



Spiritual Perspectives

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

December 2022

When the Bubble Bursts

By Radha Devi Dasi

The nature of the material world is that happiness, and the material accouterments we associate with happiness, come and go. Our modern economies are based on the idea that the more things we acquire, the happier and more successful we will be. Despite our best endeavors to acquire more, however, we can accumulate wealth, only to see it disappear in a flash. Because we measure wealth in “assets” that have no tangible existence, we are ever more vulnerable to financial loss. As Srila Prabhupada pointed out, in former times assets were largely land, precious metals, and other items that can actually be held in the hand. The emergence of paper money moved us to a system where wealth is measured by a marker that has no inherent value. Paper money has value only because we all agree on that value.

The growth of the virtual world means wealth is now measured by “assets” that exist only in a computer database. Crypto currency, electronic forms of payment created using computer encryption algorithms, has emerged as an alternative to paper currencies backed by national governments. The recent collapse of FTX, a leading cryptocurrency trading platform, highlights the imaginary nature of “wealth” in the material world.

Last month, at least \$1 billion of customer funds vanished from FTX. Current reports are that the missing assets are valued at between one and two billion dollars. FTX’s bankruptcy marked a stunning reversal for Sam Bankman-Fried. The 30-year-old had set up FTX in 2019 and led it to become one of the largest crypto exchanges, accumulating a personal fortune estimated at nearly \$17 billion. FTX was valued in January at \$32 billion. Now that those billions of dollars have “disappeared” we are left asking exactly what was being valued in the first place.

This is not the first time that the collapse of a major industry has wiped out “wealth” that ultimately existed only on paper or in



computer records. Before its bankruptcy on December 2, 2001, Enron, an American energy company, employed approximately 20,600 staff and was a major electricity, natural gas, communications, and pulp and paper company, with claimed revenues of nearly \$101 billion during 2000. At the end of 2001, it was revealed that Enron’s reported financial condition was sustained by an institutionalized, systematic, and creatively planned accounting fraud.

Bursting economic bubbles have periodically erased fortunes over the past century. Financial planners respond by advising investors to diversify, placing assets in different categories to minimize the impact of a downturn in any particular industry. But the nature of the material world means that there is no way to guarantee that wealth can never be lost. Real knowledge addresses how to deal with loss rather than how to prevent it.

The Pandavas acquired unimaginable wealth when they settled in Indraprastha. They were strong, well-trained and intelligent. Yet within a short time, they were homeless and impoverished. With each setback, however, they demonstrated both resiliency and faith in Krishna’s plan. In a world where loss is inevitable, we must learn to cope with the disappearance of the material things we value. Spiritual knowledge is the real treasure and the only asset we can never lose. Whether we are “wealthy” or struggling against inflation, disappearing assets or other financial stress, we can invest confidently in our connection to Krishna.



India's Top Businessmen Visit ISKCON Juhu's Nilachal Vedic Village

By: ISKCON Juhu Communications, *ISKCON NEWS*, November 19, 2022
<https://bit.ly/3VBjk7z>

India's most influential entrepreneurs and multi-billionaires, Sri Sajjan Jindal; Chairman JSW Group & Mayapur Heritage City Development, Sri Bala Krishna Goenka; Chairman Welspun group, Sri Ashok Goel; Chairman ESSEL Group, Ms. Manju Gupta; Chairman Lupin Group, Sri Shishir Nevatia; Chairman and Sun Jewels & SSRFC and Sri Bhargav; Founder MD of ICICI, visited the Nilachal Vedic Village (NVV), an initiative of ISKCON Juhu, India. They landed in Talasari (a city in Maharashtra) in the early morning on Gopastami day, November 4, 2022, by private helicopter. Devakinandan Das, ISKCON India Zonal Secretary, invited them to celebrate the festival at the project.

The festival started with welcoming the distinguished guests with Vedic chants, then all of them performed a *yajna* followed by *Go-puja* (worship of the cows) at the *goshala*. All of them personally fed laddus and jaggery to the cows. There was a stage program with cultural activities, including an exceptional tribal Aadiwasi dance performance by locals. Then, the project's architect, Sri Sachin, gave a presentation to all the



(Photo names left to right)

H.G. Radharchana Mataji (MC), H.G. Surangi Mataji, Ms. Manju Gupta, H.H. Guruprasad Swami Maharaj, Sri Balkrishna Goenka, Sri Ashok Goel, H.G. Devakinandan Das, Sri Sajjan Jindal, Sri Shishir Nevatia and Sri B. V. Bhargav

delegates about the future development plans and initiatives of the project. While addressing the guests on stage, they spoke appreciatively of the service and development by ISKCON at Talasari and the efforts taken specifically by Devakinandan Das for his work on the project's growth.

