



October 2014

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

AN ISKCON COMMUNICATIONS PUBLICATION
For Friends and Followers of Mukunda Goswami

Changing Your Climate

By Radha devi dasi

More than 300,000 people marched through the streets of New York City in September in what organizers called the largest climate-change demonstration in history. With banners, flags, floats and drums, protesters at the “People’s Climate March” overwhelmed midtown Manhattan in flocks of vivid color, demanding action ahead of the United Nations Climate Summit.

The march was the first in a series of events held around the world to shine a spotlight on global warming ahead of the U.N. Summit. Accompanied by drum beats, wearing costumes and carrying signs, tens of thousands of demonstrators filled the streets of Manhattan and other cities around the world to urge policy makers to take action.

Marchers in Manhattan held signs and protested various concerns — from fracking, to fossil fuels, to clean water demanding that political and financial leaders take action by creating policies and financial incentives to explore renewable energy resources. One activist told CBS News that he marched because that’s what gives people power.

“We don’t have the money to combat that kind of power of apocalyptic forces, the ignorance and greed,” Robert Kennedy, Jr. said. “What we have is people power and that’s why we need to put these people out on the street and tell the politicians that we’re not going to take it anymore.”

Protesting for change can be energizing and entertaining. But the truth is, little substantial change has come from multiple climate change summits over the past decades. The issues underlying climate change are related to increased consumption as we use more of the world’s land and resources. It has been difficult, if not impossible to broker enforceable agreements to decrease global consumption of energy.

In fact, a recent study found that the world spewed more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere last year than ever before, primarily driven by China, India, and the United States. And the top leaders of China and India announced earlier that they won’t be attending this year’s summit.

The average person’s political power and economic influence are limited. Our ability to switch to renewable energy sources is governed by what is available in the local market. Many of us cannot afford the economic investment it would take to make such a switch even where the technology is up and running.



<http://bit.ly/1rvosb2>

Peoples Climate March, New York, NY

There is, however, one simple change we can all make to save the world from the worst impacts of climate change. Ironically, that change was identified by the U.N. in 2010 but has yet to become part of the global dialogue on combating climate change – switching to a meat and dairy free diet.

According to a U.N. report on diet and climate change, a global shift towards a vegan diet is vital to save the world from hunger, fuel poverty and the worst impacts of global warming. Professor Edgar Hertwich, the lead author of the report, said: “Animal products cause more damage than [producing] construction minerals such as sand or cement, plastics or metals. Biomass and crops for animals are as damaging as [burning] fossil fuels.” A U.N. initiative as far back as 2006 identified the livestock industry as one of the largest producers of greenhouse gases.

We can limit ourselves to protest marches and demanding that our leaders solve problems they have already shown themselves to be unable or unwilling to solve. But if we truly want to see change, we also have to take action ourselves. Promoting vegetarianism, cutting back on or even giving up commercial dairy products are ways we can be part of the solution to the problems of climate change. We all have power over what we put on our plates.



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Parliament of World's Religions to Meet in Salt Lake City in 2015

By Whitney Evans, *Deseret News*, September 9, 2014
<http://bit.ly/1Aw2aGX>

SALT LAKE CITY — For the second time in a little more than a decade, Salt Lake City will host people from many nationalities and religions throughout the world.

Instead of Olympians, thousands of religious and non-religious will come for the Parliament of the World's Religions in October 2015. The announcement was made by Scott Beck, president and CEO of Visit Salt Lake, Tuesday at the Calvin L. Rampton Salt Palace Convention Center.

"Having the honor to again host thousands of people from dozens of countries representing scores of religions offers us, Salt Lake and the state of Utah, a fantastic opportunity to display our truly welcoming community," Beck said.

This is the first time the summit will be held in the United States in 22 years.

It is expected to attract 10,000 or more people from 80 countries and 50 faiths or spiritual traditions. More than 3,000 people submitted proposals to speak at the event and about 300 of those will be chosen. There will also be panels, films, music and other performances.

"It gives us an opportunity to host an international gathering. Salt Lake City is continuing to become more recognized not just in our region or our country but really around the world for being this really unique and vibrant city, and we expect to continue to play an even bigger role in hosting events like this," Art Raymond, spokesman for Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker, told the *Deseret News*.

