



Spiritual Perspectives

August 2018

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

Don't Fall in Love, Build It

By Radha devi dasi

One of the depressing things about modern life is the increasing rate of divorce. In North America and Western Europe, around one-third of first marriages end in divorce. Even in traditional societies in places like India and East Asia, divorce rates are climbing noticeably. Srila



Bride and groom participate in a Vaishnava wedding ceremony

Prabhupada was firm on the idea that marriage is for life. He stopped participating in devotees' marriages when he found that his young disciples had not imbibed the idea of lifetime commitment. The Vaishnava ideal, however, is still an arranged marriage that lasts a lifetime.

Those of us who grew up in the West were raised on a fairy tale scenario in which two people meet, fall in love, and live happily ever after. For us, arranged marriage seems like a trap that destines the spouses to a lifetime of regret, or a cold hearted business transaction. Recent psychological research, however, shows that love is stronger when it is carefully cultivated by two people than when they fall in love.

Dr. Robert Epstein, an American research psychologist, recently spoke to National Public Radio and the UK's Daily Mail about his research into arranged marriages. He found that arranged marriages are more likely to lead to long term passion than love matches. While those in love matches report feeling love for their spouse at the time of marriage, those feelings tend to fade over time. Those in arranged marriage may initially be strangers to each other. But after ten years of marriage, they have connections that are twice as strong as those found in love matches.

Dr. Epstein points to a few factors that lead to this phenomenon. The effect of social and family support

for arranged marriages is profound according to Dr. Epstein. Equally important, however, are the expectations of the newly married spouses. Those in arranged marriages, for instance, understand that it will take time and effort for them to become close. They are

willing to put in that effort because they understand that they won't meet their goal of having a successful marriage without it. Such partners understand that their marriage will require tolerance and good communication.

Those in love matches, on the other hand, believe that they have already put in the effort they need to create love. They expect that their feelings of love will naturally increase and often expect their spouse to understand their unspoken needs and desires.

In some sense, the differing models of marriage reflect the difference between a *varnashram* based society and an individualistic society. When one places duty before enjoyment and the needs of the group before one's individual needs, the effort needed to create a strong marriage does not seem unreasonable. For those who were taught that "if it feels good, do it," the question is not why so many marriages fail, but how any marriages succeed.

And these differing expectations and paradigms affect all of our relationships, including the most important one. Our relationship with Krishna, just like a marriage, requires that we give time and attention. If we want to succeed, we have to make this relationship our first priority. If we simply go through the motions, expecting that love for the Supreme will spontaneously manifest, we may find ourselves disappointed.

Divya's Kitchen Voted in the Top 10 Restaurants in Manhattan

By: ISKCON News Staff, *ISKCON News*, July 22, 2018
<https://bit.ly/2M7shF1>



<https://bit.ly/2M7shF1>

The cozy environment at Divya's Kitchen (Photo by Prentiss Alter)

There are over 20,000 restaurants in Manhattan, New York City. There is no shortage of choices in terms of the different local and ethnic cuisines and types of dietary preferences the millions who live or visit here follow.

To help customers make educated decisions about which restaurants are worth a try, each month, OpenTable.com evaluates 400,000 new diners' reviews.

Based on such reviews, in July, Divya's Kitchen, an Ayurvedic restaurant located on the ground floor of the Bhakti Center on Manhattan's Lower East Side has been voted into the Top Ten! What makes this achievement even more unique is that Divya's Kitchen is the only vegetarian/vegan restaurant on the list.

By only using organic, local, fresh ingredients for their relatively simple but very tasty and nutritious Indian and continental dishes, served in a relaxing, cozy but elegant environment, Chef Divya Alter, manager Prentiss Alter and the team have made vegetarian and vegan dining a unique calming, nourishing and healing experience.



<https://bit.ly/2M7shF1>

Chef Divya Alter (photo by Shikha Sharma)

ISKCON Teachers Get Much-Needed Support at 5th Education Conference

By: Madhava Smullen, *ISKCON News*, July 11, 2018
<https://bit.ly/2AKSW66>

Teachers at ISKCON's schools work very hard, often with little support – so the chance to connect and collaborate with fellow educators from all over North America at the fifth annual ISKCON Education Conference was a blessing.

