



Spiritual Perspectives

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

The Need for Real Change

By Radha devi dasi

Material solutions do not solve spiritual problems. Nowhere is this maxim more easily observed than in the current mid-east refugee crisis. The flood of Syrian refugees pouring into the heart of Europe is unlikely to ease anytime soon, and worsening conditions in Iraq could send new waves of displaced people onto the Continent, United Nations officials have warned.

With millions of people displaced from their homes in Syria, the pressure on surrounding countries is severe.

Hundreds of thousands of Syrians are seeking refuge in the EU. Meanwhile, the Islamic State's campaign in Iraq is driving ethnic and religious minorities to leave their homes in that country. The UN warns that up to 500,000 Iraqis could be driven out of the country due to the continued fighting between the government and ISIS.



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

Syrian refugees struggle for freedom

The huge numbers of people flooding European borders has created conflict across the EU. Some argue for open borders and giving refugees as much help as possible. Others recognize the impossibility of providing a home for all of the potential refugees. No one denies the impossibility of providing safe, adequate housing for all the displaced people. Fear of foreigners has led some countries to close borders. There have even been attacks on some refugees.

There are a number of lessons we can draw from this crisis. First, the effects of violence have a way of spilling over borders and affecting the world at large. While we often hear arguments that we should allow other countries to have autonomy, the truth is that national borders do not stop desperate people from entering. If our neighbors'

suffering becomes great enough, they will seek shelter wherever they can. No country's problems are solely an internal matter.

On the other hand, we also see that intervention in foreign affairs often exacerbates the problems outsiders seek to solve. Deposing tyrants, for example, can increase a country's problems. When the U.S. deposed Saddam Hussein, they created a power vacuum that has been exploited by the Islamic State. Ethnic divisions reemerged

and the political system has been unstable ever since. Now increasing violence is creating a new refugee crisis in that country.

Similarly, the support of Syria's rebellion has devastated that country without solving any of the tyranny that led to the rebellion in the first place. If anything Bashar Al-Assad is just as entrenched in Syria as he was years ago.

Attempts at instituting new governments in the mid-east have merely set off a chain reaction of violence. Instead of making life better, those attempts have generated a massive crisis that has no good solutions.

The deeper issue is that rebellion and regime change do not solve the spiritual problems that lead to tyranny and suffering in the first place. As Srila Prabhupada explains in the Fifth Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, when a population engages in sinful activities, suffering in that country is guaranteed. It is the duty of the country's leaders to introduce God consciousness in order to alleviate that suffering. Putting a new person or group in power is merely a cosmetic change that does not get at the root of the problem. Real change in government requires a change in consciousness in both the people and their leaders.

How Our Family Dog Made Us Appreciate the Divinity in All

By Murali Balaji, *Huffington Post*, October 14, 2015
<http://huff.to/1OT3yiP>



<http://huff.to/1OT3yiP>

Bhaskar

I still remember April 19, 2008, as the day my family's life was forever changed by the addition of a 20-pound, four-legged family member.

As a birthday gift for my younger brother, I adopted a small rat terrier-dachshund from a local shelter and brought him to my house, where my folks and my sister had come to visit. My dad expressed shock and immediately begged me to return the dog. Within hours, however, the little guy had won over my parents and became an integral part of the family.

Bhaskar, as we named him, would become the glue that held our family together. He was my mom's constant companion, and as she dealt with the breast cancer that would ultimately take her life, he provided her comfort and non-stop affection. When my mom passed away, Bhaskar - who would eat anything and everything - refused to eat for several days, simply hanging his head and sniffing around in search of her.

As my family struggled to cope with her loss, Bhaskar became an emotional bedrock for us. More importantly, he was at my father's side, so much so that his friends and family teased him for having a 24-7 sidekick. My dad, in return would quip that Bhaskar was the only one of his children who never

talked back to him.

As Hindus, we often talk

about seeing the divinity in all beings, but we more than occasionally don't practice what we preach. Dogs have special importance within Hinduism, as they are often seen as the living embodiment of dharma. A famous story from the *Mahabharata* involves King Yudhisthira refusing to enter heaven without his dog, who stayed his loyal and trustworthy companion. From a religious perspective, Bhaskar's presence reminded us of that divinity, and his actions - including his empathy for us and his unswerving devotion - helped us conceptualize the idea of an eternal soul. Bhaskar, we felt, was put on this earth to help us, to heal us, and ultimately make our family stronger when we were in the throes of grief and loss.

