

ENOUGH!

CULTURE FILE / SPIRIT MATTERS

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INSPIRE-ME-YOGI / ACTIVIST

Do What You Want!

WHAT'S LIFE WITHOUT SOME NUCLEAR LOVING?



21

Hot Nukes, Sweet Nukes
Seeking inner and outer peace in a mad world.

13

Do What You Want
Controlling your basic instincts frees you to taste the real thing: authentic nonmaterial pleasure.

25

Life – a Personal Affair
Genuine spiritual knowledge is neither vague nor abstract. Discover how.



How many people have you heard say "life is what you make it?"

Perhaps you've heard eloquent expressions, like, "Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."

Or "Do what makes you happy."

Or "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."

If you had asked me several years ago what I thought life was all about I would probably have quoted one of these cliches. However, what does life mean, really?

Setting aside clichés, we can easily admit that we all have a vision of life. We all have different concepts of what life means depending on what school of philosophy we embrace. This concept or vision determines our values, our desires, and our actions.

This magazine checks out life from the perspective of the oldest living wisdom culture on the planet. Now preserved in Sanskrit texts from India, this culture explains that our vision of life depends on who we think we really are.

Issue 8 explores this self-concept underlying our life vision. It also presents a broadminded understanding of life on all levels. The articles "Do What You

Want" and "Miswanting" examine misapplied desire – how the real self cannot be satisfied connecting with matter, and they show us that another level of life is attainable.

The article "Life – a Personal Affair" reveals a personal source, a personal centre of attraction, from which everything in this shadow world, and beyond, emanates. In this article, a description of the banyan tree – a fascinating image of life – demonstrates how our world is only a reflection of a higher reality.

At Enough! Magazine, we don't want to leave you just staring at the massive crises confronting our world. We also want to activate change – change for the individual, the community, and the planet. The article "Hot Nukes, Sweet Nukes," reveals the wisdom that can inspire this change.

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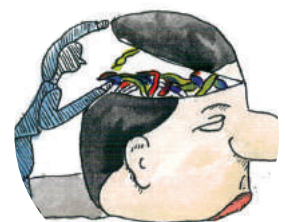


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Seeing is Believing

Don't remain trapped in dogma.
Enter the bhakti laboratory.

Contributor **Mahavan**

“Hey Mike! Mike!” I yelled. Walking for twenty minutes to the free gig in the park, my feet were sore. I had left my sneakers out in the rain the night before and had to borrow my flatmate’s plastic shoes, which were two sizes too small. The blister on my right foot was starting to make my eyes water, so I was really glad to hear the music and see brother Mike in the crowd. But he didn’t seem to recognise me, or maybe he just didn’t hear me over the band.

“Mike! Mikey!” I called again. I was closer now and caught his attention this time. Surprised, he turned, looking directly at me to see who was calling. His face looked outright confused. Oops.

“The only true things are the things that I can see.” But that’s not true, is it? Can we see the wind? Can we see the mind? Can we see time? No. But we all know that they exist, right?

It wasn't Mike but a guy who looked just like him. The same long wavy brown hair, same denim jacket, same height, the same everything, at least from a distance. “Oh, ah, sorry, ha ha. I . . . thought you were . . . someone else.” My embarrassed tone and sheepish look filled him in, and with a shrug the stranger turned back towards his friends and the stage.

To err is human, as the saying goes, but it can be quite embarrassing sometimes, can't it?

It's amazing how much faith we invest in our eyes, when so often they let us down. But somehow, with all our optical limitations and list of personal embarrassments, we are still convinced that “seeing is believing.”

“I don't see a higher reality, so it's obvious there isn't one,” we may confidently proclaim. Yet if we can muster up the courage to take an honest look at ourselves, behind our culturally created masks, we'll see what we're unconsciously saying doesn't really make sense: “The only true things are the things that I can see.” But that's not true, is it? Can we see the wind? Can we see the mind? Can we see time? No. But we all know that they exist, right?

TWO TYPES OF SEEING

That's right. Our everyday experience reveals two types of “seeing:” direct and indirect. Interestingly, in the modern scientific method, which prides itself on conclusions drawn from “observable evidence,” most of what we call “scientific evidence” is indirect. No one has directly seen an atom, for example, yet all reputable scientists accept it exists without hesitation. Why? Because although no scientist has directly seen an atom, we can still understand it exists, by observing its effect on things we can see directly. We may observe its “tracks” in a cloud chamber, or as blips on the screen of an oscilloscope.

If we were to remove all conclusions drawn from indirect evidence from what we call “science” today, we wouldn't be left with much evidence at all.

Just as indirect perception is accepted as evidence in contemporary scientific

method, the yoga texts of ancient India explain that although we can't directly see the nonmaterial reality with our limited senses, if we hear from the right source we can still be trained to perceive it. Where is the indirect evidence of a nonmaterial conscious self and the supreme conscious self? The Bhagavad Gita, for example, explains, “As the sun alone illuminates all this universe, so does the nonmaterial self within the body illuminate the whole body by consciousness.”

We can perceive the sun's presence through its energy, the sunshine, even though the sun itself may be invisible, being below the horizon. Similarly, we can verify the existence of the nonmaterial self through the presence of its energy, conscious awareness. What is the difference between a live body and a dead one? Conscious awareness. The fact that such awareness cannot be revived in a dead body by any material method, or even directly detected by any instrument of modern science, indicates that there is indeed something nonmaterial about us, the yoga wisdom suggests.

And what about the Supreme Consciousness? Bhagavad Gita also gives indirect evidence of the supreme conscious awareness: “This material nature, which is one of my energies, is working under my direction, producing all moving and non-moving beings.”

Why is there such precise structure and order in the cosmos? This question has mystified great thinkers from remote time. Can the precision with which the sun rises and sets, the rhythmic nature of the seasons and tides, or even the regulation of species for mating, have





← originated from, or be continuing in such an organised fashion simply by chance? Bhagavad Gita indicates that this regulation of the cosmos is indirect evidence of an intelligence far more powerful than human beings can wield or even imagine—the intelligence of the Supreme Consciousness.

THE BHAKTI QUALIFICATION

And how can we directly perceive the nonmaterial reality? Refreshingly, unlike many contemporary scientific hypotheses, which have no method of direct verification, texts such as Bhagavad Gita do offer a process to directly verify their tenets. For example, in the Gita's seventh chapter, Krishna says, "By the practice of bhakti-yoga you can know me as the origin of all energies both material and spiritual, completely, and free from all doubt." And this process of bhakti-yoga, unlike so many modern scientific experiments, is open to anyone, anytime, any place, with no other qualification than the sincere desire to understand reality as it is. In other words, anyone can experience the nonmaterial reality

directly, if they want to become qualified to do so.

In another Gita text, Krishna again stresses the bhakti qualification: "Only by pure bhakti-yoga can I be understood as I am, standing before you, and can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of my understanding." Meaning, bhakti-yoga is the experiment to directly verify Krishna's hypothesis of a nonmaterial reality, and the "bhakti laboratory" is open for all, regardless of age, ethnicity, nationality, and social and economic situation.

You might feel uncomfortable hearing, "Only by bhakti-yoga" can we verify this truth. Is this a dogmatic statement? No, not at all. Like any true science, the bhakti proposition is reasonable and verifiable.

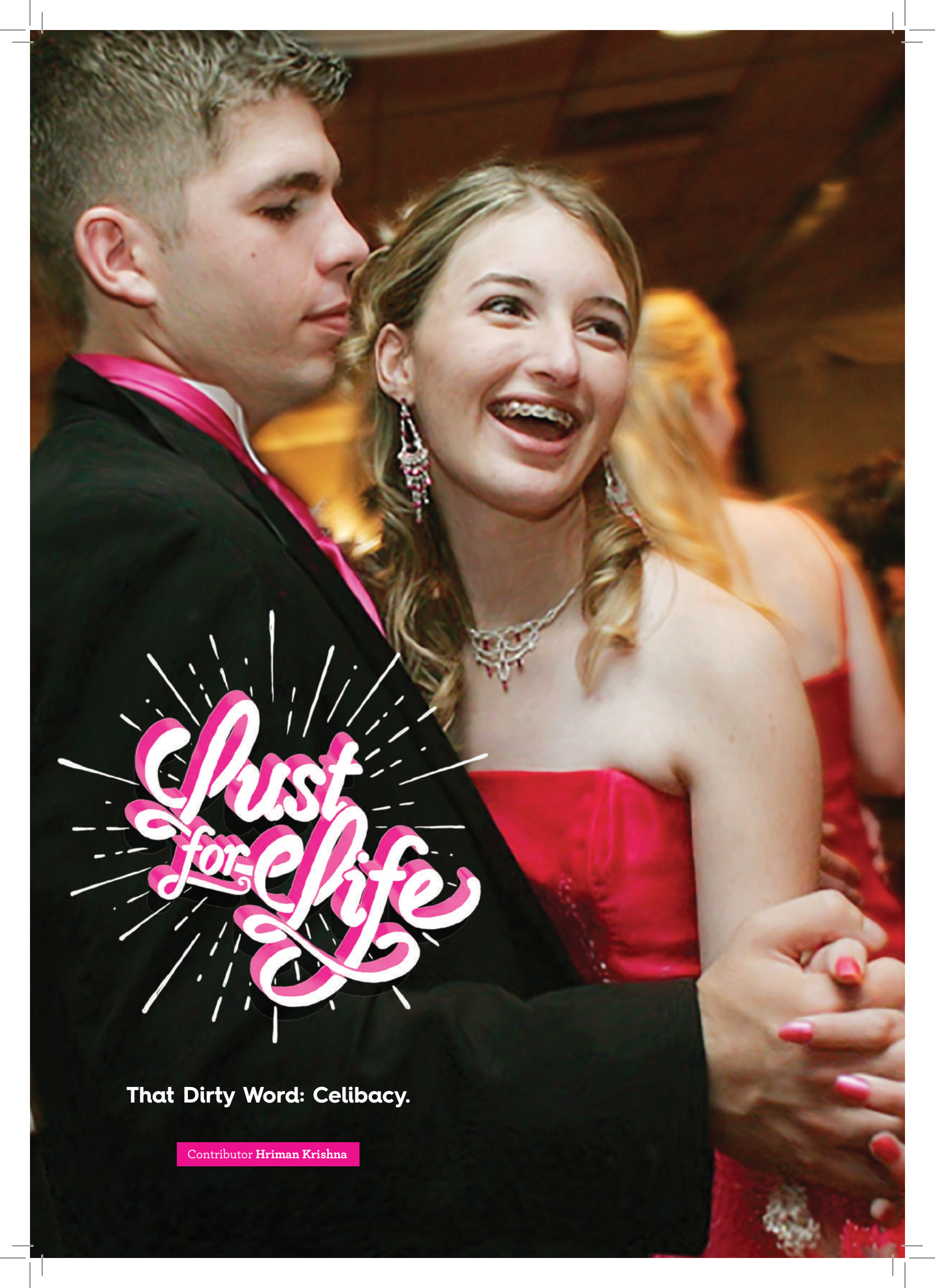
The Sanskrit word *bhakti* means "love" and yoga means "connection," and just as we, as conscious beings, allow others to know and understand us to the degree that they are connected to us by genuine love, Krishna, as the Supreme Being, also

follows this same natural inclination. If such a stipulation is required in our tiny relationships, then why should there be a double standard for the Supreme Being?

