yet, make another donation if you have given already or fulfill your pledge as soon as possible. There are over twenty available donation options to choose from according to your means. And the [Prabhupada Seva 125 India Govt. minted commemorative coin](#) is now available.

Please visit the [Seva Opportunities](#) Page today and show your support and gratitude to Srila Prabhupada by building that temple to which the whole world will come.

"Now you all together make this Vedic Planetarium very nice, so that people will come and see. From the description in the Srimad Bhagavatam you prepare this Vedic Planetarium. My idea is to attract people of the whole world to Mayapur."

Please Send Your Feedback To:
feedback@mukundagoswami.org

New Zealand Devotees Feed Thousands During Auckland Lockdown

By: Madhava Smullen, *ISKCON NEWS*, November 20, 2021
<https://bit.ly/3d6IBSp>



Organizer Anand, Krishna Chandra Das, and Haripriya Dasi give prasadam boxes to a warden who will deliver the boxes to homeless people

After being virtually free of Covid-19 for most of the pandemic, New Zealand instituted a lockdown in August after discovering its first case in six months. Auckland, the epicenter of the outbreak, has remained in lockdown for over 90 days now, while most of the rest of the country has been living with minimal restrictions. Domestic borders around Auckland are set to reopen from December 15th for fully vaccinated people and those with negative test results. Meanwhile, ISKCON devotees in Auckland have been feeding prasadam to thousands during trying times.

“We thought, we can’t just sit around the farm and do nothing,” says Auckland temple president Kalasamvara Das. “We decided to try and distribute *prasadam*. Because you weren’t allowed out of your suburb, we had to get permission from government officials to go to different suburbs around Auckland. We contacted the Minister of Health and she was really impressed because we planned to feed a few hundred people at a time. We explained that we were financing it mainly through donations because a lot of the devotees here like to donate for free food distribution.”

Congregation devotees such as organizer Anand, along with Krishna Chandra, Haripriya, and Saubhagya Sundari have

distributed thousands of meals so far, going out on Saturdays and Sundays, and sometimes three or four nights a week. With precautions such as masks, gloves, and social distancing, they hand out pre-packaged prasadam meals of curd *subji*, rice, salad, and halava.

Meals are distributed in the city, in all the suburbs around Auckland, and to homeless people in “community hubs,” as well as to those who cannot work due to the lockdown. Meals are also dropped off at the door of Starship Children’s Hospital for staff to distribute.

The free food is advertised on local TV station Apna, which draws interest. Devotees then set up their tables with *prasadam* and a “Hare Krishna Free Food” sign in public spots such as parking lots, and give out meals to pedestrians or passing cars.

“Before you know it, we’ve handed out 300 or 400 packs of *prasadam*,” Kalasamvara grins. “Some people came up pulling out their vaccine card because they thought we were part of the government’s vaccination campaign, and that they got a free meal with their vaccine. So we just went along with it!”

The response from people, according to Kalasamvara, has been enthusiastic, with many telling the devotees, “I really appreciate you guys coming out and helping.” Representatives

Continued on page 4

of government departments, such as Taff Wikaira, Regional Partnership Lead - Homelessness, have also expressed appreciation.

The lockdown *prasadam* distribution is set to continue for another four to six weeks. After that, as Auckland moves into the new traffic-light system, which will end lockdowns and use social distancing and other measures to limit the spread of Covid-19, devotees are set to restart their usual Saturday *Harinama*, book distribution, and *prasadam* distribution program in the suburbs. They are also likely to restart distributing *prasadam* at schools, with each school ranging in size from 80 to 1,200 students.

“I think *prasadam* is a great thing because it’s universal, it’s relatable, and it’s mercy,” Kalasamvara says. “Just to see people relishing *prasadam*, brings joy to the heart. I think it’s one of the best things we can do.”

<https://bit.ly/3d6IBSp>



*Top Left: Krishna Chandra Das distributes prasadam to people passing in their cars.
Bottom Left: Haripriya Dasi distributes prasadam to a homeless woman who gets her meal from the devotees daily.
Right: An appreciative prasadam recipient*

New and Improved Upgraded Holy Pilgrimages Website

By: Chandan Yatra Das, *ISKCON NEWS*, November 11, 2021
<https://bit.ly/3Eijdox>

The Holy Pilgrimages website is now upgraded encompassing easy navigation features to browse online the various holy places around India! The new additions include rare videos of various holy places (Vraja Mandala, Navadvipa Dhama, etc.) and unique documentaries on Vaishnava Acaryas like Srila Haridas Thakura, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saravati Thakura, and on the life of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

The website also has dedicated pages on South India, Navadvipa, Dwarka, Jaipur, Vraja Mandala, Ujjain, Orissa, and more. Virtual Presentations

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



on the holy dhamas that were live-streamed by the GBC SPT (Strategic Planning Team) are also included.