Bhaskar made me into a significantly better person, and in many ways, forced me to change my self-centered views on life. I went from someone who enjoyed the nightlife to someone who looked forward to spending evenings on the couch with him on my lap, just appreciating the moment. Caring for him made me more empathetic, and reminded me that love must be unconditional. I credit him for helping me to become a better husband, brother, and son.

Last month, Bhaskar was diagnosed with cancer, and it shook our family to the core. Over the next few weeks, we did everything we could to make his life comfortable, even as we tried to search (in vain) for alternative treatments. For what it's worth, he seemed to appreciate our ef-

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forts to pamper him. On Monday, I was at my dad's house, and it was clear that Bhaskar's time was near. Yet he was still happy.

On Tuesday, the start of the Hindu celebration of Navratri, Bhaskar let my family know it was his time to go. He refused the one thing he never could get enough of - food. We all said our goodbyes, prayed, and took him to the vet. After he passed away, friends and relatives called my family to offer their condolences, each expressing how Bhaskar had personally impacted them. He had an uncanny ability to make those afraid of dogs comfortable around him, and some of those same friends and relatives were now calling in tears.

The last day has been incredibly tough, and I've taken comfort in a passage from the *Bhagavad-gita* (2.22) on the indestructibility of the soul:

*vāsāmsi jīṃnāni yathā vihāya
navāni gṛhṇāti naro 'parāni
tathā śarīrāni vihāya jīṃnāny
anyāni saṃyāti navāni dehī*

“As a man casts off worn-out garments and puts on new ones, so the embodied soul casts off the worn-out body and enters other new ones.”

However, even appreciating Bhaskar's life and death as part of the natural cycle of the soul's journey doesn't mitigate his loss. We're just going to recycle our memories of him, hoping that each one recreates his life in our minds, and bolsters his presence in our hearts.

Thank you, Bhaskar, for saving my family and helping us see your true divinity. You will always be a part of us. Perhaps somewhere, my mom has been reunited with her “favorite son.”

Arianna and LinkedIn Co-Founder Reid Hoffman Discuss Science and Spirituality at DLD Conference

By Andrew Hart, *Huffington Post*, January 20, 2015
<http://huff.to/1KBJauR>

At the annual Digital-Life-Design conference in Munich, *HuffPost's* own Arianna Huffington and LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman discussed the clash of science and spirituality, arguing that both are essential for success.

Hoffman, a well-known entrepreneur and author, said that in order for companies to excel, employees and businesses should both aim to have a positive, transformative impact on each other.

“A business without loyalty is a business without long-term thinking. A business without long-term thinking is a business unable to invest in the future. A business unable to invest in tomorrow's opportunities and technologies, is a company in the process of dying,” Arianna quoted

from Hoffmann's book on the subject, “The Alliance.”

Arianna and Hoffman also discussed balancing technology and deeper connections found within the self. “Because of the over-dependence on technology, we are all having a harder time being with ourselves. And if we are having a harder time being alone with ourselves, we will have a harder time developing our wisdom,” Arianna said.

The conference on digital innovation ran Sunday through Tuesday in Munich, Germany, and featured notable speakers including Uber CEO and co-founder Travis Kalanick, Flickr co-founder Stewart Butterfield, and prominent venture capitalist Ben Horowitz.

Religion and Science: Where Are They Headed?

By Greg Cootsona, *Huffington Post*, June 26, 2015
<http://huff.to/1WeBndk>

Pope Francis's recent encyclical on climate change—and his embrace of mainstream science—brings the question of whether religion and science, two titanic cultural forces, can be reconciled. And it's not just about the Pope and climate change. Whether it's evolution vs. creation through the

book of *Genesis* (a continual favorite, it seems, with a revival in Louisiana), or whether religion and science simply see the world in irreconcilable ways (as Jerry Coyne never tires of saying), or a whole host of other topics, it would be good to know where these two are headed.

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I've been fascinated by the future of science and religion. With no working crystal ball, discerning the future remains tricky. So I've taken the course of analyzing the attitudes of emerging adults (18-30 years old), who will increasingly define the interaction of science and religion. I've been teaching on the subject of science and religion in a university setting, and naturally, reading the work of prominent social scientists and thought leaders. And, through a grant project I direct, I've been conducting personal, qualitative interviews with university students.

