



Spiritual Perspectives

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

Making the Right Choice

By Radha devi dasi

Everyone hankers for happiness because the soul is happy by nature. Materially conditioned, we have forgotten how to become happy. Lacking spiritual knowledge, we seek happiness in the acquisition of material things. However, even on the material plane there is the saying that “money can’t buy happiness.” Ironically, as Kali-yuga progresses, acquiring money becomes the avenue to “success.” As Srila Prabhupada pointed out, material society does not know how to find happiness. He advocated a lifestyle of plain living and high thinking where emphasis is placed on spiritual development rather than financial success.

Recent research from UCLA’s Anderson School of Management endorses Srila Prabhupada’s advice. People who value time over money for other activities are happier than those who value money over time. This finding held true over different ages, genders, socioeconomic status, marital status and parental status. The professors also found that it was not the amount of time or money that was associated with happiness, but the attitude toward time and money.



often forget that we are also choosing not to take part in some other activity. This choice is called an opportunity cost – each choice we make precludes many other opportunities.

Given the overwhelming social pressure in a society that values job performance above all, we often choose to spend time in activities that will lead to career success. This pressure is greatly magnified when we work for large corporations with rigid job requirements.

Some devotees will argue that simple living is not required for spiritual life. Our tradition includes devotees at both ends of the financial spectrum. Maharaja Ambarish and King Prataparudra, for example, were extremely wealthy. King Prataparudra not only possessed material wealth, he also lived in luxurious circumstances. Neither poverty nor wealth are, in themselves, an impediment to spiritual advancement.

The real issue is how the acquisition and use of wealth diverts our attention, time and energy from the need to attend to spiritual matters. In essence, everything we have is a gift from Krsna. Both money and time are resources that, as devotees, we want to use in devotional service. We must keep in mind that every choice we make affects the time and energy we have for spiritual development in order to achieve lasting happiness.



In essence, this research hones in on a point we often overlook – time is a limited resource. While most of us recognize this fact in theory, in practice we overlook the limited nature of time. When we choose an activity, we

ISKCON Brahmapur's Permanent Book Store at Railway Station for ISKCON 50

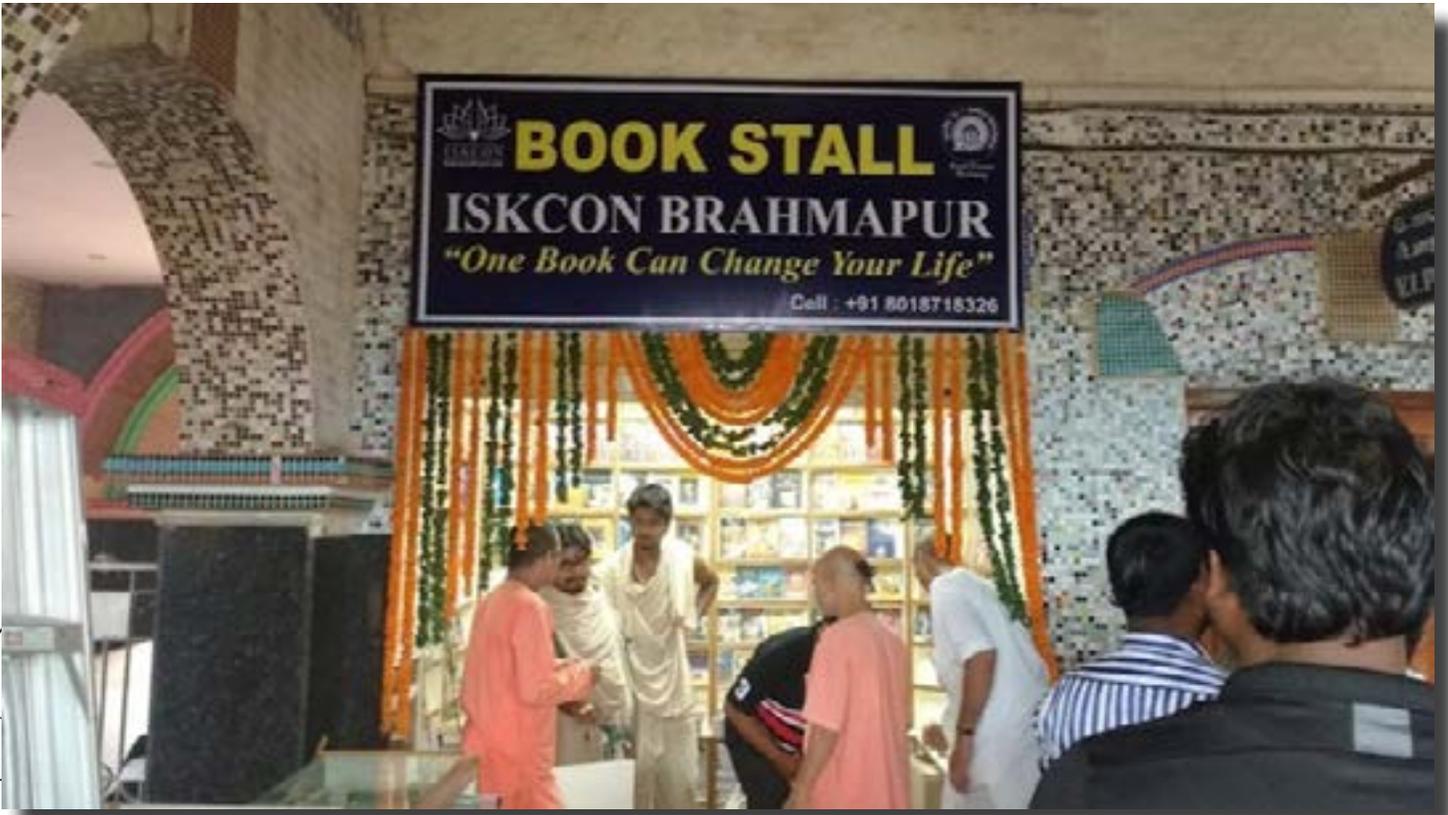
By Contributor, *ISKCON50.org*, September 19, 2016
<http://bit.ly/2dhrK1Q>

