



# Spiritual Perspectives

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

## Real Education

By Radha devi dasi

Srila Prabhupada has described secular schools and universities as slaughterhouses for the soul and material intelligence as ignorance. Given that education is the primary way a society transmits values to its leaders, this indictment underscores a fundamental weakness in the modern world. Srila Prabhupada often asked of secular universities, where is the department to find out about the soul? Rising rates of mental illness among American college students have some academics asking similar questions.

According to the U.S. National Alliance on Mental Health, one in four young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 suffered from a diagnosable mental illness in 2015. According to CNN, one in six college students were diagnosed with or treated for anxiety the same year. In fact, rising rates of mental illness on academic campuses are straining resources and raising the portion of university budgets allocated to providing health services.

There is a clear link between the kind of education it takes to get into and succeed in modern universities and the rising rates of mental illness there. As Dr. Madeline Levine, described in her 2008 book, *The Price of Privilege*, this kind of education is “creating a generation of disconnected and unhappy kids.”

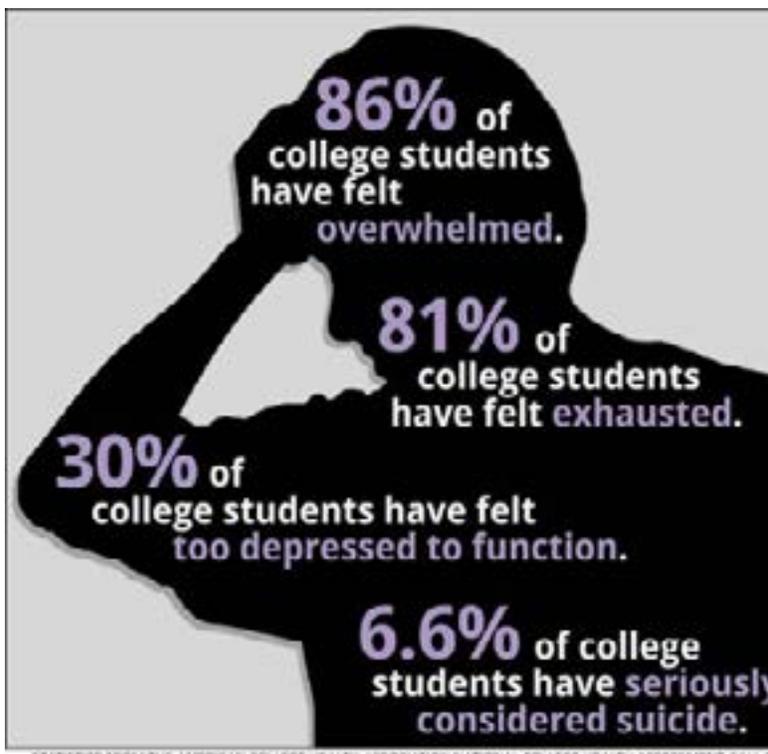
Former Yale University professor, William Deresiewicz concurs in his 2014 essay for the New Republic, “Don’t Send Your Kid to the Ivy League.” He describes the atmosphere of elite universities as a flawed meritocracy that values self-aggrandizement, wealth and status. He notes that this sense of esteem is totally conditional and temporary, leading to mental illness in students. “Universities ought to be helping stu-



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dents answer big questions such as the meaning of life,” he says.

Studying the *Bhagavad-gita* provides a much needed antidote to soul destroying material education. Rather



than finding self-worth in temporary activities, students can understand that material accomplishments result only from the interactions of the three modes of material nature. Each person is infinitely valuable as a part and parcel of the Supreme Lord; reawakening our love for Him is the real purpose of any endeavor. With this knowledge, the hearts and minds of young people can be healed and their education made meaningful.

