



# Spiritual Perspectives May 2017

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

## The Root of it All

By Radha devi dasi

The disease of the modern age is “more” – more money, more possessions, a higher standard of living, a longer life, a greater country, combined with constant innovation. Modern society starts with the assumption that sense gratification equals happiness. Thus, because none of us are truly happy, we constantly seek new sources of sense gratification.

Each of us chases material prosperity (both as individuals and as nations), believing that unbridled economic growth is the path to satisfaction. Unfortunately, these efforts to constantly increase our wealth have led to devastating consequences for our planet. Ever increasing meat consumption and industrial growth have contributed to a climate change crisis that threatens all the world with shrinking polar ice caps, rising sea levels and devastating weather patterns. March 2017 was the second warmest March in 137 years, according to a monthly analysis by scientists at NASA.

In April 2017, responding to anti-intellectual attacks on climate change by US President Trump, tens of thousands of scientists around the world organized marches in defense of climate change science. Climate change denial, however, is not prompted by a lack of faith in science as much as an addiction to an ever increasing level of material wealth and sense enjoyment. President Trump’s attacks on climate change have more to do with his tight alliances with leaders of the fossil fuel industry than with any bias against expert opinion. This fact, however, will be cold comfort to those who lose homes, crops, and jobs to the environmental effects of global warming.

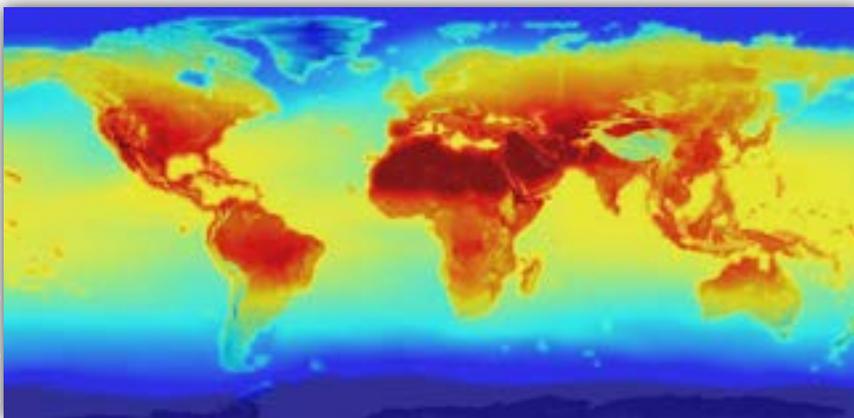


*Continued emission of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and long-lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts,” a U.N. panel said. (Martin Meissner/AP)*

The US Environmental Protection Agency has predicted that climate change will increase illness and death around the world, but particularly in the developing world. Higher temperatures cause worsening air quality, extreme weather events, vector borne diseases, worsening water quality, and reduced food production. As with any economic or environmental stressor, it is the most vulnerable populations that will suffer most. Children, the elderly and the poor will be especially hard hit.

However, promoting science is unlikely to solve this problem. While the scientific approach is an essential tool in policy making, it does not reach the root of the climate change problem. Ultimately, this very real crisis stems from a world in which we place our efforts into developing materially and little, if any, effort into developing spiritually. The real solution is to stop constantly straining for “more” and understand that genuine happiness has no material source.

*Photo Left: The new NASA global data set combines historical measurements with data from climate simulations using the best available computer models to provide forecasts of how global temperature (shown here) and precipitation might change up to 2100 under different greenhouse gas emissions scenarios*