"It's certainly the case that this group and its commitment to diversity and inclusion really reflect, we think, some of the same commitments Mayor Becker has for our community."

The mission of the Parliament of the World's Religions is to bring together religions and promote peace and unity. This is something that Arun Gandhi, fifth grandson of Mohandas Gandhi and Parliament trustee, said he learned from his grandfather.

"A lot of people seem to think that when we talk about interfaith and secularism, it means that



From left: Arun Gandhi, Sande Hart, Mary Nelson

we give up our own and adopt something new. It doesn't mean that at all. What it means is that we learn to respect all the religions as much as we respect our own religion," Gandhi said to those gathered.

Religion is often "misused ... to promote violence and perpetuate violence, and I think that is wrong. Religion is not about violence. Religion is about love, compassion, understanding, respect, and we should go back to the core of the religion and practice that," he said.

The Parliament has invited top leaders of various faiths from around the world to attend, including leaders from the Roman Catholic Church, Judaism, Islam and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, whose headquarters are in Salt Lake City. None of them had responded as of Tuesday.

"The gathering is well over a year away and the church has not made any commitments," LDS Church spokeswoman Jessica Moody said in a statement.

In the past, the event has attracted leaders such as Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

"You have (a) global outlook. We'll bring (the) globe to your home," said Imam Malik Mujahid, chairman of the Parliament board of trustees.

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The Parliament dates back to the first summit at the 1893 World's Fair and was the beginning of the interfaith movement. It returned in 1993 and has run every five years since. The Parliament board has recently voted to hold the summit every two years, beginning in 2017.

It is a place for the religious and nonreligious to come together and work toward greater understanding of others, according to Sande Hart, chairwoman for the United Religions Initiative North American Leadership Council and founder and president of the Spiritual and Religious Alliance for Hope.

"The Parliament of the World's Religions is a safe space. And when we're in a safe space, what wants to emerge is a sense of wonderment

where curiosity replaces fear and judgment. And because we're in that safe space, that place of wonder, we're more likely to understand the other. And when we understand the other, we're more likely to trust them, and isn't that what our world needs right now?" Hart asked.

The Parliament has "eliminated" past debt it held, according to Parliament spokeswoman Molly Horan. Imam Mujahid said the organization is "in better financial shape than it has ever been." The 2015 Parliament will be funded through registration fees, grants, foundations and other funding sources, he said.

Those who are interested in attending can visit the Parliament of the World's Religions Facebook page for more information or register at parliamentofreligions.org.

Google Suggest Reveals The Internet's Offensive Religious Stereotypes

By Yasmine Hafiz, *The Huffington Post*, July 22, 2014
<http://huff.to/1swSfRs>

Some questions are better left unasked.

A look at the Google Autocomplete suggestions for different religious groups shows that people frequently turn to the search engine to ask the questions they may not want to say out loud. The suggestions generated by frequent searches reveal some of our darkest collective stereotypes and generalizations about people of other faiths, some of which are bizarrely specific.

A recent Pew survey examined how the American public feels about various religious groups, with Jews rated the most warmly and Muslims the most coldly. However, the autocomplete suggestions go beyond indicating mere warmth or coldness, instead uncovering some of the most frequently-typed questions about people of different faiths.

So how are the autocompletes generated? According to Google:

Autocomplete predictions are automatically generated by an algorithm without any human involvement based on a number of objective factors, including how often past users have searched for a term.

Our algorithm is designed to reflect the diversity of our users' searches and content on the web. Just like the web, the search terms shown may seem silly, strange, or surprising. The algorithm automatically detects and ex-

cludes a small set of search terms for things like pornography, violence, hate speech, illegal and dangerous things, and terms that are frequently used to find content that violates copyrights.

Google's suggestions are mainly influenced by search frequency, search rate, search location, and search manner, according to a report by Search Engine Journal.

But are these suggestions influencing users, in turn? Probably. Online marketing expert Andre Alpar points out that a person typing in a particular search may become distracted by the suggested entries, and then choose one of the search terms delivered by Google, instead of the particular phrase that they were originally looking for.

