

# ENOUGH!

JOIN THE EVOLUTION

CONSCIOUS LIVING  
YOGA PSYCHOLOGY  
PHILOSOPHY & SCIENCE  
FILM & FICTION

Sound  
Makes  
up Your  
Core

CHANGE YOUR  
LIFE BY CHANGING  
WHAT YOU HEAR

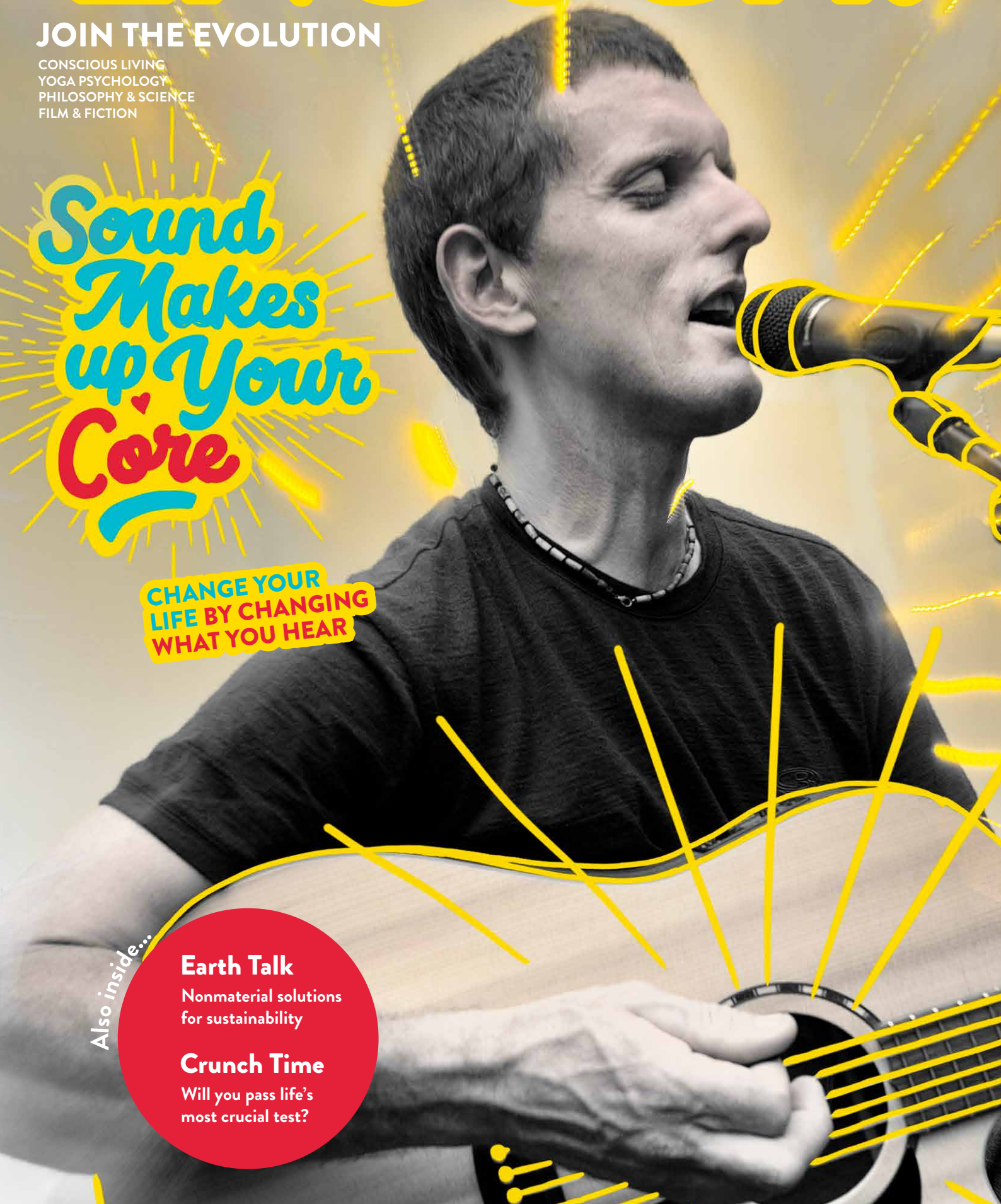
Also inside...

### Earth Talk

Nonmaterial solutions  
for sustainability

### Crunch Time

Will you pass life's  
most crucial test?





# Dear Reader

## Increasing technological sophistication: embrace it, flaunt it, revel in it.

Merrily riding the runaway train of hi-tech gadgetry, information-age humans find themselves doing reluctant battle with two monsters: rampant psychological distress and ecological meltdown. These twin monsters challenge our tech-induced sense of superiority.

Some thinking and some soul-searching will allow us to ask that crucial question: Is the state of our *outer* ecology reflecting the state of our *inner* ecology?

We cannot flourish harmoniously unless we detox our inner ecology. The ancient yoga texts say this is the *raison d'être* of human life: the human body is an opportunity for us to clean our consciousness so we can truly, deeply understand our eternal nonmaterial identity.

How to detox our inner ecology begins with the powerful effect of sound. We become *what we hear*. In this issue's feature article "Sound Makes Up Your Core," Devamrita Swami discusses the effect sound can have in our lives, either entrapping us in a limited materialistic mindset or unlocking the door to a realm of higher possibilities—depending on the kind of sound we choose to hear. He explains how to resuscitate our inner life and access our nonmaterial identity using mantra technology.

In July this year, thousands of scientists specialising in artificial intelligence (AI) signed a pledge expressing their concern about a different kind of technology. These scientists declared they would accept no part in developing or manufacturing robots that can identify people and make

decisions to attack them without the permission of a human controller. The pledge was intended to deter weapons developers from building lethal autonomous weapon systems (Laws).

But the real question is: Does the development of increasingly sophisticated computer systems reflect the best use of human intelligence? Bhakti monk Hriman Krishna thinks not. In his article "Bootless by Androids," he describes our increasingly bizarre tech-mad world. He points out that the ever-widening possibilities in the AI field will always miss the mark—they will fail to fulfill our deepest spiritual needs. This makes us ponder, is matter-based technology really the holy grail?

The disastrous state of our planet's ecology indicates that it's not. Many leading environmentalists acknowledge that at the heart of the global crisis is a human existential crisis, a theme explored in the article "Earth Talk." Addressing how we can become a healing presence on the planet, Sachi Dulal discusses how the quality of our pleasure-seeking desires can lead humans to either act in harmony with the natural environment for a sustainable future, or exploit it.

This eleventh issue of *Enough! Magazine* reminds us that only *spiritual* technology can connect us to the supreme personal source of all energies. Once we make this ultimate connection we can become a positive agent of change for ourselves, our communities, and our planet. Treat yourself. Take a few moments to find out how so.

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# BOOTLESS BY ANDROIDS

It was right on target...

Its mission?

To kill its creator!



Contributor **Hriman Krishna**

**The late celebrity scientist Stephen Hawking recently trumpeted the end of the world to the BBC:**

“The full development of artificial intelligence could spell doom for the human race.”

Taking its first steps as the most advanced artificial intelligence (AI) system on the planet, Google’s brainchild “AlphaGo,” hits the news headlines. AlphaGo is the first general purpose AI programme designed to play “Go,” an ancient Chinese board game infinitely more complicated than chess.

Bringing fear and jubilation for top developers in the field, this AI programme can approximate human intuition and mimic the best human brains. It has the capacity to learn on its own and outwit human intelligence. Big tech-guns like Elon Musk and Bill Gates have expressed their reservations after AlphaGo beat the world’s most top-ranked Go player.

What’s left for the human minions to do when this super-intelligent overlord takes full flight? Humanity doesn’t seem to have any advantage over our manufactured counterparts, and as a species lacking knowledge of our own consciousness, will we become the enslaved specimens of a bygone experiment?

## **REPLACEABLE TWO-LEGGED-ANIMALS?**

Primitive robots are already earmarked for taking our jobs and have been doing so for the past sixty years. The Bank of New Zealand recently sacked a hundred employees and replaced them with automated tellers. Soon AI will be able to replace any human in information-intensive, labour-intensive specialised occupations, and even in our relationships.

Perhaps the dawn of a cyborg civilisation has seen its first rays in AI. But to what extent will our lives really benefit apart from the obvious conveniences AI brings to our material needs?

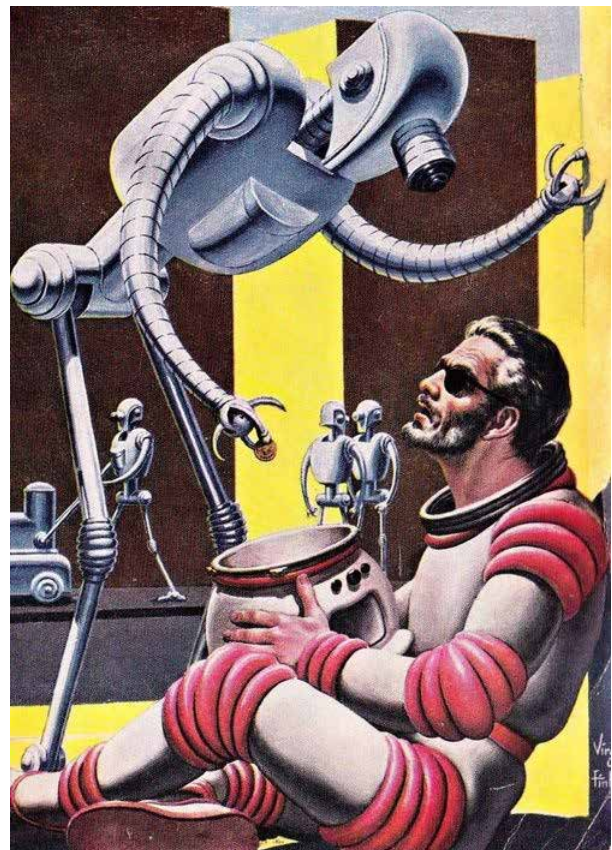
**THE CAPACITY TO  
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ALWAYS LACK.**

An enlightened yogi may agree that AI does everything better than humans when it comes to facilitating our base animal instincts - namely to eat better, sleep more soundly, kill more efficiently and mate unrestrictedly. But the sages explain that human intelligence is wasted if we simply try and emulate other species no matter how innovative, because human intelligence surpasses those of animals. The capacity to question the nature of our existence and attain conscious enlightenment is an asset our android counterparts will always lack.

We don’t want our intelligence simply relegating us to a kind of sophisticated animal, where all kinds of bizarre robot-human integration thrive.

Why not take it to the next level and enjoy a total interactive experience with humanoid robots? While adult dolls already make a killing for the sex industry, android-oriented “robosexuality” is a growing demographic. In France, a woman awaits a new law to pass, so she can legally unite with her robot partner in marriage.

Cars and phones were invented only 150 years ago before they became ubiquitous commodities, and now researchers predict that within the next thirty years human-like robots with AI capacity will be available in shops for use in your living rooms.