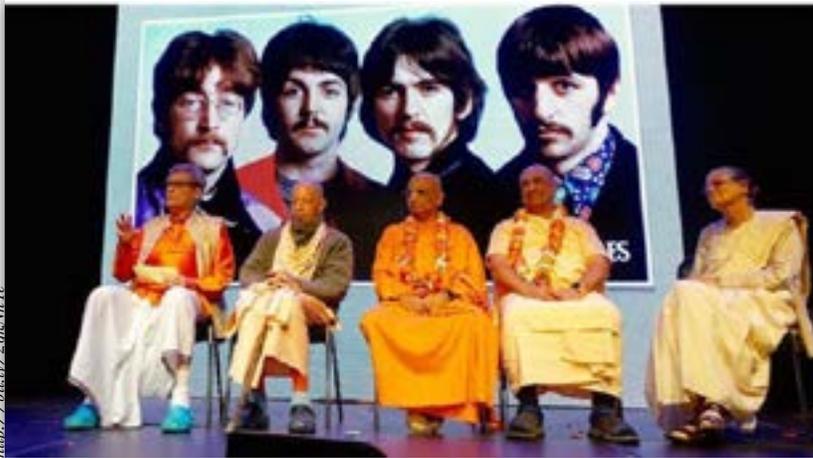


<https://go.nasa.gov/2K1WKO>

<http://radha.st/2pRB6rR>

# Historic Sydney ISKCON 50 Show Released on Youtube, DVD

By: Madhava Smullen, *ISKCON News*, April 12, 2017  
<http://bit.ly/2qkNn4e>



*Shyamasundar Das, Mukunda Goswami, Bhakti Charu Swami, Ramai Swami and Malati Devi Dasi share their memories of ISKCON's early days*

“Transcendental Journey: Hare Krishna Celebrates 50 Years,” an historic variety stage production put on by Australian devotees for ISKCON 50, is now available on Youtube and for pre-order on DVD.

The film is a nearly two-hour presentation that cuts together the best bits from the show’s matinee and evening performances at the famous Sydney Opera House on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Professionally shot with ten cameras and edited by technical director Deva Gaura Hari Das, the film seamlessly blends live acts and narrative slideshow segments.

Through music, dance, drama and multimedia, Transcendental Journey tells the story of the Hare Krishna Movement’s cultural roots, Srila Prabhupada’s extraordinary journey to transplant it to the West, and ISKCON’s development over the past fifty years.

The historical roots of Gaudiya Vaishnavism are portrayed through Krishna-lila dramas by Melbourne devotees, Odissi dance by New Govardhana farm’s Natya Shakti Dance troupe, and Vedic chanting by Bhaktivedanta Gurukula students.

Much of the show tells the story of Srila Prabhupada’s incredible achievements. There are moving dramatic re-enactments of Prabhupada’s meeting his guru Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati and his voyage to the West on the Jaladuta, including a heartfelt rendition of Prabhupada’s Jaladuta Prayers by local kirtaniya Tribhuvanesvara Das.

Prabhupada’s early days in New York and San Francisco are told with historical video footage of 26 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, slides of Prabhupada’s letters, and live recollections from special guests Mukunda Goswami, Shyamasundara Das, Malati Devi Dasi, and Bhakti Charu Swami.

Meanwhile a colorful Hair-style musical set piece has actors dressed as hippies performing Harinama Sankirtana with Srila Prabhupada in San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park.

Other performances include the musical group The Gulab Jammin covering Boy George’s Bow Down Mister, and musical duo Mohini Mohan singing the *Damodarastakam* prayers.

The show’s finale sees Grammy-nominated kirtan band Bhakti Without Borders, led by Madi Das, engage the audience in kirtan and dancing. With chanting by Australia’s own beloved Sri Prahlad Das too, it ends the show on a euphoric high that will make you feel inspired to be a part of Srila Prabhupada’s movement.

The entire show is now available to view for free on Youtube. However the DVD, which producer Damodara Pandit Das says will be released in a month, is certainly worth a purchase: it will include extras such as special interviews with Mukunda Goswami and the production team, and a behind-the-scenes look.



*The Natya Shakti Dance Troupe perform their stunning Odissi dance for Lord Jagannath*



*A dramatic re-enactment of Srila Prabhupada boarding the Jaladuta*

*Continued on page 3*

An excellent piece of history to own to remember how 50 years of ISKCON was celebrated, *Transcendental Journey* is also a great resource for ISKCON devotees.

“It’s not only entertaining and educational,” says Damodara Pandit. “But because it covers the history of Gaudiya Vaishnavism and Prabhupada’s contributions, it shows the authenticity of the Hare Krishna Movement and establishes ISKCON as prestigious enough to perform at the Sydney Opera House, it’s a great outreach tool.”

Damodara Pandit also hopes that the highly ambitious project and its success – tickets sold out within three days, and a financial profit was

made – will encourage devotees to put on similar Krishna conscious cultural events.

