



Spiritual Perspectives

Seeing the World through Spiritual Eyes

For Friends and Followers of Mukunda Goswami

November 2020

What We Believe

By Radha Devi Dasi

The coronavirus is subjecting countries around the world to a punishing test of solidarity at a time when many were already consumed with harsh political and societal divisions. According to members of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, political polarization increasingly threatens a large and growing number of democracies around the world. We have become less willing to listen to those who don't agree with us and more willing to fracture relationships in order to prove how right we are.

But how do we know when we are in the right? According to the *Bhagavad-gita*, materially conditioned souls are driven by the three modes of material nature. While we often think we are defending a position founded in reason and logic, this is rarely the case. Recent research into how people make choices shows we tend to pick a position first and then use reason and logic to defend the position.

Swedish experimental psychologist Petter Johansson has carefully examined how people develop and express preferences. In one study, he showed participants photographs of two different faces and asked them to pick a favorite. He then handed them a photograph and asked them to explain why they had chosen that face. However, using sleight of hand learned from magicians, he handed participants the photos they had not chosen. Surprisingly, three quarters of the people in the study went on to explain why the unchosen photo was their favorite. In other words, they really had no preference (as evidenced by the inability to recognize the switch) but were prepared to defend "what they believe."

This phenomenon, called choice blindness, is not limited to preferences around physical ap-

pearance. In another study, Johansson asked a group of Swedish subjects a dozen questions about where they stood on political issues – such as taxes and health care. Their written survey answers were then handed to them, except that left-wing people were shown right-wing answers and right-wing people were shown answers that were more left-wing. Then they were asked to justify their selections.

Again, most people failed to spot the switch. A subject who a minute earlier supported a rise in the petrol tax now proceeded to explain why there should be no such tax hike. They gave explanations that made perfect sense even though a few minutes earlier they would have rejected those same explanations.

As the *Bhagavad-gita* implies, we lack self-knowledge about our motives and choices. The modes of nature drive our decisions and we defend the policies of our "team" without really understanding why. A striking example of this was in the last US election. Republicans have traditionally been pro-free trade - but when Trump began to advocate protectionist policies, most Republicans continued to back him, without even seeming to notice the shift.

All of this has important implications for those of us who hope to foster unity, both within ISKCON and in the larger world. First, we have to realize the limits of logic in trying to build bridges between groups with differing ideologies. Understanding emotional triggers and issues around identity is crucial to understanding each other. More importantly, spiritual growth is the key to overcoming the modes of material nature. Until we take shelter of Krishna, we will continue to be driven by forces beyond our control or understanding. Spiritual knowledge is essential if we want real unity.



<https://bbc.in/34Yuxad>

"Asked to make a choice between two things - two faces, or two politicians, perhaps - you may think you know very well the reason you picked A rather than B. But do you?"