# Hare Krishna Movement Celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2016

By ISKCON Communications Ministry, ISKCON News, January 2, 2016  
<http://iskconnews.org/hare-krishna-movement-celebrates-50th-anniversary-in-2016,5308/>



*A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada on Manhattan's Lower East Side*

## **“Joy of Devotion” Inspires a Half-Century of Growth**

Washington, D.C.—1966 was a significant year. Chairman Mao Tse-Tung’s “Little Red Book” was published for the first time. Despite mass protests, the United States began to bomb Hanoi, North Vietnam’s capital. The Soviet Union’s Luna 9 made the first soft landing on the Moon. Actor Ronald Reagan was elected governor of California. Indira Gandhi visited Washington. Walt Disney died. The Beatles performed their very last concert in San Francisco’s Candlestick Park.

And, on New York City’s lower east side, surrounded by a handful of young followers in small storefront temple on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada incorporated a fledgling religious society. He named it the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, or ISKCON. On that hot summer day, the 13<sup>th</sup> of July, the Hare Krishna movement was born.

Few noticed the event. Fewer still would have expected this 70-year old swami and his band of reformed hippies to be more than a blip in the avantgarde history of New York City. But, fifty years later the society Prabhupada created is arguably the largest and most influential of global Vedic (Hindu) organizations, and the 600 plus Hare Krishna temples around the world attract an esti-

mated nine million worshippers per year.

“Besides scholars, few people know the depth of the Krishna movement’s roots in India’s historic Vaishnava tradition, nor ISKCON’s impact as a leading proponent of devotional bhakti-yoga around the world,” says Dr. Ravi Gupta, head of Utah

State University’s Religious Study Department.

Srila Prabhupada passed away in November 1977. But the movement he began has proven to be a resilient one. ISKCON today claims not just 600 temples, but 65 eco-farms and 110 vegetarian restaurants. Its affiliated Bhaktivedanta Book Trust is the world’s largest publisher of Vaishnava literature and has distributed 516 million books and magazines.

In addition, ISKCON’s affiliated Annamrita Food Relief program feeds 1.2 million school children every day in India, and ISKCON is the official faith partner with the British government for the Krishna Avanti schools, which oversees multiple schools. ISKCON’s world headquarters in Mayapura, West Bengal India, draws one million pilgrims each year and a new Temple of Vedic Planetarium is under construction that will hold 10,000 people in the main worship hall.

As early as 1975, scholars took note of ISKCON’s growth. Dr. A. L. Basham, author of the famed book, “The Glory That Was India,” wrote that “The Hare Krishna movement... is historically very significant, for now, for the first time since the days of the Roman Empire, an Asian religion is being openly practiced by people of western origin in the streets of western cities.” “ISKCON teaches that every living being is an eternal soul, and that

*Continued on page 3*

happiness comes from awakening our relationship with God, Sri Krishna, the all-attractive person,” said Anuttama Dasa, ISKCON’s Communication Minister. “People know that a consumer driven life is a dead end; when they experience the joy of bhakti, or devotion, they realize this is what they are looking for.” ISKCON inaugurates a year of celebrations marking the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on New Year’s Eve. Throughout the year events will include major Ratha-yatra (“Giant Chariot”) parades down New York’s 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Washington’s Independence Avenue, Toronto’s Yonge Street,

and London’s Trafalgar Square; as well as celebratory festivals and events to coincide with the July 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary date.

In addition, gala VIP dinners are planned for Sydney, London, New Delhi, Mumbai, and Washington. And, a 64-year old Krishna monk will walk for six months across the entire United States, commemorating Prabhupada’s teachings and ISKCON’s growth across America and the world.

## India Has Its First Fully Organic State

By Michele Debczak, *mentalfloss.com*, Jaanuary 20, 2016  
<http://mentalfloss.com/article/73815/india-has-its-first-fully-organic-state>



*Rice farming in Sikkim, India*

As of late last month, the farms of Sikkim in northwest India have been certified 100 percent free of synthetic fertilizer and pesticides, making it the country’s first fully organic state.

This achievement has been a long time coming. A resolution to make the Himalayan region completely organic first passed through the state legislative assembly in 2003.

Over the next 12 years, the import of chemical additives was restricted and their sale in the

state forbidden, leading to the gradual organic certification of 75,000 hectares of agricultural land.