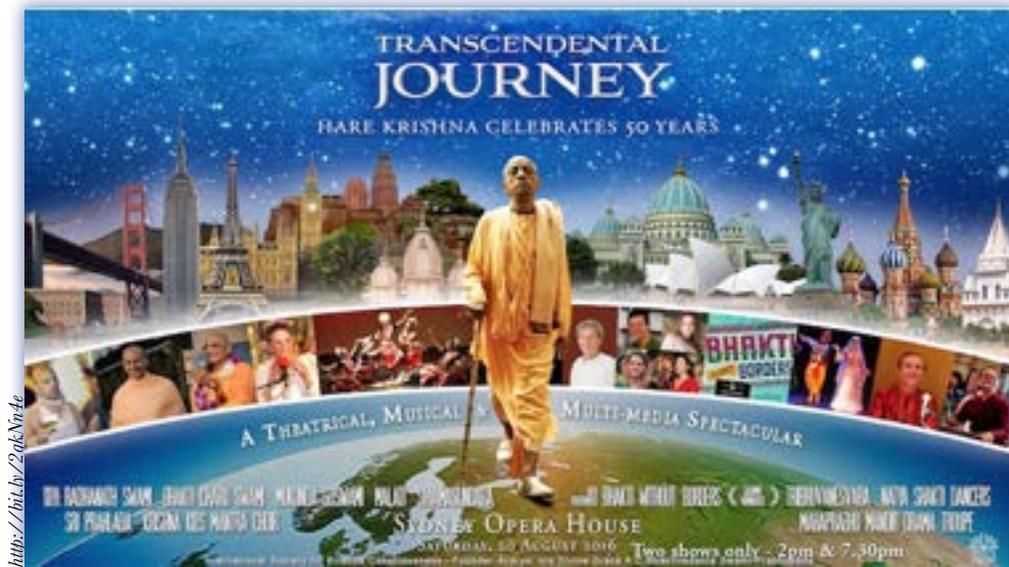
“Put everything you have into it, and Krishna will respond,” he says.

He adds: “We are happy to share our resources, such as scripts, music score, and audio narration so that others can produce their own version of the show with their local artists.”

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To watch *Transcendental Journey*, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWjDBTPNgq0>

To order the DVD with special features, or to request artistic resources for your own show, email: [yakdas@hotmail.com](mailto:yakdas@hotmail.com)



## Update on the Prabhupada Biopic

By: *ISKCON News Staff* on March 24, 2017

<http://bit.ly/2oBNgoC>

The film *HARE KRISHNA!* — formerly titled *ACHARYA*—the 90 minute feature length documentary on the life of Srila Prabhupada is nearly finished. Post-production in Los Angeles is winding down and the film should be finished by the end of this month, thus coming to a close 3 years of production work.

An anonymous donor has agreed to match any funds donated towards distribution up to \$20,000. Further donations will ensure that the film will be released to the public as quickly and as widely as possible.

The film’s official world theatrical premiere has been scheduled for June 16, 2017 in New York City. This will be a huge event and an opportunity to showcase the film for reviews. Next

it will premiere in Los Angeles and then across theaters in North America.

A wide release is possible through a theatrical distribution company, Abramorama in New York City, which has distributed films such as Ron Howard’s film on the Beatles *Eight Days A Week*, and the Oscar nominated films *The Look of Silence* and *Exit Through the Gift Shop*. The President of Abramorama is a fan of the Hare Krishna Movement from the 70’s and thinks this film has a large audience.

The film’s team have signed on with the successful Public Relations company Falco Ink., who has promoted popular films such as Oscar winners *Gladiator* and *American Beauty*, Oscar nominees *Billy Elliot* and *Pride & Prejudice* and the Netflix hit *Making a Murderer*. The founder

*Continued on page 4*

of the company, Janice Roland who has been working in PR for over 25 years, found HARE KRISHNA! moving and immediately said that she would take it on board.

The new addition to the team is the very talented, award-winning graphic designer, Jeremy Saunders, who has come on board to create the film's key art. This includes the film poster, post-cards and social media content. Some examples of his work: Lion—nominated for the Academy

Award for Best Picture 2017, The Motorcycle Diaries—winner at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival, and Carol—nominated for 6 Oscars.

