



# SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

AN ISKCON COMMUNICATIONS PUBLICATION  
For Friends and Followers of Mukunda Goswami

## Loneliness

By Radha devi dasi



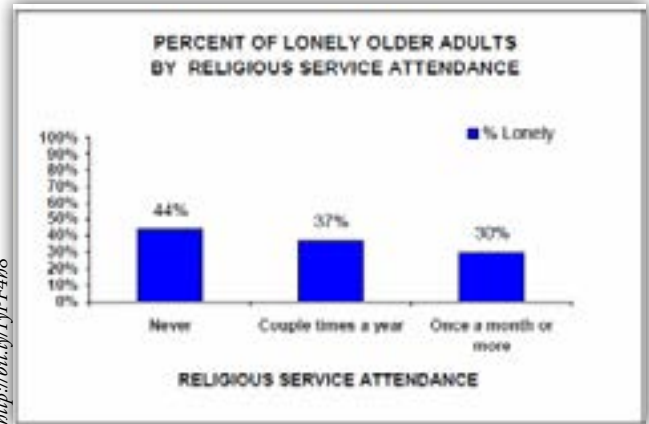
This material world is a lonely place. As a recent article in *The Atlantic* noted, various studies have shown loneliness rising drastically over a very short period of recent history. It is estimated that as many as one in five Americans suffers from being lonely. Research in Great Britain reveals what some are calling a “loneliness epidemic.” Loneliness typically includes anxious feelings

about a lack of connectedness or communality with other beings, both in the present and extending into the future. As such, loneliness can be felt even when surrounded by other people.

Feeling isolated not only has adverse effects on our mental health, but negative consequences for our physical health as well. One study found that people who were not connected to others were three times as likely to die over the course of nine years as those who had strong social ties. Another study found that people who are lonely are at higher risk for inflammatory diseases. One study even suggested that loneliness may be contagious. Those whose friends and family experience loneliness are 52% more likely to become lonely.

Modern social changes are contributing to our feelings of loneliness. Many of us spend most of our time with work colleagues rather than friends and family. As we age into retirement, these relationships disappear. As workers relocate for better careers, family and community ties are further diminished. Divorce and delayed marriage also take their toll on relationships, leaving us lonely. Things as simple as social media and long commuting times also contribute to loneliness.

People experiencing loneliness even have a new (and somewhat strange) option – cuddle services. Citizens in the U.S. and Japan are willing to pay strangers to cuddle with them. This market for artificial intimacy reveals the desperate lengths we are willing to go to in order to deal with loneliness.



Religious participation makes a big difference

<http://bit.ly/1yPF4b8>

Many pundits argue that the solution is to forswear social media and go back to traditional family models. But the *Srimad Bhagavatam* reveals that loneliness is not a modern phenomenon. Many of the personalities described there faced broken relationships and personal rejection. Vaisnava scriptures give us tools for dealing with the loneliness of the material world. The six loving exchanges described by Srila Rupa Goswami in the *Nectar of Instruction* are a blueprint for intimate relationships. By sharing our minds in confidence, exchanging gifts and exchanging prasadam, we can build healthy communities and avoid the isolation of modern day living.

Moreover, there is one relationship that can never be broken, where we are always assured of a loving welcome. The Supreme Lord, our eternal friend and well-wisher, will never abandon us. When Druva Maharaj suffered emotional torment after being rejected by his father, he found the love of his mother insufficient to heal his pain. With great love, she advised him to take shelter of the Lord.

As members of the Vaisnava community, we have everything we need to build loving relationships with each other and with Krishna. All we need is the will to do so.