The harmful effects of pesticides and fertilizers has been an issue facing India for decades. Following the Green Revolution of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, India’s food production increased which led to a higher prevalence of modified seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides in

*Continued on page 4*

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Terraced rice paddy fields of Sikkim

farming. The chemicals were hazardous to the environment, as well as a threat to the health of citizens. Several years ago, over 150 people in south India were struck by a condition related to head swelling and brain damage caused by a deadly pesticide called endosulfan, which led to its nationwide ban in 2011.

# 2015 Was Hottest Year in Historical Record, Scientists Say

By Justin Gillisjan, NYTimes January 20, 2016

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/21/science/earth/2015-hottest-year-global-warming.html>



nyti.ms/20eE4PO

Scientists started predicting a global temperature record months ago, in part because an El Niño weather pattern, one of the largest in a century, is releasing an immense amount of heat from the Pacific Ocean into the atmosphere. But the bulk of the record-setting heat, they say, is a consequence of the long-term planetary warming caused by human emissions of greenhouse gases. “The whole system is warming up, relentlessly,” said Gerald A. Meehl, a scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado.

Scientists reported Wednesday that 2015 was the hottest year in the historical record by far, breaking a mark set only the year before — a burst of heat that has continued into the new year and is roiling weather patterns all over the world.

In the contiguous United States, the year was the second-warmest on record, punctuated by a December that was both the hottest and the wettest since recordkeeping began. One result has been a wave of unusual winter floods coursing down the Mississippi River watershed.

It will take a few more years to know for certain, but the back-to-back records of 2014 and 2015 may have put the world back onto a trajectory of rapid global warming, after a period of relatively slow warming dating to the last powerful El Niño, in 1998.

Politicians attempting to claim that greenhouse gases are not a problem seized on that slow period to argue that “global warming stopped in 1998,” with these claims and similar statements reappearing recently on the Republican presidential campaign trail. Statistical analysis

*Continued on page 5*

suggested all along that the claims were false, and that the slowdown was, at most, a minor blip in an inexorable trend, perhaps caused by a temporary increase in the absorption of heat by the Pacific Ocean.

“Is there any evidence for a pause in the long-term global warming rate?” said Gavin A. Schmidt, head of NASA’s climate-science unit, the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, in Manhattan. “The answer is no. That was true before last year, but it’s much more obvious now.”

Michael E. Mann, a climate scientist at Pennsylvania State University, calculated that if

agencies in Britain and Japan do so, as well. The agencies follow slightly different methods to cope with problems in the data, but obtain similar results. The American agencies released figures on Wednesday showing that 2015 was the warmest year in a global record that began, in their data, in 1880. British scientists released figures showing 2015 as the warmest in a record dating to 1850. The Japan Meteorological Agency had already released preliminary results showing 2015 as the warmest year in a record beginning in 1891.

On January 7, NOAA reported that 2015

was the second-warmest year on record, after 2012, for the lower 48 United States. That land mass covers less than 2 percent of the surface of the Earth, so it is not unusual to have a slight divergence between United States temperatures and those of the planet as a whole.

The end of the year was especially remarkable in the United States, with virtually every state east of the Mississippi River having a record warm December, often accompanied by heavy rains.

