



April 2015

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

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

“India’s Daughter”

By Radha devi dasi

She was just 23-years-old, a promising medical student determined to make a better life for herself and her parents. The news of Jyoti Singh’s brutal gang rape and murder in Delhi in 2012 sparked worldwide outrage and galvanized a movement to end the culture of silence on violence against women.

The horrific crime and the debate it ignited are the focus of the new documentary “India’s Daughter” by British filmmaker Leslee Udwin. The film was banned in India on the ostensible grounds that Udwin’s interview with one of the rapists gave the man a platform for misogynistic views. A deeper reason may be the poor light that the film spreads on India’s cultural perceptions of women.

In the film, one of the rapists says that Jyoti’s death was her own fault. If she hadn’t fought back, he claims, he and the other rapists would have gone easier on her. But such insane thinking is not limited to the criminals. The rapists’ attorneys both made public statements blaming Jyoti for the rape. If she had not been out on a date that night, their reasoning goes, she would not have provoked our clients into attacking her. As defense attorneys, these men make these statements because they know that others will agree with them.

It is tempting to ignore the issue of gender violence in India. After all, the Hare Krishna movement is international and our principles go beyond bodily conceptions such as nationality. Why is this our problem?

The online discussion of “India’s Daughter,” however, has put this issue squarely in our collective laps. Some commentators have compared Srila Prabhupada’s teachings to the outrageous rationalizations of Jyoti’s rapists and their defense attorneys. Quoting selectively from his writings and conversations, they claim that he promoted misogyny. There are, unfortunately, some examples of gender discrimination in our organization that may lead some

to believe that our movement is misogynistic.

Anyone familiar with the entirety of Srila Prabhupada’s teachings knows that this comparison is radically unfair. One of his basic tenets is the basic equality of all souls regardless of their



<http://on.usj.com/1NBkl4A>

temporary bodily identifications. His published writings and his letters to his disciples contain many statements showing that he valued his male and female disciples equally. In establishing ashrams for women and giving brahman initiation to women, he went beyond traditional practices and created new norms for women’s participation in spiritual culture.

Some of his disciples and granddisciples, however, have a different point of view. For example, there are those who argue that domestic violence in devotee couples is the fault of the abused woman. If women were trained to be submissive, they argue, their husbands would never hurt them. This reasoning is uncomfortably close to that of the rapist interviewed in “India’s Daughter” who blames Jyoti for her own rape and murder.

It is not enough to simply deny any connection with the horrific acts and ideas depicted in India’s daughter. We must uphold the principle that no woman anywhere deserves to be harmed no matter what her behavior may have been. When Haridas Thakur was approached by a prostitute, he overlooked her faults and gave her God consciousness. Nowhere in our tradition is there any teaching that women should be assaulted.

We live in a world with changing norms and behaviors. As Kali-yuga progresses, sinful behavior increases and people behave badly. Condoning violence, however, will only make the situation worse. As servants of Lord Chaitanya, we have to understand that the solution is to spread the purifying influence of the Holy Names all over the globe.



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SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

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Bhaskaracharya's Law of Gravity: Discovered 1200 Years before Newton!

By Saurabh Khillare, <https://magnificentmaharashtra.wordpress.com>, January 22, 2015
<http://bit.ly/1BLK3gb>

India is considered as a traditional country but the world is unaware of our contributions to this modern world. Our theories were used as a base for many concepts such as weather forecasting, astronomy, astrology, aviation etc. India has developed some of the best mathematicians the world has ever seen. Many of these geniuses were not given credit for their work.

An exhibition was held recently to spread awareness of India's rich scientific heritage. The exhibition coordinator, Ashish Manjramkar stated:

"Very few of us know that speed of light was known to Indians in Vedic period. A shloka says that the speed of light is 2202 yojana per half nimish. Yojana is a unit of distance which equals to 9.06 miles and half a nimish (nimishardha) is one tenth of a second. The figure is very close to the modern measurement of speed of light."

When we talk about gravity, the first name that pops into our heart is "Sir Isaac Newton." In school we all have been told the story of how Newton was inspired to formulate "The Universal Law of Gravitation" when an apple fell from a tree. The world believes that Newton was the first to discover the gravitational concepts. You will be surprised to know that the theory of gravitation was created 1200 years before Newton by an Indian mathematician named Bhaskaracharya.