Nilachal Vedic Village is ISKCON Juhu temple's Vedic-style farm community. The farm has more than 350 cows, and more than 100 were rescued and moved from the slaughterhouse to the NVV project. Sixty acres of land have been cultivated for organically producing vegetables, grains, flowers, etc. It is around a two-hour drive from the busy city of Mumbai. The goal of the NVV

project is to allow cows to be happy, grow organic produce for the Juhu temple and offer a village experience to visitors, while providing them with basic modern amenities during their stay.

To learn more about the NVV and how you can visit or donate:

<https://ISKCONnvv.com/>



Guests were greeted at the NVV project, given garlands, and photographed with host, Devakinandan Das



ISKCON devotees and guests feed the cows at the NVV

Ratha-yatra Makes History in Sao Paulo, Brazil

By: Bhakti Rasa Devi Dasi, *ISKCON NEWS*, November 19, 2022

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

On November 6, 2022, ISKCON Cidade São Paulo held another Ratha-yatra, which took Sri Sri Jagannatha, Baladeva, and Subhadra to Avenida Paulista, where thousands of people watched and followed the parade of the Deities.

Despite the unpredictability of the weather, roadblocks that could have prevented the arrival of the car, costs, and all the necessary logistics for such a large event, the reunion of Lord Jagannatha with His devotees aroused intense emotions and spread joy everywhere!

After the parade, there was a reception at Club Homs, where more than 800 servings of *prasadam* were distributed. There was also an Indian dance performance, lectures, and a mantra show, with the illustrious presence of the stars of the day – Jagannatha, Baladeva, and Subhadra.

The Ratha-yatra featured guest appearances by Mahavishnu Swami, Bhakti Dhira Damodara Swami, and Chandramukha Swami. Devotees from several Brazilian states came especially for the procession, which included the distribution of over 4,000 sweet balls and more than 1,000 of Srila Prabhupada's books.



Ratha Yatra in Cidade São Paulo, Brazil November 6, 2022

A celebration of such a scale was only possible with the united efforts of several Iskcon Brasil projects, such as the Srila Prabhupada Vaishnava Cultural Center – Suzano Mandir and ISKCON Govardhan, which supported ISKCON Cidade São Paulo in the realization of this glorious event. In addition, hundreds of devotees from every corner of the country gave their support – with special mention to the knowledge contribution of the experienced devotees from ISKCON Rio de Janeiro, who were unconditionally active and present.



Photos by Bhakta Ronaldo Canale and Lourieni Corrêa

ISKCON Official Speaks at PaRD Annual Conference in Indonesia

By: ISKCON News Staff, *ISKCON news*, November 16, 2022
<https://bit.ly/3AXv5wy>

Recently, in Bali, Indonesia, ISKCON India's Director of Communications Yudhistir Govinda Das spoke at the annual conference of the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD), a Germany-based organization whose members include 123 faith-based organizations (FBOs) and 15 government and multilateral entities.

The four-day conference organized on the sidelines of the G20 Summit saw the participation of government officials, faith leaders, academicians, and civil society leaders from more than 30 countries who came together to discuss practical measures in advancing sustainable development through the participation of religious actors.

"As per several surveys, nearly 70% of the population identifies themselves through a religious identity. Governments and policymakers around the world are now waking up to the fact that faith-based organizations and religious leaders play a major role in the process of development. This is why agencies like the United Nations are more actively engaging with faith communities to find solutions that are realistic and practical," said Yudhistir Govinda Das, who is also a Fellow of KAICIID, a multilateral institution based in Lisbon which works for promoting dialogue among religious communities.

Speaking in a 90-minute panel discussion on the topic of the 'Role of Religious communities in responding to Natural



Yudhistir Govinda Das speaking in a panel discussion

Disasters,' Yudhistir Govinda Das explained the challenges responders face during such events and the importance of collaborating with FBOs when they occur. He stressed the need for members of religious groups to promote and practice a simpler and self-satisfied life, the absence of which leads to various social and ecological challenges.

He highlighted the work of ISKCON's members and volunteers who have served as first responders during various natural and man-made calamities by providing food relief, medical aid, and counseling to the victims.

"While some members knew the work of ISKCON in the areas of spirituality and culture, exchanges like these highlight the important contributions of ISKCON be it for disaster relief, environmental preservation, providing rural literacy and employment opportunities. These are the main pillars of a sustainable model at the heart of which are the spiritual teachings," added Yudhistir Govinda Das.

Notable speakers included Ministers and senior government officials from Denmark, Indonesia, Italy, Germany, USA along with officials from various UN and multilateral agencies. According to the feedback of the participants, the addition of major civil society groups made the conference a success.