—BBC World Service

British Queen Elizabeth Grateful for “Back To Godhead” Article

By: Anuttama Dasa, *ISKCON News*, October 1, 2020
<https://bit.ly/3oYDQig>

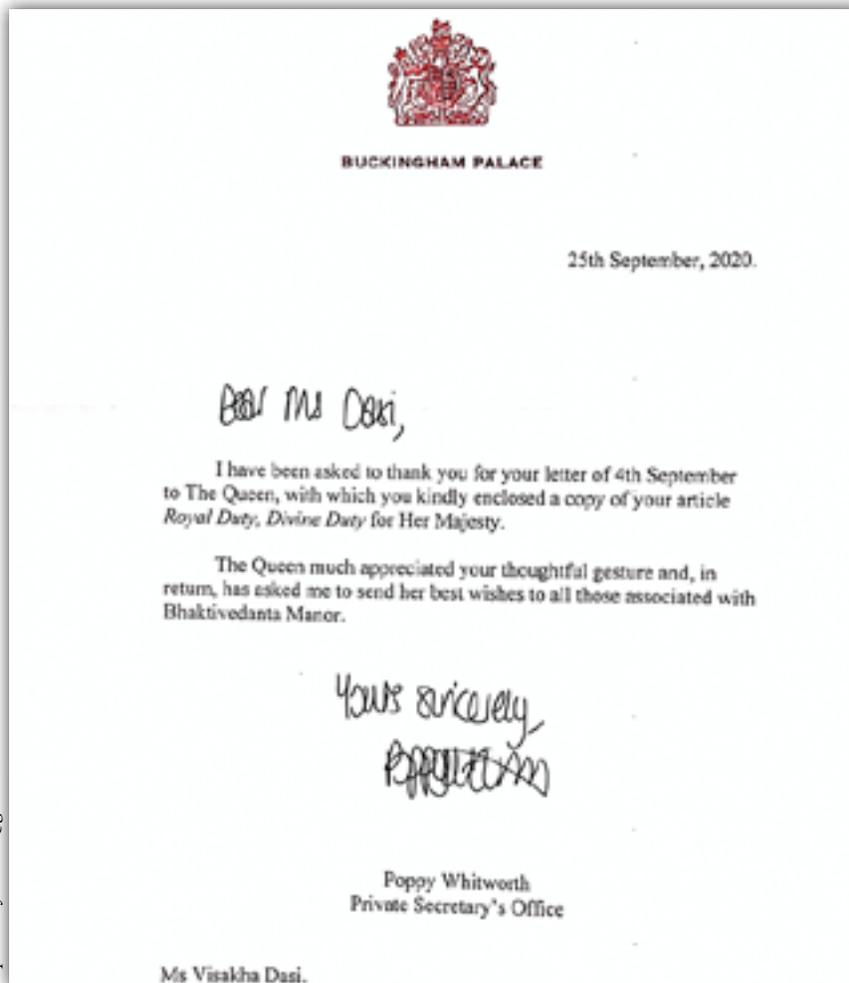
A letter was recently sent to the president of Bhaktivedanta Manor, Visakha dasi, from Her Majesty the Queen of England, via her Private Secretary's Office. The letter thanked Vishaka for her recent "Back To Godhead" article about the Queen, entitled, "Royal Duty - Divine Duty" that was published in the July/August edition of BTG.

"It was a very positive article praising the Queen's devotion to her duty, and how everyone can get closer to God through our own attention to duty and service," reports Radha Mohan Das, ISKCON Communication spokesperson at the Manor.

The Queen has had multiple interactions with ISKCON in recent years, including inviting ISKCON leaders to the Buckingham Palace for special events, and a personal royal visit to the Krishna Avanti Primary School in Harrow, UK, with her husband, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, during her Majesty's Jubilee celebrations in 2012.



Queen Elizabeth II



His Grace Jasomatinandana Prabhu Passes Away

By: Kamala Radha devi dasi, ISKCON News, October 24, 2020

<https://bit.ly/2U6OLIN>

On Saturday the 24th of October 2020 at approximately 5 p.m. Indian Standard Time, His Grace Jasomatinandana Prabhu left this planet. He had been hospitalized with Covid-19 for nearly two weeks and was in the city of Ahmedabad, India; he passed away due to cardiac arrest.

His Grace Jasomatinandana Prabhu was an exemplary devotee and spent many years in service to ISKCON. After meeting Srila Prabhupada in America, Jasomatinandana Prabhu developed a wonderful spiritual taste and started many preaching efforts in his home state of Gujarat. He was the non-GBC Regional Secretary for Gujarat and a member of the ISKCON Bureau. He supervised the translation of almost all of Srila Prabhupada's books into Gujarati and throughout his life remained committed to book distribution. Under his supervision, Krishna consciousness spread throughout Gujarat and over 15 temples were opened. Srila Prabhupada would be pleased with all his services over the last nearly 50 years.

His Holiness Radhanath Swami made the following statement on hearing of the passing of Jasomatinandana Prabhu:

My sincerest, heartfelt love, prayers and gratitude for His Grace Yasomatinandana Prabhu, who has dedicated his life and soul in the service of Srila Prabhupada in Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's *Sankirtan* movement. His devotional service is glorious and historical.