Running from Thursday, June 21st to Sunday, June 24th, the event took place at the Bhaktivedanta Academy Montessori school in Alachua, Florida. It was organized by Bhaktivedanta Academy principal Visvambhara Dasa, with help from Hanumatpresaka Swami and Dallas' TKG Academy vice principal Gopi Gita Dasi.

Twenty-three educators participated in person, from ISKCON schools in Dallas, Houston, Alachua, and North Carolina. A handful more from Sunday Schools in Baltimore, New Jersey, Detroit and ISKCON Silicon Valley participated online through Google Hangouts.

The main goal of the conference was to finish and revise a set of standards for all ISKCON schools and Sunday schools in North America to adhere to. This would get them endorsed by the ISKCON Ministry of Education as official ISKCON-affiliated schools, which would eventually see the Ministry

Continued on page 3



<https://bit.ly/2AKSW66>

ISKCON educators meet at the 5th Annual Education Conference

providing teacher training, child protection resources and even financial assistance.

Educators successfully completed the basic Level 1 endorsement standards at the conference, a major accomplishment three years in the making. This will give schools the minimum requirements to receive an official ISKCON stamp. Work on the more in-depth Level 2 continues.

Within this main topic, educators spent several hours discussing child protection and how to bring schools across ISKCON North America up to the appropriate standards.

They also talked about what it means to be aligned with Srila Prabhupada; what different challenges they faced in the course of their service; and what resources are available for them to solve those challenges.

support. Immediately we could see that even just with everyone in the room right then, we had the resources available to help fix the problems we were facing.”

Another powerful part of the conference was Radhika Ramana Dasa’s presentation. In it, he spoke about how ISKCON educators could ensure that our children don’t feel isolated and different from the rest of the world, while staying strong in their own beliefs. We can, he pointed out, bridge the gap between Western culture and our own Krishna conscious practices.

A final achievement of the conference was the creation of I-SENA (ISKCON School Educators of North America), a closed online group on Facebook and Google Drive where educators can share resources, challenges and successes.

Looking to the future, Gopi Gita hopes that the Conference can help ISKCON educators feel that they are supported and their service is valued – something she says has sadly been missing.

“I hope our next step will be to connect with temple presidents and remind them that caring for our children through these educational initiatives should be at the top of their priorities list,” she says. “And that giving teachers a voice and a place to turn to when they’re experiencing challenges will strengthen them, which will in turn help our children feel a lot more comfortable and protected.”

Next year, Gopi Gita expects double the number of participants at the Conference.

“This was the most empowering and exciting conference that I’ve been to out of all five so far,”



<https://bit.ly/2AKSW66>

Sharing ideas

“The conference was very collaborative,” says Gopi Gita. “In one session we shared areas where we needed support, and areas where we could give

Continued on page 4

Gopi Gita says. “To work with fellow educators across ISKCON; to complete endorsement standards in collaborative settings; to identify resources and struggles in many areas; to learn so much and feel so connected with dear friends; to be able to help put it together; was a total dream come true. So if you’re an ISKCON educator, please come to our next Education Conference in 2019 to feel completely rejuvenated!”



<https://bit.ly/2AKSW66>

The conference gave teachers much-needed collaboration and support

TOVP Hires Cushman & Wakefield to Manage Completion of the Project

By: Sunanda das, *ISKCON News*, July 28, 2018

<https://bit.ly/2nfHRjL>

The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium (TOVP) management team has recently made an important decision to hire the assistance of a world-leading Project Management Consultancy (PMC) company, Cushman and Wakefield, to partner with them for the completion of the TOVP by the proposed 2022 Gaura Purnima time-frame.

This is a standard practice in the construction industry for projects of this extraordinary size and complexity, and essential for the timely and budgeted work ahead now that the temple superstructure is finished. Cushman and Wakefield have been a household name in the construction industry for over one hundred years with over 45,000 employees now operating in 40 offices and 70 countries around the world.

The role of a PMC is to take the lead management role in the design management, cost management and construction management of the project, acting as the extended arm and implementation team of the client for whom they are working in full cooperation to achieve their ultimate vision. A PMC offers the most efficient management solution for increasing and improving the



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The under construction ToVP building as of June 2018

overall efficiency and outcome of a project. This is accomplished by undertaking a planned series of synchronized and budgeted activities through well thought out planning and coordination, resulting in a highly organized, monitored and controlled strategy to produce a functionally and financially viable project that will be completed on time, within authorized cost and to the required quality standards.