Devotees of ISKCON Brahmapur in the Indian state of Orissa made a unique offering to Srila Prabhupada on August 16th for the 50th Anniversary: they opened a permanent book store inside their local railway station with the permission of the railway authorities.

“This is the first time in the world that ISKCON has received official permission and support to open a permanent book store inside a railway station,” said Pancharatna Das, President of ISKCON Brahmapur. “The railway authorities arranged a prime spot inside the railway station, just next to the VIP room on platform 1. We are distributing all of Srila Prabhupada’s books from this store.”

The signboard at the book stall has the logos of ISKCON as well as the Government-owned East Coast Railways, making it an official retail outlet. The store will be managed by full-time book distributors as well as volunteers from the congregation.

“The sign above the book stall says: One Book Can Change Your Life,” commented Pancharatna Das. “All of us know that Srila Prabhupada’s books have transformed the hearts and minds of millions of people around the world. We hope that our humble offering to Srila Prabhupada in the 50th Anniversary year of ISKCON will please His Divine Grace by increasing book distribution and generating more publicity for ISKCON.”



ISKCON book stall at the Brahmapur railway station

We Would Appreciate Your Feedback

Please Send Your Response To :

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Religious and Political Leaders Appreciate Srila Prabhupada at ISKCON 50 Gala Dinner in Washington, D.C.

By Madhava Smullen, *ISKCON News*, September 15, 2016

<http://bit.ly/2cIF12a>



M.C. Anuttama Das welcomes the audience

Many international religious and political leaders honored ISKCON Founder Srila Prabhupada's achievements and contributions at a special ISKCON 50th Anniversary Gala Event in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, September 13th.

The event took place in the Presidential Ballroom at the Capital Hilton Hotel on 16th Street. Three blocks from the White House, the Ballroom has hosted every president since Harry S. Truman and features a permanent eight-foot presidential seal on its wall.

Over 300 people attended the Gala event, seventy-five of them special VIP invitees including religious leaders, religious liberty experts, members of the media, government representatives and political leaders.

Among them were U.S. Congresswoman from Hawaii Tulsi Gabbard, U.S. Congressman from Massachusetts Joseph Kennedy, Nepalese Ambassador to the U.S. Dr. Arjun Kumar Karki, Community Affairs Minister N.K. Mishra from the Indian Embassy, and Deputy Chief of Mission Mahbub Hasan Saleh from the Embassy of Bangladesh.

