



# Spiritual Perspectives July 2016

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

## The Lesser of Two Evils?

By Radha devi dasi

We are fortunate that our ISKCON movement is a worldwide body of devotees with different backgrounds and points of view. Sometimes, however, our differences give rise to conflict, particularly in addressing difficult choices. In addressing social issues, for instance, one may find that society is not yet advanced enough to accept Srila Prabhupada's teachings. Under such circumstances, can a devotee advocate a second best solution?

This question arose recently in a criticism of some of ISKCON leaders endorsing US Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard as a "devotee of Krishna." How, writes one commentator, can someone who supports public access to birth control be considered a Vaisnava?

While we sometimes think of the birth control issue as a "modern problem," Srila Prabhupada noted that the practice of killing children (born and unborn) has existed since "time immemorial." Those responsible, said Srila Prabhupada, will suffer in this life and the next and should atone by taking very seriously to Krishna consciousness. (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 6.16.14 purport.)

Krishna Himself protected King Pariksit in the womb when Pariksit was attacked by Ashvattama who released the *brahmastra* weapon to kill him. Krishna entered the womb of Uttara to protect Pariksit. From this pastime we can understand the Lord's desire that all life (including the unborn child) be preserved. Srila Prabhupada also condemned the use of abortion and contraceptives that act as abortifacients, preventing the embryo from implanting in the mother's womb. In a letter to Satsvarupa dasa, Srila Prabhupada wrote that abstinence should be used to limit the size of one's family. "But one should not strictly use any contraceptive method and at the same time indulge in sex life." (September 20, 1968). In the face of this clear instruction, is it possible for any devotee to support the distribution of contraceptives?

On the other hand, we certainly understand that most of the world will not adopt Srila Prabhupada's recommendations of limiting sex life. Only religious leaders seriously promote abstinence as a means of family planning. Governments across the globe focus on access to contraceptives and/or abortions. Thus, the immediate choice is between these two methods. Studies show that there is an inverse link between abortions and access to contraceptives, particularly long acting contraceptives

such as implants and intrauterine devices. In other words, where governments promote access to contraceptives, abortion rates go down, all other things being equal. In fact, the Guttmacher Institute, which researches such issues, reports that abortion rates are largely on the decline in the developed world but are rising in the developing countries where access to contraceptives is more limited.

Given that abortions are increasing and that most people will not practice abstinence, can a devotee advocate the use of contraceptives as an alternative? On the one hand, providing contraceptives encourages sex life divorced from responsibility and continues the entanglement in the modes of material nature. On the other hand, abortion is a much crueler and more violent means of birth control. Spiritual consciousness is the real solution to this problem. In the interim, however, we may agree to disagree on social policies that are second best.



<http://bit.ly/295z7ds>

# Divine Intervention

By Sutapa Das, [sutapamonk.blogspot.hu](http://sutapamonk.blogspot.hu), June 17, 2016  
<http://bit.ly/28ZGL2d>

“We are not dealing with a cosmic order supplier, but with a person.” On recent travels around the country I met a lady who expressed frustration in her attempts to find God. She told me her story: two years of spiritual travels, countless nights of prayer, careful scriptural exploration and persistent introspection, but still no sign! “Will I ever find Him?” she asked. “I’m beginning to question whether He even exists.” What to speak of the ‘searchers,’ even the faithful often doubt that their Supreme friend is actually alive and active. A seeming lack of reciprocation and intervention can discourage even the most devout spiritualist. Where is God when you need Him?!

While desiring a divine audience, we’d do well to bear the following in mind:

- **Action** – internal yearning should be accompanied by external endeavor. When the man made a diligent daily prayer to win the lottery, God was more than willing to acquiesce – if only he actually went out and bought a ticket. Thus, it could also be that God wants to see a practical demonstration of our eagerness to see Him. What are we willing to sacrifice and what tangible efforts will we make to search Him out?

- **Reaction** – we are not dealing with a cosmic order supplier, but with a person. As persons, we don’t mechanize our reciprocation, but rather operate on the basis of feelings and inspiration. Thus, one cannot force open the doors to see God, but simply engage themselves with enthusiasm and determination. We should eagerly anticipate a divine audience, but simultaneously be willing to patiently wait.

- **Perception** – maybe God has already intervened in our life, but not in the way we were expecting. Often times we don’t see things as they are, but rather we see things as we are. When we carry stereotyped perceptions of how God should deal with us, we leave little room to witness how He is expertly working on a bigger and better plan that will satisfy our needs and desires.

The ability to witness the wonders of God is the unique gift of the most advanced spirituality in existence. The *Bhagavad-gita* doesn’t simply deliver a philosophy which convinces one to **believe** in God, but actually equips one with the tools and techniques to dynamically **perceive** Him at every moment.