After several months of rigorous research, interviews and evaluation, TOVP Chairman Ambarisa Dasa selected the best of the best, the company he felt would be the most qualified and experienced to handle the needs of the TOVP project and bring the optimal results. A company that

Continued on page 5

would offer outstanding professional construction oversight, superlative financial management and timely completion of the project to fulfill Srila Prabhupada's dearest vision of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium.

With the services of Cushman and Wakefield on board, Ambarisa and the TOVP Team are now fully confident that their combined goal of offering Srila Prabhupada the completed TOVP will

be achieved by 2022. That year will not only celebrate the Grand Opening of the temple, but the most auspicious 50th anniversary of the *Mayapur* project as well. The TOVP team feels it will be a time of great rejoicing throughout ISKCON as Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's sankirtana movement reaches new heights of expansion and development that will have far-reaching effects into the future for generations to come.

Frankenfish & Why Some Edibles just Aren't Good Food

By: Karuna Dharini Devi Dasi, www.Dandavats.com, July 27, 2018
<https://bit.ly/2ARGots>



<https://bit.ly/2ARGots>

quarters in Maynard, Massachusetts, Aqua Bounty has been conducting fishy experiments since the early 90s. To produce the Frankenfish, the genetic material of cold water Atlantic Ocean pout (looks like an eel) is inserted into an artificially compressed salmon egg. The pout puts on fat faster than a salmon, hence the combination makes a fattier fish. However, the material from the pout doesn't exactly combine with the salmon's DNA. It is rejected, causing inflammation. A growth factor (GF-1) is then added to accelerate reproduction of the inflammation. The fish grows twice as big and three times as fast as it would have without the engineering.

With so many fast-food restaurants looking for a substitute for red meats, linked to obesity and heart disease,

Recent advances in genetic engineering (GE) seem to twist nature's arm. Now scientists alter the genetic code within seeds or eggs to make "improved" plants and animals. Wealthy countries use special GE corn and soy to insure an enormous cash crop in the form of fodder for livestock and to make ingredients for processed fast food, such as the corn syrup in soft drinks.

So far scientists have mastered a few crops, but will they revolutionize the food industry with an engineered fish? In December 2012, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced its intention to sanction the first transgenic living organism. GE opponents quickly dubbed it "the Frankenfish."

It was invented by Aqua Bounty at their farm in Prince Edward Island, Canada. With head-

fish is in big demand. Because of over fishing, the ocean population of wild fish is predicted to become nearly extinct in this century. Fish farms are the future. Will the FDA approve the mass production of a manipulated living organism for human consumption?

Fears of the Frankenfish

Some internal biologists predict that eating the GE fish will cause allergic reactions and stomach ulcers. The FDA does not do any testing itself; all of the testing is left up to Aqua Bounty, which claims their fish is perfectly safe. Some environmental scientists say the new fish poses a danger to ocean fish. A Frankenfish loose in the sea would enter the food chain and quickly create an imbalance. After some decades native ocean fish would be wiped out.

Continued on page 6

Those who wish for ethical treatment of animals complain that this fish will never spawn, swim freely, or live a full life span. And the poor creatures tend to develop birth defects from growth hormones, grow hump backs, and develop jaw erosion or multi systemic focal inflammation. As sterile females with poor longevity, they will require gallons of antibiotics to remain alive in their small underwater fish farms. They will need to be harvested at an early age to prevent disease from establishing itself within the stock.

Environmentalists predict disaster, animal rights advocates cry cruelty, and biologists describe possible health risks and lawsuits. Meanwhile the FDA announces they are on the verge of approval. Is there a veritable edible monster waiting for us in the basement of world food consumption?

It would seem we need to ask ourselves a basic question before we can even begin to confront the lurking horror of the Frankenfish: What is legitimate human food?

Good Food

We can determine when food is good, filled with inherent nutritious energy, by qualities such as texture, moisture, color, aroma, and radiance. A tree-ripened mango has a glow, hue, and perfume that can attract attention from across a room. How many times have we had a meal with family or friends when someone remarked, "Wow, this tastes amazing!" Good flavor has integrity; it entralls us because it contains vital subtle elements of the earth imparted to plants. Tasty and satisfying, simple fruits or vegetables can sustain the body and deliver vitality all day long. The ancient Vedas call this potency *pusti*. Though generally translated as "nutrition," it is Mother Earth's gracious power, bestowed by the Supreme Lord, to sustain and maintain all living creatures.