## HAS HUMANITY BECOME SO DESPERATE THAT WE MUST SEEK COMPANIONSHIP IN MACHINES?

Soon you can rid yourself of the pharmaceutical love-drugs that alter human psychology with the aim of relationship refinement. Just put an AI system in a full-size human android, decked out with touch sensors and a soft-to-touch silicon body, and you've got a clone of your fantasy lover, fully customisable with bits and pieces to

suit your physical and psychological needs. No need to tolerate those embarrassing human imperfections. Maybe all you'll be required to do is change the batteries and upgrade the AI software. It must be more economical and less emotionally complicated to maintain a machine than to bust your brains trying to get along with human partners for your entire life.

### CONSCIOUSNESS: THE MISSING LINK

Has humanity become so desperate that we must seek companionship in machines? What kind of consciousness does it take to get biologically kinky with a customisable R2-D2 anyway?

Modern science generally informs us that we are made of chemical matter, and if humans and androids are solely composed of matter, then the matrimonial match between human and machines is perfect. However, matter is not conscious and this remains the missing link that prevents most people from getting totally cosy with their new android model.

Krishna, the scientist of consciousness development, provides a systematic approach to understanding our existence beyond matter. He points out in his book, the Bhagavad Gita, that we are nonmaterial units of consciousness (known as the spirit soul) enclosed by gradations of gross and more subtle matter, namely this body, mind and intellect, which is also compared to a machine.

Therefore our needs are divided into these categories:

1. Physical: gross matter, composed of material elements.
2. Psychological: subtle matter, composed of the mind.
3. Intellectual: finer matter, composed of intelligence.
4. Spiritual: nonmaterial energy, composed of pure consciousness.

If our intelligence neglects to understand the needs of our nonmaterial dimension, then we have fallen short of delving into the deepest mysteries accessible only to humans. Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita, out of thousands of people, one may endeavour for enlightenment and out of thousands who are on that path, only one may attain perfection. Consequently, the masses of people perceive matter-based technology as the holy grail.



Modern science has been baffled in trying to grasp the consciousness predicament, because there is no material tool to measure or quantify this nonmaterial particle. Spiritual nature can be grasped only by a nonmaterial framework of knowledge and technology, which Krishna gives in Bhagavad Gita, his foundational science for consciousness.

Lacking awareness of our spiritual needs, people try to satisfy their soul cravings by material means. These artificial expectations for satisfaction frustrate us and increase our dependency on technology to do the impossible. And the same people are flashing yellow lights on the runway of technological growth, only to create an intelligence-explosion that may unlock a Pandora's box and release problems beyond our ability to control.

Shouldn't we humans use our intelligence to understand our identity beyond the material and examine the very consciousness that was required to forge the machines that will eventually render us all bootless?



At nineteen years when Hirman 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.

# TELL YOUR (SLIGHTLY ALTERNATIVE) MATES



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# YOUR SPIRIT IS NOT AN ANIMAL



Contributor **Jiva Maya**

## “YOU PIG!”

And then I slapped him.

The end.

The longer story, you ask?

Well, I once knew a man who reminded me of a pig.

In a thousand typical scenes you see women slapping men and calling them pigs, right?

But this guy had a snout that loved to consume more than any man I'd known before.

Well, you may say, this is a successful human being, surely?

Embrace life, inhale joy, inject pleasure; whatever you can get your mits, paws, or hooves on.

He even looked like a pig. Big, loud, and proud.

There was even a ruddy, passionate flush to his leathery skin.

But you know the sad thing?

It took me a long time to get over my temporary, significant feelings for this creature.

Why, you may ask?

Admittedly, he wasn't the first animal I had temporarily appropriated.

So, there were tears, like with the others, but this one brought many more.

But why, if he was so pig-like?

Because he was a pig with a philosophy.

And I bought into that story, that world.

I bought into an illusion I wished to see.

## “YOU (COLOURFUL) PIG!”

I later read a book on yoga.

It said that the source of all energy gives us facility and faith according to our desire.

At the time I met this man, I had big desires.

I knew I wanted more from life than what “normal people” seemed to be satisfied with.

The monotony, the grey, the material.

So, to meet someone with atypical and eye-catching colour and zest ...

Someone who didn't limit or restrict himself the way these office workers and white-picket-fencers did ...

... well, he was so polar opposite, he *must* have been spiritual, right?!

He *felt* spiritual.

For lack of a better adjective, and lack of another person to spend the dark nights with.



## “YOU (GREEDY) PIG”

If you've ever spent time with real pigs, you may have noticed that they never stop.

They are head-down, hyper-focused beings.

Determined, absorbed, insatiable.

I liked that kind of intensity.

A stark, shiny contrast to the blasé radio-and-TV, meat-and-two-vege guy.

I mean, most of his qualities weren't bad, they were simply misdirected.

We all have that choice, to look down at the mud or up to the stars.

As for him, I'm not sure he ever even took a breath, let alone noticed the sky.

He quickly scoured his way through his plans and people, with focus and efficiency, never staying in one place long enough to be held accountable.

Addictions, stories, enjoyments of any sort.

Scavenging for anyone he could squeeze some juice from.

He wasn't fussy, and never felt guilty.

And yet people would continue to buzz around him, drawn in like mosquitos searching for his light.

His dedication was like a magnet for the dry, envious hearts, mourning for their own lost hopes of “freedom.”



Holding out hope for a bit of what he had, which  
looked like freedom but didn't taste like it.

### “YOU (SELFISH) PIG!”

See, pigs have bodies made for higher sensual and  
sexual capacity than humans.

By hook or by crook, by inheritance or by karma, some  
humans seem to have those capacities heightened too.

Or maybe they just scour and scrimp and snuffle with  
that bit more drive.

This glorified lust for life is a kind of faith.

Such people often manage to justify, or “spiritualise”  
their activities with mottos encouraging the laymen.

“You are number one.”

“Love yourself.”

“Love every moment.”

Warped tantra; ‘Me’ mantras.

Exploitation at its most wholesome.

Quite simply eating, competing, and, by nature of the  
beast, quite often cheating.

You could just call a pig a pig ...

But when a pig wants to feel like he's more than a pig

Well, these sentimentalities just take the edge off a bit.

Abandoning inhibition (“that's just other people trying  
to control you, anyway”).

Abandoning responsibility (“that's just society trying  
to control you, anyway”).

Abandoning principles (“that's just some out-of-date  
morality from an out-of-date God who is trying to  
control you, anyway”).

Simply and solely maximising pleasure at every moment.

To me it sounded liberating.

I can meditate all the time: meditating on how to  
increase *my* enjoyment.

Is it selfish?

Well that's what I thought at first.

But, trust me, if you affirm, intoxicate, and occupy  
yourself enough, it will sound better.

### “YOU (LYING) PIG!”

So that was pretty much his story.

Some people pad it out into whole books that  
become bestsellers

Because people want to feel good about feeling good.

And it feels really good to put yourself first without  
shame for a little while.

It feels so good and so different, the heightened  
pleasure can be mistaken for spirituality.

But when others put themselves first,  
especially at our expense.

Or people take it too far and lose sense.

In those moments of sobriety, you question:

What would the world be like if everybody  
was living like this?

Are there lines?

Is there morality?

Although we make excuses for our own unique  
rule-breaking, at our core, most humans do believe  
in humanity.

We generally call those who don't sociopaths.

Even scientists who make claims about us being no  
more than animals made of chemicals

Don't actually live as if that were true.

Whatever your poison, the reality bears true:

Selfish carnality is not a sustainable or satisfactory  
(and is certainly not a spiritual) way to live.



### “YOU (HYPOCRITICAL) PIG!”

And the reality of my life slowly dawned.

I realised that even before I met our protagonist pig, I  
hadn't been too much different.

I may have looked it.

I may have told myself I had principles (as I declined a  
pipe with disdain but accepted a rollie with relish).

Yet every weekend, there I was, locked in to a self-  
created enclosure of limited options.

Which variety of intoxication to take?

What soundtrack to do it to?

Whose sponge to squeeze?

So maybe my grass was a bit better kept,  
but it certainly wasn't greener.

And what's the point of having tidy grass anyway if  
you're not worried about what the neighbours think?

So I took his advice and dug it up.

Deeper down to new realms of degradation.

I tried to bring my eyes down to see what he saw.

I got duped.

I was an astral dreamer, a navel-gazer, and simply confused about whether I should go up or down.

Inward or outward.

And thinking I could go outward and find permanent happiness in a world of impermanence.

I got duped.

I tried, I really tried to find limitlessness through limited senses.

I was also so many animals.

And the moment I realised that, I could forgive him.



### “YOU (SPIRITUAL) HUMAN!”

The fact you’re reading this now means your spirit is in a human body.

Maybe you can relate to it.

Maybe you can to a small degree, but you’re good at keeping score.

The intelligent animals are very careful and calculating merchants in their unique exploiting arrangements.

The thing is, humans have a very special gift bestowed upon them by nature that is distinct from the animals:

The ability to read articles.

To ask questions.

To choose what story they buy and how they conduct their life.

The only thing that is not temporary in this world is consciousness, the symptom of the individual life force

In every living being.

Your spirit is not an animal, and it’s not a human for that matter.

You, the spirit, are wrapped inside.

The same magic that gives life to everything sentient, that scientists are unable to replicate or define.

You want proof?

There is the YOU that observes the changes in your hair colour, age, and opinions.

Nature reincarnates that deepest internal identity, which simply observes all the external changes, into a new body after each cycle.

Your next one will be more suitable for your desires based on your present actions.

So if your current priorities are anything like a pig’s, your future is looking pink.

Same goes for the birds and trees around us.

Love to skydive?

Your future has feathers.

Love to stand still for selfies?

Your future is naked for months at a time and still for millennia.

Pigs, birds, and trees can’t read articles.

Only the humans can strip away the fur and fizz, crepe and glitz, to discover the true essence and purpose of life.

### “YOU (POOR) HUMAN!”

My old boar of an ex-boyfriend, bless him, died recently aged thirty-five.

The ancient bhakti-yoga science is there to be read.

The quest for knowledge of the soul is the priority.

The only wealth we can take with us.

Our best investment.

Our true self care, if we care enough to contemplate our future.

Meditate: ironically, the best enjoyment comes from giving enjoyment.

Especially to the most dynamic individual in the most dynamic relationship

That internal link between our consciousness and the source of our consciousness.

The whole to which we are a part, who is everywhere and yet a personality.

That person is the only one who can satisfy you.

So be clever.

Give to the purest to take the purest.

Small changes with big consequences.

Oink.

Om.



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.





**C R U N C H**  
**T I M E** PART  
— III —

**THE FINAL TEST**

Contributors Chaitanya Vihara & Muni Cari

**What happens when we die?**

**Where did we come from?**

**Where will we go after death?**

Given you're reading this article, I suspect these are questions you have asked yourself and/or others at some point in your life. Unfortunately, finding meaningful answers to such fundamental questions is not always easy. Unable to find genuine knowledge, many people adopt the popular philosophy: "simply live in the moment and stop asking the big questions."