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To donate towards the film's distribution please go to the film crowdfunding site at:

<https://www.generosity.com/fundraising/acharya-marketing-and-theatrical-distribution/x/15795863>



*The film HARE KRISHNA! — is a 90 minute feature length documentary on the life of Srila Prabhupada*

## Grammy-Nominated Jai Uttal Collaborates With ISKCON Devotees on New Album

By: Madhava Smullen for *ISKCON News* on April 19, 2017

<http://bit.ly/2oOpojk>



*Jai Uttal chants during a concert on the banks of the Ganga*

Jai Uttal, one of today's best-loved and most popular kirtan artists, has released his latest album *Roots Rock Rama!* with Mantralogy, an ISKCON devotee-run record company that has also

worked with The Mayapuris, Jahnvi Harrison, Gaura Vani and more.

*Roots Rock Rama!*, an epic double-album, features drumming by Mayapuri Visvambhar Sheth and was co-produced by Gaura Vani.

“I met Gaura about eight years ago at the first ‘Chant 4 Change’ in Washington D.C. and immediately felt I’d met my lost brother,” says Jai Uttal. “He is an inspiration to me, both musically and spiritually, my Bhakti Buddy. We are always in communication about our spiritual and life journeys, sharing thoughts and encouragement with each other.”

Jai also praises Visvambhar, calling him “an awesome musician and a shining young Bhakta.” Interestingly, Jai, who is a disciple of Hanuman devotee Neem Karoli Baba, was first exposed to kirtan in 1960’s Manhattan by none

*Continued on page 5*



http://bit.ly/2oOpo7k

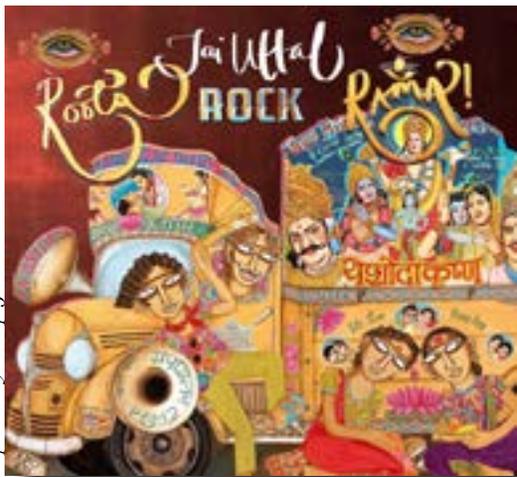
*Visvambhar chants with Jai Uttal*

other than Srila Prabhupada and his first Western disciples.

Soon after, he happened to visit his guru in Vrindavan, India, at the same time as ISKCON sannyasi Radhanath Swami, who was on his well-known “journey home” at the time.

*Roots Rock Rama!* carries all these influences and many more. “This album expresses the full fifty years of my practice of devotional singing, of my journey in kirtan and *Bhakti*,” Jai says. “It contains so many moods and colors, and every bit of my heart is in it.”

On the tracks “Raga Rocksteady,” “H.E.L.P. (Hari’s Ecstatic Love Potency),” and “Heart of the Gopis,” Jai Uttal sings the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*.



http://bit.ly/2oOpo7k

*The lively cover of Roots Rock Rama!retreats*

“Two of my other favorites are ‘Madhava Mystic’ and ‘Echo of Mercy,’ because of their moods of separation and complete dependence on Krishna,” he says.

There are also songs about Srimati Radharani, Lord Rama, and Shiva the greatest Vaishnava.

Although all the lyrics are kirtan mantras, the exciting blend of styles include reggae,

Beatlesy rock, ska, Bollywood, bossanova, samba, and swampy blues. Brazilian guitarist Jose Neto contributes, as do Indian string ensemble “The Melodious Strings of Mumbai” and Jai’s old band “The Pagan Love Orchestra.” Like Jai himself, the album radiates the joy of life and devotion.

This joy was shared at a concert in Rishikesh on the banks of the Ganga on January 11<sup>th</sup>, where Jai – with friends Prema Hara, Gaura Vani and Visvambhar – performed the entire album. Featured in the video for single “S.A.M.B.A.,” the concert was something truly special.

“The day was so beautiful; the weather was perfect; the mood was pure joy,” says Jai.

The response to *Roots Rock Rama!* so far has been enthusiastic, but it may be a revelation to some that Jai Uttal, a Grammy-nominated artist, doesn’t see commercial popularity as the gauge of success.