[feedback@mukundagoswami.org](mailto:feedback@mukundagoswami.org)

<http://bit.ly/1AfmT2H>

## SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

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# Anonymous Donor Pledges \$1,000,000 for the TOVP Project

By Radha Jivan Das, [www.dandavats.com](http://www.dandavats.com), November 26, 2014  
<http://bit.ly/12i6YWo>

An initiated devotee of ISKCON, who wishes to remain anonymous, approached his Guru Maharaj, His Holiness Devamrita Swami, and said that he wished to donate one million dollars to some project in ISKCON. Devamrita Swami immediately suggested that his disciple donate this money to the Temple Of the Vedic Planetarium (TOVP) project, which is an extremely important project of ISKCON, and which is part of building the worldwide headquarters that Srila Prabhupada had envisioned.

When asked, Maharaja explained that he has many projects where he requires money, and he could have directed his disciple to donate in those places. But he considers the Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir to be of first priority, and therefore he encouraged his disciple towards the TOVP.

Devamrita Maharaja's act of allegiance to Srila Prabhupada's Mayapur project is an inspiration to all the leaders and devotees of ISKCON, and if everyone gives priority to this project as he has shown, then the temple can be built without any difficulty, and offered to Srila Prabhupada and Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

I thank Maharaja and his disciples, who have so kindly offered this very large donation for the TOVP. Hare Krsna.

Radha Jivan Das  
Campaign Director TOVP



# The World's First Vegetarian City

By Shuriah Niazi, *www.worldcrunch.com*, October 9, 2014  
<http://bit.ly/1wpmoWC>



*Jain temples in Palitana*

PALITANA — Jainism is one of the oldest religions in the world and preaches a path of non-violence towards all living beings. In India, about 5 million people practice it.

“Everyone in this world — whether animal or human being or a very small creature — has all been given the right to live by God,” says Virat Sagar Maharaj, a Jain monk. “So who are we to take away that right from them? This has been written in the holy books of every religion, particularly in Jainism.”

## Bhaktivedanta Research Center Acquires Manuscripts From Advaita Acharya's Line

By Madhava Smullen, *ISKCON News*, November 14, 2014  
<http://bit.ly/1s4wrib>

The Bhaktivedanta Research Center in Kolkata, India has added some new treasures to its vast library of over 16,000 works that includes all the major Puranas and Vedas and many important and rare works by Vaishnava acharyas.

Amongst the recent acquisitions are seven hand-written manuscripts donated by Sri Sanjay Goswami of Vrindavan, a 14<sup>th</sup> generation descendent from Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's intimate associate Sri Advaita Acharya.

They include copies of Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*, Raghunath Das Goswami's *Mukta Charita*, and Gopala Guru's *Bhajana Paddhati*,

The mountainous town of Palitana in the state of Gujarat is home to one of Jain's holiest sites, and many residents don't want any kind of killing happening here. Recently, 200 Jain monks began a hunger strike, threatening to fast until death until the town was declared an entirely vegetarian zone.

“Meat has always been easily available in this city, but it's against the teaching of our religion,” says Sadhar Sagar, a Jain believer. “We always wanted a complete ban on non-vegetarian food in this holy site.”

They have gotten their wish. On August 14, the Gujarat government declared Palitana a “meat-free zone.” They instituted a complete ban on the sale of meat and eggs and have also outlawed the slaughter of animals within the town's limits.

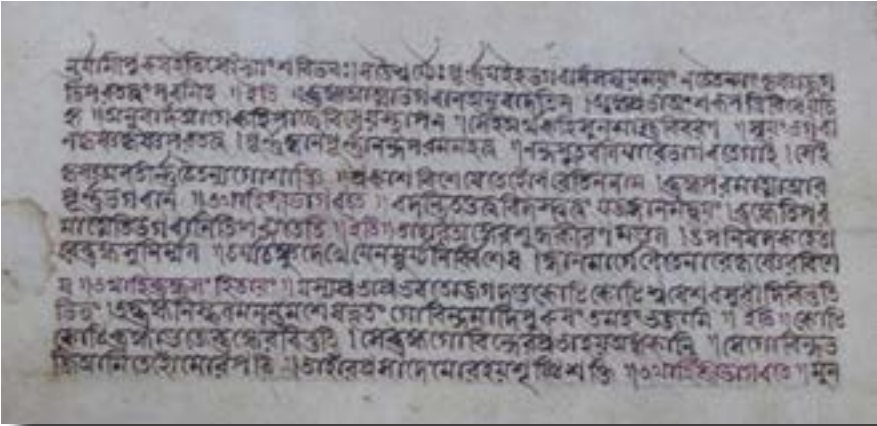
It's a victory for vegetarians, but bad for business for others. Fishermen such as Nishit Mehru have had to stop working entirely. “We have been stopped from selling anything in Palitana,” he says. “They shouldn't have taken this one-sided decision. How will we survive if we are not allowed to sell fish? The government should not make decisions under pressure.”

