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# SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

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For Friends and Followers of Mukunda Goswami

## Compassion Gap

by Radha devi dasi

Plenty of successful people see a picture of a needy child and their first impulse is not to help but to reproach. Americans, for instance, live in the world's wealthiest nation. Yet 14.5 percent of U.S. households—nearly 49 million Americans, including 15.9 million children—struggle to put food on the table. In the United States, hunger is not caused by a scarcity of food, but rather the continued prevalence of poverty.

Throughout the developing world there is hope that rapidly expanding economies in places such as India and China will help eradicate starvation and other poverty related ills. The truth is, we have the tools to break cycles of poverty. Small investments can yield big payoffs when dealing with those in dire need. Significant bodies of social science research have given us ways to improve education rates and increase employment. What we lack is the will to do so.

According to Pulitzer Prize winning *New York Times* columnist, Nicholas Kristof, there may be neurological biases at work. A professor at New Jersey's Princeton University found that our brains sometimes process images of people who are poor or homeless as if they were not humans but things.

Likewise, psychology experiments suggest that affluence may erode compassion. When research subjects are asked to imagine great wealth, or just look at a computer screen saver with money, they become less inclined to share or help others. That may be why the poorest 20 percent of Americans, for instance, give away a larger share of their incomes than the wealthiest 20 percent.

For this reason, economic solutions to poverty and starvation will not solve these problems. Without spiritual training, we are conditioned to feel less compassion for others as our affluence increases. Economic growth and increasing wealth actually make us less likely to help. As Srila Prabhupada said, the real lack in this world is a lack of Krishna consciousness.

Thus, material wealth without spiritual knowledge is useless, even dangerous. One who learns from the Vedas, however, is reminded that all living creatures are sons and daughters of the Supreme Lord. Krishna Himself declares that one with true vision sees with equal vision the brahmana and the outcaste, understanding that a living entity's worth is not determined by material status or wealth.



<http://bit.ly/1prb71C>

Compassion for all living entities is one of the signs of a Vaisnava. Srila Prabhupada requested that his followers “be compassionate to every living being, accepting them as sons of the Supreme Being.” (Letter to Madhuvisa, November 18, 1975)

“You have been a little bit perturbed that the demons are eternally condemned, and I thank you very much that you have been compassionate with the demons. That is the sign of Vaisnavism. The Lord may condemn the demons, but because the Vaisnavas are there, there is ample chance for the demons to become blessed by the devotees of the Lord. The devotees of the Lord are so powerful that each and every one of them has the power of delivering many demons, even condemned by the Lord. The preaching work of Krishna Consciousness Movement is specifically meant for delivering the demons. Therefore, if you remain faithful to the Lord, you shall be able to deliver many such demons.” (Letter to Revatinandana — Los Angeles, March 25, 1970)

“So we should be compassionate to every living being, accepting them as sons of the Supreme Being. That is the real communistic idea, perfectly enunciated in the *Srimad-*



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*Bhagavatam*.” (Letter to Madhudvisa — Bombay, November 18, 1975)

Srila Prabhupada quoted by His Holiness Giriraja Swami:

“Just like Lord Jesus Christ said that ‘You hate the sin, not the sinner.’ Not the sinner. This is very nice. Because the sinner is illusioned. He’s mad. If you hate him, then how you can deliver him? Therefore those who are devotees, who are really servants of God, have no hate for anyone.”

“Just like Lord Jesus Christ, when he was being crucified, he was requesting God, ‘My Lord, please excuse them. They do not know what they are doing.’ This is the position of the devotee. Yes.

Because people are mad after the materialistic way of thinking, so they cannot be hated. Anyone. So this Krishna consciousness movement is so nice that there is no question of hating. Everyone is welcome. Please come here. Chant Hare Krishna, take Krishna prasada, and hear some nice philosophy from *Bhagavad-gita*, and try to rectify your material conditional life. This is the program— Krishna consciousness.”

The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle brāhmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater (outcaste). *Bhagavad-gita* 5.18

## British MP Shailesh Vara Receives International Award

By Contributor, *Bhaktivedanta Manor Newsletter*, February 26, 2014  
<http://bit.ly/1hTJLLP>

Sailesh Vara, Justice Minister and Member of Parliament in the British Government has been awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award by the government of India.