Just as understanding mathematics is the qualification to begin physics, or holding a degree in IT is the qualification for employment in that field, bhakti, or pure love, is the qualification to directly perceive the nonmaterial reality. The foremost contemporary teacher of bhakti-yoga, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, explains, "We can see the Supreme always within and outside ourselves if we have developed the transcendental loving attitude towards him. Thus for people in general he is not visible." 🌸



Mahavan has been practising and teaching bhakti-yoga in New Zealand since 1997. He has an interest in photography and a special taste for fusing music with mantra meditation. If you're in Wellington you can catch him often leading kirtan at Bhakti Lounge.



Just for Life

That Dirty Word: Celibacy.

Contributor **Hriman Krishna**

I never meant to be celibate. Teen life is all about parties and play. Abstinence is an extinct idea. Sex sells, even in the supermarket aisles. Bottomless, topless passion prevails. Clutching promiscuity, society places pressure on you to perform—you're a failure if you don't.

There was no peace growing up in the oldest Marist boys' school in New Zealand. Chastity was sacrilege. Pumped to meet girls from neighbouring high schools, we were thrilled at the chance to hook up. Every teen carries this burden, because life isn't fun without sex.



Believing we will find happiness only in bodily interactions and sensual delights, our urges drive us, pacified only by orgasms and consumables, as we chase a buzz lacking any sublime purpose.

Think of your high school dance. Mine was an embarrassment, my mind anxious, excited, and fearful.

Risking humiliation, young predators stalk the game for a score, while girls sneer, smirk, whisper, and giggle. I'm tipsy, disoriented, and full of nerves, as my eyes scan the dance floor for a prospective hit.

As night wanders away, dimmed lights and relaxed grooves signal a time to pounce on prey for a slow dance. It's a dire test of courage. But in no time, success! Victim to my gyrating swirls, a girl lands in my arms, glancing approvingly at me.

Gracefully locked in slow, synchronised moves, moments seem to last all night, and I poise myself for a first kiss. It's a nervous, sloppy mess, disturbed by fetid whiffs of meat pies and Baileys reeking from her breath.

A tap on my back surprises me. It's my English teacher scowling at my conquest. Mixed with teenage passion and shame, I abandon my prized possession. She is lost forever—I never find her again.

Sensual Circus

Our society seeks instant gratification. People are becoming addicted to giving in to their senses—our mind and senses renew with vigour no matter how we try to fill these material cravings, hooking us into a cycle of self-victimisation.

Believing we will find happiness only in bodily interactions and sensual delights, our urges drive us, pacified only by orgasms and consumables, as we chase a buzz lacking any sublime purpose.

Like carnivorous creatures, our mind and senses are careless of their victim's silent cry for love, acceptance, and self-worth. Watch your mind hunger for bodies to devour as it delights in all parts, types, and bits. A fierce inner struggle against bodily pleasure begins.

This exploitative attitude limits our perception of people and ourselves to mere objects meant for entertainment and disposal. Like a predator, we anticipate enjoying our catch, and we become habituated to depersonalising others.

Access to Freedom

No matter how freakishly we may try to gratify our passions, to justify our self-indulgent fixations would be to misuse our intelligence.

Renowned teacher and scholar, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada explains:

“For all this hardship, a person's only happiness is a little sex . . . human life is not meant for this kind of existence, which dogs and hogs enjoy. Indeed, dogs and hogs do not have to work so hard for sex. A human being should try to live in a different way and should not imitate the dogs and hogs.” (Srimad Bhagavatam 5.5.1 commentary).



What we got up to this week...



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What people are really yearning for is love that helps each other grow in spiritual consciousness. Human intelligence is meant to access this kind of love, not the fleeting physical pleasure readily available to animals.

Sages describe human beings as multidimensional beings who experience reality through:

- 1) a gross matter-based body
- 2) a subtle, mental state
- 3) a nonmaterial consciousness.



Freed from a materialistic mindset, those in a committed spiritual relationship share a friendship and bond so deep that they break the chain of victimisation and shatter the pangs of exploitation and discontent.

The deepest love is accessible in the nonmaterial reality, and educating ourselves in how to interact on this plane, rather than on the whims of our body and mind, will serve our greatest interest.

Being freed from the constraints of a materialistic mindset, those in a committed spiritual relationship share a friendship and bond so deep that they break the chain of victimisation and shatter the pangs of exploitation and discontent. Such a conscious, nonmaterial relationship empowers each person to experience a reality above the mundane and solve the problems of life together.

Before diving into physical entanglement, consider the effects. Just to skim the surface: research shows that people who are not as sensually driven are less likely to suffer depression or anxiety disorders, attempt suicide, or live in poverty. They are also likely to do better in school, as they double their chances of graduating from tertiary education than those on the merry-go-round of shallow relationships.

When you hold out from the hook-up itch, self-empowerment and freedom emerge from the undermined art of controlling the mind and senses. Just as accomplished yogis direct their sex-energy to exceed higher and higher levels of ecstasy, our determined choices to control our mind and senses will result in heightened perceptivity.

Enough of this slavery!

Having picked up a Bhagavad Gita from an old bookshop, I began to consider the ultimate benefits of an alternative lifestyle based on higher knowledge. Krishna’s words, immortalised in this yoga classic, offer a process of yoga to reconnect our nonmaterial consciousness to the highest platform of love.

Krishna, who is known as Hrishikesha, the master of the senses, elaborates a scientific system of sensory stimulation outdoing any worldly pleasure. Also celebrated as Yogeshvara, the master of mystics, Krishna demonstrates a pleasure far greater than what our lust burns for.

The best yoga is found in accessing nonmaterial love, with Krishna’s assistance, as he guides us in experiencing a taste in relationships outside our body’s gross and subtle coverings. From this superior taste of love comes the topmost benefit of resisting temporary physical encounters: romance beyond time and space.

Krishna explains that by perceiving this taste, a person can overcome base animal instincts and become steady and undisturbed:

“A person who is not disturbed by the incessant flow of desires that enter like rivers into the ocean, which is ever being filled but is always still, can alone achieve peace, and not the person who strives to satisfy such desires.” (Bhagavad Gita 2.70)

Sentimental affirmations won’t withstand the jostle of the body’s urges, but a genuine spiritual practitioner, absorbed in union with a reservoir of pleasure, isn’t bothered by these bodily demands.

“In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless nonmaterial happiness, realized through nonmaterial senses. Established in this state, a person never departs from the truth, and on gaining this he or she thinks there is no greater gain. In this state, a person is never shaken, even in the midst of greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact.” (Bhagavad Gita 6.20-23)

Now, pushing my mid-thirties, life has a defined meaning, and I couldn’t imagine being fettered by pressures of the hook-up culture. It was never a question of becoming a celibate. One day I just asked myself: how could anyone call a zoological romp an expression of the deepest love? 🌸



At nineteen years when Hriman Krishna was a third-year tertiary student and a student of the NZ School of Philosophy, he came across the ancient yoga texts of India. He fell in love with that timeless wisdom and has been a practising monk of the bhakti tradition ever since. He studies under his teacher and mentor Devamrita Swami.

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Most don't really consider the importance of rain, seeing it more as a nuisance that just gets you wet and cold.



Wisdom from Nature

Finding steadiness amidst the shifting seasons of happiness and distress.

Contributor **Lavanya Keli**

I won't deny that I'm searching for happiness. I look for it everyday, and I'm sure you do too. But sometimes it feels like I'm desperately chasing a water mirage in the desert, only to find it advancing ahead of me at the exact speed I pursue it. Pausing for a moment, I might realise I do have water in my drink bottle, but alas—it's only a drop. I keep running. What I need is a full bottle of water. Or how about some rain?

Most don't really consider the importance of rain, seeing it more as a nuisance that just gets you wet and cold. But rain nourishes the crops we eat, it replenishes and revitalises the entire earth, explains Sukadeva, a wise sage (person, not herb!). It's the very thing we need to survive. Sukadeva explains that rain not only nourishes everything, but when all creatures of the land and water take advantage of newly fallen rain, they become attractive, pleasing to look at. Not only does this wise sage explain how we can gain insight from nature, but he also describes the lives of wise men and women from many cultures and locations throughout the universe, in an intriguing book collection called *Srimad Bhagavatam*, an ancient yoga classic. But I diverge; I'm talking about rain, not interesting accounts filled with wisdom and adventure.

Sukadeva compares rainclouds to merciful persons who simply, and happily, dedicate their lives for the pleasure of others. He explains how rainfall is so sufficient that it even falls on rocks and hills as well as oceans and seas where there isn't even any need for water. We can compare this to a charitable person who shares his wealth with all, not discriminating whether the charity is needed or not. Sukadeva further illustrates how, after the dark clouds release their rain, they become white, shining brilliantly like the sun, beaming a smile in every direction.

While nature is always in this constant flux, it has kindly presented two possible solutions in our search for happiness. The first is to be compassionate to all.