Your servant,
Radhanath Swami



<https://bit.ly/2U6OLIN>

His Grace Jasomatinandana Prabhu

The following is a statement from Communications Minister His Grace Anuttama das:

Dear Vaishnavas,

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

I am deeply saddened to hear of the passing of our dear Godbrother Jasomatinandana Prabhu. He has been a pillar of ISKCON and an important leader of our India yatra for decades.

Last year I spent time in Ahmedabad with Jasomatinandana where I marveled at his accomplishments. And, I participated with him and many local dignitaries in an event renaming the street in front of the temple after Srila Prabhupada. Despite his ailments and weakened condition, Jasomatinandana Prabhu was always jolly and only talking of Srila Prabhupada.

Over the years, whenever I visit the Juhu Temple I always stop by the photo displayed in the guestroom hallway of Jasomatinandana Prabhu and Srila Prabhupada. While looking at the two of them, I think about how dedicated Jaso Prabhu is to Srila Prabhupada and how much Srila Prabhupada must love him.

I pray that Prabhupada now gives Jasomatinandana Prabhu his complete shelter and that Jaso may reach the highest abode to be again engaged in the Lord's eternal lila.

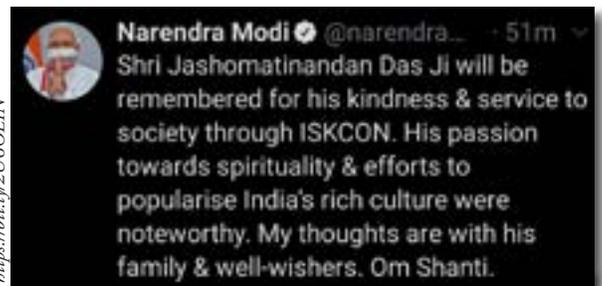
Your servant,
Anuttama dasa
Minister of Communications

The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi shared his condolences for the passing away of Sriman Jasomatinandana Prabhu on his Twitter account.



<https://bit.ly/2U6OLIN>

His Grace Jasomatinandana Prabhu during Harinam



<https://bit.ly/2U6OLIN>

Our community collectively prays for His Grace Josomatinandana Prabhu and requests all to kindly pray for him so that he attains the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha Shyamasundara.

Vrindavan, the Playground of God — WhatsApp Kartik Parikrama

By: Dimple Parmar, *ISKCON News*, October 17, 2020

<https://bit.ly/3p03u6a>



School of Bhakti, United Kingdom, will hold a virtual 30-day walkthrough of the mystical village of Vrindavan - the playground of God, where every step is a dance, and every word a song! There will be daily morning videos, in which Sutapa Das and Radhika-Ranjana Das will visit the sacred sites, sharing daily meditations and stories to inspire devotees' hearts. Every evening there will be a special *Damodarastakam* video for everyone to sing along to while offering candles at their home.

Every Saturday evening there will be unique gatherings with special guests.

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To book the free *Parikrama* trip visit www.bit.ly/Kartik20 and you will receive the link to join the WhatsApp group where only the Admin will be able to post messages.

For more info visit on the School of Bhakti, visit www.schoolofbhakti.com

The Opening of the TOVP Postponed

By: Administrator, www.dandavats.com, October 25, 2020

<https://bit.ly/3jYQc8>

Dear ISKCON Leaders and Devotees Worldwide,

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

As you know, we have planned for some time now to shift the Mayapur Deities into the new TOVP temple room by 2022. In the meantime, of course, the COVID-19 Pandemic came on the scene and all construction came to a halt from mid-March to mid-October 2020, and it is only now that we have restarted the construction in a limited phase-like manner. Also, during this period we have faced and continue to face a significant financial downturn. In light of all these difficulties and serious delays we met with our project management consultant, Cushman & Wakefield, and discussed the matter threadbare.

The unanimous and obvious conclusion was that, considering all these factors and the quantum of work to be completed, it will not be possible to have the TOVP Opening in 2022. Therefore, we are hereby appraising you that we are postponing the shifting of the Deities and the opening date to 2023, and only somewhat later can we confirm the exact months of the opening.