To many, it seems the prominent scientist and atheist Richard Dawkins is right: there is a conflict, and science is winning. Sociologists Christian Smith and Kyle Longest found that 70% of 18-23 year olds "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement that the teachings of religion and science conflict. And more than half (57 percent) disagreed with the statement, "My views on religion have been strengthened by discoveries of science." Thus, it would seem that the forces of science and religion are locked in a deadly battle.

Behind these reasonably straightforward statistics is a much more varied and interesting story, which also makes the future less easy to predict. Let me explain by noting the way the interaction of science and religion is commonly.

Ian Barbour, a physicist at Carleton College, set out four key types that has defined the field of science and religion for the past 50 years. There are those who encourage conflict—here we can think of biologist and author Jerry Coyne and Creation Museum's Ken Ham, a duo which is entertaining to put together, but hardly of the same ilk. Others, like noted paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould and his Non-Overlapping Magisteria promote independence—these two are different and ought to stay separate. Science is about facts; religion about values. Or perhaps the quote often assigned to Galileo is set out, "Religion tells us how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go." And then there those who explore dialogue and integration (two of Barbour's categories I'm combining) like Pope Francis, or the head of the National Institutes of Health, Francis Collins who was recently interviewed by National Geographic on "Why I'm a Man of Science—and Faith." And the Dalai Lama who has advocated for a series of programs to teach scientific education, especially contemporary brain science, to Buddhist monks.

That's the typology. What about emerging adults? One relevant fact about 18-30 year olds is the growth of the "Nones" (or those who an-

swer "None" when asked "What religious affiliation are you?"). This demographic hovers around at about 1/3 Nones (or, depending on the survey 30-34%). And, as pollster David Kinnaman published in "You Lost Me," which found that one of the six main reasons emerging adults are leaving the church is that it is seen as "antiscience."

Reading a bit deeper, however, it's important, though, not to confuse Nones with atheism. Yes, there is a growth with atheism, but the Nones are more about growth away from nominal Christianity as well as other religious traditions. For much of United States history, however, it's been stated, "I'm an American. Therefore I'm a Christian." Emerging adults don't make that connection for various reasons. Many Nones either believe in God or are seeking a spiritual reality. They are not hardcore atheists. They simply don't identify with religious congregations.

In this regard, the observer arrives at something curious: though there are statements from prestigious organizations such as the National Academy of Sciences, who state, "Attempts to pit science and religion against each other create controversy where none needs to exist," the discussion on the Internet—which powerfully affects the opinions of emerging adults—is largely hostile toward religious faith. As one post stated: "The Internet will kill religion." And another opined: "Jesus will soon go the way of Zeus and Osiris." And there is the series of memes like "Let me introduce you to my bronze age sky god" when ridiculing Christianity.

The issue of conflict is perceived within the culture of emerging adults, but with a bit of work, one quickly realizes that this isn't about conflict over content. Simply put, there are various reasons for perceiving, or promoting, the conflict between science and religion. Calvin College sociologist Jonathan Hill demonstrates that, even though a slight majority believes religion and science are often in conflict, that number breaks into three groups. First, some believe the two are separate domains, and the conflict is unnecessary. It's happening "because one or the other is stepping out of its natural domain." The next group believes that there are real conflicts but these "are limited to very specific domains, not to a general epistemological conflict." The final third see them as "fundamentally incompatible. Within this group about half side with religion and half with science."

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Therefore, though it would seem that there is an irreconcilable conflict between science and religion, Hill's work, and my qualitative research, suggests something different—namely, that emerging adults are not as personally negative about the compatibility between science and religion, more that they have heard others argue for incompatibility. Perhaps they have heard about the conflict between the two (maybe they watched Bill Nye and Ken Ham on TV), but they themselves are quite interested in finding a response. So, though they know that warfare is in the air, many emerging adults, when asked, generally are not adherents.