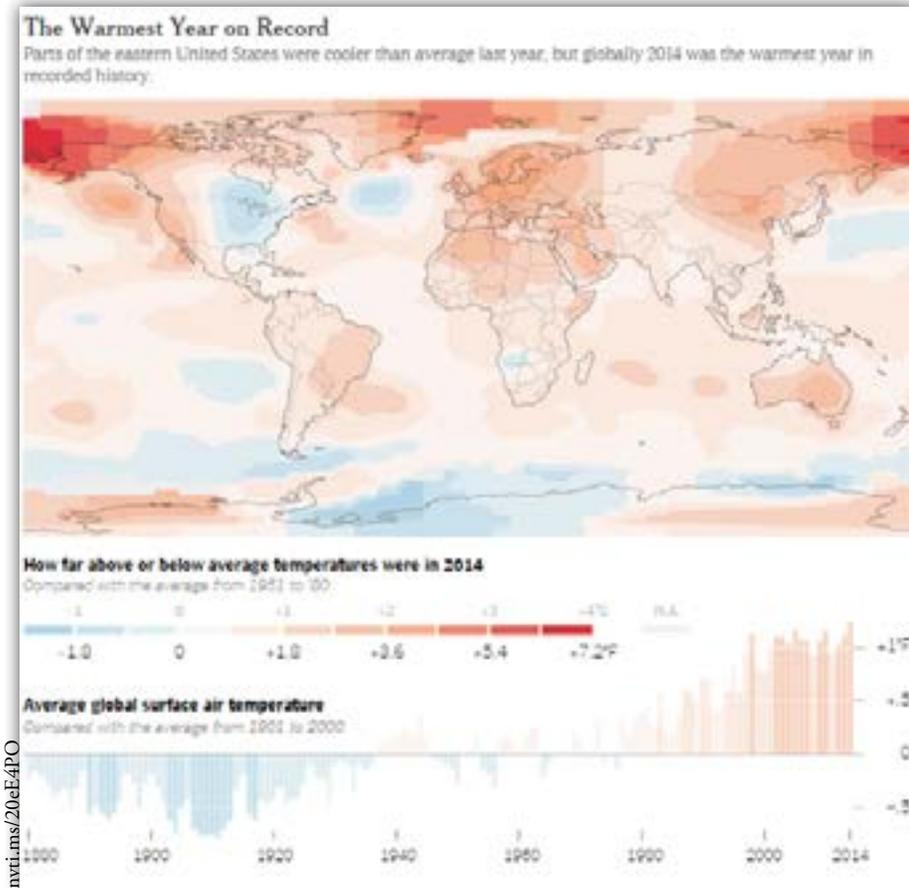
A warmer atmosphere can hold more water vapor, and an intensification of rainstorms was one of the fundamental predictions made by climate scientists decades ago as a consequence of human emissions. That prediction has come

to pass, with the rains growing more intense across every region of the United States, but especially so in the East.

The term global warming is generally taken to refer to the temperature trend at the surface of the planet, and those are the figures reported by the agencies on Wednesday. Some additional measurements, of shorter duration, are available for the ocean depths and the atmosphere above the surface, both generally showing an inexorable long-term warming trend.

Most satellite measurements of the lower and middle layers of the atmosphere show

*Continued on page 6*



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the global climate were not warming, the odds of setting two back-to-back record years would be remote, about one chance in every 1,500 pairs of years. Given the reality that the planet is warming, the odds become far higher, about one chance in 10, according to Dr. Mann’s calculations.

Two American government agencies — NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration — compile separate analyses of the global temperature, based upon thousands of measurements from weather stations, ships and ocean buoys scattered around the world. Meteorological

2015 to have been the third or fourth warmest year in a 37-year record, and scientists said it was slightly surprising that the huge El Niño had not produced a greater warming there. They added that this could yet happen in 2016. When temperatures are averaged at a global scale, the differences between years are usually measured in fractions of a degree. In the NOAA data set, 2015 was 0.29 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than 2014, the largest jump ever over a previous record. NASA calculated a slightly smaller figure, but still described it as an unusual one-year increase.

The intense warmth of 2015 contributed to a heat wave in India last spring that turns out to have been the second-worst in that country's history, killing an estimated 2,500 people. The long-

term global warming trend has exacted a severe toll from extreme heat, with eight of the world's 10 deadliest heat waves occurring since 1997. Only rough estimates of heat deaths are available, but according to figures from the Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, in Brussels, the toll over the past two decades is approaching 140,000 people, with most of those deaths occurring during a European heat wave in 2003 and a Russian heat wave in 2010.

The strong El Niño has continued into 2016, raising the possibility that this year will, yet again, set a global temperature record. The El Niño pattern is also disturbing the circulation of the atmosphere, contributing to worldwide weather extremes that include a drought in southern Africa, threatening the food supply of millions.