Even for successfully meeting our new target date of 2023 for the TOVP Opening we are entirely dependent upon the whole ISKCON Society to help us achieve that goal. We, consequently, are looking to each and every ISKCON leader and all the devotees within their Zones to assist us by endeavoring to see that every devotee fulfills their pledge to the TOVP in the quickest pos-

Continued on page 5

sible time. Additionally, it is imperative for each leader to enthusiastically encourage their temple congregation to pitch in their might. It must be realized that we, just a few of us, have no real capacity to bring up and complete such a monumental and unique project, the personal vision of Srila Prabhupada and the entire *Parampara*, in isolation and without the full and active support of every leader and devotee in ISKCON.

Likewise, we were planning to hold the Inauguration and Installation of the unique TOVP worshipping pose *Murti* of Srila Prabhupada in Sridham Mayapur on February 27, 2021. However, given the great unlikelihood that any GBC members or significant number of devotees will be attending at that time, due to the continuing COVID-19 Pandemic, we have decided to also postpone that event. Nevertheless, we are most eager to have this extremely auspicious and historic Inauguration at the soonest possible time and have rescheduled it for October 2021 during the month of Damodar (date to be announced).

We humbly request all devotees to please continue with their pledge payments, and whenever possible, to give again. Our fundraising focus for the next year will be the installation of the new Prabhupada murti in the TOVP, and you can

now sponsor an *abhisheka* for that purpose at the TOVP website as indicated below. This will be our worldwide *dakshina* to our Founder/*Acharya*, and our combined welcome and greeting to him into the TOVP. This will also provide an important steady stream of income to our current construction work and the payment of existing bills to vendors.

We regret having to make this grave announcement, but under the circumstances we feel this is the only practical path to follow under the circumstances. We both wish all of you our sincere thanks for your continued support and beg your prayers for the successful opening of the TOVP in 2023.

Your servants,
Ambarisa das – Chairman
Braja Vilasa das – Director of Development

To sponsor an *abhisheka* for the Grand Installation of the new Prabhupada *murti* in the TOVP please go to the TOVP website: www.tovp.org

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

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<https://bit.ly/3jYSQe8>

Personal Message



Dear Friends,

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

On the Fourth of July, 2020 the COVID-19 virus took the life of one of Srila Prabhupada's dearest disciples, Bhakti Charu Swami. Several other ISKCONITES have departed this world, having been victimized by this most dangerous pandemic. Their names are being intentionally withheld here as permission to use them has not been granted at this time.

The following two excerpts are from the writings of a devotee with a PhD in biotechnology:

- As of October 3, 2020, COVID-19 has infected 34,666,560 people and killed 1,029,394 people worldwide, according to the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering.

With the global pandemic in full swing, pharmaceutical companies, government researchers, and others are working to accelerate the development process for COVID-19 treatment. In the field of allopathic medical research, there are currently no approved drugs specifically for the treatment of COVID-19. Researchers are exploring and studying either new drugs, or drugs that are already approved for other health conditions (called as drug repurposing), as potential antidotes for COVID-19. Because COVID-19 is a multi-armed virus, which attacks several organs thereby hijacking many different systems in the body, it is unlikely that any single drug will be fully effective. As per the leading virologists working in the field, the best treatment to combat the novel coronavirus is predicted to be a combination of different drugs.

- The gold standard to determine whether a drug would work requires trials to be placebo-controlled, double-blinded and randomized. That means some patients will be randomized to receive a placebo instead of the treatment drug and neither researchers nor patients know who gets what. Typically, every drug to be approved by government agencies, like the US FDA, must go through rigorous trials (Phase I, II and III). Hydroxychloroquine was initially approved for an emergency use authorization based on early studies, but those studies were small and not randomized or blinded. The FDA has now retracted the drug's emergency authorization and multiple studies, including large, randomized ones, which have shown no proven benefit from the drug in COVID-19 patients.

Thus, without any available effective treatment so far, this disease demands us to be cautious moving forward. It seems that practicing excellent hygiene, physical distancing and wearing our masks rather than cutting corners, are still considered the best approved ways to prevent contact-based infection.

The author also writes, "The lives of our devotees are too precious, and we must not adapt to any relaxed approaches to this serious health risk."

Your servant,

Mukunda Goswami