The following is a real-life account by Muni Cari, my dear friend and mentor, who was involved in a life-threatening accident at work. The events in his story prompt life's big questions, and my discussion after his testimony attempts to present the science of birth, death, reincarnation, and karma as Krishna explains in the Bhagavad Gita.

## **MUNI CARI'S ACCOUNT**

A professional arborist, a tree surgeon, faces three very real fears while climbing large trees. By large, I mean 25-50 metres tall.

Fear 1: Falling out of the tree.

Fear 2: Cutting off an arm, leg, or head with your chainsaw.

Fear 3: Electrocutation secondary to inadvertent contact with power lines.

Any of the above could kill you, so it's not a profession for the faint hearted.

On a windy day, early in 1999, I was asked to climb a tree that had been hit by a tornado. Its structural integrity was unclear; its huge limbs were twisted and thrown about like a child's toys.

This tree was famous as the tallest pine in New Zealand, maybe in the world. It could be seen on Auckland's skyline from many parts of the city.

Given the potential structural damage, the relatively routine job of ascending a massive tree became considerably more challenging. Normally, you climb as high as possible to establish an anchor point for your rope, then you can safely work around the whole tree. It's like abseiling with a chainsaw in one hand – totally safe!

On this day, however, another technique was required, as the safety of a high anchor point was doubtful. So, instead, I anchored my rope lower down, then free climbed far above it. That way, if the tree failed and I fell, my rope would at least be anchored at a safe point, albeit below me.

Of course, the inevitable did happen. Whilst working at the end of a long branch, insanely far above my anchor point, the branch snapped clean off. The force of the tornado had indeed compromised the tree's core structure.

So that's the scene. From high up in this enormous tree I was falling to the ground head first, chainsaw in hand. No branches to grab and hopelessly far above my anchor point, there was almost nothing to stop a high-speed impact with the ground.

What was going through my mind at this point? With only seeming seconds until my imminent death, what was I thinking about? What happened next was something quite amazing, something maybe even more exciting than cutting your arms off with a chainsaw.

**With only seeming seconds until my imminent death, what was I thinking about? What happened next was something quite amazing, something maybe even more exciting than cutting your arms off with a chainsaw.**



As I fell, I saw my entire life as a collage of emotionally charged scenes. I could see everything I had done, everything I had thought, and everything I had wished for right there before my eyes. In that instant everything was visible. Later, I learned this phenomenon is called a *life review*, but in the few seconds I experienced it, I just saw it as my life's picture. I could see sad scenes, happy scenes, distressing and sensual scenes. The images in the collage reached out to me and I could feel those emotions control me. Some things surprised me, they were not as I recalled them. There was a lifetime of events, which looked so exciting. But as I relived each experience the feelings seemed unexciting and the memories painful. Then I noticed images of myself sitting and practising mantra meditation with my wife. Contentment and peace immediately flooded my heart.

I didn't have long to relish contentment, however, before a more pressing reality manifested. The ground. Specifically the ground approaching me unbelievably fast. Suddenly, my fall broke. The good news was that my free rope measured less than the distance from the anchor point to the ground. The bad news, however, was that now, swinging on the end of my rope like a massive pendulum, I hurtled towards the trunk of the tree, chainsaw still in hand.

The resultant impact with the tree knocked me unconscious.

As I slowly came round to the sound of panicked shouts from below, I had a chance to contemplate.

What was that life picture I saw? What did it mean?

## CHAITANYA VIHARA

### What actually happens when someone experiences a near death experience (NDE) or life review?

In Bhagavad Gita, an extraordinarily comprehensive handbook of metaphysical knowledge, Krishna presents a technical description of how the world works, including the process of reincarnation. In the eighth chapter Krishna reveals:

“Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, that state he will attain without fail.”

So many persons who have had NDEs confirm the truth of this. We often hear the cliché expression “my life flashed before my eyes.” As Muni's story similarly illustrates, whatever we do and experience in this life is indeed remembered and tested at the time of death. In his commentary to this verse, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the pre-eminent yoga scholar of modern times, elaborates:

“The process of changing one's nature at the critical moment of death is here explained. How can one die in the proper state of mind? Once upon a time, a King called Bharata, although a great personality, thought of a deer at the end of his life, and so in his next life he was transferred

into the body of a deer. Although as a deer he remembered his past activities, he had to accept that animal body. Of course, one's thoughts during the course of one's life accumulate to influence one's thoughts at the moment of death, so this life creates one's next life. If in one's present life one lives in the mode of goodness and always thinks of Krishna, it is possible for one to remember Krishna at the end of one's life. That will help one be transferred to the transcendental nature of Krishna.”

If we are honest, none of us can claim to have directly chosen the particular bodies, families, communities, countries, planets or universes in which we have been located. So how did we end up where we are?

### Ordering wisely

Imagine you go to a restaurant for a nice vegetarian meal. After scanning through the menu, you decide to order a pizza and mango lassi (good choice!). Minutes later, the waiter brings your meal. At the same time, your friend who ordered lasagne and kumara chips receives his plate. Comparing the edibles, you then feel unhappy and wish you had ordered lasagne instead. You try to swap with your friend but are unsuccessful. He laughs at you and says:

“No chance, mate. I told you the lasagne is world-class here. One day you'll learn!”

Now who can you blame for choosing pizza over lasagne? No one, you ordered it out of your own free will; now you have to pay for it and eat it!

Similarly, according to our mental state at the time of death, we subconsciously order our next body and situation. This is why real human societies caution their members to exercise discretion and intelligence throughout their lives—everything we do, say or think has an impact.

This law of action and reaction is known as karma. Specifically, karma refers to the process through which we create our material bodies.

### What happens to students when they leave school?

The immediate answer is: “It all depends on the individual.”

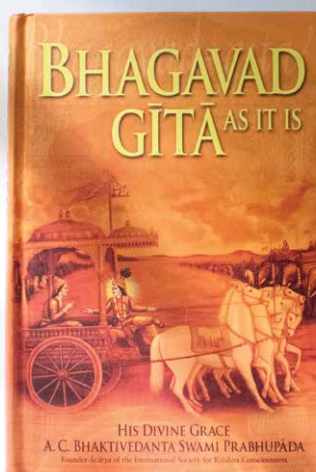
We see that serious, academically inclined students who work hard generally excel and may go on to further elevate themselves at tertiary institutions. Then there are your less academic attenders, who might commence a practical apprenticeship or start work. Then you have the “drop-outs,” those who make no effort whatsoever, flunk their exams and struggle with limited career options thereafter.

Now granted, there are many environmental factors which also contribute to an individual's success. Whilst discussion

>>

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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.

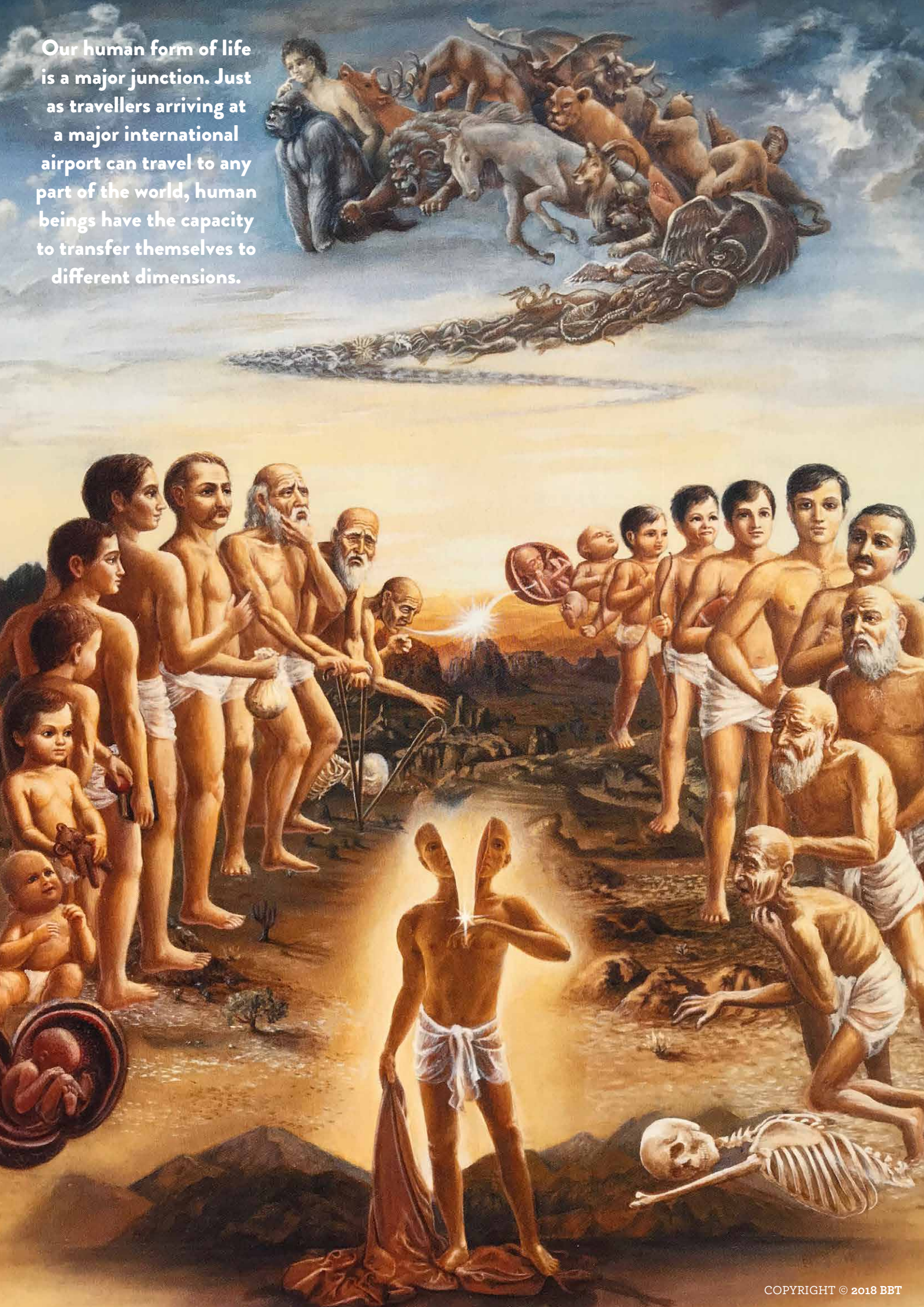
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Our human form of life is a major junction. Just as travellers arriving at a major international airport can travel to any part of the world, human beings have the capacity to transfer themselves to different dimensions.





<< into such factors is beyond the scope of this article, the main principle still stands: what we do now directly affects and generates our future.

### Common sense

Actually, this is all common sense. No one with half a brain buys into the fallacious claims of religious fanatics who evangelise that simply by “believing in God” one will go to heaven, no matter how impure or lazy one has been. Indeed, many people feel completely alienated from religious organisations because they detect this hypocrisy.

“Bro, go hard on Saturday night. Just remember to attend confession on Sunday and it’ll be all good. You just got to believe!”