PaRD Annual Conference

Please Send Your Feedback To:
feedback@mukundagoswami.org

Gratitude for God's Gifts – Giving Thanks

By: Giriraj Swami, www.girirajswami.com, November 23, 2022

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

If we are at all aware of how dependent we are on God—for the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, and our very ability to eat and drink and breathe, to think and feel and will, and to walk, talk, and sense—we will feel grateful and want to reciprocate God's kindness. We will want to do something for He (or She or They) who has done, and continues to do, so much for us.



We often take things for granted until we lose them. I use my right hand to chant on meditation beads, and one morning I found that I had severe pain in my hand and could no longer use it for chanting. I had taken the use of my hand for granted, but when I lost its use, I resolved to never take it for granted again and to always use it in the best way in God's service.

How can we attempt to return some of God's favor, some of God's care and love for us? My spiritual master, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, gave one answer:

"Whatever you have got by pious or impious activities, you cannot change. But you can change your position, by Krishna consciousness. That you can change. Other things you cannot change. If you are white, you cannot become black, or if you are black, you cannot become white. That is not possible. But you can become a first-class Krishna conscious person. Whether you are black or white, it doesn't matter. This is Krishna consciousness. Therefore our endeavor should be how to become Krishna conscious. Other things we cannot change. This is not possible.

*tasyaiva hetoh prayateta kovido
na labhyate yad bhramatam upary adhah
tal labhyate duhkavad anyatah sukham
kalena sarvatra gabhira-ramhasa
[Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.5.18]*

Kalena, by time, you will get whatever you are destined. Don't bother about so-called economic development. So far as food is concerned, Krishna is supplying. *Eko bahunam yo vidadhati kaman*. He is supplying even cats and dogs and ants. Why not you? There is no need of bothering Krishna, 'God, give us our daily bread.' He will give you. Don't bother. Try to become very faithful servant of God. 'Oh, God has given me so many things. So let me give my energy to serve Krishna.' This is required. This is Krishna consciousness. 'I have taken so much, life after life, from Krishna. Now let me dedicate this life to Krishna.' This is Krishna consciousness. 'I will not let this life go uselessly like cats and dogs. Let me utilize it for Krishna consciousness.' "

I pray that I will dedicate this life and everything I have—everything God has given me—fully in God's service, following His pure devotees.

*manasa, deho, geha, yo kichu mora
arpilun tuya pade, nanda-kisora*

"Mind, body, and home, whatever may be mine, I surrender at Your lotus feet, O youthful son of Nanda!" (Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Saranagati)

Hare Krishna.
Yours in service,
Giriraj Swami

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Personal Message



Dear Friends,

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

Euphemism is a strange word. It refers to a gentler way of phrasing things. For example, one can say “unusual” instead of “horrible” or “unpalatable” instead of “bitter.”

One of the 26 qualities of a devotee mentioned by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta: Madhya lila 22.78-80*) is *mṛdu* (mild).

In Srila Prabhupada’s *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, it is said in the 17th chapter, 15th verse: “Austerity of speech consists in speaking words that are truthful, pleasing, beneficial, and not agitating to others, and also in regularly reciting Vedic literature.”

In one of Jiva Goswami’s *Sandarbhās*, it is indicated that harsh words are more painful to the heart than an arrow that pierces the body close to the heart.

In one of his lectures Srila Prabhupada tells of a medical doctor who murdered one of his male patients. The crime was discovered by an off-duty policeman who was driving a car on an Indian road. The car in front of him was pulling a closed wooden trailer that was dripping blood.

The murder occurred when the medical doctor learned that his patient “was implicated” [euphemism for “having an affair”] with the doctor’s wife.

Srila Prabhupada wasn’t always using euphemisms, because he regularly employed such terms as ‘fools, devils, criminals, crooks, swindlers, rogues, thieves, villains, window smashers, miscreants, cheaters, and con artists.’ He spoke of learned men attempting to remain in *Brahmananda* who came back to the material world, put on a show, took money from their audiences and then went away. Such tricksters were in the category of *persona non grata*, and their misdeeds were to be carefully avoided, along with members of the 13 pseudo-*sampradayas*. This was an integral part of his teaching. He took on the popularity of modern science and technology as one of his key enemies, and insightful individuals – devotees in search of truth, appreciated his adroit perception and spiritual alternatives.

But gentility in personal dealings was one of his most outstanding traits. When his own disciples fell from grace for years (including sannyasis who had relations with women), he was extremely welcoming and forgiving, just like a benevolent father who loves to see prodigal sons and daughters return home. He could be soft as a rose and hard as a thunderbolt.

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