The reinforcement of generalizations about various identities through Google suggest is a problem that concerns Paul Baker and Amanda Potts, researchers in the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University, who wrote a paper titled, "'Why do white people have thin lips?' Google and the perpetuation of stereotypes via autocomplete search forms."

A look at the suggestions below show just how dark the suggestions can get, with only Mormons escaping mostly unscathed. Check out what the Internet wants to know about religious groups here.

Continued on page 4

These searches were conducted using an incognito window, so previous personal inquiries would not influence the results. It's also likely that the reporter's location in New York, NY,



<http://buff.tol1suSfRs>

influenced the suggestions. For each group, the reporter typed in enough letters to generate suggestions that included the full title of the group in all of them.

<http://buff.tol1suSfRs>

Modi Gifts Gita to Japanese Emperor

By PTI, *The Times of India*, September 4, 2014
<http://bit.ly/11egKbT>

TOKYO: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday took a dig at his “secular friends” over his giving a copy of the holy Hindu text *Bhagavad-gita* to Japanese Emperor Akihito, saying they could kick up a storm and trigger TV debates back home.

Modi had an audience with Emperor Akihito at the Imperial Palace on the fourth day of his five-day visit to Japan to strengthen bilateral ties.

Addressing the members of the Indian community at a reception in India, Modi spoke of his carrying a copy of the *Gita* during his visit to Japan that he planned to give the emperor.

“Today I went to the maharaja of Japan, I have given one to him,” he said, “because I don’t think that I have anything more to give



<http://bit.ly/11egKbT>

Prime Minister Modi had an audience with Emperor Akihito at Tokyo's Imperial Palace

and the world also does not have anything more to get than this.” The remark triggered another round of applause from the assembled gathering.

New Book Traces Science Advances to Ancient Asian Culture

By Contributor, <http://www.oswego.edu>, August 20, 2014
<http://bit.ly/ZWBt8o>

<http://bit.ly/ZWBt8o>

śūnya	= void
kha	= sky
ākāśa	= space
bindu	= dot

“Modern science and medicine would be unrecognizable, and far more primitive, without the immense contribution of the ancient Hindus” writes the book’s author

In his new book, Dr. Alok Kumar, a professor of physics at SUNY Oswego, describes and documents the development of scientific and mathematical concepts in South Asia centuries—and in some cases millennia—before they were rediscovered or adopted in Europe.

Sciences of the Ancient Hindus describes many discoveries and advances of the ancient inhabitants of the country now known as India. Maintaining that these people have been widely known as Indians primarily in the 250 years since the British colonized the region, Kumar prefers the name Hindus for the inhabitants of the Indus-Sarasvati region, which has variously been called Hind, Hindustan, Bharat and India.

What is now known as the Arabic number system did arrive in Europe from the Middle East, he notes, but it came to the Arabs from the Hindus. The concepts of zero, the atom, and Earth as a planet that moves through the universe all appear in Hindu science long before they were proposed in Europe, he explains, and the ancient Hindus developed detailed knowledge of human anatomy, devising cataract surgery and skin grafting, for example.

“Modern science and medicine would be unrecognizable, and far more primitive, without the immense contribution of the ancient Hindus,” he writes.

With this new book, Kumar aims to encourage appreciation of the multicultural nature of science and to make the modern world

aware of the intellectual contributions of Hindu culture as earlier scholars have done for the contributions of the Chinese and Islamic cultures.

“The science of ancient India is a subject of great richness, far too often overlooked, that deserves a central place in the history of pre-modern science, a role now advanced by this excellent work,” said Scott L. Montgomery, an affiliate faculty member at the University of Washington in Seattle and the author of many books, essays and scholarly papers on the history of science. “Alok Kumar has provided an enormous service to the scholarly and teaching communities with this well-researched, wide-ranging, yet simply written volume.”

Kumar uses original documents translated from Sanskrit and cites accounts of contemporaneous Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, Persian, Arab, Roman and other sources crediting the scientific contributions of the Hindu people.

Kumar’s colleague, Dr. Ronald A. Brown, emeritus professor of physics at SUNY Oswego, said, “The demonstrated accuracy of the factual documentation given by Kumar is undeniable. The book fills a gap in the history of science that preceded the work of the ancient Greeks, to form a more detailed and complete picture of the earliest beginnings of science and mathematics.”