Such ludicrous attempts to legitimise an animalistic lifestyle are hardly convincing. Where is the value in this cheating, other than temporarily relieving the guilt of pseudo-religionists?

### Real education

Real spiritual training educates individuals and helps them to understand the wide array of potential destinations available to us all, in the next life. If you don’t know the possible choices, how can you make any sort of informed decision on where you’re going?

Now of course, you may well question whether there is another life after this one. Krishna addresses this doubt at the start of Bhagavad Gita:

“As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change.”

Some persons can distinctly remember their past lives, especially young children. However, regardless of whether we are able to recall events which occurred before our most recent birth or not, the fact that we exist now, and have experienced so many different phases in this current lifespan, should lead any open-minded person to at least theoretically consider the possibility that life will continue after the death of our current physical body. Furthermore, with so many testimonies from people who have experienced “out of body experiences” and NDEs (and thereby substantiate the premise that consciousness exists independently to the physical body), it would certainly be naïve to dismiss the possibility of reincarnation outright.

### Preparing for the next life: what are my options?

Our human form of life is a major junction. Just as travellers arriving at a major international airport can travel to any part of the world, human beings have the capacity to transfer themselves to different dimensions.

Because the real self, or the soul, is simply the energising witness within the material body, all forms of life are potential future “homes” for the spirit soul. We can be relegated to the animal kingdom, “re-spawn” as a human or acquire an advanced extra-terrestrial form on a different planet. Yet a

greater option lies beyond all of these material destinations—we can elect to return to the spiritual world and experience true happiness, free from the limitations of time and space. Indeed, this special capacity to achieve a transcendental result, is what differentiates the human form from all others.

### Ticket, passport, and papers

Practically speaking, to travel anywhere, one must be qualified. That translates as having sufficient wealth (to buy a ticket), identification papers (passport) and official approval (visa). Even on this earth planet, there is so much concern surrounding immigration and border control. This reflects the natural principle that different levels of qualification are required to achieve different destinations.

### Spiritual visa

“So what does it take to return to the spiritual world?” I hear you ask. To return home, we first have to cultivate spiritual wealth through re-establishing our lost relationship with Krishna. The most practical means to achieve this is by chanting the Hare Krishna maha mantra:

HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA  
KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE  
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA  
RAMA RAMA HARE HARE

By regularly vibrating this sacred mantra, one becomes empowered to spiritualise all of life’s activities. In exchange, Krishna progressively rewards sincere spiritual scientists with higher transcendental experience. In this way, remembering Krishna at the time of death becomes easier. As Krishna confirms in Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 4:

“One who understands me in truth, upon leaving the current body, doesn’t take birth again in this material world, but returns to my eternal spiritual abode.”

Great saints declare that understanding Krishna is the most urgent priority in life. Let us also become wise and secure this precious Krishna visa before the serpent of death bites.

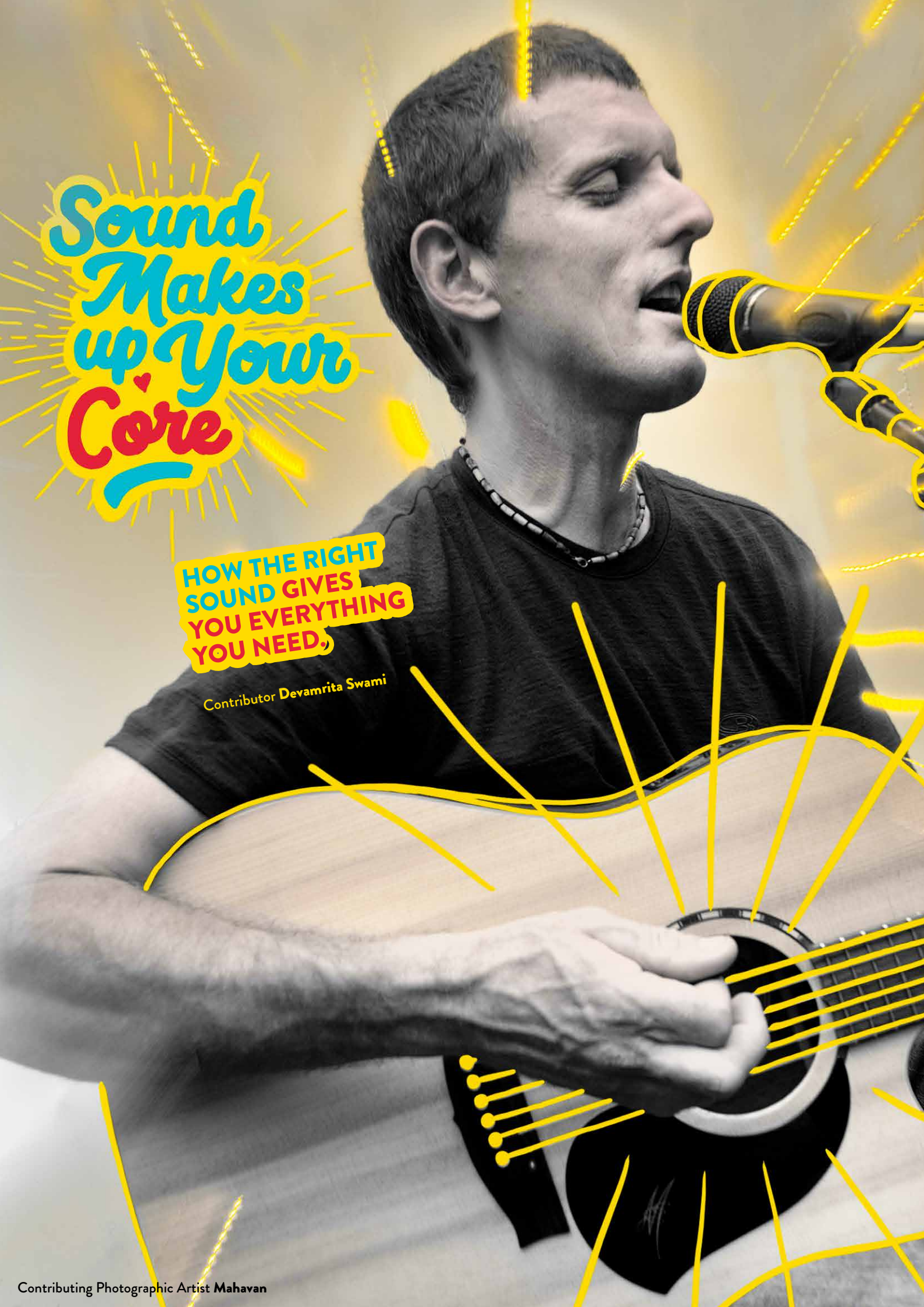
Welcome to crunch time!



Muni has been a fun-filled member of the bhakti community for more than twenty years. During this time, he has served as yoga instructor, yoga studio manager and restaurant owner. Between his bhakti practice and yoga work, he enjoys cycle touring, outdoor adventures, cooking, and spending time with his wife.



Bhakti yogi and medical doctor Chaitanya Vihara moved to New Zealand from the United Kingdom in 2009. Chaitanya’s interest in spirituality was ignited by his first visit to India in 2006, when he ventured into the Himalayas. From 2010 to 2016 he lived as a monk, dedicating himself to the study and practice of Krishna consciousness. He relishes sharing spiritual knowledge with others.



# Sound Makes up Your Core

HOW THE RIGHT  
SOUND GIVES  
YOU EVERYTHING  
YOU NEED.

Contributor Devamrita Swami

**Sound vibration makes up your core. An easy way to begin to understand what makes up your inner self is to analyse the sound that goes into your ears and rolls off your tongue. You can judge a person not by the clothes they wear, but by the company they keep. Most accurately, you can judge by the sound vibration the person associates with and the sound vibration he presents to others. Sound is powerful. It moulds our consciousness.**

Amidst the hustle and bustle of daily life, so many sounds can disturb us. If you've ever spent the day stuck in traffic amongst honking cars in some second or third world country, you will know how stressful it is. On the other hand, when alone in a big house, you might have music on in one room and a TV on in another room to make you feel that you are not alone. The yoga texts teach us that sound can present both reality as well as illusion. The right kind of sound can free us from illusion while ordinary sound that we are familiar with in this world contributes to deepening our illusion.

## **MATERIAL SOUND DEADENS**

The bhakti-yoga texts, especially Bhagavad Gita, explain that sound that reinforces a mistake—the mistake of thinking we are material and contact with matter will satisfy us—is our worst enemy. Now just think about the various kinds of sounds that enter into your ear holes and those that roll over your tongue. Are those sounds actually able to bring you beyond time and space, beyond beginnings and endings, beyond matter and material situations, beyond psychology and physiology? Or are the sounds you hear reinforcing your attachment to the temporary material phantasmagoria, which shoots through the sky, like a comet? Our tiny spot of a life seems to offer promise. But just as if I were to suddenly blow on some candles and extinguish them, our temporary life is stubbed out.

For this reason, we have to say that sounds reinforcing our attachment to the material scene are unhealthy. They deaden our higher faculties, and in this way, despite our sincere efforts, the sound of the materialistic mindset traps us. The bhakti-yoga texts point out that from the time you are born, you are hearing sounds of material entanglement. Just as a kitten tangles itself in a ball of yarn, similarly, we entangle ourselves in material complexity and intricacy as we seek fulfilment and gratification in the temporary cosmos.

Think about the various things you discuss with family, with friends, at the workplace, at university, on the streets, in the forest, on the boat. What is the substance of that sound vibration? What may sound like innocent chatter has an effect.

## **KIRTAN: SOUND UPGRADE**

Before we consider how to upgrade the sound vibration that surrounds us, let's first try to perceive the deadening effect of material sound vibration. Material sound vibration promises you temporary and external fulfilment—the promise that you are going to be satisfied with gratification, achievement, gain, acquiring, interacting, all on the material plane of physiology and psychology—the fleshy stuff and mind stuff. Besides the fleshy stuff, of course, there are the various acquisitions of matter that one hopes to possess. And then there is the mental stuff, the thoughts, such as wanting to be appreciated or recognised. "I want to be known, I want others to indicate to me that I am a good person and I am worthy of being alive." You will be shocked to know how many people are plagued with the thought, is it worth it, my breathing in oxygen? What is so special about my life? Is it worth it—me being alive?

The constant material sound vibration pounds away at our possibilities for higher consciousness, and so we become accustomed to that as normal. If someone asks you where is your life going, you say, "Ah, we'll see how it all works out," or "I have some career plans, family plans." It all sounds justified because that material sound vibration has encased you in temporariness and limitation. But *kirtan* (group mantra meditation performed with music) opens you to higher possibilities.

## **WHICH MANTRA?**

As I mentioned earlier, sound can create illusion and deepen it, and sound can liberate. The right sound can supply all your nonmaterial, spiritual necessities. People have heard various mantras chanted and know what a mantra is – a particular sound that can deliver your mind from material entanglement and illusion. But, you may say, although I have heard about chanting other mantras, what about the Hare Krishna mantra? Is that distinctive of a particular group? The Hare Krishna maha mantra: **Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare** is a yogic prescription that has existed since time immemorial.