“We are not dealing with a cosmic order supplier, but with a person.”

# ‘Walking Monk’ Makes Stop in Joliet During Journey Across America

By Mike Mallory, [www.Dandavats.com](http://www.Dandavats.com), June 22, 2016

<http://bit.ly/2974VeA>



*Bhaktimarga Swami in Joliet. The Swami hopes to spread a ‘greener’ way of living*

JOLIET – Bhaktimarga Swami sat calmly Monday morning as he rested in the grass of Joliet’s West Park with a water bottle at his side.

Known as the “Walking Monk,” Swami covers about 20 miles a day with only a pair of sandals separating his feet from the ground. He’s in the middle of the second leg of his journey from New York City to San Francisco.

“I started walking in Joliet today,” Swami said. “I found out the Illinois & Michigan Canal State Trail is here. That’s a piece of paradise. You see a heron every few minutes.”

Swami hopes to promote a “greener,” healthier lifestyle in America – one that emphasizes strong morals and ethics. Through outreach efforts along his path, he spreads his message.

“My purpose is to make the statement that we need to simplify life,” Swami said. “In many ways this walk reaffirms what we should be doing. Our bodies were made for walking. The question is, are we doing enough of it?”

He began this portion of the trip in May in Pennsylvania and plans to finish in early August in Nebraska. Next year, he will make his way to California.

Swami has walked across Canada four times, and isn’t opposed to battling heat waves and severe weather all summer if it accomplishes his goal. He said it helps develop a sense of austerity.

“Being exposed [to the elements] is part of it,” Swami said. “Every day it’s a new plan. If it’s going to be very hot, I might get on the road at 2 or 3 a.m., or walk in the evening if I have to.”

Swami, 63, also is walking to honor the contributions of his own spiritual teacher, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, who arrived 50 years ago in America. At 70 years old, Prabhupada moved from India on the order of his teacher to promote God consciousness, or devotional bhakti yoga, to the English speaking world.

When not walking, Swami flies to other continents to teach and spread the message. He is an instructor in bhakti, mantra meditation and interactive dance. He’s also scripted and directed dozens of performances based on sacred Hindu texts.

Next, he will travel along the Lake Michigan shoreline with others to a temple in Evanston before heading west to the Great Plains.

# UK Prime Minister David Cameron Celebrates ISKCON's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

By Mina Sharma, *Bhaktivedanta Manor, UK*, June 10, 2016  
<http://bit.ly/292awQe>

Bhaktivedanta Manor marked the start of a new chapter in its history on Friday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, as the groundbreaking ceremony for the long awaited Haveli building was led by UK Prime Minister David Cameron. The ceremony formed part of the Manor's offerings to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ISKCON, upon which Mr. Cameron heartily congratulated ISKCON by praising Srila Prabhupada on his creation of a "global mission."

A reception of over 300 people, including Parliamentary Secretary Under State Shailesh Vara, devotees and patrons, was held in a marquee over the spot where the new Shree Krishna Haveli will be built. His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami, His Holiness Radhanath Swami, His Holiness Sivarama Swami and His Grace Praghosa Dasa, GBC were also in attendance.

After being shown the Temple Room and deities of Sri-Sri Radha Gokulananda, the Prime Minister went on to garland the deity of Srila Prabhupada, stating "if only he had lived to see what the Manor has become; a mock Tudor country house donated by a Beatle, serving as a hub of worship, celebration and selflessness."

The Prime Minister also congratulated ISKCON on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, joking that he too will celebrate his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday this year. He went on to say: "I look at what you have done in the past fifty years and I think how much you can achieve in the next fifty. In fact, the next half century begins right now as we begin building the new Krishna Haveli, and I'm delighted to be putting the first tool in the ground."



*UK Prime Minister David Cameron at Bhaktivedanta Manor*

Shailesh Vara MP praised the Prime Minister for pioneering the term 'British Indian' and for forging better trade links with India. He said "the Prime Minister visited India more times than any other country, and took the largest trade delegation there . . . this Prime Minister cares about an inclusive modern Britain."

Srutidharma Dasa, Temple President of Bhaktivedanta Manor thanked the Prime Minister for attending, and spoke of the important role of the Haveli and the need to "promote the spiritual values of tolerance, kindness . . . we at Bhaktivedanta Manor aim to embody these principles at large."

Speaking about the Haveli, Managing Director of Bhaktivedanta Manor Gauri Das said: "This is a historic time for the Manor. The Haveli fulfils the needs of the Temple, respects the concerns of the local village and received full support from Hertsmere Council. It is a profound honor that the Prime Minister has put the first spade in the ground."