It was presented to him by the Indian President Mr. Pranab Mukherjee and he was also congratulated by the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.

It is the highest award given to a non-Indian citizen. The award, under the category “Engaging Diaspora: Connecting Across Generations” was for “Public service and in promoting ties between India and the people of UK.”

Upon his return to the UK, Shailesh came to Bhaktivedanta Manor to be honored and receive blessings from His Holiness Sivaram Swami and His Holiness Bhakti Rasamrita Swami.

Sailesh Vara MP has helped ISKCON in several important campaigns, including those in Hungary and Moscow, and with many projects for the Hindu community in the UK. As the Justice Minister, he holds the highest post of any Hindu in the British Government.



Sailesh Vara (second from left) with Sivaram Swami, Bhakti Rasamrita Swami and Shruti Dharma Das

# New Noida Temple Wows at Three-Day Grand Opening

By Madhava Smullen *ISKCON News*, February 21, 2014  
<http://bit.ly/1moX9NS>

Thousands poured into ISKCON's architecturally stunning new Radha Govind Dev Mandir and Bhaktivedanta Academy in Noida, Uttar Pradesh for its grand opening from February 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>.

Two thousand national and international ISKCON devotees stayed overnight for the festival, with that number rising to 5,000 during the day on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.

About 25 sannyasis attended, including Gopal Krishna Goswami, Lokanath Swami, Bhaktimarga Swami, Bhakti Chaitanya Swami, and Kadamba Kanana Swami.

On the 13<sup>th</sup>, when the temple was officially opened to the public, over 25,000 local Noida residents streamed in.

ISKCON leader Lokanath Swami had devotees break ground for the temple in 2002, when he saw that residents of Noida, a relatively new corporate township that was born in the 1970s and borders New Delhi, would need a place of worship.

The temple is home to Radha Govind Dev, Gaura Nitai, and Jagannath, Baladeva and Subhadra, and features many hand-carved elements, including a giant relief Sri Chaitanya and Nityananda Prabhu on either side of the entrance, a lifesize chariot carrying Lord Krishna and Arjuna, and many intricate pillars. The Mandir is seven stories high (including the basement and ground floor), and includes a state-of-the-art auditorium,

a Govinda's restaurant and Radharani bakery, a Samskar Bhavan hall for weddings and birthdays, a book and gift shop, a Bhaktisiddhanta library, a circular conference hall, and a large white marble temple hall.

The project also features the Bhaktivedanta Academy, with two seminar halls and five classrooms, and, in a separate seven-story building, the Back Home guesthouse.

The grand opening festival for the project began in a large pandal (tent) at the back of the property on the evening of February 11<sup>th</sup>, with Netronmilanam.

During this ceremony, the new Deities of Radha Govind Dev, still dressed in simple white cloth, opened Their eyes for the first time (ceremonial blindfolds were removed), and saw 25 different auspicious articles, such as the sacred plant Tulasi, the *sastra* (scripture), and Vaishnava *brahmins*.

The next morning at 8:00 am, priests began a large fire sacrifice called Homa Yajna, inviting the Lord to appear in His Deity form.

"Then, at about 9:00 am, we started *abhisheka*, bathing the Lord with different ingredients such as yogurt, fresh fruit juices, honey, rosewater, and ghee," says Bhaktivedanta Academy Director Buddhimanta Das. "It was a very elaborate and colorful ceremony, ending with a *pushpa abhisheka*

of rose petals." Next, as priests dressed the Deities behind a curtain, local devotees honored all the senior Prabhupada disciples, sannyasis and GBCs present by inviting them onto the pandal stage, thanking them, and presenting them with gifts including a combined framed clock and photo of the Noida temple.

The Deities, dressed gorgeously in Their new outfits, were then carried to the temple in a two-hour procession.



*The newly opened ISKCON Noida temple at night*

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“There were thousands of devotees, walking alongside the Lord, holding a huge Harinam,” Buddhimanta says. “The highlight of the procession was that a helicopter had been arranged and was showering flowers from the sky. The next morning, all the Indian newspapers reported on it: ‘Helicopter Showers Flowers on ISKCON Deities.’”

Sri Sri Radha Govind Dev were then installed in Their permanent home on the new altar, decorated with an abundance of multicolored fresh flowers. Devotees took darshan of them and performed kirtan in front of them for many hours.