“I think it’s totally awesome and amazing that devotional music has inched a little



http://bit.ly/2oOpo7k

*Jai Uttal’s colorful concert on the banks of the Ganga*

toe into the waters of mainstream culture,” he says. “But in the world of celebrity and performance it’s easy to lose the essence. The most important thing in kirtan is for it to be sincere and heartfelt, and I pray for myself and all the new western followers of Bhakti Yoga to cultivate the truest and deepest connection to God through our singing and to never stop clinging to His lotus feet.”

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For more info, visit [www.jaiuttal.com](http://www.jaiuttal.com)

To purchase *Roots Rock Rama!* visit <http://jaiuttal.merchnow.com/>

## SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

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# Indian Court Gives Ganges, Yamuna Same Rights as a Human

By: AP Contributor for *The Himalayan Times* on March 21, 2017  
<http://bit.ly/2oOjFDr>

A court in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand has granted the same legal rights as a human to the Ganges and Yamuna rivers, considered sacred by nearly a billion Indians.

The Uttarakhand High Court ruled Monday that the two rivers be accorded the status of living human entities, meaning that if anyone harms or pollutes the rivers, the law would view it as no different from harming a person.

The judges cited the example of New Zealand's Whanganui River, revered by the indigenous Maori people, which was declared a living entity with full legal rights by the New Zealand government last week.

The court in the Himalayan hill-resort town of Nainital appointed three officials to act as legal custodians responsible for conserving and protecting the rivers and their tributaries.

Judges Rajeev Sharma and Alok Singh said the Ganges and Yamuna rivers and their

tributaries be declared "legal and living entities having the status of a legal person with all corresponding rights, duties and liabilities."

The case came up in court after officials complained that the governments of Uttarakhand and neighboring Uttar Pradesh states were not cooperating with federal government efforts to set up a panel to protect the Ganges.

The court ordered that the Ganga Management Board be set up and begin working within three months.

Environment activists say many rivers across India have become dirtier as the country's economy develops, with city sewage, farming pesticides and industrial effluents freely flowing into waterways despite laws against polluting.

Read more: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/world/indian-court-gives-ganges-yamuna-same-rights-as-a-human/>



<http://bit.ly/2oOjFDr>

*Pilgrims taking ritual bath in the Ganges at Haridwar*

# Personal

## Message...



Dear Friends,

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

This is the first of a three-part series. The essay was written in 1979 as the Introduction to the BBT book, *Life Comes From Life*.

Introduction

Science: Truth and Fiction

Once upon a time (as in a fairy tale) most of us believed that the food we ate was basically wholesome, nutritious and free from dangerous chemicals, that advertising may have been believable, and that product labels truly described the qualities and contents of what we fed ourselves and our families. Once upon a time, most of the world believed in the integrity of our heads of state, high-ranking political leaders and local leaders. Once upon a time we thought our children were getting a solid education in the public school system. Once upon a time we thought that atomic energy had “peacetime uses” that were completely safe and congruous with a happy and healthy society.

Yet in recent times our illusions have been shattered. Repeated exposés of widespread computer fraud and grand political collusion and bribery have all but destroyed our former innocence. We now know that through mass marketing and the media, a veil of fantasy and deception can be created with such unprecedented expertise that it can become impossible for us to distinguish between substance and simulation, reality and illusion.

Today many scientists are propagating the doctrine that life originates from matter. However, they cannot provide proof, either experimentally or theoretically. In fact, they hold their stance essentially on faith, in the face of all sorts of scientific objections. Srila Prabhupada points out that this groundless dogma has done great damage to moral and spiritual standards worldwide and has created incalculable suffering.

Though beset by internal doubt and division, modern scientists have somehow managed to present a unified front to the non-scientific public. Their behavior brings to mind the worst in political and corporate trickery. For instance, despite the recent outcry over their masking the difficulties at maintaining safety at nuclear power plants, the scientists and the government remain committed to nuclear power and even make light of the fact there is no way of dealing with radioactive waste.

In popular works and in textbooks scientists present their account of the material origin of life as the only possible scientific conclusion. They claim that no other theory can be scientifically acceptable. And so everyone is taught that life gradually arose from chemicals, a “primordial soup” consisting of amino acids, proteins and other essential ingredients . . . [to be continued]

Your well-wisher,

Mukunda Goswami



Publisher’s Note: The Introduction to *Life Come From Life* was written by Mukunda Goswami.