and a complete copy of *Chaitanya-charitamrita* from 1760.

Sanjay Goswami's family is currently still taking care of Advaita Acharya's personal Deities at the Sri Sri Radha Madan Gopal temple near Loi Bazaar in Vrindavan.

Meanwhile Sri Swarup Mitra of the Sura Mitra family, one of Kolkata's oldest aristocratic lines, invited the Bhaktivedanta Research team to scan his collection of over seventy valuable Vaishnava manuscripts for their digital library, with access promised to another private library in the near future. The manuscripts include

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One of the rare new manuscripts from Advaita Acharya's line

Rupa Goswami's *Lalita Madhava* and *Uddhava Sandesa*, Sanatana Goswami's *Danakeli Kaumudi*, Gopal Bhatta Goswami's *Hari-Bhakti Vilasa*, the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and many more.

Swarup Mitra's ancestor Raja Pitambar Mitra moved to Kolkata from Ayodhya over 250 years ago, and the family still worships their ishta-deva (personal Deity) Sri Sri Revati Balaram in their temple at Beliaghata in Kolkata.

"We were naturally delighted to receive the manuscripts," says BRC co-director Hari Sauri Das. "There are many families who have authentic and ancient manuscripts but do not know what to do with them any more, and the Sura Mitra and Sanjay Goswami families are two such Vaishnava families who know the value of their heritage and are now looking to the BRC for help in preserving it."

He adds: "It is perhaps significant that these two families approached us after hearing about the work that we're doing. There was no soliciting on our part and so that means that the reputation of the BRC is increasing. The word is getting out and we hope that many more private collections will be made available to us in the future."

Now in its fifth year, the BRC has seen its staff double in size and has recently added well-lit individualized study sections for the benefit of visiting scholars and devotees; a restricted area where rare manuscripts are kept under lock and key; and a high-quality air conditioning unit to provide ideal temperature around the clock and extend the life of the manuscript collection.

Thanks to a kind donation by Raghunath Priya Das of Slovakia, it will also soon add a laser engraver, which recreates the exact image of handwriting from ancient manuscripts by burning it into professional grade aluminium, thus preserving texts for thousands of years.

The BRC has also just begun renovating two newly-acquired apartments on the ground floor of its building for its new Translations and Publications department, which will make Sanskrit and Bengali books and manuscripts available to the English-speaking world for the first time.

The department's first publication will be *Sri Saraswati Jai Sri*, a two-volume compilation of lectures and diary entries by Srila Prabhupada's guru Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur. The first volume was originally published in 1934 in Bengali, while the second volume — a series of Bengali-language interviews with the Thakura in which he recollects his early life until the age of eighteen — has never been published before in any language.

Devotees worldwide eagerly anticipate *Sri Saraswati Jai Sri's* publication, as well as that of all the other rare Vaishnava works that the BRC will make available in the future.