Yet, if I start to beam like the sun, will that last? The track record for everything "going my way" hasn't been good so far. In fact, I've begun noticing that, like the winter and summer seasons, objects I own, as well as jobs, friends or circumstances in my life are always changing. I would be foolish to think that acting like a cloud and putting others first would make me permanently happy, wouldn't I? Surely

it's not that simple? Yet, just like I can't control nature, I can't control the inevitable ups and downs in my life. What I can control is how I react to them. I can choose to be tolerant, like a mountain that withstands any season, and not like a leaf that gets dragged around by the ever-changing winds.

If you become affected by the natural ups and downs of life, your mind will never be peaceful. Knowing the nature of the mind and its relationship to the self can help us develop tolerance.

Although nature is always in this constant flux, it has kindly presented two possible solutions in our ceaseless search for happiness. The first is to be compassionate to all. True compassion is not simply concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of another's material situation. The yoga handbook to life, *Bhagavad Gita*, compares that type of compassion to rescuing only the clothing of a drowning person. What we should really be concerned for is people's spiritual sufferings or misfortunes, because if you are inwardly suffering you automatically outwardly suffer.

To develop inward strength, you need tolerance. If you become affected by the natural ups and downs of life, your mind will never be peaceful. Knowing the nature of the mind and its relationship to the self can help us develop tolerance. Without understanding what the self needs, your mind will never be able to tolerate the body's distresses and urges. When we are able to control the forces of the mind, we can then become steady and peaceful.

So I encourage you to be that mountain that stands tall and strong under all seasons. Why not explore the wisdom of an ancient time as described by Sukadeva in *Srimad Bhagavatam* or delve into the *Bhagavad Gita's* tips on peaceful living? Once the mind is peaceful, we naturally find happiness.



Lavanya-keli holds an honors degree in visual communication design. She hopes to make films that will inspire people and help them to question, even if it's just a little. She's passionate about caring for the environment and is rather anticongsumerism, preferring to spend her time outdoors enjoying the beauty of undisturbed nature.



Do What You Want!

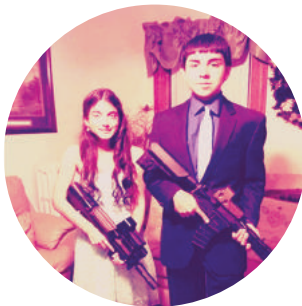
Contributor Khadiravana

**ONLY SOCIETY'S
RULES AND
REGULATIONS
FORCE US TO
TAME OURSELVES.
INSIDE, THE
REAL PERSON
SUPPOSEDLY
WRIGGLES
AND GRUNTS
TO BE FREE.**



No longer shackled by outdated religious traditions and the rules and guilt they impose, we are free to do what we want, when we want, with whom we want. Pretty much, anything goes, as long as everyone consents. Year after year, ripping down boundaries, social media gurus and music icons compete to out-explicit each other, and we all get to revel in their wake, free to be ourselves. By now, we should be totally happy, because we can do whatever we want.

It's logical to believe that making everything acceptable and having no rules of right and wrong will bring the greatest pleasure. Why wouldn't it? Everything can feel so artificial and confined can't it? People don't really know what you are thinking or feeling about them. Freedom must mean we can say and do exactly what we think, at every moment! Just as Sigmund Freud speculated, all anxieties come from having to inhibit our most primal instincts. Only society's rules and regulations force us to tame ourselves. Inside, the real person supposedly wriggles and grunts to be free. How happy Freud would be in 2016!



“Hey man, as long as you feel good when you blow my brains out, that's the main thing—you did what you wanted.”

But hang on, are we okay with a deranged person walking into our classroom and opening fire on everyone? Probably not. Obviously I'm taking this philosophy to its extreme, to test whether it is really a bulletproof principle to work from. But where do we draw the line marking what is acceptable or not, or will the line increasingly widen to accommodate anything and everything? “Hey man, as long as you feel good when you blow my brains out, that's the main thing—you

did what you wanted.” Maybe some ethics are necessary if we don't want total mayhem?

JUST DO IT

Experimenting with all kinds of stuff in the name of art, my art school friends were a stimulating bunch to hang out with in my Uni days. One night, in a small room at the art school, inspired to explore how I would act if I did exactly what came into my head, I began moving randomly around the room. Squatting down, rising up, dancing, and making whatever weird noises came to me, I hoped that expressing whatever was inside me, moment to moment, would somehow liberate me. By the end, I felt not much different to before, except a little less human and more like an animal. The experience had been absent of social norms, and I missed my intelligence, which decides what to do and what not to do at each moment. I still thought I was pretty cool, however, to have tried the process. One of the artists present had watched me incredulously as I experimented. Every time I saw him after that, he told me, with some concern, how I had been acting crazy that night. Even as an artist himself, he thought this was going a bit far! I thought he just wasn't ready for such boundary breaking tests. But when I think of that night now, I agree with him—he was the only one who had seen what was really happening. I was just being crazy; the experiment wasn't some sophisticated intellectual art form as we had thought at the time.

Compared to what we can get into when we let our instincts really dominate, my artful exploration was pretty short-lived and harmless. Yoga psychology explains that until we are spiritually enlightened, acting on our impulses means acting according to unconscious conditionings. This can develop into obsessive behaviour, causing harm, not only to ourselves, but to the people around us. Acting on our urges is no different from behaving like an animal, just as a dog, dragged by its senses, sniffs lamp posts and backsides with no concern for what anyone thinks! No offence to our furry friends—that's life for them, even though, like most humans, they are not in touch with their original enlightened state either. Beyond both the animal and human body types, the non-material self sits dormant until revived using spiritual techniques. Significantly, for life on this level, animals stay within nature's boundaries, and they don't get



The fact that human habits can really get out of hand, destructive and nasty at worst, indicates that the human being's intelligence is being misused or channelled in the wrong direction.

into really awkward, unusual habits – they don't have perversions, psychologically speaking.

I'm not convinced it's natural for humans to act on impulse. What happens when we let it all hang out? So many destructive habits go on in the name of expressing ourselves. Think alcohol and drug abuse, date rape, drunk driving accidents, STDs, domestic violence, child abuse, pedophilia and numerous other distorted sexual tendencies, gaming addictions, porn addictions, overeating, for example. At a certain point, acting out our every desire gets ugly, because these desires are selfish and usually result in exploiting others. Actually, all desire we know is selfish, because it has been pulled out of shape from its genuine nature, like a jumper that once fitted well but now hangs misshapen.

The fact that human habits can really get out of hand, destructive and nasty at worst, indicates that the human being's intelligence is being misused or channelled in the wrong direction. According to yoga science, human intelligence is meant for big things, like understanding our nonmaterial identity, the nature of existence, how reality is working, and running complex and harmonious societies, to list a few. Just as children with no positive engagement get themselves into trouble, our human intelligence, if not chasing a higher purpose, gets into all sorts of unwanted habits, bringing





← our consciousness down to its lowest expression. And because we are meant for more, we are not happy living like loose units. It's depressing to have no self-control, to be instead controlled by habits that we hate. Ughh! If we are not pursuing our highest potential, how can we be happy?

CRACKING THE GAME

Yup—this business is counter-intuitive. What we think will make us happy—letting loose, doing what we want, however we want, whenever we want—often doesn't, you might have noticed. How many times have you launched full-hearted into doing something that you think will make you happy but you've ended up bummed out, or disappointed at least? For example, you spend hours getting all dressed and hyped up for a night out. You check your hair in the bathroom mirror or a shop window a dozen times. But the night ends up a fizzer. A few awkward moves on the dance floor, some random and unsatisfying drunken conversations, nobody notices your perfectly styled hair or how showstopping your new pants are. Even worse, your fake eyelashes don't lure any victims for late night sensuality. You stumble to a taxi, get home, go to bed and wake stinking of alcohol and cigarettes, facing another long day of trying to get happy.

Or maybe you do get lucky, but the experience is so awkward and devoid of emotional connection or care that you feel ten times more empty the next day. You stagger home, doing the walk of shame in your get-up from last night, which glitters incongruously in the morning sun. You win some, you lose some. But even the sporadic "winnings" are short-lived, because they are always threatened by change, flavour depletion and inevitable endings—like a mouthful of chewing gum after a couple of hours. But like moths to a flame we fly back again and again, attracted to what glitters, thinking it the path to happiness, only to find our wings scorched, as we tumble back down to earth. We pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, superglue our wings back together and take another leap at that bright light . . .

WHO RIGGED THIS WARPED REALITY?

This reality is based on desire, our misapplied desire that we be controller and enjoyer of the world. In the Bhagavad Gita, Ultimate Cosmic Project Director, Lord Krishna, explains how he is a neutral facilitator of our desires. Always appealing to our good intelligence to rethink our dream of nailing happiness in this shadow world, he assists us, regardless of what we choose. We may choose to descend to darkened consciousness—increasing selfishness and exploitation, serving only ourselves. Or more rarely, we may choose to evolve to higher levels of consciousness possessing more luminous desires to serve the Complete Totality, Krishna, which automatically includes service to all beings.

This revolutionary vision brings us the ultimate education in personal responsibility and accountability. In other words, we can't blame anyone else for the mess we get ourselves into. Desiring to overlord our own little fantasyland creates this world of appearances. Here,

Through the spiritual practice of bhakti-yoga the deafening noise of our bodily and mental urges is drowned out by authentic experiences of nonmaterial pleasure, allowing our higher spiritual identity to flourish.

what looks like happiness isn't, and what looks like a bad time—controlling your basic instincts, and practising techniques for spiritual enlightenment—can deliver the real thing.

WHERE DESIRE AND PLEASURE CONNECT

Control your basic instincts? Is that another contradiction? Isn't happiness to be free from any control? But how free are we really in our current state? Can we stop going to the toilet? Or getting hungry? How about stopping those urges for sex and financial, emotional, and physical security? Besides managing the universe of our own drives, from outside we face the uncontrollable and often unfriendly realities of weather and natural disturbances, and we suffer

from the actions of living beings—people, insects, and other animals. As if that isn't enough, if we zoom out and survey the human lifespan, we see the numerous difficulties and distresses of birth, the different life stages, health crises, old age and finally "the big don't argue"—death.