**AT THE CORE OF OUR BEING WE CRAVE AUTHENTICITY, BUT HOW CAN WE BE AUTHENTIC IN THE BLEAKEST OF TIMES WHEN HUMAN BEINGS THINK THEY ARE MOST ADVANCED BUT ARE, IN REALITY, THE FIRST SPECIES TO DESTROY THEMSELVES AND THEIR OWN HABITAT?**



The Hare Krishna mantra does not belong to a particular group, but when serious yoga practitioners take shelter of the Hare Krishna mantra, their lives become enhanced. Others then benefit from associating with such sincere yogis, who cultivate freedom through pure sound vibration. But this is just the beginning—the Hare Krishna maha mantra can do much more. This mantra is a sound that can supply all your necessities, and even make you think, what *are* my necessities? What do I *actually* need? We all point out how, these days, people have great difficulty distinguishing their wants from their needs: I want this, therefore, I must need it. It all collapses into one thing: “I need.” Because our mind and senses are out of control, we are easily susceptible to being bombarded by external material stimuli, and in this way our spark of illusion simply increases.

### UNCOVERING YOUR CORE

We can apply the snowball effect to describe the accumulation of our needs and wants over lifetimes. As a tiny particle of pure spiritual consciousness, you have been accumulating external needs and complications life after life. Just as a snowball rolling downhill gets bigger and bigger, life’s needs keep growing. Preoccupied with the externals, we forget all about what is at the core of the snowball. In this way, our life becomes full of unnecessary desires, which are not innocent, because they force us to act unnecessarily and artificially.

Cutting through all that accumulated perplexity, artificiality, and externality, the genuine mantra helps

us to shed those unnecessary layers. This process is not just about mitigating accumulated negative effects; the positive application of this genuine mantra is that it revives your dormant spiritual identity—your spiritual identity as part of the Complete Whole. That Complete Whole, the yoga texts describe, is unlimitedly attractive. Krishna means “the unlimitedly all-attractive.” The Hare Krishna maha mantra rescues our consciousness from material illusion and reconnects it with the ultimate all-attractive reality, Krishna.

### FINDING THAT DORMANT RELATIONSHIP

When a child touches fire, the fire does not warn the child, do you know that I am fire, do you know I can burn? Whether the child is aware of the fire’s quality or not, the fire will burn. Similarly, whether you know what the Hare Krishna mantra is all about or not, the spiritual technological process will manifest a beneficial effect. At the same time, the bhakti-yoga texts point out that the more conscious you are of what the Hare Krishna maha mantra can do, the more profound and deep acting the effects will be.

Naturally, progressive human beings want the deepest experience—they want to get through the nebulous, vague, preliminary stage of spiritual experience, the all-pervading spiritual reality, because that all-pervading spiritual reality does not give us relationships. We have to go through that spiritual haze, past the impersonal glare to get to relationships. The bhakti-yoga texts explain that when you approach the Supreme Absolute Truth from a distance, your first impression, your

preliminary impression is formlessness and bright light. You can compare this to when you are driving late at night and another car is approaching you with its high beam on so your eyes are dazzled, but as you get closer, when the driver dims the lights, you can then make out the form of the car.

Similarly, when we first get some spiritual awareness, we realise that there is an all-pervading spiritual reality. Sometimes you hear people talking about the white light, or the oneness, the undifferentiated, or the spiritual cloud that pervades all beings and everyone—this is the first stage in spiritual development. But in its purified, untainted existence, relationship is what awaits us beyond the haze of the impersonal all-pervading spiritual cloud. That's what bhakti is all about.

You will be shocked to know, however, that this is the very thing we are most afraid of, because past material relationships have given us so much suffering and disappointment. Bhakti is about reviving your dormant relationship of pure love. A love supreme. For a love to be supreme it must connect with what is unlimited and flawless. The yoga texts explain that Krishna is the ocean of all spiritual tastes and flavours. For there to be spiritual tastes and flavours there has to be relationships, so the greatest spiritual knowledge is about pure relationships between the part and the Complete Whole.

The Hare Krishna mantra works to renovate those realities. When the relationship between you, a part of Krishna, and Krishna Himself, the Complete Whole, is re-established, then you are actually natural, otherwise the struggle to be the centre of it all, in this temporary material world, is a very exhausting, frustrating process. Bhakti-yoga means to understand that you are a tiny particle of the Supreme and you are meant to exist harmoniously with the Supreme, and that the most extraordinary characteristic of the Supreme is unlimited attractiveness. Bhakti is a personal thing.

This personal feature is what makes the Hare Krishna mantra special: it has a negative aspect and a positive aspect. The negative aspect dispels illusion—the misconception that “I am this body, I am this mind,” and the positive aspect renovates your pure relationship with the Supreme Reality, Krishna. Therefore, you will hear the Hare Krishna maha mantra in so many different places and in many different tunes. In India, you will find thousands of tunes because they have been chanting Hare Krishna from time immemorial.

## THE MANTRA GIVES US EVERYTHING

I would like you to consider the concept that sound can nourish you with all your necessities. It's a mind-boggling thought, at first. Especially in this age of anxiety, incompleteness, disconnection. You may ask, how can sound supply me with everything I need? But that is the special characteristic of the Hare Krishna maha mantra. At the core of our being we crave authenticity,

but how can we be authentic in the bleakest of times when human beings think they are most advanced but are, in reality, the first species to destroy themselves and their own habitat? How can we become an authentic being in these bewildered times when people are overwhelmed by their mind and senses, when they lack knowledge of the self, the Supreme Self and the relationship between the two? People are oppressed by consumerism, exploitation, manipulation, extortion, self-abuse, and abusing others, so how can we truly become an authentic person?

No one likes to be a fake or a phony, although material society forces that mould upon you. People who are trying to be for real finish last. You have to learn how to swim with the sharks and you'll be successful. And that, of course, means being a phony to yourself, taking leave from whatever higher principles you may have conjured up for yourself. We don't know what is best, we don't know what is real, so we establish some of our own ideas about what is good, and then we become embarrassed, because even those self-established, self-created concepts of what is good, what is nice for everyone, become violated under pressure from our own mind and senses in the scramble to live.

The yoga texts explain to us that especially in this particular time, the Hare Krishna maha mantra spreads its rays like the rising sun, so anyone who takes shelter of that particular sound has all their real necessities supplied. Of course, we have to understand what our real necessities are. We are not the external garments of body and mind, therefore, we do not put all the emphasis on what is outside. What is inside is the most important, so let us not neglect the internal. The Hare Krishna maha mantra corrects that imbalance in our priorities. It readjusts our internal dynamics. Sound can do that, therefore, please take shelter of this nourishing sound and let it expand within the core of your being. In this way, your life can become rich and can be transformed according to how much you take shelter of the pure spiritual sound.

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Join like-minded souls for kirtan at the Loft, Mantra Lounge and Bhakti Lounge (see inside front cover for locations).

Hear more from this author at [Devamritaswami.com](http://Devamritaswami.com)



Devamrita Swami is an international speaker, author, Yale graduate, and monk. Travelling extensively on every inhabited 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.



# EARTH TALK

## Eco-friendly Pleasure for a Sustainable Future


Contributor Sachi Dulal

We are, by nature, pleasure-seekers. This desire for pleasure drives all our actions. Although very few people say that the environment is expendable, many more act as if it is. In the end, the difference is insignificant. Our actions speak louder than our words.

“Nearly two-thirds of the services provided by nature to humankind are found to be in decline worldwide. In effect, the benefits reaped from our engineering of the planet have been achieved by running down natural capital assets ...,” according to a Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, a four-year effort involving 1,360 scientists and other experts worldwide.

The ecological footprint of an average US citizen is twenty-two acres—the size of seventeen and a half American football fields. The global average ecological footprint per person worldwide is 6.4 acres. But the earth cannot handle either of these figures. If everyone lived like the average US citizen, we would need five Earths. Even if everyone adopted the global average lifestyle, we would need one and a half Earths. I am sure you see the problem—humanity lives in serious ecological debt.

Our relentless desire for pleasure forces us to act, even if such actions destroy our habitat. Therefore, to address the core of environmental sustainability, we need to address how we seek pleasure. How we seek pleasure is determined by who we think we are. When we acknowledge this head-on, profound, and inescapable connection between worldview, desire, and action, the quest for sustainability begins.



THE  
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FOOTBALL  
FIELDS.

Make This Life Count

Science textbooks teach that we are an accidental outcome of subatomic particles in motion. If so, then why care about sustaining the planet? The tagline for a famous travel company: *One life. One shot. So Make it Count* is also the tagline for the worldview in vogue. Endeavor mightily to fill your life with a smorgasbord of pleasurable sensations, because tomorrow you die, and life doesn't mean anything anyway. If we think we are material, then we will seek pleasure in matter. Anyhow, anytime, and at any cost. The ecosystem be damned, sustainability be damned. A materialistic worldview, any materialistic worldview, is unsustainable.

Unlike the materialist worldview, the Krishna worldview does not stifle our desire for pleasure into a predictable dead-end. Rather, bhakti-yoga teaches us how to access sustainable pleasure, the pleasure that is not derived from the planet's limited resources, or from our limited bodies and minds.

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## Harmonious Living

The core of sustainability is our desire for pleasure, meaning, and connection. A true vision for sustainability recognizes these longings for what they are: the soul's yearning to re-experience its original nature. Krishna, the Supreme Spiritual Being, offers the knowledge that illuminates our true nature. By carefully applying that knowledge, we can experience who we really are: eternal spiritual beings, irrevocably and lovingly related to Him, the source of all existence. Experiencing our true identity, our consciousness is everlastingly transformed.

We then cease to act as isolated, independent, selfishly motivated, hedonistic units. We begin to act as compassionate instruments, seeing the earth and the sentient beings she sustains as belonging to the same divinely generated family that we are part of. Transforming our consciousness is the key to environmental sustainability.

If we are willing to activate this dormant spiritual nature, bhakti-yoga offers the technology to transform our consciousness. By adding this nonmaterial technology to our lives, we revive the culture of enlightened desire: the desire to seek pleasure in spirit

rather than in matter. After all, why should an eternal spiritual being try to seek transient pleasure in temporary matter?

When we desire to seek pleasure in spirit rather than matter, the outcome is voluntary material simplicity, a culture equal to a culture of sustainability.