Later, in the evening, a cultural stage program was presented at the pandal. Rasa-lila dances and dramas, based on Lord Krishna’s pastimes with the gopis, were performed by Vaishnavis from ISKCON Vrindavana, as well as students from its Bhaktivedanta Gurukula and International School.

The highlight of the evening was the play Gita Concise, in which Bhaktimarga Swami and his crew of actors from Toronto, Canada dramatized core philosophical concepts of the *Bhagavad-gita*.

“The play was super great -- it was really appreciated by the crowd,” says Buddhimanta.

On the third and final day of the festival, February 13<sup>th</sup>, local Uttar Pradesh politicians and MPs were invited to the temple at 11:00 am.

At noon, Cabinet Minister Ujjwal Raman Singh officially inaugurated the temple by cutting the ceremonial ribbon and offering puja to the Lord.

“The temple was then officially open to the public,” Buddhimanta says. “Thousands and thousands of local Noida people entered to take darshan as kirtan went on non-stop. We didn’t close the Deities’ curtains until night-time.”

Another cultural program in the pandal followed that evening from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm, with Bhaktimarga Swami doing a repeat performance of his popular Gita Concise play, this time with a running commentary in Hindi for the public.

Next, a group of twelve children from Orissa performed the state’s famous Gotipua folk dance.

“It’s an aerobic dance,” says Buddhimanta. “They have synchronized steps, and they are very flexible -- they can bend their bodies and take the shape of anything to depict Lord Krishna’s pastimes. They became chariot wheels and horses, to show Krishna riding a chariot; and they all climbed on each other’s shoulders quickly to become a tower.”

The evening ended with a bang with a rock show by the Govinda band, comprising of devotees from Mauritius and headed by Radha-Rasabihari Das.

“There were thousands of people watching the performance,” says Buddhimanta, “And they made everyone dance.”

Meanwhile, throughout all these festivities, the ISKCON Noida devotees served three full meals a day to all the visiting devotees and guests.

Festival attendees left happy and appreciative, expressing that they were particularly taken with the beautiful Deities and the temple’s artistic hand-carved stonework.

With the grand opening behind them, Noida devotees will apply some finishing touches to the construction, and then refocus on their outreach work.

“Our focus will be on increasing youth and corporate preaching at our Bhaktivedanta Academy, areas which lacked attention before while so much of our energy was put into construction and fundraising,” says Buddhimanta.



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

*Bhaktimarga Swami, the director of the Gita Concise play, during one of his walks across Canada.*

# Does the World Think Religion is Necessary for Morality?

Recommended by Alison Moore, *Deseret News*, March 19, 2014  
<http://bit.ly/1iRxZnX>

A recent piece by *The Atlantic* highlighted a study from the Pew Research Center that explored how the world responds to the question, “Is it necessary to believe in God in order to be a moral person?”

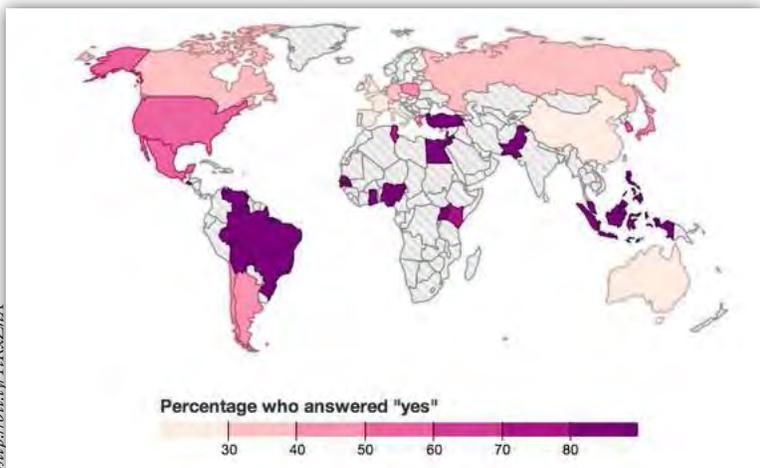
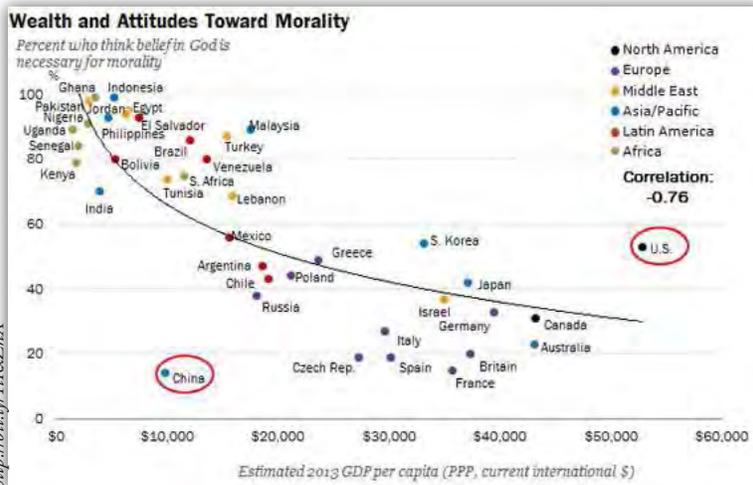
The survey, which involved 40,000 people in 40 countries between 2011 and 2013, revealed interesting associations and subtleties, including how a nation’s wealth affects attitudes toward morality.