Did we say we felt free to do whatever we wanted? We can't control the daily disturbances from the outside, nor do we have much control over the challenges our lifespan throws at us. But we can work on mastering our lower urges and transforming our desires back to their original state. In this original state, our senses are compatible with the complete project we are part of, aligned with the desires of the Complete Whole, Krishna, so that everything clicks into place. The good news is that we human beings are equipped to control our lower tendencies. Through the spiritual practice of bhakti-yoga the deafening noise of our bodily and mental urges is drowned out by authentic experiences of nonmaterial pleasure, allowing our higher spiritual identity to flourish. No longer controlled and pushed around by our lower drives and habits, our intense likes and dislikes, we are actually free. We are free to choose how to act at every moment, because we move with our original natural desire to work in harmony with Krishna. Like a hand cooperating with the whole body, we move in perfect synchronicity with that Total Reality, one in desire but always individual in our identity and expression. This opens the door to real freedom and spontaneity on the spiritual level, where our decontaminated desire actually produces the pleasure we have always wanted, every time.

The Bhagavad Gita is all about how to get real freedom, genuine pleasure, and true self-expression. We just have to learn the art of transforming desire with the applied spiritual technology of bhakti-yoga. In this way, we will be totally happy, because we can really do whatever we want, on the level of pure desire. 🌸



Khadiravan has been practising bhakti-yoga since 1997. Within that time she studied for a doctorate in Indovedic psychology—psychology as described in the ancient yoga tradition. She conducts yoga psychology workshops and leads kirtan nights (mantra and music meditation) at Bhakti Lounge, Wellington.



SCHOOL OF LIFE

REBELS, THE GREAT INDIAN SHOW,
AND A SPLASH OF WISDOM.

Contributor Sachi Dulal



“THERE MUST BE SOME WAY OUT OF HERE,” SAID THE JOKER TO THE THIEF.

– BOB DYLAN

Landing in quick succession, the bombs made a deafening noise. Okay, they were not real bombs. They were firecrackers. The locals called them “chocolate bombs.” I am not sure who thought of calling heart-fracturing firecrackers “chocolate bombs,” or why. But the name stuck.

That’s how things go in India. Political leaders, traditions, and traffic tend to get stuck in ways that are as inscrutable as the deepest mysteries in existence. Not that anyone really cares. As long as we are having fun, why bother?

And we were having fun. Our class of thirty students, the top class of one of the most prestigious schools in town, had waited a long time for this. Twelve years of mostly gruelling and boring school life was almost over. The mock-exams were over. We had been registered to sit the final school-leaving exams.

WHAT ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF LIFE? IS IT MERELY AN OPPORTUNITY TO STRUGGLE MIGHTILY TO CONJURE THOSE FLEETING PEAK EXPERIENCES, EXPERIENCES WE TRY TO REHASH, REKINDLE AND RELISH DURING OUR TWILIGHT YEARS?

Someone had hatched the bright idea to celebrate this momentous occasion by throwing firecrackers from the classroom, located on the third floor of the school building, onto the school grounds below. All during school time, of course. Everyone heartily approved of the scheme.

By the time the principal managed to reach the third floor to see who the hell was responsible for the commotion, it was time to call in the riot police. Some of us had toppled chairs and tables, while others had established a foot-stomping beat. The more rebellious ones had dismantled light fixtures, and the brazenly defiant were still dispatching “chocolate bombs.”

The principal threw a fit. We barely noticed. He was no stately Jesuit veteran. He was in water too deep for his liking. And we knew it. The bombs kept on falling.



EVERY PARTY MUST END

Things died down, of course. They had to. Where our affable yet inexperienced principal had been unsuccessful, our maths teacher wasn't. We respected him.

By the time our maths teacher had brought things under control, the principal had decided that enough was enough. He expelled us for the rest of the term. The entire class. Since we had already secured permission to sit for the final Indian School Certificate exams, the expulsion was inconsequential. In fact, it was exactly what we wanted; exactly what we had planned.

Authorities confiscated the contraband: the chocolate bombs. All except one box. A classmate decided to hide a box in the front of his pants. Why waste something that makes a big bang, right?

Placing a box of firecrackers near your genitals is not the brightest idea. Firecrackers, especially Bengali ones, are not known to be the most stable compounds.

I know what you are thinking, but no, it didn't happen. My classmate has played his part in delaying the Voluntary Human Extinction Movement. In retrospect, he did admit that hiding a box of firecrackers down the front of his pants was a stupid thing to do.

SCHOOL OF LIFE

“The test of an enjoyment is the remembrance which it leaves behind,” the German Romantic writer Jean Paul Richter famously remarked. I suppose this is why I remember the “chocolate bomb” incident. In what was a rather uneventful school life, I did enjoy this act of sheer rebellion.

But what about the school of life? Is it merely an opportunity to struggle mightily to conjure those fleeting peak experiences, experiences we try to rehash, rekindle and relish during our twilight years?

If there was a definitive answer to this question, I certainly did not learn about it at school.

THE SCHOOL

Francis Xavier, respected by the scholarly faithful as “the greatest missionary of modern times,” arrived in India in 1542. Fellow Jesuits, an all-male Catholic order, soon followed. Their mission, in the words of their founder, Saint Ignatius of Loyola: *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam inque hominum salutem*, to work “for the greater glory of God and the salvation of humanity.”

What better way to give glory to God than by educating humans about his glory? And so the Jesuits had set up educational institutions all over the country. Expectedly, they set up a few in Calcutta (now Kolkata) – former capital of British-ruled India. If India was the centre-piece, the “jewel in the crown” of the British Empire, Calcutta, back then, was the centre of that centre-piece. It was as much the intellectual and cultural capital of India, as it was the centre of the budding Indian independence movement.

Initially educating only European and Anglo-Indian boys, the Jesuit-run school soon opened its doors to all and sundry. Affluent local families vied to send their sons to the school. It guaranteed proficiency in English and a suitably cosmopolitan education: both prerequisites for a respectable career and respectability.

India gained independence from the British on 15 August 1947. But affluent local families still endeavoured to send their sons to the reputed Jesuit-run school—a move that continued to enhance prospects for securing a respectable career and respectability.

My grandmother worked hard to ensure that my father attend this school. It was a given that I would attend the same school too. Soon after I was born, my family made every effort to ensure that I did. They did not go in vain. A suitable kindergarten, a suitable English tutor, and a suitable home-library to foster creative potential were all

IN THE WARM AFTERGLOW OF REKINDLING YOUTHFUL MEMORIES, THERE WOULD ALSO BE A LOT OF FORGETTING, FORGETTING THAT THE EASY CONFIDENCE OF YOUTH HAS LONG SINCE VANISHED, AND IN ITS PLACE, UNCERTAINTY—UNINVITED, UNCONTROLLABLE, AND UNAVOIDABLE HAS MADE ITSELF AN UNWELCOME COMPANION.

key ingredients that ensured the family tradition would be maintained: my father and I would be “old boys” of the same school.

GROWING OLD IS INEVITABLE. GROWING UP ISN'T.

My father sounds enthusiastic over the phone. He has just told me that there is going to be an old boys’ get-together. Men in their ‘60s, men who went to the same reputed Jesuit-run school, men who now live in different continents from each other, would be getting together to see how destiny had favoured their school mates.

Destiny, true to her job description, had doled out varying dollops of fortune. Some had gotten what they wanted—a big slice of corporate and social prestige. Some had missed out on the prestige, but not on the money. And some had missed out on both the money and the prestige.

So the old boys would get together. The wine would help to revive memories. Some teetotalers, like my father, would hardly touch a drop, while others, having long abandoned themselves to the palliative effects of the world’s most popular drug, would do so once more.

In the warm afterglow of rekindling youthful memories, there would also be a lot of forgetting, forgetting that the easy confidence of youth has long since vanished, and in its place, uncertainty—uninvited, uncontrollable, and unavoidable, has made itself an unwelcome companion. Divorces have taken their toll, diseases have turned chronic, debts have multiplied and the shadow of impending death has become too long to ignore.

As the night wears on, one “old boy” will end up doing the inevitable. Intoxicated way beyond his usual limit, he will cut a tasteless joke at his old mate’s expense. Tempers will flare up. A fight will ensue. Other old boys, still sober, will quickly separate the two.

Old boys may have gotten old. But some things are hard to change. Doing dumb things is one of them.

RECLAIM YOUR INNER SAGE

Whatever excuses you have for acting stupid, you can always learn better ones. This mantra is one of the top five mantras that jostle for the allegiance of the Indian public. Corrupt politicians, mafia bosses, rapists, and a whole other assortment of thugs swear by it. It’s strange really, because one thing about growing up in India is that she offers innumerable opportunities to wise up—she offers innumerable encounters with death.

Unlike the West, where death is sterilised, sanitised and carefully sealed off from common view, in India, death is a routinely visible affair. You see it all the time. You see it on pavements, on railroad tracks, in corpses drifting down rivers and flower-decked funeral processions headed for the crematorium. I didn’t become aware of the impact of death till I was in my late teens, but I had been notified





of his presence much earlier. My mother died when I was one month old.

There is another thing about growing up in India: spirituality is in your face too. You can't miss it even if you try. In Kolkata, where I grew up, the biggest party is a religious extravaganza that continues for four consecutive days. The city is festooned with light shows, intricately decorated *pandals* (makeshift structures usually made of bamboo and tarpaulin) and food stalls. Since a party without music is no party at all, there is

YOU CAN CHOOSE AMNESIA, IN A FLAVOUR THAT TICKLES YOUR TASTE-BUDS. YOU CAN CHOOSE YOUR MIX OF POTENT DRUGS, ROMANTIC LIAISONS, CAREER-INSPIRED HYPER-BUSYNESS, EXTREME SPORTS AND EXTREME REALITY TV; YOU CAN CHOOSE HOW TO FORGET THAT YOUR ACTIONS HAVE NO ULTIMATE MEANING.

music too. Blasting loudspeakers, a few at every street corner, ensure that everyone—the living, the dying, and the ghosts—is doused with the festive spirit.

To prepare for this extravaganza, power stations regularly cut the power supply for many hours on the days leading up to the festival. The reason: to ensure an uninterrupted power supply during the four festival days, when power consumption goes through every conceivable ceiling. After all, hell hath no fury like a twelve million plus community deprived of its annual ninety-six-hour religious bash. And you thought religion was boring!