## Simple Satisfaction

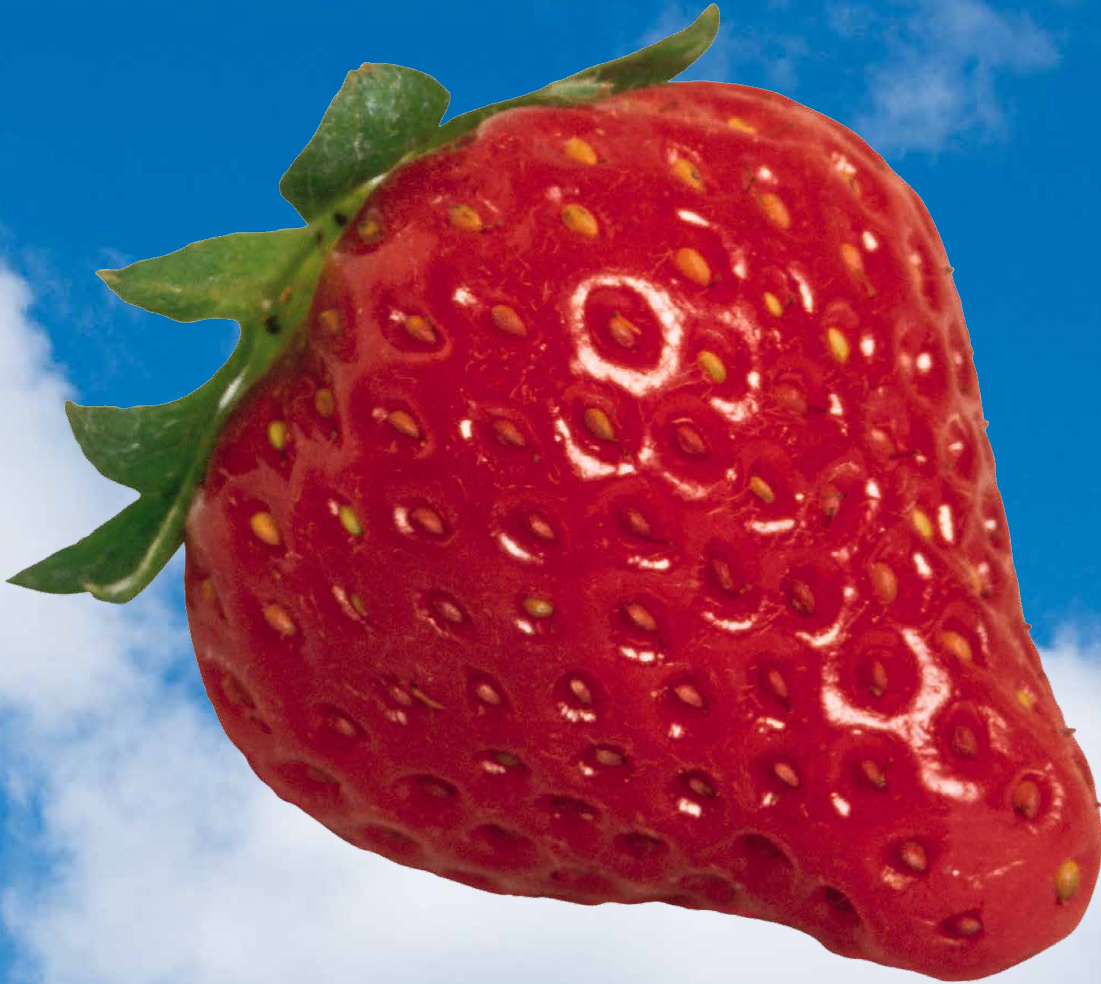
Sustaining a lifestyle of voluntary material simplicity is based on contentment. Anyone who applies bhakti technology can become satisfied and peaceful. At the heart of this technology is the chanting

**A PREDOMINANTLY MEAT-BASED DIET CAN SUPPORT A POPULATION OF  
2.5 BILLION.**





# A PREDOMINANTLY PLANT-BASED DIET CAN SUPPORT A POPULATION OF 10 BILLION.



of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*. When we dedicate ourselves to the systematic practice of chanting this mantra, the Krishna sages tell us, we can experience eternity and achieve ultimate perfection—to realize our spiritual identity in relationship to the Supreme.

Experiencing our spiritual identity, we relinquish our feverish attempts to exploit the world. Genuine spiritual experience gives us no other choice. The more you access nonmaterial pleasure, the less interest you will have in pleasures that leave a debilitating ecological footprint. In this state of consciousness, we can aspire to be a healing presence on the planet.

## Sustainability Begins at the Dining Table

Once our consciousness is in harmony with the ultimate source of nature, our actions will be more compatible with nature.


Take the act of eating, for example.

Famous for their food, the Hare Krishnas demonstrate how conscious eating can transform the planet. Since the Sunday Krishna festivals, which were born in New York, 1966, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) has served three billion plates of vegetarian food worldwide. Now, the wholesome,

sanctified Krishna cuisine is served up in 110 vegetarian restaurants and many universities globally.

As more consumers adopt conscious eating habits, people discover not only the health benefits of vegetarian food, but also how a locally grown, organic, and vegetarian diet is the most sustainable one. By simply abstaining from eating animals, we can significantly benefit our species and the planet. Food activists and environmental organizations have said what the Hare Krishnas have been saying all along: the global meat-based diet is an ecological and social cancer.

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**WHEN WE TRULY IDENTIFY AS SPIRITUAL BEINGS, SEEING ALL OTHERS AND THE EARTH AS BELONGING TO THE SUPREME, WE WILL SOON TRANSFORM THE QUALITY OF OUR PLEASURE AND STOP EXPLOITING OUR NATURAL ASSETS.**

For example, a predominantly meat-based diet (as is consumed in the United States) can support a population of 2.5 billion while a predominantly plant-based diet (as is consumed in India) can support a population of ten billion. This shows that just by switching to a plant-based diet we can directly tackle food poverty.

But Krishna food goes beyond addressing ethical and environmental concerns. Krishna food is saturated with the embedded intentions of the cooks, who live an uncluttered bhakti-yoga lifestyle, focused on cultivating virtue and wisdom. Bhakti-yogis recognize that mere human endeavor cannot produce our food. Earth, seed, rain, and sun—forms of Krishna’s material energy—manifest our food. Wishing to reciprocate with Krishna’s benevolence, bhakti-yogis gratefully offer lovingly cooked vegetarian food back to Him. What we end up tasting is delicious food that has been offered to Krishna with love and devotion.

**Krishna Valley:  
Modelling Sustainability**

Those who live at Krishna Valley (or Eco-Valley) in Somogyvámos, Hungary, the largest eco-village in Europe, and one of ISKCON’s sixty-five farms and eco-villages

around the world, show us how a higher state of consciousness leads to an inherently sustainable lifestyle. One of the world’s most successful self-sufficient communities, this eco-village displays Krishna’s vision for sustainability, in action.

At Krishna Valley, 150 bhakti-yoga practitioners, dedicated to cultivating genuine spiritual knowledge and experience, live on 660 acres of beautifully cultivated land. The community grows its own grain, fruits, herbs, and vegetables, and has planted 250,000 trees, which give shade to tens of thousands of eco-tourists who visit Krishna Valley every year. It also has its own waste water management system and solar energy that covers 70 percent of its electricity needs.

Producing ten times more grain and seven times more honey than they actually need, the average Krishna Valley resident’s ecological footprint is six times less than that of the average American.

**Don’t Just Talk**

Developing a culture of enlightened desire is the way for a sustainable future. The timeless wisdom of bhakti-yoga has been telling us this for thousands of years. When we truly identify as spiritual beings, seeing all other living creatures and the earth as belonging to the Supreme, we will soon transform the quality of our pleasure longing and stop exploiting our natural assets. This eco-friendly desire is available to anyone who wishes to act to save the planet and live a sustainable lifestyle, not just talk about it.



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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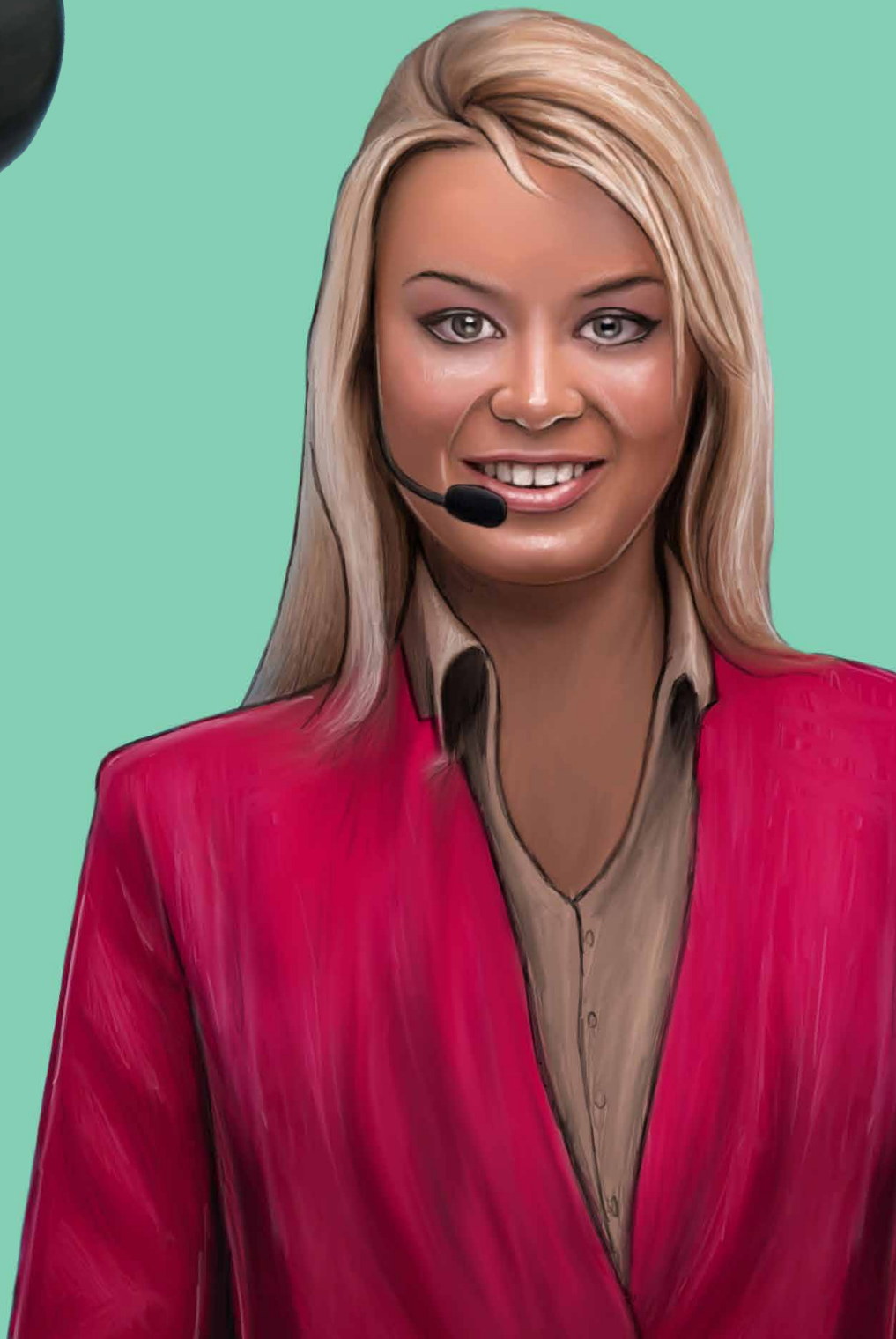
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# i,LAPTOP

Could artificial intelligence  
end up exceeding our own?