There were also three rabbis including one from one of Washington, D.C.'s most prominent synagogues; as well as the new chaplain of Hindu Life at Georgetown University, Brahmachari Vrajvihari,

several Protestant ministers, and a representative from the American Jewish Committee.

From ISKCON, GBC members Malati Devi, Bhaktimarga Swami, Anuttama Das, Emeritus GBC Ravindra Svarupa Das and GBC Chairman Sesa Das attended. So did many devotees from New York, Philadelphia, Massachusetts, Florida, Canada and beyond, including Prabhupada disciples Devi Deva Das, Guru Gauranga Das, Sravanananda Das and Yogesvara das, who travelled to Washington to attend the event.

The celebrations began with a special catered reception at 6pm with hor d'oeuvres and beverages in the Senate Room. The room was fitted with a display of Srila Prabhupada's books that included twenty-five different translations of the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, a full set of *Caitanya-caritamrta*, a full set of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and signage explaining Prabhupada's literary contribution.

There was also a beautiful display of art by Kim Waters, the well-known ISKCON artist and author of the book *Illuminations* from the *Bhagavad-gita*, demonstrating ISKCON's efforts in preserving and promoting Krishna art.



Devotees and VIPs mingle at the Gala's reception

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During the one-hour reception, VIPs milled about, browsing Prabhupada's books and Waters' artwork, and networking with each other. They also had the chance to get their picture taken on a red carpet in front of a large ISKCON 50 logo.

At 7:10 pm, the doors to the main Presidential Ballroom automatically opened, and all 300 guests moved into the beautifully decorated space, with its grand ceilings and sparkling chandeliers, to the euphoric sounds of George Harrison's My Sweet Lord.

As everyone took their seats at circular white clothed tables with orange and red rose centerpieces by Gopisvari Dasi, ISKCON of D.C. priest Manorama Krishna Das inaugurated the event by blowing a conchshell and chanting elaborate Sanskrit mantras to invoke auspiciousness.

M.C. Anuttama Das then welcomed everyone, and showed a four-minute trailer for the ISKCON 50 documentary film Joy of Devotion.



<http://bit.ly/2cIF12a>

The Presidential Ballroom, where the Gala event was held

Vaishnavas, the trailer explains, understand that God sends many messengers throughout history to bring his message of love and peace. And in 1965, Srila Prabhupada crossed the Atlantic Ocean to bring that same eternal message, ultimately impacting the lives of millions.

Following the trailer a series of eminent speakers delved deeper into these themes, beginning with Dr. Graham Schweig, Professor of Religion at Christopher Newport University, talking about Srila Prabhupada's academic contributions.

Next Alfred B. Ford (Ambarisa Das) spoke about his own devotion to ISKCON and to Srila Prabhupada. He also discussed his great-grandfather auto magnate Henry Ford, an out-of-the-box thinker who believed he owed much of his skill and innovation to past lives, and would gift visitors to his Ford factories with reincarnation pamphlets.

Kristina Arriaga, an outspoken advocate of religious liberty from the United States



<http://bit.ly/2cIF12a>

Alfred Ford (Ambarisa Das) speaks

Commission on International Religious Freedom – a highly influential and prestigious organization – spoke about ISKCON's contributions to the fight for religious freedom in America and around the world. When Hare Krishnas first showed up in America, she said, people thought they were brainwashed. But they didn't give up their principles or faith – and today, they have grown to be respected around the world.

GBC Chairman Sesa Das also spoke, identifying six key principles of bhakti from the *Bhagavad-gita*, and talking about how ISKCON is trying to uplift the world by teaching and promoting these principles – which include ahimsa, or nonviolence, humility, and sama-darshina, or seeing all living beings with equal vision.

A break in the speeches saw Anapayini Jakupko of the Bhakti Kalalayam Dance School and her sister Komala Kumari Patel wow the audience with a fifteen-minute Bharatanatyam dance, depicting Krishna-lila and scenes from the *Bhagavad-gita* such as Lord Krishna's displaying His universal form.

Before dinner Episcopal Minister and Founding Executive Director of the United Religious Initiative (URI), Reverend Charles P. Gibbs offered grace. He recalled his times with the late ISKCON leader Bhakti Svarupa Damodar Maharaja. He poignantly noted that Maharaja's humility, intellectual depth, and devotion had impressed him with a profound appreciation of the Hare Krishna tradition.