If India is famous for unparalleled religious entertainment, she is also famous for unparalleled depths in serious spirituality. When I say serious, I mean the kind that is based on millenniums of refined and sophisticated philosophical thought—the kind of thought that the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer labelled as almost superhuman. The American literary giant Henry David Thoreau drew a similar conclusion. Upon reading the Bhagavad Gita, the essential text of India's perennial wisdom culture, he remarked that in comparison to the Gita, the modern world and its literature seems puny and trivial.

By the time I finished school everything did seem puny and trivial. What death had done for countless humans in aeons gone by, he did for me too; he made me lose my appetite.

So begins the irrepressible human quest for transcendence. It begins when we become aware of death's omnipresent murmur—an awareness that causes the cataract of melancholy to form over your eyes. You see the world and you see it devoid of joy; you see it devoid of meaning.

At this point, you have a choice.

You can choose amnesia, in a flavour that tickles your taste-buds. You can choose your mix of potent drugs, romantic liaisons, career-inspired hyper-busyness, extreme sports and extreme reality TV; you can choose how to forget that your actions have no ultimate meaning.

Or you can seek, and if you seek, then you will find. You will find that you are part of an eternal, unchanging, absolute, self-manifest, blissful, personal reality. We originate from this reality. Our life has meaning inasmuch as we endeavour to reconnect to this reality. Even a momentary glimpse of this reality is enough to dissipate the cobwebs of melancholy once and for all.

So say the sages of India. With great compassion they declare that we, who have now been placed in a human body, should make good our fortune, by reconnecting to our ultimate source. With great precision they describe how we can do this. If we ignore this offer, an offer meticulously presented in voluminous Sanskrit texts such as the Shrimad Bhagavatam, then what else is left?

We are left trying to relive old times doing old tricks that don't really mean anything anyway. 🌸



Sachi Dulal first read Bhagavad Gita As It Is in 2005, while completing a masters degree in environmental science. Finding Krishna's teachings rational and relevant, he took up the practice of bhakti-yoga soon after. He loves to write about the intersect of life, philosophy and Krishna knowledge.

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THE WORLD
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Levin'

Contributor Devamrita Swami



Some things in life we may consider worth dying for. Our techno-centric societies in the developed world have empowered us, we feel, with unprecedented treasures of an advanced civilisation. Let nothing ever endanger our precious gems of human progress.

Just to defend such glories, we might even think to kill, in this way preserving our clever societies for the benefit of future generations. We shouldn't lose our goodies to inimical tribes and nations. Another main motivator for an armed response is gratitude, indebtedness, for all the well-being and conveniences we're sure our world delivers.

Just think and drool over the juicy advantages. Never before has life been easier, more effortless. Advertising shapes and shoves us 24/7, from every possible angle, avenue. Consumer products in limitless, ever-changing array offer so much to choose, make our very own, and then discard, for ever newer versions. Hypersocial media fills whatever few quiet moments remain in our life—how can we dare live without it?

What's more, we can vote in democracies manoeuvred by multinational corporations and stupendously wealthy elites; we can share in global technological might that has become a geophysical force, altering nature on a scale never seen before.

Elbowing and bulldozing to achieve our self-created material burden of hot-blooded goals, we blind our eyes to nature. Future generations, we hope, will handle the ecological havoc. But who now can escape the omnipresent threat of nuclear war?

INTELLIGENT DISSENT

The yoga texts disagree that we currently have a genuine human civilisation. In Bhagavad Gita, Krishna spells out the sociological reality: "What is night for all beings is the time of awakening for the self-controlled; and the time of awakening for all beings is night for the introspective sage." (2.69)

The premiere yoga scholar and exemplar of the Gita, Srila Prabhupada, elaborates in his commentary to this verse:

"There are two classes of intelligent men. One is intelligent in material activities for sense gratification, and the other is introspective and awake to the cultivation of self-realization. Activities of the introspective sage, or thoughtful man, are night for persons materially absorbed. Materialistic persons remain asleep in such a night due to their ignorance of self-realization. The introspective sage remains alert in the 'night' of materialistic men.

Yes, another level of life is attainable—it's not airy-fairy, like horse eggs or flowers in the sky. Disconnected from comprehensive spiritual science, we forget that we don't have to live and slave as fools. The real heroes in society are the authentically spiritual yogis and sages. But where are they?

The Gita commentary continues, widening our vision: "The sage feels transcendental pleasure in the gradual advancement of spiritual culture, whereas the person in materialistic activities, being asleep to self-realization, dreams of varieties of sense pleasure, feeling sometimes happy and sometimes distressed in his sleeping condition. Introspective persons are always indifferent to materialistic happiness and distress. They go on with their self-realization activities undisturbed by material reactions."

These two dissimilar classes of humans will certainly champion contrasting versions of society. Where has the so-called normal day and night of today's misled, bewildered humanity brought us? And who are the sages, the self-controlled, the enlightened, desperately needed to guide us?



THE COMMON ASSUMPTION IS THAT FOR THE SECURITY OF CULTURED HUMANITY, A FEW SOBER NATIONS—NOT THE ROGUE ONES—DO NEED TO STOCKPILE THE DELICACIES, THE NUKES.

THE NUKES SHALL SET YOU FREE

As a school child in New York, back in the fifties, I dutifully sucked up the standard version of American social gospel: "Most of the freedoms our great nation enjoys today are because we have nuclear weapons."





Certainly back then, no school teacher urged me to question: Freedom to do what, under whom, and for whom?

Even now, how many public educators dare to doubt the imaginary, hallucinogenic choices a rigged, materialistic society imposes on both its young and old?

Anyway, the common assumption is that for the security of cultured humanity, a few sober nations—not the rogue ones—do need to stockpile the delicacies, the nukes.

an ever dangerous world, will the national anthem “God Defend New Zealand,” sung mainly at sports matches, save this tiny but spectacularly scenic and wholly secular nation—where religion died decades ago? Come on “land of the long white cloud,” why maintain your aversion to the supreme—the omnipotent mushroom clouds?

Far across the ocean, always religious, the Americans sing “God Bless America.”

But heck, to back up the Almighty, the Yanks have a potent arsenal.



SPENDING LAVISHLY ON THEIR WEAPONRY, NATIONS IN THE NUCLEAR CLUB ARE READY TO LITERALLY FIGHT TO THE FINISH, RISKING EVEN THE ENTIRE EARTH, JUST TO PROTECT THEIR SMASHINGLY GLORIOUS MATERIALISTIC LIFESTYLES



Let’s check the numbers: Approximately 16,000 nuclear weapons worldwide are ready for action, 94 percent held by the United States and Russia. Regardless of whether the leaders of the U.S. and Russia inspire or repel us, we feel a degree of imaginary confidence in them: “at least *they* would never dare launch their nukes—well, probably no more than one or two.” But what would you say about . . . Pakistan?

Yes, dicey and dubious Pakistan—chocka with brazenly corrupt generals, extremist politicians, and religious terrorists—has an arsenal growing faster than any other country. What does that say for the value of humanity today?

Sporting 120 warheads, Pakistan could, in a decade, take third place in the world’s nuclear rankings, well behind the United States and Russia, but ahead of China, France and Britain.

WAY DOWNUNDER: FAR FROM THE MADDENING CROWD?

My home base for the past twenty-three years, New Zealand has always been staunchly anti-nukes. Though American military hawks periodically hassle and hound, the Kiwis won’t permit the US Navy to park its nuclear-armed ships, even for a day.

Global movers and shakers prod us way down here to wonder and worry. After all, they say, in

Yes, their dollar says “In God We Trust.” And gazillions of bumper stickers proclaim “Jesus Saves.”

But we know what actually safeguards America: faith in nuclear salvation.

In other words, real nations sport nukes—launched via land, sea and air, targeting populations deemed hostile or expendable.

Spending lavishly on their weaponry, nations in the nuclear club are ready to literally fight to the finish, risking even the entire earth, just to protect their smashingly glorious materialistic lifestyles.

Highlighting the depraved mentality dominating the world, Krishna describes in Bhagavad Gita (16.9): “Submitting to their own twisted conclusions, lost in demonism, bereft of genuine intelligence, the perverted determinedly advocate and sponsor wretched, horrible projects meant to destroy the world.”



EXCELLING IN LUNACY, NOT PEACE AND PROSPERITY

As if seeking to confirm Krishna's supreme presentation, the US military, its budget enthusiastically approved by politicians, has now embarked upon a thirty-year programme to refurbish its nuclear arsenal—at the unfathomable cost of . . . er . . . one trillion US dollars.

Part of that unthinkable grand total, some mere billions are earmarked for new darlings of destruction: so-called mini nukes. According to General James E. Cartwright, formerly of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Going smaller [makes using this nuclear] weapon more thinkable."

Not to be left out of the rave, both presidential candidates for the 2016 election have announced that firing nuclear weapons should be "on the table."

The Russian military quickly countered with its own brand of devilishness, purposefully leaking hints of a nuclear-armed drone submarine.

The drone would carry a large nuclear device into coastal waters and detonate it, touching off a radioactive tsunami to flood and contaminate seaside cities, rendering them totally uninhabitable for a long time.

When the world's leaders advance such catastrophic innovations . . . what is there to fear . . . Relax, residents of other continents—stuff—including a nuclear blast here and there—happens, eh? Somehow life will lurch onward?

The spiritually erudite bhakti-yoga preceptor Srila Prabhupada comments on Krishna's analysis of the materialistically depraved mentality:

"They try to enjoy this material world to the utmost limit and therefore always engage in inventing something for sense gratification.

Such materialistic inventions are considered to be advancement of human civilisation, but the result is that people grow more and more violent and more and more cruel, cruel to animals and cruel to other human beings. They have no idea how to behave toward one another.

"Animal killing is very prominent amongst demonic people. Such people are considered the enemies of the world because ultimately they will invent or create something that will bring destruction to all. Indirectly, this Bhagavad Gita verse above anticipates the invention of nuclear weapons, of which the whole world is today very proud.

"At any moment war may take place, and these atomic weapons may create havoc. Such things are created solely for the destruction of the world, and this is indicated here. Due to godlessness, such weapons are invented in human society; they are not meant for the peace and prosperity of the world."