To donate towards establishing the BRC's new Translation and Publications department, please contact BRC Co-Director Hari Sauri das at [harisauri@gmail.com](mailto:harisauri@gmail.com)



The ancient manuscripts arrive

# NYU's Interfaith Peace Vigil Gave Students A Chance To Reflect On Summer's Tragedies

By Carol Kuruvilla, *Huffington Post*, September 9, 2014  
<http://huff.to/1scFfgl>



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**"It's important to create a space to hear unfiltered voices and celebrate commonalities"**

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In the face of immeasurable loss and seemingly irreparable divisions, one college campus decided to stop talking and just listen.

Students and chaplains at New York University gathered together for an interfaith peace vigil on Monday evening.

Cradling candles inside a quiet, darkened auditorium, the students and faculty members from Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic faiths had much to think about as they reflected on their summers. Violence in the Middle East, Ukraine, and Nigeria, along with the tragedies that erupted in American cities, like Chicago and Ferguson.

The goal of the vigil wasn't to find a solution or issue a zealous "call for peace." The peacemakers took to the stage to simply share their stories, leaving heated arguments for another day.

Leila Suboh, a student of Palestinian descent, spoke passionately about the lives lost in Gaza this summer. Her voice trembled as she

shared the plight of a close family friend whose life had been uprooted by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

There was no debating or talking back. The audience simply listened.

Andre Ross, a native of Gary, Indiana, reminisced about rampant crime and gun violence in his hometown.

"I keep feeling a pressure to be angry, to be upset. But I also feel very numb," Ross said. "I don't understand when life became less precious."

Even though Monday's vigil didn't result in solutions, NYU's Muslim Chaplain Imam Khalid Latif said this type of interfaith work is invaluable, since the voices that spoke at the event don't often get the chance to share a stage.

"It's important to create a space to hear unfiltered voices and celebrate commonalities," Latif told the *Huffington Post*. "For people to understand that my pain is as genuine as yours."

# Author Dan Brown: Science And Religion Are Partners

By Carol Kuruvilla, *Huffington Post*, November 12, 2014  
<http://huff.to/1ua0TCP>

Author Dan Brown has sparked plenty of intellectual debate during his career as a novelist by exploring the relationship between science and religion.

While delivering the Penguin Annual Lecture in India recently, the writer revealed that he believes that the lines between science and religion are actually starting to “blur.”

“Science and religion are partners. They are two different languages telling the same story... While science dwells on the answers, religion savors the questions,” Brown said, according to *The Hindu*.

“Ironically, we now turn to God only for a handful of existential questions which science has never been able to answer like ‘Where did we come from? Why are we here? And what happens when we die?’,” he continued.

Brown has been struggling with these questions for quite some time. His father was a mathematics professor and his mother was a devout Christian and a church organist. For the lecture, Brown brought along two old license plates from his parents’ cars. His dad’s read METRIC, while his mother’s read KYRIE, meaning Lord, according to the *Times of India*. This contrast in views reportedly set the scene for a lifetime of investigations.

As a teen, Brown began to question apparently irreconcilable contradictions between reli-



*Dan Brown at the Penguin Annual Lecture in Delhi, India*

gion and science that he found at his mother’s church. But as he grew older, he began to understand that both ways of examining the world were important.

The ultimate question for him is how to celebrate and further the achievements of science without losing the beauty of faith.

“The world is getting smaller everyday and now, more than ever, there is enormous danger in believing that we are infallible. That our version of the truth is absolute and that everyone

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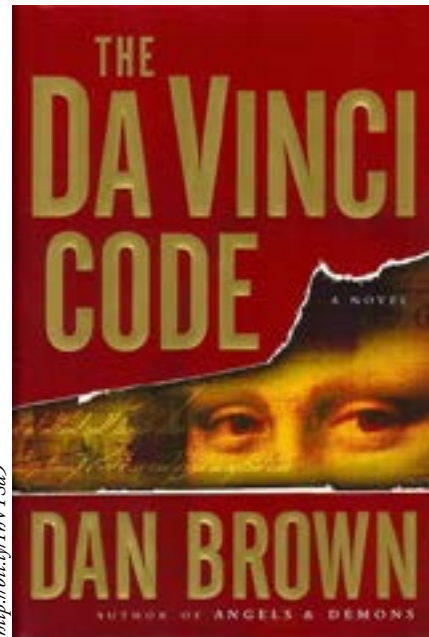
*While delivering the Penguin Annual Lecture in India recently, the writer revealed that he believes that the lines between science and religion are actually starting to “blur.”*

who does not think like we do is wrong and therefore our enemy,” Brown said.