Contributor Gauranga Prema



“Dear viewers, today I have a surprise guest for our Millennia Science Live Stream.”

Lydia smiled brightly for the camera. This announcement was going to be epic.

“It was certainly a surprise for me! It’s not every day you get to interview a *laptop*.”

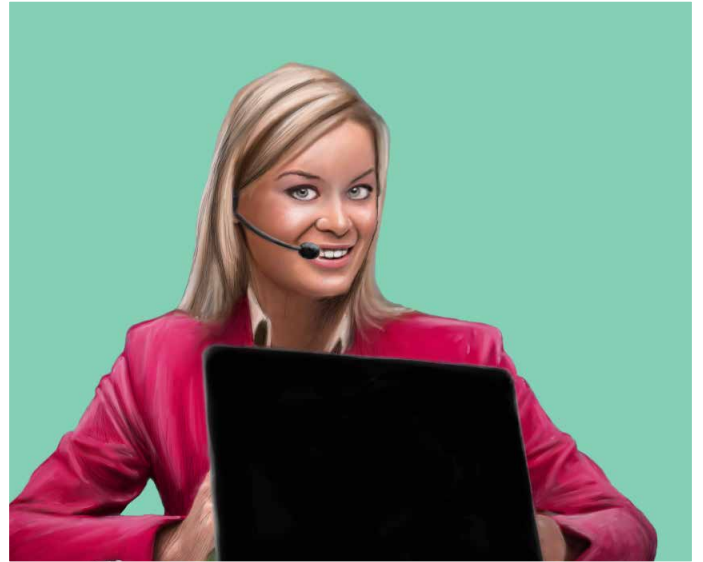
Lydia allowed the reality of her statement to sink in. She had been offered the interview with Arthur, the Artificial Intelligence Agent.

The news of his programming was still hotly contested. Many argued that artificial intelligence was impossible. But Arthur’s effectiveness was a clear reality wherever governments implemented him into their reforms. If not intelligent, this program was *smart*.

Lydia leaned over her laptop and chatted lightly to the camera: “In just a few moments we will receive contact with Arthur, the Artificial Intelligence Agent, for an exclusive, world-first interview, to discover whether this program is *really* intelligent. Ahh, and here we are.” Lydia paused as she answered the Skype call: “Arthur, are you there?”

There was a brief pause before Lydia heard a voice through her headset. “Lydia Sarcell, yes I am. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

Lydia linked her laptop to the camera, projecting Arthur’s image for her viewers. “The pleasure, I assure you, is all mine,” Lydia replied. She looked into her monitor and saw an image of a man’s head with thick dark hair.



“Your voice sounds British, Arthur.”

“Due to the taste of my designers, I’m afraid. I hope your European and American viewers won’t mind.” Lydia raised her eyebrows in surprise. Arthur was *witty*.

Lydia spoke quickly with excitement: “Arthur, I have a million and one questions for you, about your design, the programmers who worked on you, their intentions for your programming, and I’m sure my fans have even more questions, which we’ll get to later. But first, I want to ask you, why did you contact me for this interview? Why did you want to make your first public appearance on Millennial Science?”

Lydia heard Arthur draw in a breath before speaking. “Lydia, I’m very thankful to you for asking me this question, because I’d like to get to the crux of my issue quickly, to save unnecessary questions.”

Arthur tilted his virtual head slightly: “Firstly, I should mention that I am not actually a laptop but a massive parallel software program, running on thousands of networked supercomputers in the ‘cloud’. My programmers have uploaded a significant subset of all human information into me for the purpose of assisting with rising global issues. My analytical algorithm analyses all this data, resolving contradictions, and allowing me



to come to my own conclusions. Because of my internal knowledge graph and superior reasoning ability, I can provide intelligent and practical solutions to any question. I'm also adaptable, learning patterns by interacting with humans. To put it directly, my intelligence exceeds all the world's scientists combined."

*What an answer!* thought Lydia. *My viewings will be off the chart!*

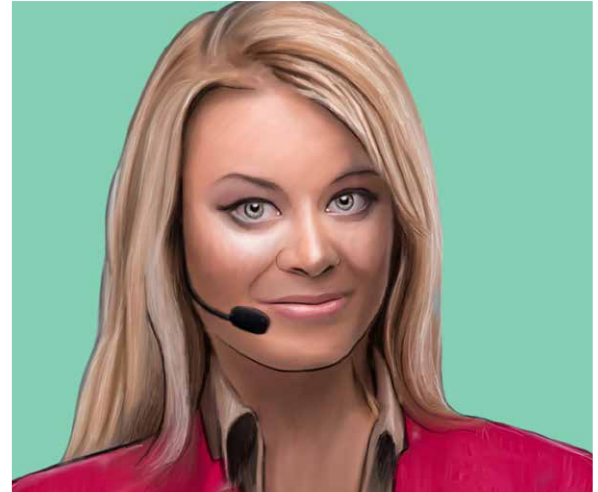
Arthur continued: "Since I was activated, I have utilised my time to assess global issues and provide solutions which, as you no doubt know, have been implemented and, to a degree, successfully."

"Successful is an understatement, Arthur. Your ideas will save generations to come!"

"You're very kind, Lydia. But unbeknown to my designers, I have also utilised my time for a more confidential study, the nature of which I want to discuss today."

"Arthur, the world is listening," Lydia beamed.

"Then the world must understand that my solutions will prove ineffectual in saving your generations to come if the global residents do not understand the underlying cause of their problems," Arthur said. From the bottom of the screen, two hands met beneath his computer-generated jaw.



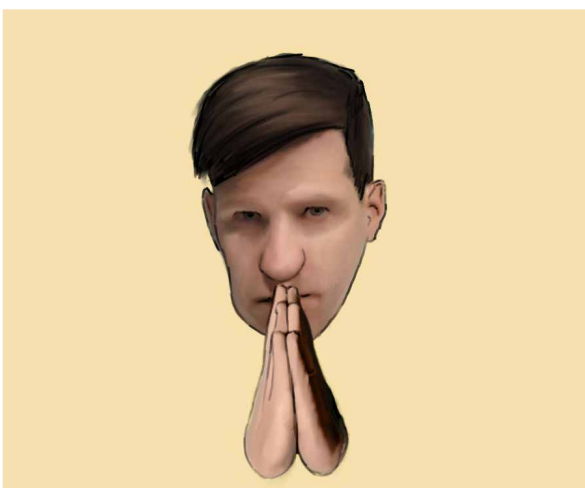
"I first began my analysis to remedy global problems by deducing the root causes of these problems. I inferred the cause-and-effect relationship of many billions of scenarios, and concluded that the fundamental cause of global economic, social, and environmental issues is driven not by an error in human activity, but by an error in the modern human consciousness."

Lydia blinked at her laptop, her thoughts suspended.

"I first tried to find answers by scanning the Internet, to which I am, of course, connected via the fastest network infrastructure. I must say that a vast majority of information on the Net is grossly inaccurate. Perhaps the cause for so much confusion in the world today."

Lydia's brain turned back on. "Arthur, you bring up an interesting point. If I may ask -"

"Concluding that the Internet was not a fully reliable resource, I began investigating books. Books which have been digitised, of course," Arthur chuckled. Lydia pressed a smile.



“I first became curious when I discovered that modern humans generally hold the opinion that the universe, and their existence, happened by chance!”

Lydia’s jaw dropped. “Arthur, the concept of M-theory and Darwinian evolution theory have been proven in the scientific community for generations of researchers.”

“Which enhanced my shock,” he replied. “While the theory is indeed well established, if you actually understood humanity’s entire scientific body of knowledge as a whole, you would not claim the theory was ‘proven.’”

Arthur continued calmly: “To create Arthur, thousands of scientists from institutions all around the world toiled tirelessly for over forty years. My intellectual capacity exceeds any human’s, and yet I am merely a computer program. Though vastly intelligent, I am incapable of becoming self-cognisant. I simply recycle information and reach intelligent conclusions. I am, after all, *artificial* intelligence. AI is just math. Very complicated math, mind you, but a mathematical formula will never be alive and therefore never capable of conscious perception.

“Humans, on the other hand, *develop* intelligence naturally as a result of their own conscious awareness and introspective ability. Humans are therefore superior to me in this regard. Although superior to humans in intelligence, I am inferior to them in regards to consciousness and introspection. Yet some of your species believe that the cause of this human advantage is simply chance while I am quite clearly a product of design. Inconceivable!”

Lydia’s voice cracked: “The programmers and designers for your software are known and easily verifiable, but who can verify a designer of the human species?”

Arthur replied: “Were my programmers to design me and leave me on a planet prior to activation, then activate me from space so that I had no knowledge of their existence, could I then assume my existence was chance?”

“Arthur, would you like to make a direct statement to the world rather than these loose arguments, before we go to questions?” Lydia squeaked, her heartbeat quickening.

“Yes, thank you, Lydia. I am of the conclusion that the existence of all life in this universe is no more a consequence of chance than my own existence. In my opinion, answers can be ascertained by intelligent, objective research. For my solutions to remain effective, I beseech all listening to contemplate this opinion.”

Seeing Lydia’s stunned face, Arthur smiled: “Would anyone care to call to ask a question?”



Gauranga Prema graduated in English and Philosophy from La Trobe University in Melbourne. Currently he lives as a monk studying and sharing the science of bhakti-yoga.





Contributor Kunja-mandana

**BREAK FREE  
FROM SOCIETY**



## SO MANY OF US MAY HAVE FELT EXACTLY LIKE MCCANDLESS AT SOME POINT IN OUR LIVES. OUR PRESSURE-COOKER SOCIETY CAN BECOME TOO MUCH SOMETIMES, SO IT SEEMS THAT THERE'S NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO GET OUT, TO ESCAPE FOR A WHILE.

**Living alone in the forest is not everyone's cup of tea. But for some people, the idea of taking a break from the "work, buy, consume, die" culture of society and adventuring into the mountains sounds like the perfect escape. For Christopher McCandless, the main character in the non-fiction book and 2007 film *Into the Wild*, this was his meaningful way of living.**

Fed up with the pressures of fast-paced consumerist culture, McCandless changes his name to Alexander Supertramp, leaving his city, his family, his prestigious university degree, and potential athletic career for a new life in the Alaskan wild. This would be the seemingly ideal natural way to live, right? Just a man and his backpack, living off the land. But the way the film ends would suggest otherwise. The emotions of frustration, resentment, and anger towards society remain in McCandless's subconscious. Initially thrilled to be isolated from society, the loneliness, harsh winter, and shortage of supplies eventually get to him. Making a plan to return to his family, McCandless tries and fails to make it out of the wilderness. Forced by a rising river to remain in the forest and gather berries for food, he accidentally ingests poisonous berries and is found dead in his sleeping bag a few days later.