## Three Popular Psychology Studies That Didn't Hold Up

By Benedict Carey and Michael Roston, *NYTimes*, August 28, 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/21/science/earth/2015-hottest-year-global-warming.html>

In an unprecedented analysis, a team of 270 researchers redid 100 studies published in three top psychology journals. The team was interested in duplicating them as closely as possible to see whether they held up. Only 35 did so, according to the most frequently used statistical test. Below are three popular studies that did not check out, along with some possible reasons.



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### Free Will and Cheating

In 2008, a paper in "Psychological Science" found that people were more likely to cheat on a test after they had read an essay arguing that behavior was predetermined by environmental factors. The authors suggested from their findings that belief in free will had societal implications.

The redone study found an effect pointing in the same direction as the original, but far weaker.

One possible reason, the authors suggest, had to do with how subjects' opinions about free will were manipulated.

Participants read an essay, and it's plausible that they were not as engaged in reading and thinking about it as were those in the first study. The study was cited 341 times in other journals, the most of any of the 100 studies that the Reproducibility Project tried to replicate. There are 24 citations listed in the PubMed database. In popular news media at the time, the study was covered with a focus on what it meant for societal belief in free will. A "Scientific American" report in August 2008 called the study clever and added, "The results were clear: Those who read the anti-free-will text cheated more often!" In "Psychology Today" in March 2008, a reporter wrote, "Reducing belief in free will might also make people exercise less and drink more." A "New York Times" story in February of the same year said that the researchers interpreted their findings to raise, "questions about how human behavior might change if the belief in free will continued to decrease." However, it added that the researchers, "cautioned against reading too much into the results."

### Cleanliness and Morality

In 2008, a study in "Psychological Science" found that people were less severe in their moral judgments after they had thought about the idea of cleanliness, or washed their hands in the wake of feeling disgust. The researchers suggested that

*Continued on page 7*

<http://bit.ly/22ytdlK>



*A 2008 study suggested that judgments of moral purity were linked to concepts of physical cleanliness*

judgments of moral purity were linked to concepts of physical cleanliness.

The retest found a substantially smaller effect than the original study. One possible explanation, the authors wrote, is a difference in the study population: The subject in the original study were undergraduates in Britain, whereas those in the reproduction were college students in the United States. Cultural differences might account for some disparity in the findings.

The study was cited 17 times in other journals in the PubMed database. Reports in the popular news media called the study proof of a well-known cliché. “The old adage that cleanliness is next to godliness has now received scientific support,” the “Telegraph of Britain” said. “Cleanliness is next to godliness, the ancient proverb says – and now scientists have proved that the state of your hands can affect your moral judgment,” the “Daily Mail” also wrote. “Something to think about for those

who feel that purification rituals bring them closer to God,” the “Economist” wryly noted.

### **Loneliness and Inanimate Objects**

A study published in 2008 in “Psychological Science” found that people who are lonely compensate by creating human connections to things that are not human. The researchers suggested that their findings had implications for when people choose to anthropomorphize things. The reproduced study found none of the effects of the original, and part of the explanation may have to do with how the researchers induced emotions in the subjects. In both studies, the participants watched short movie clips, but in the redone study those clips might have seemed dated, muting the emotional response, the authors wrote.

The study was cited 13 times in other journals in the PubMed database. In the popular news media, coverage of the study suggested that loneliness might be the driver of visible social behavior. A “Toronto Star” article in June 2008 suggested a link between the study’s findings and the popularity of luxury pet products as well as the growth of evangelical Christianity. A post at ScienceBlogs in February 2008 noted that the study was not conclusive, but added, “All of those people who’ve told me over the years that religion is born of “existential” loneliness and alienation can feel somewhat vindicated.” A “New York Times” blog post suggested that the study offered an explanation for why Tom Hanks’s character in the movie “Cast Away” needed the company of Wilson the volleyball.

[myti.ms/1VfSu/B](http://myti.ms/1VfSu/B)



*Wilson the volleyball from the movie “Cast Away”*

## **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**

Devaprastha das

### **DESIGN AND LAYOUT**

Raj Dutia

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