Before discussing Bhaskaracharya's contribution let us understand the basic concept of gravity.

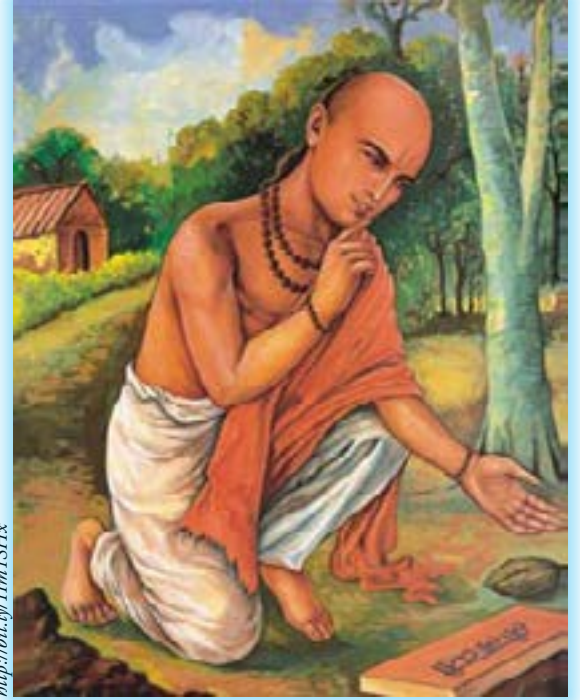
Gravity is a universal force that allows a mass of body to attract other masses of body. The bigger a mass of body is, the higher will be the force of gravity.

Importance of Gravity

Objects stay on earth because of the gravitational pull. Every single body in the universe is affected by gravitational forces which also include the earth, sun and the moon. Tidal waves are created by the gravitational pull of the moon. The sun's gravitational pull keeps all the planets in their orbits. Earth's gravity allows it to revolve around the sun.

Now that you have understood the meaning of Gravitation, let's get back to the work of Bhaskaracharya.

Who was Bhaskaracharya ?



<http://bit.ly/1Im1SHx>

Bhaskaracharya, or Bhaskara II, mathematician and astronomer, lived 1114-1185

Bhaskaracharya was one of the most prominent astronomers and mathematicians of the 12th century. He is also considered to be the greatest mathematician from the medieval era. He is known amongst mathematical theorists for discovering principles related to astronomy and calculus.

He wrote *Siddhanta Śiromani* at the age of 36 in 1150 AD. He also contributed to the *Surya Siddhanta* that was originally written by Aryabhata.

The first principle of gravity was stated by Bhaskaracharya, not Newton

Bhaskaracharya stated the laws of gravity in the book *Surya Siddhanta* in the 11th century. Thus the recognition of the law actually occurred even before the birth of Sir Isaac Newton (Newton was born in the 16th century).

Hindu Primary School Among Two New Croydon Free Schools Announced by British Prime Minister

By Chris Baynes, <http://m.croydonguardian.co.uk>, March 11, 2015
<http://bit.ly/1F1T9Yh>

Two new Croydon free schools, including the borough's first Hindu faith school, were announced by Prime Minister David Cameron this week.

A primary school run by a Hindu charity, Avanti Schools Trust, and a secondary school offshoot from a top Sutton grammar were among 49 new Department for Education (DfE) approvals revealed on Monday.

Both are expected to open in the next three years.

Avanti Schools Trust, which already runs existing schools, had its initial application turned down by the DfE last year.

However, its amended bid for a 420 place primary school in Croydon has been accepted. The trust hopes to open in the school in September 2016 and is in talks with Croydon Council and the DfE over a location.

Nitesh Gor, the charity's chief executive, said: "We are very pleased with the approval. It has been a long time in the pipeline."