# The First Russian in Vrindavan Was Tsar Nicholas, 125 years ago

By Isvara Academy, *Vrindavan Today*, January 27, 2016  
<http://bit.ly/29bMOX1>



<http://bit.ly/293YWWY>

*Tsar Nicholas*

Translation: Sofiya Perfilyeva, Edited by Visnu Murti das.

On Friday, January the 4th in 1891, Hindus who were bathing in the sacred river Yamuna witnessed an amazing scene. A ship with a name in an unknown language was approaching.

In the morning mist, a young light-skinned man in an officer's jacket and surrounded by armed soldiers, but not looking

belligerent, came ashore. The stranger was the crown prince Nicholas, who was to be the last Russian emperor when he died in the Revolution of 1917.

The small town of Vrindavan, 80 miles to the south of Delhi, was part of the journey of the crown prince, along with Mumbai, Delhi, Gwalior, Agra, Ellora, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Kolkata and Madras and Sri Rangam, up to the southern parts of the Indian subcontinent, from where he viewed the outline of Ceylon.

The heir to the Russian throne liked Vrindavan. Nicholas found the town very similar to Venice. From the travel notes made by Nicholas, one can assume that his familiarity with Vrindavan occurred in the place of Keshi Ghat, on the banks of river Yamuna. The royal guest was shown the temple of Madana Mohana. And one of the "interesting" churches, which he visited, might have been the Jugal Kishore temple. According to some assumptions, while visiting one of the temples, the crown prince received blessings from local elders to rule his kingdom. It rather might be a beautiful legend, though. Anyway, 125 years ago Nicholas II was the first Russian "discoverer" of Vrindavan.