This was followed by a special catered prasadam meal, served with an apparently unlimited number of bottles of sparkling apple cider. During the dinner, guests were treated to

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an entrancing slideshow of images of ISKCON around the world, projected onto a big screen. As they ate, watched, and networked with each other, there was a real spirit of camaraderie and joyfulness in celebrating ISKCON's 50th.

After the meal, there was a brief video showing former British Prime Minister David



Anapayini and Kumari present a Bharatanatyam dance on the Bhagavad-gita

Cameron visiting Bhaktivedanta Manor, and then the speeches started up again.

Islamic Scholar Sanaullah Kirmani, who met Srila Prabhupada in 1968 at Harvard University while a student there, spoke very glowingly about the impact Prabhupada had had on his life. He concluded with a short Bengali poem he had written in Prabhupada's honor: "I was standing in the doorway," he read out, "and you gave me a beautiful flower, which is still blossoming."

Father Leo Lefebure, Professor of Religion at Georgetown University, spoke about the reform the Catholic Church underwent in 1965, and the Nostra Aetate declaration which opened it up to a broader vision of other religions and encouraged interfaith dialogue, respect and cooperation.

Maryland State Delegate Kumar Barve compared Prabhupada's struggles with those of his own grandfather, who emigrated to the USA from India for freedom and opportunity. Barve reflected on how he was a member of the House of Delegates today because of his grandfather's struggles; and how in the same way, ISKCON has blossomed into what it is today because of Prabhupada's struggles and achievements.

N.K. Mishra of the Indian Embassy spoke of ISKCON's many contributions in India, such as its huge food relief programs, and called Srila Prabhupada a great cultural emissary of India. "You can't go to a major city anywhere in the

world and not find an ISKCON temple," he said, citing twenty international cities with ISKCON centers.

Prakash Hinduja, chairman of the Hinduja Group in Europe, expressed much appreciation for Srila Prabhupada, whom he had met personally. He then led everyone in chanting the Hare Krishna mantra.

Finally Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, the Keynote Speaker for the evening, spoke of her personal appreciation for Srila Prabhupada, Bhaktininode Thakura and the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Quoting Mahaprabhu's Siksastakam prayers, she explained that Vaishnavism is not sectarian, but that it appreciates the religious sentiment and expression of all people. She also offered her gratitude to Srila Prabhupada for all he has done in bringing the Vaishnava tradition to the West and all over the world.

The Congresswoman then picked up her personal stringed instrument, which she dubbed a "Guitalele" – a combination of the ukulele and guitar – asked the entire audience to get to their feet, and led them in a Hare Krishna maha-mantra kirtan. As she sang, Gaura Vani, Visvambhar, Purusartha and Srivani of the kirtan group The Juggernauts joined her, adding mridanga, kartalas and bass guitar to the mix.

As they chanted, the audience began to



U.S. Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard speaks

sway from side to side, clapping, singing along, and raising their arms to the ceiling.

When Congresswoman Gabbard concluded her part, The Juggernauts invited the entire audience to attend the Chant 4 Change event coming up on October 8th on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, and then chanted for another twenty minutes, ending the evening

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with an uplifting flourish of kirtan. (All are invited to attend this upcoming historic event. For more information or to offer your support see chant4change.com)

As the guests departed, they were all given gift bags containing either Mukunda Goswami or Yogesvara Dasa's biographies of Srila Prabhupada; a 64-page commemorative magazine entitled "The Hare Krishnas: Celebrating 50 Years"; an attractive metal ISKCON 50 keychain; artful bookmarks by Kim Waters; and a beautifully packaged box of assorted prasadam sweets.

The response from the VIPs to the evening was overwhelmingly positive,

with many commenting that they had been unaware of the depth of Srila Prabhupada's scholarship, or the breadth of his contributions in spreading the Krishna tradition around the world. The ISKCON devotees present, meanwhile, were very inspired to see so many esteemed personalities appreciating ISKCON's contributions.

"I found the event to be an unprecedented validation of Srila Prabhupada and his contributions to the world," says Rukmini devi dasi, one of Prabhupada's earliest female disciples. "To see so many important people appreciating him, chanting and dancing with their arms upraised, and thoroughly enjoying the experience, was just wonderful."