But doesn't religious belief prevent those of faith from engaging with the insights of science? Actually, not really. As Rice sociologist Elaine Ecklund has pointed out, religious believers are remarkably interested in science, at about the same percentage as the wider culture. This all makes sense of one of the most consistent responses I received in interviews with students: Travis, after looking at the interaction of science and religion from the perspective of history and philosophical

critique, concluded, "I'm really interested to hear from someone who's thought about these issues." In my experience and research, although many emerging adults may perceive conflict, they would like to hear thoughtful voices from either side that move beyond warfare. This generation has been fatigued by the culture wars.

All this leads me to conclude that conflict is not what it appears and that these nuances do not fully exhaust the varieties of responses to the question of how to relate religion and science. Of course, there are remarkable amounts of emerging adults in the United States who pull together religion with "traditional American values." That seems to be the best way to understand the growing voice of anti-evolutionists who combine that with conservative politics, which is notably contrasted with those who are in the mainline religions, who are more likely to ascribe to the truth of evolutionary theory than the wider public. But let me simply offer a few ways this can divide and radiate into forms we haven't seen yet. We will undoubtedly see the emergence of Artificial Intelligence, and trans- and post-humanism—perhaps as promoted by the futurologist and Google Director of Engineering, Ray Kurzweil—increasing not just scientific, but technology's, interaction with religious impulses. But there are certainly other voices, such as the students I've interviewed who blend a variety of spiritual insights, certainly not simply Christian, but other religious traditions, such as Buddhism and Wiccan practices, as well.

So, will there be more future statements by religious leaders, like the Pope and the Dalai Lama, that engage mainstream science? Undoubtedly. But with an increasing percentage of Nones, they will have to learn to speak the language of the wider culture of the religious unaffiliated. Will there be those who advocate an increasing split between mainstream science and religious faith? Certainly, but since most US citizens are religious (the figure hovers around 80%) and since almost all of us use science in daily life, it's hard to see these voices winning the day. And will this emerging adult generation—defined by openness and spiritual flexibility—find new ways to go with this interaction? For sure. In ways that I've noted above, but in so many more that no one can see.

As far as I can tell, even though I lean toward integrating science and religion, there won't be any big winners. But that's why I enjoy listening to the voices of emerging adults. They make the future harder to predict, fraught with more uncertainty, and entirely interesting.

Srila Prabhupada's Arrival in America 50th Anniversary Celebration in Butler, PA

Announcements at *Dandavats.com*, August 20, 2015
<http://bit.ly/1PICUmv>

Fifty years of steady dedication, fifty years of non-stop commitment, fifty years of building memories and accomplishment. A 50th anniversary is known as a golden anniversary and throughout this year and the next, ISKCON devotees all over the world are celebrating a golden milestone of achievement of our glorious spiritual master and Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The celebrations began in Calcutta, India where Srila Prabhupada left behind the land of his birth on his mission of mercy, and continued in Boston, Massachusetts where His Divine Grace's lotus feet first touched American soil. On October 24th, devotees from all over North America will gather to glorify Srila Prabhupada's transcendental pastimes in Butler, PA.

Srila Prabhupada's arrival in Butler was certainly a momentous occasion in his lifetime of meditation on spreading the glories of Caitanya Mahaprabhu and fulfillment of his spiritual master's instructions. This was the first place in America he began a steady preaching program and giving his association to inquisitive souls. Srila Prabhupada spent his time in Butler meeting with local people and speaking to them about the relevant topics of awakening the spirit soul and developing one's lost relationship with Krishna.

Srila Prabhupada's stay in Butler was made possible by the kindness of Gopal Agarwal and his wife Sally Agarwal. The young couple, although unable to shelter Prabhupada in their home, arranged for his stay at the local YMCA, to meet with local interested people, and to cook his meals at their home. Sally describes Srila Prabhupada's association (and cooking particularly) during this time as "sublime."

On October 24th, there will be a celebration and commemoration of Srila Prabhupada's stay in Butler, PA. The event will take place at the Grand Ballroom in Butler, PA. The building, the old YMCA, where Prabhupada personally resided can be seen from the window of the Grand Ballroom. This historical event will include a harinama touring of the places of Prabhupada's

pastimes, kirtan, glorification of Prabhupada and mouth watering prasadam.

This event will also mark the half way point of His Holiness Bhakti Marg Swami's walking tour of the eastern United States. Swami is performing this pilgrimage in honor of the first travels of Srila Prabhupada in America. He will also be present at the celebration in Butler and will enliven us with his kirtan and association. He will then continue by walking to New York City and will also attend the celebrations there.