Srila Prabhupada comments on the inherent value of plants: "Krishna's arrangement is complete. The herbs, plants, trees, and creepers, they grow luxuriously and supply the needs of the human being. Every plant and creeper has got some service. We simply do not know how to use them. Experienced men, they collect so many *ausadhi* [herbs]. We are neglecting these herbs and vegetables, but because we do not know how to use them we are confronted with so many bills from the doctor." (Lecture, 1974)

Our ability to discern how every vegetable and creeper has some service to offer human beings can be the dawning of spiritual awareness, as

well as good health. In his purport to *Bhagavad-gita* 17.10, Srila Prabhupada writes:

The purpose of food is to increase the duration of life, purify the mind, and aid bodily strength. This is its only purpose. In the past, great authorities selected only those foods that best aid health and increase life's duration, such as milk products, sugar, rice, wheat, fruits, and vegetables... All these foods are pure by nature. They are quite distinct from untouchable things like meat and liquor. Fatty foods, as mentioned in the eighth verse, have no connection with animal fat obtained by slaughter. Animal fat is available in the form of milk, which is the most wonderful of all foods. Milk, butter, cheese, and similar products give animal fat in a form which rules out any need for the killing of innocent creatures. Slaughter is the way of subhumans. Protein is amply available through split peas, dal, whole wheat, etc.

Food is our most fundamental connection with the Supreme. God imparts the delicious mystery of exquisite taste and also the relief of hunger. He is our very power of digestion. By His grace we are enjoying life.

Srila Prabhupada writes:

According to Ayurvedic *sastra*, we understand that there is a fire in the stomach which digests all food sent there. When the fire is not blazing there is no hunger, and when the fire is in order we become hungry. Sometimes when the fire is not going nicely, treatment is required. In any case, this fire is a representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead... *Sabdadhībhyo 'ntah pratisthanac ca* [Vedanta-sutra 1.2.27]: the Lord is situated within sound and within the body, within air and even within the stomach as the digestive force. There are four kinds of food-stuff –some are drunk, some are chewed, some are licked up, and some are sucked and He is the digestive force in all of them. (*Bhagavad-gita* 15.14, Purport)

Meanwhile the long-term effects of genetically modified (GM) foodstuffs on human health and the environment remain in question. As the fire of digestion, the Supreme Personality of Godhead doesn't have to efficiently digest foods not chosen by Vedic authorities as fit for human consumption. And chronic indigestion causes disease.

We depend fully on food, yet with all of modern industrial enterprise we cannot devise anything that can take its place. No modern scientific laboratory equipped with chemicals,

Continued on page 7

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

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test tubes, and scientists with Ph.D.'s has ever invented a way to manufacture food in a tube. Certainly they try; to do so would be highly useful. Their efforts in the form of genetically modifying plants and animals have been arduous and even grotesque.

Srila Prabhupada explains: Godless civilization — they can no more depend on the natural gifts. They think that by industrial enterprises they will get more money and they'll be happy. And to remain satisfied with the food grains, vegetables, and natural gifts is a primitive idea. They say, "It is primitive." When men were not civilized, they would depend on nature, but when they are advanced in civilization, they must discover industrial enterprises. (Lecture, 1974)

Since the dawn of history human beings have obediently cooperated with nature by becoming the cultivators of seeds, plants, and trees. Now they've become manipulators, violating the laws of nature, which are under the strict jurisdiction of the Supreme. Man is allowed to produce food in gracious cooperation with nature but is not allowed to exploit her resources to maximize profit or for the slaughter of innocent creatures.

Food As a Loving Offering

According to the *Bhagavad-gita* (3.14), "All living beings subsist on food grains, which are produced from rains. Rains are produced by performance of yajna [sacrifice], and yajna is born of prescribed duties." Srila Prabhupada comments: "Food grains and vegetables are factually eatables. The human being eats different kinds of food grains, vegetables, fruits, etc., and the animals eat the refuse of the food grains and vegetables, grass, plants, etc. Human beings who are accustomed to eating meat and flesh must also depend on the production of vegetation in order to eat the animals. Therefore, ultimately, we have to depend on the production of the field and not on the production of big factories. . . . The Lord can be satisfied by sacrifices; therefore, one who cannot perform them will find himself in scarcity — that is the law of nature."