British Prime Minister David Cameron



The Krishna Avanti School in the UK

New Sadaputa Das YouTube Channel Gives Vedic Perspective on Modern Science

By Madhava Smullen, *ISKCON News*, March 5, 2015

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

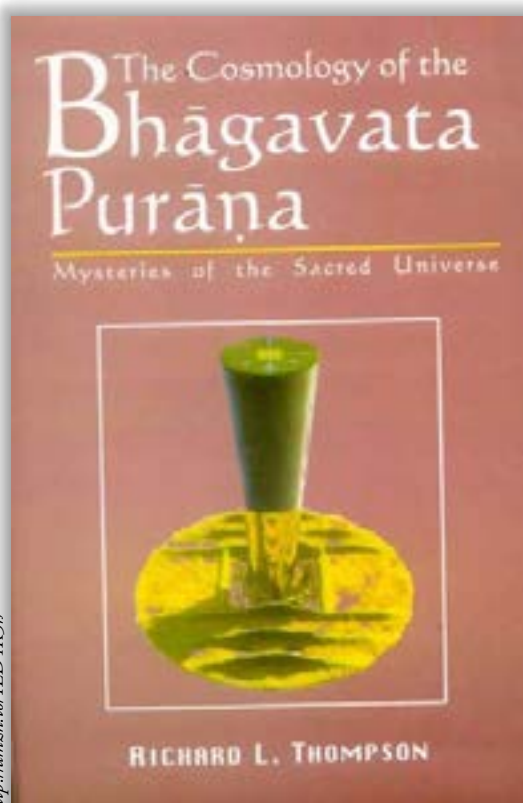
A new official YouTube channel, dubbed “The Sadaputa Digital Channel,” is offering the most complete and organized collection of the late ISKCON scientist Sadaputa Das’ lectures, seminars, interviews and videos in one place.

Sadaputa Das (Dr. Richard L. Thompson) received his Ph.D. in mathematics from Cornell University, where he specialized in probability theory and statistical mechanics.

He was one of the founding members of ISKCON’s scientific branch, the Bhaktivedanta Institute, and wrote many well known volumes,



Sadaputa Das



Mysteries of the Sacred Universe by Richard L. Thompson (Sadaputa Das)

such as *Forbidden Archeology* and *Mysteries of the Sacred Universe*, which presented the Vedic view on the big questions of the world. ISKCON’s founder Srila Prabhupada once praised him as a “real mahatma,” or great soul.

In more recent years, he was responsible for much of the current design of the Vedic Planetarium at ISKCON’s under construction Temple of the Vedic Planetarium in Mayapur, West Bengal. He also worked on many other exhibits for the temple.

“It was the world’s great misfortune that in 2008 he passed away from this world, leaving much work still to be done in his life’s mission and service to Srila Prabhupada,” says TOVP team member Sunanda Das.

Recently, a team of devotees have begun an effort to collect, preserve, and disseminate Sadaputa’s legacy of lectures, books, videos, interviews and papers for the benefit of future generations. The Sadaputa Digital Channel on YouTube is their first achievement.

Sunanda hopes the channel will educate and inspire devotees and researchers. “Aside from finding ways of bridging the gap between science and Vedic wisdom, one of Sadaputa’s main goals was to teach and educate devotees exactly why modern scientific explanations of reality are incomplete at best, and continue to be so,” he says.

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In the coming years, Sunanda and his team hope to also provide Sadaputa's lectures, seminars, and more in CD format along with transcriptions for serious research projects and study.

A website and Facebook page are also planned for the near future.

Visit the Sadaputa Digital Channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/SadaputaChannel>

If you know of or have access to additional recorded lectures or videos of Sadaputa, please contact the channel atspchannel108@gmail.com.



<http://bit.ly/1ECUN0i>

Preview of the Sadaputa Digital Channel on YouTube

Does Obama's 'God Talk' Stand a Chance in a Polarized America?

By Cathy Lynn Grossman, *Religion News Service*, February 16, 2015
<http://huff.to/1NBxk6s>

WASHINGTON (RNS) After taking heat from the religious right for saying Christians and Muslims have all committed horrors in God's name, President Obama is now angering the religious left with a White House conference on combating "violent extremism" that seems to focus only on Muslims.

The back-to-back controversies raise the question: Can Obama — or any president — walk the tightrope of religious rhetoric in today's political crosswinds?

No, say experts who keep a close eye on presidential God talk. It's a perilous walk, taken without a safety net as news and social media voices wait to savage him in a nanosecond.