RE-ENGINEERING YOUR LIFESTYLE

Is the earth hell? Definitely not—human life is a chance to make full spiritual progress here, beyond the temporary coverings of the body and mind, back to the ultimate goal of yoga and meditation, Krishna. But we are making this planet and the human window of opportunity it offers madly hellacious. Therefore, artificially, the planet has become uninhabitable for the sane and sensible.

How desperate the world is for profoundly comprehensive spiritual knowledge and applied spiritual technology. Join the bhakti-yoga community of Krishna conscious agents for inner and outer peace.

Truly become the change you want to see, because only a major spiritual transformation of consciousness, individual and collective, can rehabilitate a world gone—in the name of progress—crazy. Watch and see how our destroying the human inner spirit and outer habitat allows mass madness, deception, and illusion to masquerade as civilisation, advancement, and growth. Is this tragic mistake worth dying for—or even living for? 🌸



Devamrita Swami is an international speaker, author, Yale graduate, and monk. Travelling extensively on every continent of the planet, he has been sharing the path of bhakti-yoga with others for over forty years. He advocates spiritually based economics, sustainability, and environmentalism. When he is not travelling, he calls New Zealand home.



LIFE

a Personal Affair

Could there be more to spiritual realisation than the great white light?

Contributor Chaitanya Vihara

What is the nature of Absolute Truth?

It's a question great thinkers have philosophised on throughout the ages. Contemplating the Absolute Truth, we may ask:

1. Is there a conscious agent controlling the world?
2. If so, is the Absolute impersonal or personal?

To answer question one, common sense takes us a long way.

If we place a loaf of bread, a block of butter and some cheese on a kitchen table, will they ever spontaneously assemble into a gourmet sandwich?

If we manufacture the thousands of parts required to produce an automobile and leave them in a garage, will we find a sparkling new car on returning the next day?

If we ask a model to pose in the art studio and set up a canvass, paint, and brushes, will a beautiful painting suddenly manifest?

Obviously not.

Regardless of its source, simply providing an object's essential parts is insufficient for creation. Practically, the hand of a conscious controller must initiate, blend, and mould ingredients into complete products.

So why do we struggle to apply this basic principle to the creation of the universe?

If it takes a chef to make a cheese sandwich, how can we conclude that this gigantic universe assembles itself by chance?

IT'S ALL ONE?

Theoretically accepting the existence of a supreme, creative, conscious entity, we may now ask, is the Absolute personal or impersonal?

Some spiritual seekers say that a spiritual reality guides the universe's inferior material energy. However, claiming that the supreme is essentially impersonal, these spiritualists' highest conception of life is the "white light," spiritual energy that pervades and supports everything. Consequently, the individual soul's life goal is to merge into this uniform, undifferentiated spiritual oneness.

Can you remember a time when you felt stressed, frustrated, and infuriated with life? Despite all your best endeavours and plans, things just weren't working out?

The drawback to this understanding of the absolute? If the Absolute is simply an impersonal, conscious energy, what exactly is a person supposed to do after merging into this void?

Let me put it another way.

Can you remember a time when you felt stressed, frustrated, and infuriated with life? Despite all your best endeavours and plans, things just weren't working out?

Naturally, you might have considered various short-term ways to escape the

suffering. The usual options include getting intoxicated, embarking on a spending spree, absorbing yourself in sensuality, or heading away for the weekend. We all sometimes feel the need to escape from the stresses and strains of everyday life. After all, let's face it, life in this material world is never a totally comfortable or smooth experience.

Now suppose I offered you the ultimate "time out" facility. Imagine I created a completely soundproof, lightproof chamber, devoid of any sensory experience. Choking on the toxic fumes of the high pressure, materialistic lifestyle the West specialises in, you might well jump at the chance to turn your back on the world, at least for some time. But the question is, how long would you last in such a situation?

Sooner or later, after cooling off, de-stressing, and contemplating life, the desire to experience variety, relationships, and happiness would drive you out of the chamber, back into the whirlwind of material life.

Similarly, even if you are able to achieve "impersonal nirvana" and merge into the all-pervading, impersonal spiritual energy, there is every chance of falling back down to the material reality for want of variety, and ending up back at square one.

On the other hand, those who advocate a personal conception of the Absolute accept that an omniscient, omnipotent *person* controls, creates, maintains, and destroys. We see such beauty and artistry in nature, so why shouldn't we consider the possibility that a supreme artist is sculpting reality according to his perfect taste, desire, and pleasure?



We see such beauty and artistry in nature, so why shouldn't we consider the possibility that a supreme artist is sculpting reality according to his perfect taste, desire, and pleasure?

← GETTING OVER OURSELVES

Well, many people feel uncomfortable accepting the existence of the Supreme Person, Krishna.

Here's why:

In the central chapters of Bhagavad Gita, one of the most highly prized texts of spiritual understanding, Krishna powerfully confirms his position as the Supreme Person and Absolute Truth:

"I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in my devotional service and worship me with all their hearts." (10.8)

Hearing this bold claim, you may feel a burning wave of envy rising in your heart. If Krishna is rightly accepted as the omniscient agent behind everything, then that means we're not God, and we're not the centre of the universe. Even more alarming, if we entertain the possibility that the Supreme is an omniscient, all-pervading person, we suddenly become accountable for all our thoughts, words, and actions . . . What could be worse than that!

On deeper reflection, we can also perceive that the desire to "merge" oneself with Krishna is still an attempt to place ourselves in the centre. In the name of "becoming equal with the Supreme," impersonalists continue to compete with Krishna, though in a more subtle way.

Without understanding Krishna, life is all about gratifying our selfish desires, whether we dress in the garb of a sophisticated impersonal spiritualist or a common and crude materialist.

Our appreciation for, and realisation of the supreme as a person, can only truly develop once we become completely free from envy.

The Bhagavad Gita gives us a precious opportunity to directly hear Krishna explain about himself. Amazingly, when we consider Krishna's message with an open mind, we start to free ourselves from the shackles of envy. So why should we resent Krishna's fascinating "instruction manual for life"? After all, when we buy any complex item, we expect it to come with an instruction manual, so we can get the most out of our purchase. Similarly, as the designer and creator of

the material world, Krishna has supplied the most comprehensive guidebook, Bhagavad Gita, to re-orientate our conceptions of reality.

THE SHADOW REALITY

At the start of the Bhagavad Gita's fifteenth chapter, "The Yoga of the Supreme Person," we hear Krishna's majestic description of the material world:

"It is said that there is an imperishable banyan tree that has its roots upwards and its branches down . . . The real form of this tree cannot be perceived in this world. No one can understand where it ends, where it begins, or where its foundation is. But with determination one must cut down this strongly rooted tree with the weapon of detachment. Thereafter, one must seek that place from which having gone, one never returns and there devote oneself to that Supreme Person from whom everything began and from whom everything has extended since time immemorial."

To further aid our understanding, Srila Prabhupada, founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), expertly explains this analogy in his commentary:

"The entanglement of this material world is compared here to a banyan tree. For those who are engaged in material activities, there is no end to the banyan tree. They wander from one branch to another, to another, to another. For those who are attached to this tree, there is no possibility of liberation.

"Now, there is no ready experience in this world of a tree situated with its branches down and its roots upward, but there is such a thing. That tree can be found beside a reservoir of water. We can see that the trees on the bank reflect upon the water with their branches down and roots up. In other words, the tree of this material world is only a reflection of the real tree of the spiritual world."

So we can understand that everything we see here under material conditions is also present in the spiritual world, but in a pure and perfect way, free from mundane limitations.

So the next question you might ask is:

How do we understand the spiritual reality?



We can easily appreciate that Krishna consciousness is not a sectarian religion, but the most broadminded, scientific understanding of reality on all levels.



DESIRE





3 WAYS OF KNOWING

← Now before our envy flares up again, let's consider that nowhere in the Gita does Krishna ask us to "believe in him" or maintain fanatical, blind faith.

However, as the proprietor of both the material and spiritual worlds, he kindly provides a comprehensive overview of the various possible levels of understanding the supreme, and the respective paths that lead to them. In this way, by studying Bhagavad Gita, we can enjoy a "bird's eye view" of the entire spiritual playing field.

The first level of spiritual realisation Krishna describes is the impersonal understanding, as previously described. This is achieved by those following the process of philosophical study known as *jnana yoga*. Whilst not the ultimate, this level of spiritual awareness is nonetheless a starting point.

Interestingly, this impersonal "white light" or spiritual energy that pervades everything, emerges from Krishna himself. As Krishna explains:

"I am the basis of the impersonal energy, which is immortal, imperishable and eternal." (B.G. 14.27)

Ironically, the impersonalists also approach Krishna, though unknowingly. But on this basic level of knowledge, the philosopher only experiences the **eternal** aspect of Krishna.

In mystic yoga, the yogi strictly following the process of *astanga yoga* develops realisation of the second level of spiritual understanding, technically termed Paramatma realisation (see "Enough! Magazine," issue 5). The Paramatma is a personal expansion of Krishna who accompanies each soul on its sojourn through material existence. Uncovering the existence of the Super-soul is an important stepping-stone on the way to complete realisation of Krishna.

At this point, the yogi experiences Krishna's aspects of **eternity and knowledge**.

Sadly, the kind of yoga practised in many studios today, is often a severely watered down version of the original yoga system. Especially in the West, yoga has been reduced to little more than a commercially exploited technique of bodily agility

Understanding these three levels of spiritual achievement in relation to Krishna, readers of Bhagavad Gita gain complete knowledge of all spiritual paths.

and pseudomeditation, although it was once a comprehensive form of spiritual realisation practised by millions. Many people now practice simply to improve flexibility, lose weight, or increase their libido, ignorant of the potential deeper benefit.

The third and final level of spiritual realisation, however, is the perfection of life. Those who practise bhakti-yoga, the art and science of directly serving the Supreme Person, Krishna, in love and devotion, achieve this highest level of spiritual awareness.

Only at this point of bhakti can we experience Krishna's **eternity, knowledge, and bliss simultaneously**. Unlike the impersonal philosopher, marooned at the lowest stage of spiritual understanding, Krishna's devotees are fully satisfied by their blissful, loving relationships with Krishna, and their position is secure.