In May, Kumar’s article “Transmission of Indian Science and Philosophy” appeared in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam*, published by Oxford University Press. The article deals with the

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Dr. Alok Kumar

transmission of knowledge in mathematics, astronomy, medicine and philosophy from India to the Islamic world in the Middle East.

Kumar's many other scholarly publications include the reference book *Science in the Medieval World*, which he translated with Sema'an I. Salem and which the University of Texas Press published in 1996. His next book, written with Montgomery, is *A History of Science in World Cultures: Voices of Knowledge*, to be published in 2015 by Routledge.

He has received fellowships from Germany's Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the USA's NASA. Born and educated in India, Kumar has been teaching in American higher education for more than three decades. He has received the State University of New York Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching and the SUNY Oswego President's Award for Scholarly and Creative Activity and Research.

Published earlier this year by CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, *Sciences of the Ancient Hindus* is available online from Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

Gita Nagari Farm Listed as Success Story by US Department of Agriculture

By Melissa Erdman, <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>, August 27, 2014
<http://bit.ly/1vmZfm2>

The United States Department of Agriculture has listed ISKCON's Gita Nagari Farm in Port Royal, Pennsylvania as one of the most important success stories of preservation and sustainability in 2013.

ISKCON, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness is a popular religious-based, worldwide organization. Membership varies in terms of social, economic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. ISKCON has more than 400 centers, including 60 farm communities. One of these unique farm communities is located in Port Royal, Pennsylvania, USA.

The Gita Nagari Yoga Farm in Port Royal was purchased by the ISKCON organization in 1974. Since that time, there have been varying numbers of residents and farm success. At first, there was a great deal of enthusiasm for farming and the farm became a success story in the local area. Maintaining 125 residents, the farm had 100 acres in small grains and row crops and 50 acres of hay fields in addition to about 4 acres of vegetables and 3 acres of potatoes. There was also a herd of brown Swiss cattle (including award winning show cows), and at the peak of that period there were 27 cows milking (and a total of 157 in the entire herd). The residents made all of their own butter, yogurt, and curd. The first farm conservation plan for the ISKCON farm was written and signed in February 1989; however, the first notes of conservation work taking place on the farm with NRCS (at the

time called the Soil Conservation Service) assistance was in October 1982 – over 30 years ago!

From its bustling beginnings in the 1970's, over time, the number of residents declined and the farm fell into disrepair for a number of years. Starting in 2008, a new farm operator and his wife, Dhruva Das and Parijata Dasi took over the leadership of the farm. According to Dhruva, "The natural beauty of the farm and the community overcame us and we fell in love with the residents and farm." However, taking over the ministerial and farm management functions were not without challenge.

Dhruva is a mechanical engineer with nuclear power plant training and Parijata a human resources executive; neither had a background in agriculture. As a part of their faith however, they view an agrarian lifestyle as a key component in their daily living. "We desire that farming be the heartbeat of our community because it brings everyone together in rhythmic harmony with nature. This understanding of the inter-connectedness of all living beings has a significant impact on holistic human health and wellbeing, which we understand to be essential for spiritual development. We are therefore committed, by default based on our value system, to sustainable agriculture and environmental/conservation practices." So, farmers they became!

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Since 2008, the ISKCON Farm has become very active and diversified. In 2010, the farm was certified organic and began their first Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), delivering fresh produce to 45 families in the Philadelphia area. Also, their conservation plan was updated for the first time since the 1980's. "With the support of NRCS we designed a plan to address different facets of conservation issues that were 'hot potatoes' and in this way both solve and continue to learn and improve operations here on the farm." The conservation plan now includes a prescribed grazing plan, forest management plan, and nutrient management plan. As these plans were written, Dhruva and Parijata applied for assistance to implement those plans.

An EQIP contract was written in 2010 to implement the recommendations in their nutrient management plan, including a concrete barnyard for their growing dairy herd and animal trails/walkways and a watering system to better utilize their pastures. In 2011-2012, they applied for and received assistance through EQIP and AMA to implement their forest stewardship plan, install a high tunnel, pollinator habitat, and a drip irrigation system, respectively, to control invasive species and aid production for their growing CSA, which had more than doubled to 115 families between the major cities of Towaco and Edison in New Jersey; Philadelphia, PA; Potomac, MD; and Manhattan, NY; and also a limited supply to Tuscarora Organic Group.