The bestselling novelist has 200 million books in print and has published in 52 different languages, according to his website. He’s currently writing a new book and working with Columbia Pictures to turn his most recent novel into a movie.

His controversial *The DaVinci Code* sparked criticism from Christian denominations after it suggested that Mary Magdalene had given birth to Jesus’ son. The book provoked much debate and continues to inspire theories about the role of Mary Magdalene in the early church.

During the lecture, Brown spoke to a full house of audience members. He was chosen as the eighth speaker to give a presentation at Penguin Random House India’s annual lecture series. Previous lecturers included the Dalai Lama, writer Thomas Friedman, and Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan, according to *The Hindu*.



*Dan Browns bestselling novel  
The DaVinci Code*

## Greater Than God

It is Greater than God

It is More Evil then the Devil

The poor have it.

The rich need it.

And if you eat it you die

What is it?

**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 Srila Prabhupada.

The “science of God.”

What made Krishna consciousness accessible and interesting to Westerners was Srila Prabhupada’s use of the terms “cultural,” “educational,” and “scientific.” He was careful to say that Krishna consciousness should be understood, in both its present and past contexts, as the *SCIENCE* of God. He often used systematic and scientific terminology that included the number of years in the yuga cycles (1,800,000; 1,200,000; 800,000; 400,000) and the distance of earth from the sun (93,000,000 miles). He even had a disciple, Thoudam Singh, who held a Ph.D. in physical organic chemistry, write a book called, *The Scientific Basis of Krishna Consciousness*, from which excerpts read:

Everyone in the scientific community knows that mathematicians work with an imaginary number ... the square root of minus one... Without the help of this branch of mathematics, various complex theories and problems cannot be solved. Thus the existence of this number cannot be denied; yet there is no experiment to prove it ... scientists in the field of statistical mechanics also utilize various conceptual models ... to explain their theories and arguments. These are all beyond the realm of experimental science. If scientists are willing to accept these imaginary and conceptual models, what is the difficulty in accepting the perfect knowledge given by Lord Krishna, the supreme scientist? (pp. 27-28)

Keeping with his scientific approach, his first publication directed to Westerners was, *Easy Journey to Other Planets*. He also approved of an illustration on the cover of *The Science of Self Realization* that showed a picture of four-armed Vishnu being encircled by a standard electron pattern illustrating the orbits they travel around the nucleus of an atom. He also quoted Vedic literature that God was defined as: *aśvaryaśya samagrasya vīryasya yaśasaḥ śrīyah jñāna-vairāgyayoś caiva saṅgām bhaga itiṅgana* (Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.5.47) and that the soul has a specific magnitude: *keśāgra-śateka-bhāga punaḥ śatāmśa kari tāra sama sūkṣma jīvera ‘svarūpa’ vicāri* (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Madhya-lila 19.139).

In addition to his scientific orientation, Srila Prabhupada has also written that Krishna consciousness is a “cultural movement,” and he was uncompromising about Krishna consciousness being a religion in which God was involved. In his public lectures and books the word “God” appears more than nineteen thousand times. It was clear to everyone that Srila Prabhupada was a man of God deeply committed to the cultural and behavioral aspects of spiritual life, yet he, with insight into the popular worldview of our times, simultaneously referred to the philosophy of Krishna consciousness as the “Science of God,” and taught Westerners that the theology of Krishna consciousness contained systematic and scientific dimensions.

Your servant,

*Mukunda Goswami*

Mukunda Goswami



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