Continued on page 5

South India



Rameswaram
Tirupati
Srikangam
Guruvayur
Ahobilam
Kanchipuram
Madurai
Udupi
Hampi
Trivandrum
Adikesava at Thiruvattar
Rajahmundry
Kanyakumari
Kurma Ksetra near Srikakulam
Simhachalam
Jaganmohini Keshava at Ryali
Shabar's Cave & Pampa Sarovar

Jagannatha Puri & Orissa



Jagannatha Puri Parikrama
Remuna Khira Chora Gopinatha
Akarnath Temple Brahmagiri
Sakshi Gopal
Gopal Jiu Temple Gadegiri
Tota Gopinatha Temple
Siddha Bakula
Sri Sri Haridasa Thakura Samadhi
Birthplace of Sri Bhaktisiddhanta
Salabeg - Muslim Devotee of Jagannatha

Navadvipa Mayapur



Navadvipa Mandala Parikrama
Yogapatha
Nrsimhapalli
Champakhatti
Dhameswar Mahaprabhu
Chaitanya Math
Rajapur Jagannatha
Nandana Acarya's House
Gaura Kisor Babaji
Sridhara's Aangan
Murari Gupta's House
Mangachhi
Suvama Vihara Temple
Gouranga Bari at Katwa
Chand Kazi Samadhi
Vrindavan Thakura's Birthplace

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

Freedom Through the Holy Name

By: Administrator, www.dandavats.com, November 19, 2021
<https://bit.ly/3pcttbG>

Following is a talk given by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in New Vrindavana in August 1972 on the subject of *Bhagavat-dharma*.

God's names are a divine gift that can lift us from the conditions of material life and return us to our original spiritual freedom.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for kindly participating in this Krishna consciousness movement. This knowledge, *bhagavata-dharma*, was spoken by Bhagavan Himself, Lord Sri Krishna. *Bhagavan* is a Sanskrit word. *Bhaga* means fortune, and *van* means one who possesses. So *bhagavan* means the supreme fortunate. There are six principal opulences: beauty, wealth, strength, fame, knowledge, and renunciation. One who possesses these in full, without any rival, is called Bhagavan.

Bhagavata-dharma means the relationship between the devotees and the Lord. The Lord is Bhagavan and the devotee is *bhagavata*, or in relationship with Bhagavan. Everyone is related with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, just as a father and son are related. That relation cannot be broken at any

stage, but sometimes it happens that the son, out of his own independence, goes out of his home and forgets the affectionate relationship with the father.

We living entities are part of God. When we want to live independently of God, the conditional stage of our existence begins. "Conditional stage" means we accept a material body, which is conditioned in so many ways. For example, the body undergoes six kinds of change: It is born at a certain date, it remains for some time, it grows, it gives some byproducts, it dwindles, and at last it vanishes.

Besides these six changes of the body, we face many tribulations. There are the threefold miseries: those pertaining to the body and mind, those offered by other living entities, and those caused by natural disturbances. And the whole thing is summarized into four principles, namely birth, death, old age, and disease. Together these make up our conditional life.

Our Original Consciousness

To get out of these conditions of life, we must revive our Krishna consciousness, or God consciousness. Krishna means the Supreme Lord. God consciousness, or Krishna consciousness-

Continued on page 6

ness, is our original consciousness. Just as it is natural to remember our father in this life, it is natural to remember our original father. But we forget the supreme father, Krishna, and we want to live independently to enjoy life according to our whims. That is so-called independence. But by such independence we are never happy, so for this illusory happiness we transmigrate from one body to another. Each type of body has a particular facility for happiness. We want to fly in the sky. But because we are human beings, we have no wings and cannot fly. But the birds, although they are lower animals, can easily fly. If you analyze you'll see that every type of body has a particular facility that others don't. But we want all facilities of life. That is our inclination.