“... The United States continued its tradition of defying religious patterns in the rest of the West and developed world: Compared to people in other countries with a similar per-capita GDP,

U.S. respondents were much more likely to say that belief in God is necessary to be a good person,” Emma Green wrote for *The Atlantic*.

Read the complete article on *The Atlantic*.

Alison Moore is a writer for the Faith and Family sections at *DeseretNews.com*. She is studying journalism and editing at Brigham Young University.



Left: Percentage of population that believes God is necessary for morality by continent. Above: Relation between countries GDP to their populations idea of morality and God.

# A Holi Celebration: ‘Festival of Colors’ Glows on a Global Scale

Compiled by Herb Scribner, *Deseret News National Edition*, March 18, 2014  
<http://bit.ly/1oQ4QeB>

In an age where we watch topics and events that are trending, people might want to keep an eye on the colorful celebration of Holi.

Holi — called “The Festival of Colors,” with origins to Hinduism — has slowly transformed into a nondenominational celebration, and it’s sweeping the United States, *The Huffington Post* reported. People up and down the coasts and across the Midwest are finding time and reasons to celebrate the holiday that commends good winning over evil, *HuffPost* reported.

“As played out in America, entire families show up in white or light-colored clothes and

sprinkle, spray or smear one another with bright red, pink, green, yellow, purple, magenta and blue colors,” *HuffPost* reported. “Colors cover not only the clothes, but the faces, arms and hair in a bacchanalian burst of boundless delight. Upbeat Holi songs from Bollywood movies and high-calorie foods from India’s diverse ethnic regions are the backdrop of everyone hugging one another.”

The holiday is very popular in India and Nepal, as well as other southeastern Asian countries. Pictures of those celebrating can be seen across multiple platforms, like ABC News, BBC News and Mashable. Google India lit up as well

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with a special decoration for the festival, and Indian celebs have been announcing their joy over the holiday, too.

But even as the holiday continues to make waves in India, it's pushing past borders and resonating internationally. *DNA India* reported that the festival is now "a multi-religious, multifaceted and largely global tradition." Is this a good thing for the holiday? *DNA* writer Surabhi Subramonian doesn't think so, as other countries have brought in traditions and changes that don't suit the holiday's origins.

"What was once a perfect setting to express love has now turned into a haven for hooligans and trouble-makers," Subramonian wrote. "The

food has changed and so has the mentality. Is this a good thing or bad? Globalization and the 'One world, One life' phenomenon has taken over the world."

Bringing people together is a part of the holiday, though, *The Observer-Reporter* reported. In Pittsburgh, the Indian-American community comes out in droves to celebrate the holiday, bringing people together on a large scale.

"We have unity and diversity, and this keeps our community together also," said Ravindra Mehta, a psychiatrist that practices in Pennsylvania. "We have the same goal, basically, to keep the culture alive wherever you are."



<http://bit.ly/1oQ4QzBB>

*Holi festival goes celebrate by the throwing of colors*

## CNN Anchor, Guest ask if God Made Malaysia Airlines Flight MH 370 Disappear

Recommended by Herb Scribner, *Deseret News*, March 17, 2014  
<http://bit.ly/1gqHFXi>

As theories continue to sprout over the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines flight MH 370, one CNN anchor, Don Lemon, and a guest commentator, Brad Meltzer, speculated about whether God had anything to do with the missing flight, *Mediaite* reported. Lemon said people aren't openly talking about the supernatural element to the missing flight, according to *Mediaite*.