"This perfection is characterized by one's ability to see the Self by the pure mind and to relish and rejoice in the Self. In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness, realized through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he or she thinks there is no greater gain." (B.G. 6.23)

Understanding these three levels of spiritual achievement in relation to Krishna, readers of Bhagavad Gita gain complete knowledge of all spiritual paths. When we apply Krishna's recommendations, we will then gain access to the highest spiritual realisations. In this way, we can easily appreciate that Krishna consciousness is not a sectarian religion, but the most broadminded, scientific understanding of reality on all levels.

So why not give Krishna a fair chance and consider his presentation?

It might just be the life changing inspiration you're looking for. 🌿

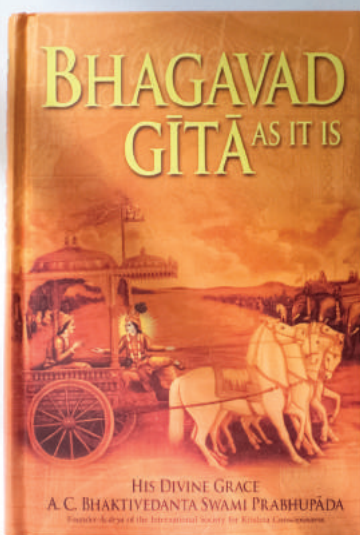


Bhakti monk and qualified medical doctor, Chaitanya Vihara moved to New Zealand from the UK seven years ago. A visit to India in 2006 when he ventured into the Himalayas in search of spiritual wisdom ignited Chaitanya Vihara's deep interest in yoga and meditation. He teaches mantra meditation workshops at Auckland University and relishes sharing Krishna consciousness with others.

ENOUGH! recommends...

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When doubts haunt me,
when disappointments
stare me in the face, and
I see not one ray of hope
on the horizon, I turn to
Bhagavad-gita and find
a verse to comfort me;
and I immediately begin
to smile in the midst of
overwhelming sorrow.

— MAHATMA GANDHI

JOJI'S GUIDE 1.0 Decoding Vagueness

FREQUENTLY USED WORDS. REDEFINED THROUGH YOGI-GOGGLES.

Contributor Jiva Maya

LOVE



1 (VERB) TO FEEL WARM PERSONAL ATTACHMENT OR DEEP AFFECTION, AS FOR A PARENT, CHILD, OR FRIEND.

2 (MATERIAL) MUTUAL EXPLOITATION OF ANOTHER'S MIND AND BODY BASED UPON SPOKEN OR UNSPOKEN CONTRACTS OF EXPECTATION ON EITHER SIDE; ALWAYS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

3 (SPIRITUAL) GENUINE DESIRES AND ACTIONS THAT HELP OTHER LIVING BEING(S) CONNECT WITH THE SUPREME, BASED ON FULL KNOWLEDGE AND WITHOUT SELFISH MOTIVE.

FREE

1 (ADJECTIVE) NOT LIMITED OR CONTROLLED IN ANY WAY.

2 (MATERIAL) THE FEELING OF HAVING NO RESTRICTIONS TO WHAT ONE CAN DO OR ACHIEVE, HOWEVER, NOT GENERALLY SUSTAINED FOR EXTENDED PERIODS BECAUSE OF SOCIETY'S EXPECTATIONS, THE DEMANDS OF THE BODY AND MIND, AND THE LIMITATIONS IMPOSED BY TIME AND SPACE.

3 (SPIRITUAL) TO BE FULLY IN CONTROL OF THE MIND AND SENSES, NOT UNDER THEIR DICTATION; TO BE FREE OF CONDITIONING AND LIBERATED FROM AN ENVIRONMENT OF LIMITATION AND DUALITY.





¹ (NOUN) THE SET OF A PERSON'S CHARACTERISTICS, SUCH AS PERSONALITY AND ABILITY, THAT ARE NOT PHYSICAL AND DIFFERENTIATE THAT PERSON FROM OTHERS.

² (MATERIAL) MAY REFER TO ANY ASPECT OF THE BODY OR MIND. ANY LEVEL OF SELF-IDENTIFICATION IS TRANSIENT AND TEMPORARY AS EVEN THE CLEAREST CONCEPTION IS LOST AFTER DEATH OF THE BODY.

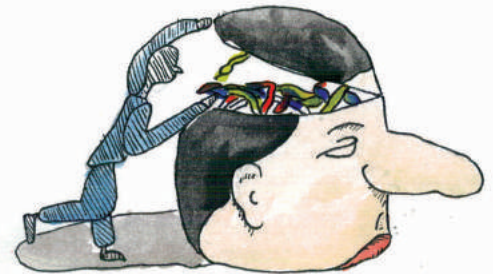
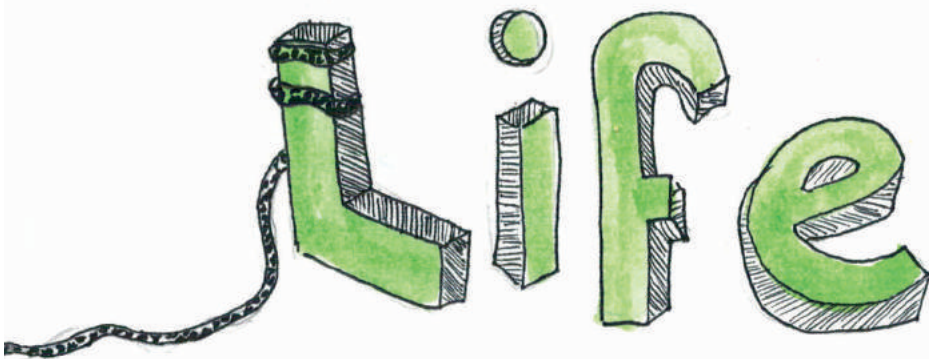
³ (SPIRITUAL) DIFFERENT LAYERS OF SELF ARE ACQUIRED AS A RESULT OF A PERSON'S CONDITIONING IN THIS LIFE AND PREVIOUS LIVES. HOWEVER, THE CORE SELF, A TINY PARTICLE OF CONSCIOUSNESS, IS ACCEPTED AS THE TRUE INDIVIDUAL THAT TRANSITS THROUGH DIFFERENT MATERIAL BODIES OBSERVING SUCH TEMPORARY EXPERIENCES.



¹ (NOUN) THE QUALITY OF A PERSON OR WORK OF ART THAT SHOWS OR PRODUCES DEEP GOOD FEELINGS.

² (MATERIAL) AN AMBIGUOUS TERM REFERRING TO A DEEPER PART OF AN INDIVIDUAL OR OBJECT; OFTEN USED TO EMBELLISH DESCRIPTIONS OR, IN INDIVIDUALS, TO JUSTIFY CERTAIN BEHAVIOUR OR ACTIONS THAT MAY NOT BE COMPREHENSIBLE ON A LOGICAL OR MORAL BASIS.

³ (SPIRITUAL) AN INDIVIDUAL, INFINITESIMAL SPARK OF CONSCIOUSNESS EMANATING FROM KRISHNA, THE SUPREME SPIRITUAL BEING. THE SOUL ANIMATES EVERY MATERIAL BODY AND IS KNOWLEDGEABLE, ETERNAL, AND BLISSFUL—CHARACTERISTICS TEMPORARILY OBSCURED BY LAYERS OF MATERIAL COVERING.



¹ (NOUN) THE PERIOD BETWEEN BIRTH AND DEATH, OR THE EXPERIENCE OR STATE OF BEING ALIVE.

² (MATERIAL) A SET OF EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS BEGINNING AND ENDING WITH THE CURRENT BODY AND INTENDED PRIMARILY FOR ENJOYMENT OF ONE'S CURRENT SENSES.

³ (SPIRITUAL) A TERM OF EXISTENCE IN ANY ONE OUT OF 8,400,000 BODIES RANGING FROM MICROBES, PLANTS, AND ANIMALS TO DIFFERENT TYPES OF HUMAN AND CELESTIAL BODIES; PARTICULARLY VALUABLE IN THE HUMAN BODY BECAUSE THE ADVANCED INTELLIGENCE THIS BODY PROVIDES IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE AND PRACTISE SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE AND RETURN TO THE SPIRITUAL REALM.



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



Jiva Maya developed a taste for travel in her childhood, hopping between the United States and the United Kingdom, where she now lives in Cardiff, Wales. Upon finishing college she took a "gap year," which unexpectedly lasted four years and led her to Australia and New Zealand. Her adventures and questions led her to bhakti-yoga, which she continues to pursue along with other interests including writing, reading, dance, and music.



CONTRIBUTING ARTIST BALADEVA NITAI

“I know what I need. I know what I want,” you tell yourself. You trust your desires, and following them you hope to ride into the sunset—another happy ending. Or is it? Could you be *miswanting*? According to psychology professor Daniel Gilbert, people mistake how much happiness they will gain from achieving what they desire; whether a car, a new spouse, or a piece of cake—when we do gain what we desire, it is never as good as what we calculated. This mistake, Gilbert explains, makes us victims of miswanting. You desire, then aspire, and if you’re lucky, you acquire. But then what?

“I can’t get no satisfaction.

I can’t get no satisfaction.

‘Cause I try and I try and I try and I try.

I can’t get no, I can’t get no ...”

-The Rolling Stones

This is the theme song to life as we know it. But it’s time to change the

soundtrack. Understanding this flaw of miswanting, the yoga texts of ancient India seek to redirect the sincere seeker to the true object of desire that results in real spiritual fulfilment.

NEEDS AND WANTS

It’s easy to distinguish between needs and wants.

Our needs are what our body must have to survive: we need to eat, sleep, mate, protect ourselves.


Wants, on the other hand, aren’t essential to sustaining life. Whereas all conscious beings have needs in common (generally speaking), wants are what make you an individual. “I want a Ford and not a Toyota.” Or “I want chocolate ice cream, rather than plain vanilla.” And we think that our wants will make us happy. Certainly, there is no question of happiness if particular needs are not met. But wants are like extra spice you sprinkle on your life, thinking, “This is what I want to make me happy.”