Also in attendance will be Sally Agarwal, who relishes the opportunity to share her memories of Srila Prabhupada. Please join us with your congregation members on October 24th at the Grand Ballroom in Butler, PA from 4-7pm to celebrate the wonderful accomplishments of our dear Srila Prabhupada. The harinama will take place from 2:30-3:30pm and will start and end at the Grand Ballroom.

**SRILA PRABHUPADA'S
ARRIVAL FESTIVAL**
BUTLER, PA

10.24.15 | EVENT SCHEDULE

2:30 - 3:30pm	harinama
4:00pm	welcome note
4:15 - 5:15pm	speech by special guests
5:15 - 6:00pm	kirtan
6:00 - 7:00pm	prasadam

VENUE: Grand Ballroom- 3rd Floor
201 South Main Street, Butler, PA 16001

CONTACT: NVfestivals@gmail.com or 304.312.4177

SPECIAL GUESTS:  SALLY AGARWAL  BHAKTI MARG SWAMI

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

The Human Soul

By Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, *www.Dandavats.com*, October 16, 2015

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



Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati: “The human soul is a tiny part of the Divine spiritual essence functioning in the realm of the Absolute which is free from limitations but liable to be expelled from the spiritual world if it ever forgets its own littleness and abjures the guidance of Krishna. So long as it chooses to be guided by Krishna it is free from limitations or ignorance.” (Harmonist November 1928, The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Caitanya)

“The soul functions freely in the realm of the Absolute where it is conscious of its real relationship with Krishna. Its function is crippled, thwarted and distorted the moment it chooses to set up as master on its own account, that is to say wants to play the role of a male... This perverted activity is stopped on all sides by the resistance of the Absolute Truth. It falls out with everything as soon as it falls out with Krishna. In its attempt to enjoy everything it is punished by those very things which serve to lure them to deeper depths of ignorance by a delusive response

to their frantic attempts after sensuous gratification. In the normal state those very objects help them in serving Sri Krishna. To sum up: the soul retains its natural condition as long as it serves the Absolute with all the resources of the principle of selfconsciousness. But its will is free. It may not like to serve the Absolute. This is the abuse of its free choice in as much as it is an offense against the principle of pure reason which also is part and parcel of its eternal nature. In consequence of its choosing deliberately to act in opposition to the dictates of reason the delusion that it is an entity existing independently of Krishna takes firm possession of it. It now finds itself exiled from the realm of the Absolute and functioning in strict subordination to the delusive or material power of Sri Krishna. In this new world the fallen soul tries to please itself with the help of its reason on which it has deliberately put various limitations. Thus is evolved the principle of the false ego (Ahankara).” (*The Harmonist* vol. 26)

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

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Personal

Message...



Dear Friends,

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

The concept of “branding” can be used by putting ISKCON’s 50th Anniversary logo on every ISKCON website, and on all official (and even casual) temple communications, for example, notices, posters, and advertising.

Placing ISKCON’s 50th Anniversary logo everywhere is important propaganda. The official logo can appear on ISKCON notices, memos, concession cards, vouchers, announcements, statements, letterheads, websites, position papers, news releases, communiques of all description, bulletin boards, signs, briefings, manuals, fact sheets, handouts, flyers, minutes of meetings, notices, directories, reports and the list goes on. On occasion, this may cost something, but in applications, such as websites, it will be free.

In a large number of applications placing the logo will involve only minimal costs.

Branding is a device employed by corporate entities all over the world. Sometimes branding takes the form of advertising with millions of dollars involved.

One corporate example may be cited. Beginning in the 1990s, a well known US candy bar advertised itself all over the Russian Federation. After some time, owing to the popularity of its sales, its corporate board decided not to advertise. As a result, sales plummeted. The board then agreed to resume advertising. Soon sales improved, and eventually the bottom line was restored.

According to Promotional Products Association International, “Promotional products can be used for nonprofit organizations to promote their cause, as well as promote certain events they hold.”

Wikipedia tells us, “The Australasian Promotional Products Association (APPA) states [that] the effectiveness of promotional merchandise shows that... 76% recall the name advertised,” and that “52% of people do business with a company after receiving a promotional product.” The website, WWW.ISKCON.ORG (ISKCON’s official site) uses a type of branding on its homepage.

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

Mukunda Goswami