"Especially today, on a day when we deal with the supernatural," Lemon said, according to *Mediaite*. "We go to church, the supernatural power of God ... People are saying to me, 'Why aren't you talking about the possibility' — and I'm just putting it out there — 'that something odd happened to this plane, something beyond our understanding?'"



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

*A woman reads messages and well wishes to people involved with the missing Malaysia Airlines MH370*



*Left: Amelia Earhart, an American aviation expert and female pilot. She was honored for her solo flight across the Atlantic and was due to complete a world flight in 1937. Mrs. Earhart never completed the world flight. She disappeared en- route from Lae, Papua New Guinea to Howland Island on July 2, 1937. To this day the whereabouts and details of the disappearance of Mrs. Earhart and her plane, the Electra, are unknown. She is declared dead in absentia.*

*Right: A map showing the alleged locations of the Bermuda Triangle off the coast of Florida, USA, and the Dragons Triangle off the coast of Japan. These areas are said to be the site of many mysteriously vanished ships and aircrafts. Japan declared the Dragons Triangle an official danger zone circa 1954.*

*Photo Courtesy of Ancient Aliens Television Program*



**Please send your  
Thoughts, Opinions, Questions,  
Comments, Concerns to:  
[feedback@mukundagoswami.org](mailto:feedback@mukundagoswami.org)**

# Personal Message...



Dear Friends,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Some think Śrīla Prabhupāda came from the spiritual world (Kṛṣṇaloka). Others are not sure. He is reputed to have said that he was a doctor in his last life in the material world, but that is not confirmed. In support of the 'emanating from the material world' position, one can cite the following *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* passage (6.42):

TRANSLATION: Or [if unsuccessful after long practice of yoga] he takes his birth in a family of transcendentalists who are surely great in wisdom. Certainly, such a birth is rare in this world.

PURPORT: Birth in a family of *yogīs* or transcendentalists—those with great wisdom—is praised herein because the child born in such a family receives a spiritual impetus from the very beginning of his life. It is especially the case in the *ācārya* or *gōsvāmī* families. Such families are very learned and devoted by tradition and training, and thus they become spiritual masters. In India there are many such *ācārya* families, but they have now degenerated due to insufficient education and training. By the grace of the Lord, there are still families that foster transcendentalists generation after generation. It is certainly very fortunate to take birth in such families. *Fortunately, both our spiritual master, Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and our humble self had the opportunity to take birth in such families, by the grace of the Lord, and both of us were trained in the devotional service of the Lord from the very beginning of our lives. Later on we met by the order of the transcendental system.* [emphasis mine].”

On a somewhat similar note Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote me a letter in 1969: “...Your next question, whether the Spiritual Master was formerly a conditioned soul, actually a bona fide Spiritual Master is never a conditioned soul. There are three kinds of liberated persons. They are called 1) *sādhana siddha*, 2) *kṛpā siddha*, and 3) *nitya siddha*. *Sādhana siddha* means one who has attained perfection by executing the regulative principles of devotional service. *Kṛpā siddha* means one who has attained perfection by the special mercy of Kṛṣṇa and the Spiritual Master, and *nitya siddha* means one who was never contaminated. The symptoms of *nitya siddha* is that from the beginning of his life he is attached to Kṛṣṇa, and he is never tired of rendering service to Kṛṣṇa. So we have to know what is what by these symptoms. But when one is actually on the *siddha* platform there is no such distinction as to who is *sādhana*, *kṛpā*, or *nitya siddha*. When one is *siddha*, there is no distinction what is what. Just like when the river water glides down to the Atlantic Ocean nobody can distinguish which portion was the Hudson River or some other river. Neither is there any necessity to make any such distinction. Actually, every living entity is eternally uncontaminated, although he may be in the material touch. This is the version of the Vedas. *Asanga ayam puruṣa*—the living entity is uncontaminated. Just like when there is a drop of oil in water you can immediately distinguish the oil from the water, and the water never mixes with the oil. Similarly, a living entity, although in material contact, is always distinct from the matter.”

Your servant,

  
Mukunda Goswami

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