Obama's remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast triggered fury when Obama mentioned the Crusades, the Inquisition and Jim Crow segregation laws as examples of Christian violence in God's name.

"This is not unique to one group or one religion," Obama said. "There is a tendency in us, a sinful tendency that can pervert and distort our faith."

Todd Starnes at Fox News asked viewers: "Did you ever imagine the day would come when an American president would twist and distort and insult those who follow Christ?" And pundit Michelle Malkin tweeted: "ISIS chops off heads,

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U.S. President Barack Obama walked to greet wellwishers on February 14, 2015 as he arrived in Palm Springs, California where he spent the Presidents Day weekend

incinerates hostages, kills gays, enslaves girls. Obama: Blame the Crusades.”

Suddenly, Wednesday’s (Feb. 18) White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism came into sharper focus.

The White House announced the summit in January as an event made “more imperative in light of recent tragic attacks in Ottawa, Sydney and Paris.” The topics will be efforts to prevent recruitment and radicalization of potential killers. But all the examples were community programs aimed at Muslims.

That doesn’t fly with the Interfaith Alliance, which has sent an open letter to Obama, signed by leaders of 18 religious and civil rights groups. It said the conference should not single out any specific faith when it condemns extremist violence.

“Here in this country, Muslims are far more likely to be victims of the actions of extremists than they are to be the perpetrators,” Rabbi Jack Moline, executive director of the Interfaith Alliance, said Friday (Feb. 13).

In a time of hypersensitivity on all sides, Moline said the White House attempted in the prayer breakfast speech “to satisfy both sides of a silly rhetorical debate” but chose language that, “unfortunately, was more encouraging to the antagonists toward Islam than the people who practice it.”

Still, Moline does not find Obama any more or less graceless with God talk than presidents before him. Someone wielding religion as a rhetorical weapon has pilloried every president, from Thomas Jefferson to Abraham Lincoln to Obama.

“I don’t think people’s reactions are different than they used to be. They just have a new vehicle for expressing it,” said Moline. “You can sit down behind your laptop and spew all you want.”

There really is no way any president can get religious rhetoric right, said Martin Marty, one of the nation’s leading religion historians.

Presidents have three roles they could take — “none of them constitutional,” said Marty. He listed the roles as a priest over the rites and rituals of the nation; a prophet calling Americans to virtuous account; or a pastor-in-chief comforting them in moments of tragedy.

Rare is the president who could safely and consistently navigate any one path, and “Obama has none of those choices in this era of polarization,” said Marty, professor emeritus at the University of Chicago. “He doesn’t stand a chance.”

Even Lincoln, who spoke in a prophetic but religiously generic voice, was pounced upon by both abolitionists and slavery proponents for calling America God’s “almost chosen people.”

Every president has taken blows from the media of his time, said David Domke, communication professor at the University of Washington in Seattle and author of studies on religious speech in American politics.

What’s different today, Domke said, is the speed of the Internet and social media, and the velocity of the anger from evangelicals who feel their cultural clout is slipping “so they are fighting harder.”

Add to this that there actually are “some very dangerous people in the world who claim to be Islamic.” To ignore that is to ignore global reality, he said.

There’s one other inescapable obstacle for Obama, Domke said. The president is a Christian but a stubbornly significant number of Americans still think he is a Muslim.

A 2012 survey by the Public Religion Research Institute found 16 percent of voters — including 24 percent of white evangelical voters and 25 percent of Republican voters, labeled him as a Muslim.

“If he criticizes Christians, he’s seen as a closet Muslim. If he criticizes Islam, he’s accused of trying to hide that he’s Muslim,” said Domke.

Still, despite the crosswinds, Obama steps out on the God talk tightrope. Domke said Obama is pushing harder now than in the first six years of his presidency to create a “religious and racially pluralistic America.”

Mumbai's Municipal Schools to Teach 'Bhagavad-gita' to Students

Published in Reports for www.dandavats.com, March 21, 2015
<http://bit.ly/1NBAIno>

All municipal schools in the city and suburbs would teach *Bhagavad-gita* to students in order to make them more focused, boost their morale, and impart knowledge to them about spiritualism, a civic official has said.