The equation for happiness seems simple enough. Needs + wants = satisfaction. But has such a simple formula ever produced a happy civilisation? Fulfilling life’s basic needs has become problematic, even for the animals.

For example, drivers will not be surprised to see a hawk in the middle of a highway trying to salvage some roadkill before a car travelling at 100 kilometres per hour strikes it dead. Fulfilling a basic need can be life-threatening for such birds of prey. Similarly, many humans struggle for life’s basics—food and clean water. However, in First World countries, where food and clean water are in abundance, we find another extremity, obesity. Everyone needs to eat, but when our needs become wants and we want to eat more than needed, we create problems for our natural environment, others, and ourselves.

“The world has enough for everyone’s need, but not enough for everyone’s greed.” (Mahatma Gandhi)





“Foods dear to those in the mode of goodness increase the duration of life, purify one’s existence and give strength, health, happiness and satisfaction.”

Bhagavad-gita 17.8



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Being old enough to remember that song, he suddenly felt tears glide down his face. Astonished, he thought, “Why, when I hear this sentimental pop song, are tears coming from my eyes? I don’t understand. After so much practice, I still haven’t annihilated desire.”

Like it or not, we all have an eternal loving propensity. We want relationships. We want the flow of loving relationships. And you can't falsely get rid of that.

When the monk asked for his insight, Devamrita Swami explained,

Like it or not, we all have an eternal loving propensity. We want relationships. We want the flow of loving relationships. And you can't falsely get rid of that. You tried to ignore the reality, thinking that the goal of reality is to annihilate the self, annihilate all desire. But just see—one song from the '50s blows your whole agenda away. This desire comes from the soul—it's coming through matter, that's true, it's coming through the body and mind—but originally it comes from the soul. The soul wants connection. But can the soul be satisfied connecting to matter, whether physiologically or psychologically? No, the soul can only be satisfied by connecting with the Supreme Soul, Krishna. That is the lesson of Bhagavad Gita and it is one that will get to the root of all human problems today.

FISH OUT OF WATER

Devamrita Swami raises an interesting point. How can the soul, being spiritual by nature, be satisfied connecting to matter? Is this existential crisis, the problem of desire, pointing to the true nature of consciousness? The premise of Bhagavad Gita is that the nature of the conscious self is spiritual—thus by interacting with matter you “can’t get no satisfaction.”

His Divine Grace Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the modern world’s foremost exponent of Krishna consciousness, explains:

Everyone in the material world is engaged in all kinds of political, philanthropic and humanitarian

← ALL I WANT IS NOT TO WANT

Bhagavad Gita, the most well-known yoga text, insightfully explains why we “can’t get no satisfaction.” Krishna, the master of the yoga system, explains that desire burns like fire—and a fire is never extinguished by a constant supply of fuel. It just gets bigger and bigger.

“Thus the wise living entity’s pure consciousness becomes covered by its eternal enemy in the form of lust, which is never satisfied and which burns like fire.” (B.G. 3.39)

Frustrated with desire you may think, “All I want is not to want.” Is this possible? Can the fire of desire be extinguished for good?

Author and bhakti-yoga teacher Devamrita Swami, shares the fascinating story of a Buddhist monk whom he met in Thailand, who was originally from the United Kingdom. Many foreigners would visit the monastery where the Buddhist monk

had been a practising abbot for the past thirty years.

His practice was to meditate on the incoming and outgoing breath, what the Bhagavad Gita calls *pranayama*. The breath is actually material, not spiritual. Although *pranayama* certainly reduces material distress, a person cannot approach the spiritual reality through such material methods.

The monk told Devamrita Swami how he had constructed a bamboo hut in the jungle outside the monastery, where he meditated for five years on the incoming and outgoing breath, tolerating sickness, changing weather conditions, and mosquitoes.

He began to think he was making a lot of progress. But what was that progress? Becoming detached from material desires—from his needs and wants. One day, however, from a large transistor radio strapped to the back of a passing villager’s bike, blared the ‘50s song, “Tell Laura I love her. Tell Laura I need her.”



Everything we do
is an act of faith.

Contributor Arjuna

You have an important appointment in the city at 4:50pm. The bus you need to catch is scheduled to arrive at 4:32. It's now 4:33. The bus pulls up to the kerb. You pay, find a seat and sit down, close your eyes, plug your earphones in, and escape into another world.

Or, singing to your favourite song, you drive to work. It takes you twenty minutes to get there. You park the car and head inside to start your day.

What assumptions do you make in these situations?

You trust that the bus driver will take you to the right place and that you will be on time for your appointment, and you assume that it's safe for you to close your eyes and relax on the bus. In the car, you trust that the oncoming cars will stay in the opposite lane and not cross the centre line and that you will get to work safely. You assume you will find a carpark.

If we didn't make assumptions in every aspect of our lives we wouldn't be able to function as a member of society. Our assumptions require faith—complete trust and confidence in something.

Imagine your life without making assumptions. Living life without relying on this type of faith is an extremely uncomfortable and dysfunctional way to exist. If we didn't make assumptions in every aspect of our lives we wouldn't be able to function as a member of society. Our assumptions require faith—complete trust and confidence in something.

Faith and Science

If faith is so crucial to daily life, does it also play a role in science? Most of us accept scientific method as a way to explain the way the world works—as a way to present the hard facts. Merriam Webster's dictionary defines science as "principles and procedures for the systematic pursuit of knowledge involving

the recognition and formulation of a problem, the collection of data through observation and experiment, and the formulation and testing of hypotheses." By definition, science deals with this material world and with matter. If you can measure it, then there is a branch of science that addresses it. But where do we draw the line between science and faith? Where do assumptions end and facts begin? Or do they cross over? And if faith is such an integral part of our lives, then why are we so phobic about anything that demands our "faith"?

Science Requires Faith Too

To function, science also requires that we make assumptions—it requires faith. Physicist Paul Davies points out that "even the most atheistic scientist accepts as an act of faith the existence of a law-like order in nature that is at least in part comprehensible to us."

To perform science, we need to believe the material world is real. It needs to be measurable for it to give us real knowledge. You're probably thinking, "Who wouldn't accept that the material world is real? You can touch it, you can kick it." But if you think about it, we can't prove that the material world is real, because any proof is itself only real if the material world is real. If the material world is the experimenter's imagination, then no knowledge could come from such measuring. So, to gain knowledge through science, we must assume that the material world is real.

We can't prove that the material world is real, so to take it as such is a kind of faith. But let's not quibble over faith versus science. Assumptions are a necessary part of life, and applied with intelligence and discrimination they enable us to engage in life both on the surface and at deeper levels. In complex mathematics, for instance, assumptions are unavoidable. Electrical engineers routinely assign a variable a fixed value so that they can perform their equations. But while it's clear that assumptions can't be avoided, a difference exists between blind faith and intelligent acceptance of truths that can't be empirically proven.

Our Deepest Assumptions

Consciously or unconsciously, we all perceive some level of truth as "self-evident." These truths don't need to be proven, because they prove themselves.

Core moral values best demonstrate these self-evident truths. We all feel that on the deepest level, all people should be equal. Yet, materially, there is no equality. One person is rich, one is poor, another is beautiful, another is unattractive. No one can say that on a material level everyone is equal. However, we like to think that there should be a fundamental equality between all human beings. Why do we feel this way?

That all humans are inherently equal is a nonmaterial value: a value that cannot be measured or experienced with our ordinary senses. Interestingly, the United States Declaration of Independence states: "We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The universal equality of all human beings is not something we can prove through material methods.

All traditional worldviews acknowledge the existence of something that is not measurable with material tools or senses. The most notable of the yoga texts of ancient India, the Bhagavad Gita, discusses a supreme spiritual reality, a world that is not perceivable through ordinary senses. Spiritually inclined or not, we all participate in a realm that is not perceivable through ordinary senses: it is the realm of values.

Beyond Our Senses

Every one of us must accept some values, because as a society we have a certain level of consciousness. For example, we expect and value good hygiene, fidelity, honesty, and security. However, people in a lower state of consciousness can violate a society's values. Generally, we would think a person who was not

strongly against rape, murder, and theft is insane.

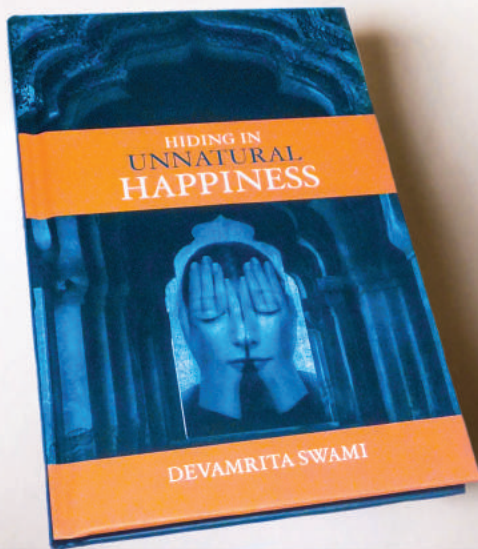
Shared by persons with the same level of consciousness, values have the power to unite or divide. Our values cannot be measured under a microscope, but few would claim it to be less important as a result. Many would uphold that core values and principles such as love, ethics and sense of purpose are most important in building truth and identity in their lives. So the question is, does knowledge that validates our deepest values exist?

Bhagavad Gita—True Spiritual Science

Knowledge that validates our most cherished values does exist. In my search for this knowledge and a worldview free from inconsistencies, I found the texts of ancient India to provide the most rational and comprehensive understanding of both this world and the world beyond. The universally acclaimed Bhagavad Gita, an authentic body of spiritual knowledge, covers everything from the eternal nature of the soul, to the layers of the material world and the spiritual reality. This ancient text also describes human life's ultimate goal and its highest achievement. It offers readers an opportunity to experience the positive effects of applying this higher knowledge in their everyday lives. Universities have so many faculties, but which department studies the eternal nature of the soul? Let's take a step back and ask the bigger questions in life, consider whether answers to these questions exist, and make it a priority to search out such answers. 🌻



Arjuna's life-long interest in philosophy and his search for higher knowledge led him to bhakti-yoga five years ago. He works as an electrician and lives with his wife and newborn son at the Krishna conscious community in North-West Auckland.



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