The Lord does not say that in order to ensure our survival we need to splice together the genes of several fruits and fishes. Rather, He recommends spiritual sacrifice. He is God, so supplying food to us, no matter how many of us there are, is never beyond His abilities. As

Mahatma Gandhi said, "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed."

Srila Prabhupada and the *Bhagavad-gita* strongly recommend we seek the help of God for getting food. By doing everything we do to please the supplier of the raw ingredients, we transform the way we think of food, and the way we grow, cook, distribute, and eat it.

Whatever food the devotee receives, he or she first offers it to Krishna, who says in the *Bhagavad-gita* (9.26), "If one offers me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, I will accept it." Lord Krishna asks only that our foods be offered to Him with love.

Srila Prabhupada writes: "In this way our karma is neutralized, for from the very beginning we are thinking that the food will be offered to Krishna. We should have no personal desires for the food. Krishna is so merciful, however, that He gives us food to eat. In this way our desire is fulfilled. When one has molded his life in this way dovetailing his desires to Krishna's then it is to be understood that he has attained perfection in yoga." (*The Perfection of Yoga*, Chapter 4).

In the practice of yoga, eating a properly prepared meal is required for mental and physical health. What's more, it is an essential component for developing our feelings of love of God. Just as cooking a meal for someone you care about is a gesture of affection, cooking meals for the Lord is a special act of transcendental love. The devotee collects and prepares the best natural ingredients with respect for the source of those ingredients and then offers food to Krishna with prescribed prayers. The devotee partakes of the freshly cooked meal with a grateful awareness born of sacrifice. For one who eats only fine food prepared and offered with love, a special appreciation for what is sacred and pure develops. Krishna is the very taste and love in the food. Who can impart divine realization through the sensation of flavor? It must be someone at least as ingenious as the most ingenious scientist. Give credit where credit is due. Let's first determine what Krishna wants to eat, what He considers proper food, and prepare our meals with Him in mind. Then there will no longer be any question or debate about what is food. We will be fully satisfied and well fed, too.

Personal

Message...



Dear Friends,

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

Here are excerpts I recently compiled from various sources:

• “Then the *Bhaṭṭācārya* asked Caitanya Mahāprabhu, ‘Which item is most important in the execution of devotional service?’ The Lord replied that the most important item was the chanting of the holy name of the Lord.” – *Caitanya-charitamrita, Madhya-lila*, 6th chapter, 241st verse.

• “Know that all opulent, beautiful and glorious creations spring from but a spark of My splendor.” – Lord Krishna speaking in *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, 10.41

• Pirates of the Caribbean kidnapped Mr. Joseph Donbey in 1793, thus ensuring that the US remain for the time being a non-metric (Imperial) country. Thomas Jefferson, then Secretary of State for the newly formed US, had commissioned his pal, Mr. Donbey, to carry from France, a copper kilogram cylinder, slated to pave the way for US metrification. Unfortunately, the Frenchman’s ship was blown off course to the Caribbean Sea. He and the ship were hijacked by pirates, and Donbey died in captivity, his metal weight lost forever. Thus, the US is stuck with the McDonald’s quarter-pounder (burger) and other madness. Imperial absurdities include 1 gram = 0.0353 ounces, 1 millimetre = 0.0394 inches and 1 foot = 0.305 metres.

• Srila Prabhupada’s teachings included many English proverbs, such as ‘To err is human,’ ‘Trust no future, however pleasant,’ ‘It is folly to be wise where ignorance is bliss,’ ‘Dust thou art...,’ ‘The face is the mirror of the mind,’ ‘Time and tide wait for no man,’ ‘Necessity knows no law,’ ‘Eat drink and be merry...,’ ‘As ye sow ye shall reap,’ ‘God give us our daily bread,’ ‘Birds of a feather...,’ and ‘Sour grapes.’

• No one is happy in the material world except those who are totally insane and those who are on the topmost level of spiritual realization. The relevant *Srimad-Bhagavatam* verse is: “Both the lowest of fools and he who is transcendental to all intelligence enjoy happiness, whereas persons between them suffer the material pangs.” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 3.7.17).

• Srila Prabhupada, during his *grihastha* ashram, read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and worshipped Radha and Krishna Deities for 4 hours every day, according to his late son, Vrindavan Chandra De, said His Holiness Tamal Krishna Goswami in a recorded interview published in the book, *Memories* — Volume 3, pages 12 and 13. It can also be viewed in the DVD *Memories* series Tape # 29.

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

Mukunda Goswami