For example, modern scientists are trying to go to other planets, but they're conditioned, so they cannot go. There are millions and trillions of planets before us: the sun, the moon, Venus, Mars. Sometimes we wish, "How can I go there?" But because we are conditioned and not independent, we cannot go.

Originally, because we are spirit soul, we were free to go anywhere. We have immense independence, but we are now conditioned by this body. Therefore the human form of life is an opportunity to get back our original independence. That is called Krishna consciousness. That is freedom.

Two Kinds of Material Body

We have our spiritual body within the material body. That is our real identification. Now we are covered by two kinds of material body. One is called the subtle body and the other is called the gross body. The subtle body is made of mind, intelligence, and false ego, and the gross body is made of earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Generally we can see the gross body; we cannot see the subtle body. I know that you have your mind. I know that you have intelligence. You know that I have a mind and intelligence. But I cannot see your mind, I cannot see your intelligence, I cannot see your determination, I cannot see your thoughts, feelings, and will. You see my gross body made of earth, water, air, and fire, and I can see your gross body. And when your gross body is changed and you are carried away by the subtle body, that is called death.

Death means we change the gross body. For example, you have your shirt and coat, and you may change the coat but keep the shirt. Similarly, we keep our subtle body and give up the gross body; that is called death. And by the laws of nature the subtle body carries us into the womb of another mother. Then we develop another gross body with materials supplied by the mother. And when the body is prepared, we come out of the womb to work again with our subtle and gross bodies.

Bhagavata-dharma means that we have to transcend both the gross and subtle bodies and come to the spiritual body. It is very scientific. And as soon as we come to our real, spiritual body, being freed from the gross and subtle bodies, then we actually feel happiness and independence. The process of Krishna consciousness is the highest benediction for human society because it is trying to bring the human being to the platform

of the spiritual body transcending the gross and subtle material bodies. That is the highest perfection. Human life is meant for coming to that platform, the spiritual platform, transcending the gross and subtle material bodily concept of life.

Therefore this Krishna consciousness movement is very important. Those who have taken to it are very, very fortunate. **"I Am Wasting My Valuable Life"**

I shall explain a song sung by Narottama Dasa Thakura, one of our predecessor *acharyas*, or teachers. His songs are accepted in our Vaishnava society as Vedic truth. He has written in simple Bengali language, but it contains the Vedic truth. He has written many songs. One of them begins *hari hari biphale janama gonainu*: "My dear Lord, I am simply wasting my valuable life." Narottama Dasa is speaking for people in general. Although we have been born as human beings, we do not know how to use human life. We are just like animals. The animal eats; we simply make arrangements to eat unnaturally. That is our advancement. In the animal kingdom every animal has a particular type of food. A tiger eats flesh and blood, but if you give the tiger nice oranges or grapes, he'll not touch them, because those are not his food. Similarly, a hog eats stool. If you give the hog nice *halava*, it will not touch it. You see? Every animal has a particular type of food. Similarly, we human beings have our type of food. What is that? Fruits, milk, grains, vegetables. Our teeth are made for such foods. If you take a fruit, you can easily cut it into pieces with your teeth. If you take a piece of flesh, it will be difficult to cut with these teeth. But a tiger has a particular type of teeth, and he can immediately cut flesh into pieces.

We are advancing in education, but we do not even study our teeth. We simply go to the dentist, that's all. This is our advancement of civilization. The tiger never goes to the dentist. Its teeth are so strong that immediately it can tear raw meat into pieces. But it doesn't require a dentist, because it doesn't eat anything unnatural for it. We eat anything; therefore we require the help of a dentist.

The human being has a particular type of business. That business is to study and discuss the *bhagavata* life. That is our natural business. We should try to understand Bhagavan, God. The relationship between Bhagavan and the *bhakta*, or devotee, is called *bhagavata-dharma*. The business of human life is very easy: Simply hear about Krishna. Krishna is Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and we are part of Krishna.

Suppose I have forgotten my home. I left my home a long time ago and have forgotten my father. So if somebody reminds me, "Do you know such-and-such gentleman? He is your father. You were playing in such a way, your father was helping you..." In this way, if he simply talks of my father, I will remember my home. Similarly, we have forgotten our relationship with Krishna. If we simply hear about Him, then we will remember.

It is a simple process. We simply have to hear about Krishna. Krishna is situated in everyone's heart, and we have forgotten Krishna, our supreme father, on account of material contamination. So hear about Krishna attentively. You haven't got to do

Continued on page 7

anything else. It doesn't require that you become an M.A. or a Ph.D. No. God has given you two ears, and if you kindly submissively hear from the realized souls, then your life will be successful.