Most recently, the ISKCON Farm continued the expansion of their dairy herd and bought a herd of Brown Swiss cows. They had a pasteurizer installed and have begun bottling and distributing their own milk, produced from "protected cows" (cows that will die naturally, not sent to slaughterhouses). The ISKCON Farm also serves to educate others affiliated or inter-

ested in their community about agriculture and conservation, having over 3,000 visitors per year since 2009.

In summary, Dhruva says, "due to the newly fenced pastures, cow walkways, [and] frost-free hydrants, we can graze our animals in an effective rotation, with the Nutrient Management Plan supporting the health and productivity of our animals. The barnyard upgrades have done the same. Our Organic Systems Plan ensures that we treat our natural resources as they should be treated. Our forests are receiving expert care and the Stewardship Plan and your [NRCS] initiatives will correct and restore so many imbalances. The high tunnel assists us in extending our season and the irrigation system will increase our efficiency and efficacy in crop production. And, the composting facility completes the cycle naturally, where we can fertilize our land with the manure of our own cows; what to speak of the cost savings and critical benefits to the soil and protection of our water systems."

Dhruva and Parijata continue to encounter and overcome the challenges of making a farm profitable, while producing products raised according to their belief system and being environmentally conscientious. "Imperative to the above is education and awareness (in ourselves and others) of our human impact to the delicate balances in nature and how to act so as to restore or create these."

Dhruva and Parijata are always willing to listen and take advice from NRCS to improve their operation. "Having no formal training in agriculture, veterinary sciences, environmental sciences, and the like, we have still been able to learn and apply what you share with us and with tangible results - what can be more rewarding! This is due to your [NRCS] expertise, passion, and willingness to put yourselves in the shoes of the farmer, in the field, daily."

**Please send your
Thoughts, Opinions, Questions,
Comments, Concerns to:
feedback@mukundagoswami.org**

Personal Message...



Dear Friends,

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

The following are excerpts from my book, *Miracle on Second Avenue*.

August came and went, and still the planning permission did not come. The temple property was unlivable, Betterton Street had long since been sold and we were all living in scattered apartments as close as we could to Bury Place.

When we received indication from Srila Prabhupada that it was better if we all lived together, Shyamasundar found us an unexpected source of temporary accommodation – John Lennon and Yoko Ono's estate, Tittenhurst – an eighty-five-acre property near Ascot racecourse that had previously belonged to the chocolate baron Cadbury family. The arrangement was that we could live in the servants' quarters free of charge in exchange for doing renovation work on the estate – peeling off paint, varnishing wood, cleaning up the grounds and weeding the fields and gardens. Prior to our arrival, the work had been done by John's American friends, a couple named Dan and Jill, who now took on the role of supervising us in addition to working themselves. Presumably this living arrangement had more than a little to do with the fact we were now Apple recording artists.

Our forty-five was released in the first week of September, just ten days before Srila Prabhupada was finally going to be arriving in London. The sleeve featured a photo of us with our musical instruments, and said "Radha-Krishna Temple" in large letters across the bottom. Although we hadn't planned it, we quickly became called the Radha-Krishna Temple band.

Described as "Indian Gospel" by the *New Musical Express*, the record hit the British charts almost immediately and climbed to number eleven. In other countries – reportedly in Japan and Yugoslavia—it reached number one. Consequently, when we finally welcomed Srila Prabhupada to England on September 11, we did so in a way that was grander than we had ever imagined. Generations of Gaudiya Vaishnavas had dreamed of presenting Krishna consciousness in English, and for them that had meant bringing it to England, the center of the empire of which India was a colony.

Prabhupada's own spiritual master had requested many of his disciples to speak and write about Krishna in English, and his father, Bhaktivinoda Thakur had sent literature to libraries in England. Now, as Prabhupada touched down at London's Heathrow Airport, the Hare Krishna mantra was being played and sung all over the country..."

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

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