"We shall impart the knowledge of *Bhagavad-gita* to students to make them independent and sharpen their power in decision making," Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai's (MCGM) Deputy Municipal Commissioner Ramdas Bhausahab said. He was speaking at a prize distribution function of 'Gita Champions League' contest, organized by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) on March 15.

Mr. Bhausahab said MCGM has 1,200 schools with a total of 478,000 students and the corporation spends significant funds every year to impart free education to the students in nine regional languages, a press release here said.

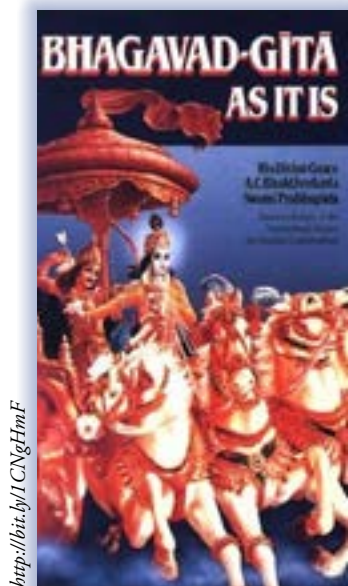
"Our children are our future. We need to protect them, nourish and develop their minds.



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

Photo Top Right:
 New paper clipping of the article from The Hitavada newspaper, Nagpur, India

Photo Right:
 Bhagavad-gita As It Is by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



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

However, television, movies and the Internet together expose the children to violence, pornography and insanity, as a result of which they can easily get influenced and succumb to negative thoughts and actions," said Radhanath Swami, the spiritual guru of ISKCON's Radha Gopinath Temple at Girgaum Chowpatty in Bombay.

The teachings of '*Bhagavad-gita*' can influence young minds and give a positive and morale-boosting exposure, help students remain focused, and assist them in making ethical decisions, he said.

The Gita Champions League's written contest was held in January this year by ISKCON. Over 4,000 students belonging to various religions from 105 schools all over Mumbai participated in the contest and answered questions related to the sacred scripture.

Please send us your feedback

feedback@mukundagoswami.org

Personal Message...



Dear Friends,

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

It is intellectually dishonest to quote Srila Prabhupada out of context.

To take a statement — even when directly quoted — and to say that such a statement is universal, that it is absolute, true for all time and circumstances is to abuse the truth.

In this connection it's interesting to note that Sripada Krsnadasa Kaviraja, author of *Caitanya-caritamrta*, quotes in *Madhya-lila* 22.76 from the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (5.18.12) the verse that Srila Prabhupada has translated as “In one who has unflinching devotional faith in Krishna, all the good qualities of Krishna and the demigods are consistently manifest...’ And that two verses later, *Madhya-lila* 22.78–80, Krsnadasa Kaviraja goes on to list the 26 qualities of a devotee, beginning with “krpalu” or “mercy.”

Related to this is that in the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* (13.8–12), Srila Prabhupada translates 20 qualities of a devotee beginning with “amitvan” or “humility.” In the purport to this verse, he writes, “As for actual advancement in spiritual science, one should have a test to see how far he is progressing. He can judge by these items.”

The point I wish to make is that development of all good qualities does not begin at the time of initiation, even though it is written that all these good qualities automatically manifest in the psyche of a devotee. Although it is written in sastra that such development is automatic, it has been indicated by scholarly acaryas, such as Srila

Prabhupada and Krsnadasa Kaviraja, that qualities like compassion, humility, mercy and the like, also have to be endeavored for separately.

There is an English maxim that says, “God helps those that help themselves.” This is parallel to Srila Prabhupada’s writing that “As for actual advancement in spiritual science, one should have a test to see how far he is progressing. He can judge by these items.” By “these items,” he is referring to the characteristics listed in *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, chapter 13, verses 8–12.

Therefore to take a statement out of context like the *Srimad Bhagavatam* verse that says all good qualities appear automatically in the person of a devotee does not give us the complete picture. The apparent contradiction is that all excellent qualities have to be striven for regardless of the fact they will automatically manifest.

I beg to remain

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

Mukunda Goswami

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