Deliverance by The Holy Name

I was explaining Narottama Dasa Thakura's song. Let me finish it. He says:

*hari hari! bifale janama gonainu
manusya-janama paiya,
radha-krishna na bhajiya,
janiya suniya bisa khainu*

"My dear Lord, I received this valuable human form of life, but I have wasted it for nothing. This life is meant for understanding Radha and Krishna, but I did not do so. Therefore I have knowingly taken poison." Sometimes a person takes poison to commit suicide. He knows that as soon as he'll take the poison he'll die. Similarly, one who is not taking to Krishna consciousness is drinking poison. This life is the opportunity to become Krishna conscious. And if you don't use this opportunity, that means knowingly drinking poison.

Golokera prema-dhana harinama-sankirtana. Just as we receive radio sounds from different countries, from the spiritual world we receive the vibration of Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. *Rati na jan milo kene tay:* "I could not get my attachment to this transcen-

dental vibration." *Samsara-bisanale, dibanisi hiya jwale, juraite na koinu upay.* "I am suffering constantly with the poison of this materialistic way of life, and I did not try to get out of it by taking shelter of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*."

Then Narottama Dasa says, *brajendra-nandana yei, Saci-suta hoilo sei.* "In this age, the same Supreme Personality of Godhead who appeared five thousand years ago as the son of Nanda Maharaja, that Krishna has appeared in this age as the son of mother Saci." Lord Caitanya's mother's name was Saci-devi. *Balarama hoilo nitai:* "The same Balarama who appeared as Krishna's elder brother has appeared as Nityananda." What is the business of Lord Caitanya and Nityananda Prabhu? *Dina-hina jata chilo, hari-name uddharilo* delivering the lowly, wretched souls with the holy name.

There are two kinds of people within the material world. One is committing sin and the other is suffering sinful reactions. *Papi-tapi.* That is our business. In this life, I am suffering the resultant action of my past impious activities and creating another set of impious activities so that I shall suffer next life. *Hariname uddharilo:* But everyone can be delivered simply by chanting Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Thank you very much.

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 CONSULTANT
Devaprashta das

DESIGN AND LAYOUT
Raj Dutia

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



Personal Message



Dear Friends,

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

My first meeting with Srila Prabhupada took place in May of 1966 at 94 Bowery, Manhattan, New York City.

The Bowery, also known as Third Avenue, was formerly fashionable. The name “Bowery” is probably related to the word “bower,” a shady shelter of flowers, leaves, and small twigs. “Bower” is even mentioned in the *Caitanya-caritamṛta* in the Antya-līla, verse number twenty-four as follows: He brought Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to a bower by signaling with His flute. Then He entered within that bower to perform pastimes with Her. English dictionaries define “bower” as a shelter, a pleasant, alcove-like place made of flowers, leaves and small tree boughs often intertwined, usually in a garden.

Early Bowery was populated by people “strutting their stuff” and the Third Avenue El, was an elevated train that boasted of New York’s industrial prominence. However, by 1940, Bowery Street had become “skid row,” where flophouses, sordid bars, and homeless alcoholics hung out. Srila Prabhupada’s arrival in 1966 made little difference to the noisy traffic flow of the Bowery and avoidance of it by the upper classes of Manhattan’s humanity. Basically, his arrival at 94 Bowery went unnoticed.

Having been given the address, pencil-scrawled on a paper scrap, I meandered there one warm evening, amid the pervasive odor of beer and urine, climbed four flight of stairs, and under bare light bulbs and cob webbed rafters on the fourth floor beheld the Swami, perched on a large wooden platform forty paces from my entry point. He was wearing reddish horn-rimmed spectacles and sat erect speaking English to a small gathering of about six people sitting on the floor. His thick Bengali accent made his words almost undecipherable.

But one repeated phrase was crystal clear: “I am not this body.” “What a great line,” I thought to myself, as I sat down quietly among the motley gathering. But the sound kept ringing in my ears – “I am not this body,” magically taking on new meaning each time I heard it.

At the end of his talk, I walked up to him and said, “I have a tamboura.” “Then bring it,” he said to me, gesturing with a come-hither flourish of his right hand. A few nights later, I came with my tamboura, sat down, played as he chanted, and listened to his talk.

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

Mukunda Goswami