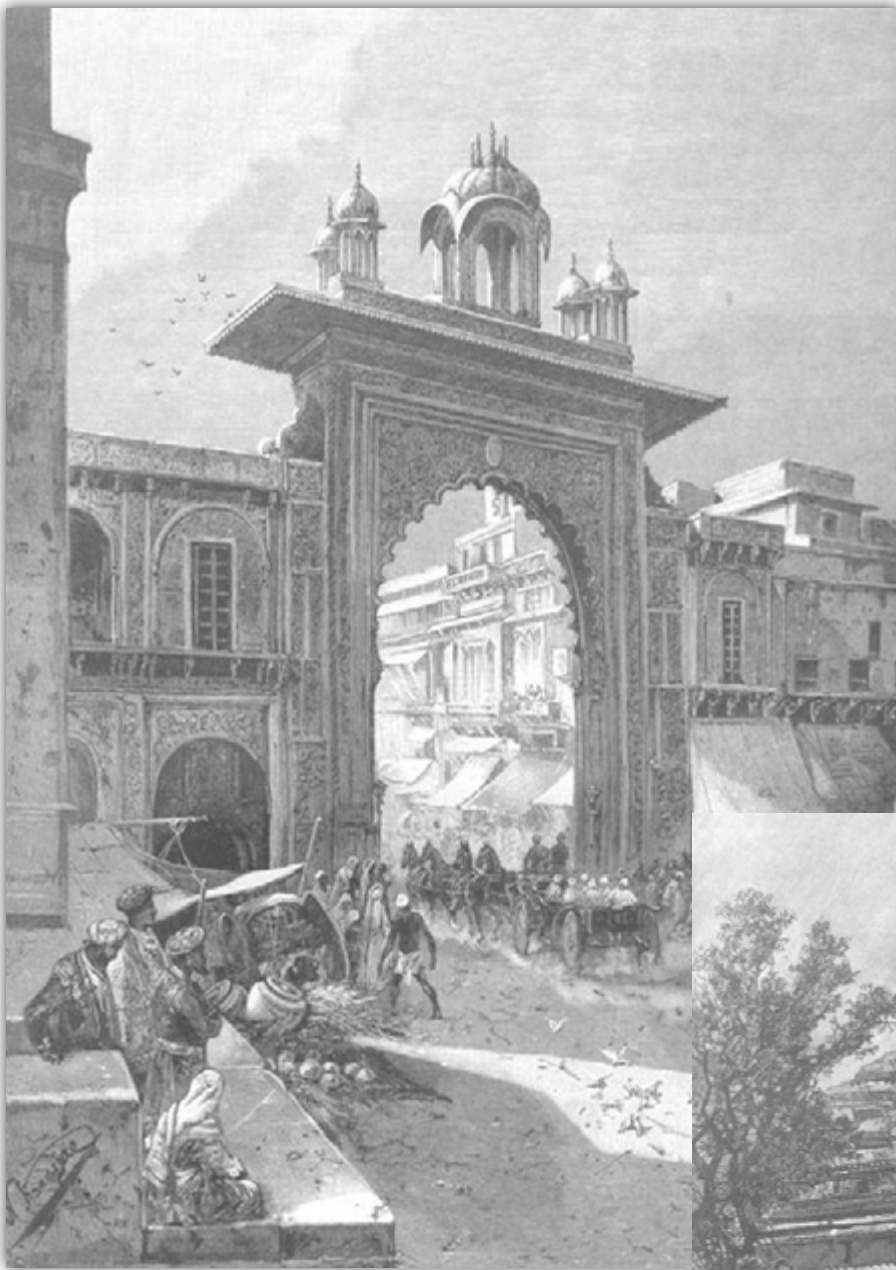


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*The Mathura Dwarkadhish temple in 1891, as seen by Nikolai Karazin, the Russian artist accompanying Prince Nicholas*

*Continued on page 6*

*Pictured left; Bharatpur Gate in Mathura*



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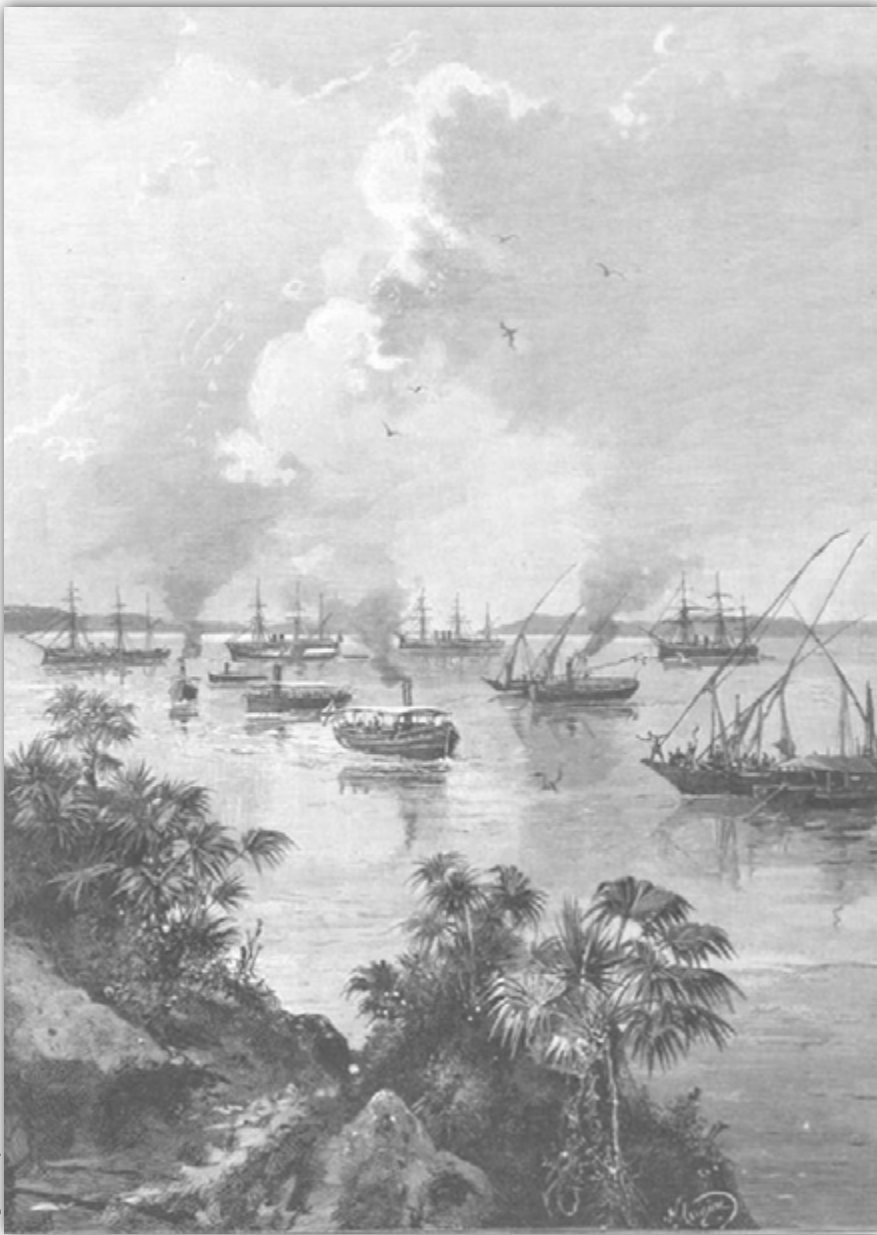


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*Pictured right: the Madana Mohana temple*

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<http://bit.ly/293YVWY>



*Boats on the Yamuna*

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