Hear the Unheard

By Sutapa Das, *ISKCON of DC*, September 14, 2016

<http://bit.ly/2d4bAe8>

Looks can be deceiving, and often far from the full story. It is said that one who laughs too much, even at small and insignificant things, may well be harboring dissatisfaction and sorrow within. A person who feels impelled to keep talking and communicating, could be experiencing loneliness and lack of meaningful camaraderie. The insensitivity and harshness that individuals exhibit, is likely connected to an internal weakness and existential insecurity. Some people seem to be compulsive critics and chronic faultfinders – there is a good chance that they are suffering from spiritual stagnation and a lack of personal growth. Interesting and revealing. Instead of reacting to people's words and acts, it helps to invest some time and energy in understanding what's behind them. We must venture into the invisible world in order to hear the unheard.

Back in the third century A.D., King Ts'ao sent his son, Prince T'ai, to learn leadership lessons under the great master Pan Ku. Upon arrival, the master sent him alone to the Ming-Li Forest, instructing him to return and describe the sounds of the tropics. When Prince T'ai returned, he began his description. "Master," said the prince, "I could hear the cuckoos sing, the leaves rustle, the hummingbirds hum, the crickets chirp, the grass blow, the bees buzz, and the wind whisper and holler." Wholly unimpressed, the master sent him back to the forest and told him to stay there for a year!

For days and nights on end, the young prince sat alone in the forest listening. But he

heard no sounds other than those he had already heard. Then one morning, as the prince sat silently beneath the trees, he started to discern faint sounds unlike those he had ever heard before. The more acutely he listened, the clearer the sounds became. A feeling of enlightenment enveloped the boy. "These must be the sounds the master wished me to discern," he reflected. When prince T'ai returned to the temple, the master asked him what more he had heard. "Master," responded the prince reverently, "when I listened most closely, I could hear the unheard – the sound of flowers opening, the sound of the sun warming the earth, and the sound of the grass drinking the morning dew." The master nodded approvingly. "To hear the unheard," remarked Pan Ku, "is a necessary discipline to be a good ruler."

Powerful and poignant. Deepening our spiritual consciousness empowers us to read the hidden story. Otherwise, we hear but don't really hear. The *Bhagavata Purana* also talks of one who sees but doesn't really see (*pasyan api na pasyati*). We must listen closely to people's hearts, hearing their feelings uncommunicated, pains unexpressed, and complaints not spoken of. Relationships break down when we mechanically react to someone else's superficial words and instinctive actions. We must penetrate beyond so we can ascertain the true opinions, feelings and desires of the people we relate to. Then we achieve substantial growth and make real progress.

Personal

Message...



The Culture of Succession

Dear Friends,

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

Soon I expect to be giving a seminar called, “Passing the Baton.”

In it, I will address the concept of continuing ISKCON after the present GBC members have departed this world. I know this sounds a bit morbid, but none of us will remain here after about 100 years. It would be most tragic if our ultimate managing authorities were to depart from us physically without others to succeed them. In the sastras, the disciplic succession is explained in verses 4.1-2 of the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*. “The Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna, said: ‘I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god, Vivasvan, and Vivasvan instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Iksvaku.’ ” And “This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way. But in course of time the succession was broken, and therefore the science as it is appears to be lost.”

This indicates that ISKCON is based on the principle of empowerment.

Srila Prabhupada created the GBC in 1970 with the idea that ISKCON would survive beyond his departure. He seemed to be optimistic about the movement’s future. However he did several times say that we could “spoil everything.” [For example, in London in a *Bhagavad-gita* lecture dated July 30, 1973].

In Giriraja Maharaja’s offering in the *Vyasa-puja* book of 2016 (page 32) it is written that a visitor asked Srila Prabhupada, “So many spiritual organizations begin well, but after the founder dies the institutions break apart because the followers fight over the material assets of the institution. What will happen to ISKCON after you leave?” Srila Prabhupada replied, ‘That will not happen in ISKCON, because these American and European boys and girls have had enough of material opulence and enjoyment, from before...In fact, they have given up their material wealth and facilities to join ISKCON, so they will not fight over these things.’ ”

In a letter to Hansadutta, he wrote, “So I want you leaders especially to become very much absorbed in the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gita*...and become yourselves completely convinced and free from all doubt. On this platform you shall be able to carry on the work...” (June 22, 1972)

I beg to remain,
your servant

Mukunda Goswami