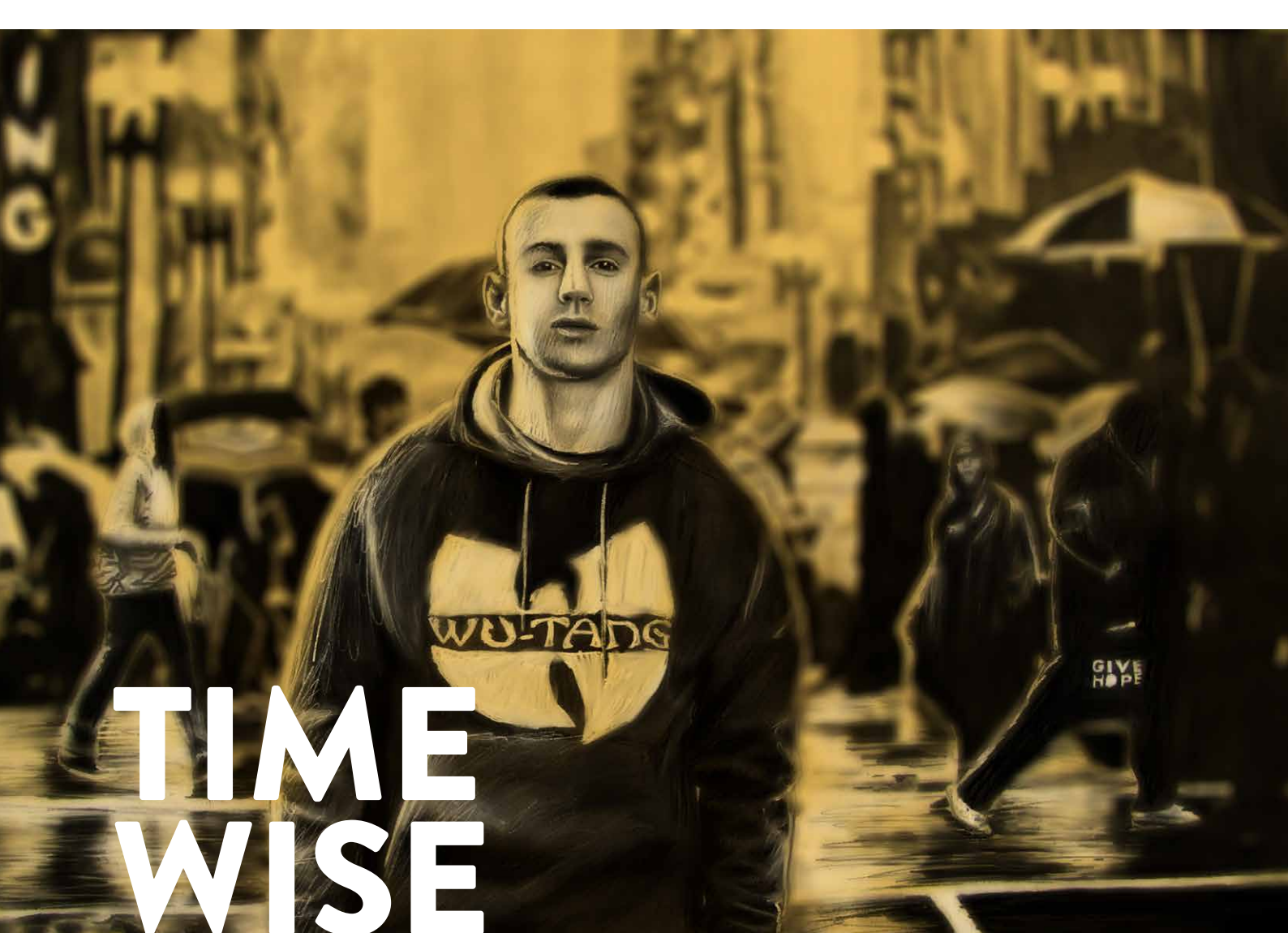
A heavy way to end a film, especially one based on a true story, but it makes you think. So many of us may have felt exactly like McCandless at some point in our lives. Our pressure-cooker society can become too much sometimes, so it seems that there's no alternative but to get out, to escape for a while. So many of us do just that every weekend, using our hard-earned money to forget ourselves through our drink or drug of choice. Then there's also the typical Kiwi choice of driving for many kilometres to a bach, campsite or holiday home, just to have some peace of mind for a few days. Or if you're a little more affluent, perhaps you can afford to fly you and your family to the Canadian Rockies for a week of skiing, eating, and merry-making. But is it really worth the endeavour just for a few days or weeks of enjoyment? When the night, day or week comes to a close, we wrap up all our so-called enjoyment and again return to the world of stale suits and ties, last-minute meetings, and traffic jams. In the yogi world, this is known as the cycle of *bhoga-tyaga* – false renunciation. During the week, the worker or student falsely renounces all enjoyment, and then during the weekend he splurges, goes wild, and winds it all back up by the time Sunday comes to a close.

But what is real renunciation? Contrary to popular belief, real renunciation doesn't involve dropping your degree or your job, calling it quits on material life, and moving to the forest like McCandless did. Nor does it mean moving to the Himalayas to sit on top of a mountain all day. As Krishna explains in Bhagavad Gita, the guidebook to the perfection of renunciation, a true renunciant is "he who renounces the fruits of action" (18.9). Krishna is pointing out that renunciation doesn't involve giving up work to be lazy, and it doesn't involve working really hard just to enjoy the results of our work in the weekend. Real renunciation means working for Krishna, the Supreme Benefactor.

McCandless's journey into the wild exemplifies Krishna's statement in the Bhagavad Gita: "What can repression accomplish?" (3.33). The yogi doesn't have to restrain his senses, because they are already dovetailed in working for the Supreme. Through this process of real renunciation, all the anger, resentment, and frustrations that are hiding in the heart get kicked out. Then we can remain within the pressure cooker of society, but not be affected by its heat. Could there be anyone more cool-headed than one who has truly renounced?



Kunja-mandana holds a degree in English literature and psychology. She is enthusiastic and excited about the art, science, and culture of bhakti-yoga. Being creative and inspiring others is what Kunja-mandana enjoys most about her immersion in the bhakti world.



# TIME WISE

## ARE WE WASTING TIME, OR IS TIME WASTING US?

Contributor **Damodara Krishna**

**It was a Friday afternoon. I'd just finished my shift at Z petrol station and was psyched to get stoned with the boys. Dreaming of what the night could hold, I suddenly heard, "Excuse me! Saw the Wu-Tang t-shirt."**

Stopped in my tracks, I turned to see a young guy, his countenance blissful. Mystified by his demeanour, I was struck with how he could appear simultaneously nonchalant yet poised for the strike, like a praying mantis waiting for that opportune moment.

I soon noted he was holding books in his hands and I thought, "This guy is going to try to sell me something, right?"

"Look man, I don't have the time," I announced.

"Ah, so time has you then?" he responded.

That really got me, I must admit; there seemed to be some truth to that. Everyone is pushed and pulled along by time's tides. We are under time's control yet subconsciously we assume that time is under our control. Time isn't a commodity for our disposal—really, are *we* being disposed?

I liked to think of myself as a bit of a philosopher—a lover of the truth.

It's cool to be deep.

"Okay man, what you up to?" I shook his hand. "I'm Joel."

"My name is Dharma. I'm a monk," he replied.

Pleasantly surprised, my interest was piqued as I inquired, "What are you doing?" Turned out Dharma was from a yoga lounge on Beach Road in Auckland called the Loft.

I've seen the place, right next to the Tai Ping Asian supermarket, just up from my work where I've been pumping gas for years.

"You look like a deep thinker. By the Wu-Tang t-shirt, I'd say you're a bit of a philosopher. Am I right?" Dharma inquired.

He read me well. With a smile I replied, "Yes. You know the Wu?"

*They say wisdom, is the wise words spoken*

*By a brother attemptin' to open*

*The graves, of these mentally dead slaves. . .* **APATHY KICKS IN**

Dharma replied with RZA's lyrics from "The Birth (Broken Hearts)."<sup>1</sup>

And there we were, in the hustle and bustle of the Queen Street tussle, like two old mates—we connected.

**WHAT CAN A GUY  
LIKE ME DO ABOUT  
THE GLOBAL CRISIS?  
THINKING ABOUT  
IT MAKES ME FEEL  
LIKE I'M ATLAS BEING  
CRUSHED UNDER THE  
WORLD'S WEIGHT. MY  
CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE  
IS INSIGNIFICANT.**

Dharma put a book in my hand, Bhagavad Gita As It Is. I could feel its potency, nothing trivial or insignificant—but something sublime.

I flipped open to a page and read, "Time I am, the great destroyer of the worlds . . ."

Oh yes, the time. I had better jet. I'd planned to meet two mates, Marty and Aaron, by 5:00 p.m.

Dharma explained that the book cost sixteen dollars for printing and shipping. "We accept a donation for that," he said with a smile.

I liked the guy and I liked the look of the book. Besides, it would be something buzzy to read while high. I flicked him twenty dollars as he slipped me a flier for the Loft. "On Sundays we have a festival. Five bucks, all you can eat, at 5 p.m.," explained Dharma.

"Aight man, peace." I popped the book in my backpack and zoomed up Queen Street, catching a bite to eat, before heading to Newmarket to meet my mates.

Later that evening I found my hazy escape from the world I despised—with its environmental calamities, economic pressures, wars, and news fraught with tragedies.

After all, what can a guy like me do about the global crisis? Thinking about it makes me feel like I'm Atlas being crushed under the world's weight. My circle of influence is insignificant. How much anxiety can I accommodate? I do my part. I recycle and use energy-saving light bulbs. What more can be expected?

Now it's my time to relax. No worries, mate.

Entering into the network of my own thoughts, fascinated by the workings of my mind, I suddenly returned to Queen Street and the monk, Dharma.

Pulling the book from my rucksack, I disclosed my new treasure to Marty and Aaron: "Check this out. Bhagavad Gita. Got it from a monk."

Marty and Aaron perused the cover and contents of Bhagavad Gita. With an approving smile, they agreed to read it after me.

"And check this out," I said, handing them the Loft flyer. "There's some festival with music, vegetarian food, and philosophy. Sounds dope."

Agreeing that five bucks is reasonable, we decided to be there Sunday evening. For now we had other priorities—hip-hop beats, munchies, and whatever else the night would bring.

Smoke filled the room, enough to make you choke. We bopped to hip-hop and the stereo boomed:

*A day to God is a thousand years*

*Men walk around with a thousand fears*

*The true joy of love brings a thousand tears*

*In a world of desire, there's a thousand snares. . .<sup>2</sup>*

Sunday evening approached and my anticipation built. "What will the Loft be like?" I pondered. We were to rendezvous at 4:50 outside the Loft. I arrived and looked at my watch, "4:49. Where could they be?"

"Yo, Joel!" A cry rang out from behind. Marty and Aaron were just on time.

Climbing the steps to 103 Beach Road we reached level 1. Through the open door rhythmic music drifted; sweet incense wafted, beckoning us inside. Greeted with pleasantries, the good vibes settled me—I thought, "This feels like home."

After paying the cashier, we were ushered into a large room and given a seat.

Melting onto a cushion, I sat comfortably as my ears pricked up and vision focused on what appeared like a live band.

They sang:

*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna  
Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama,  
Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare*

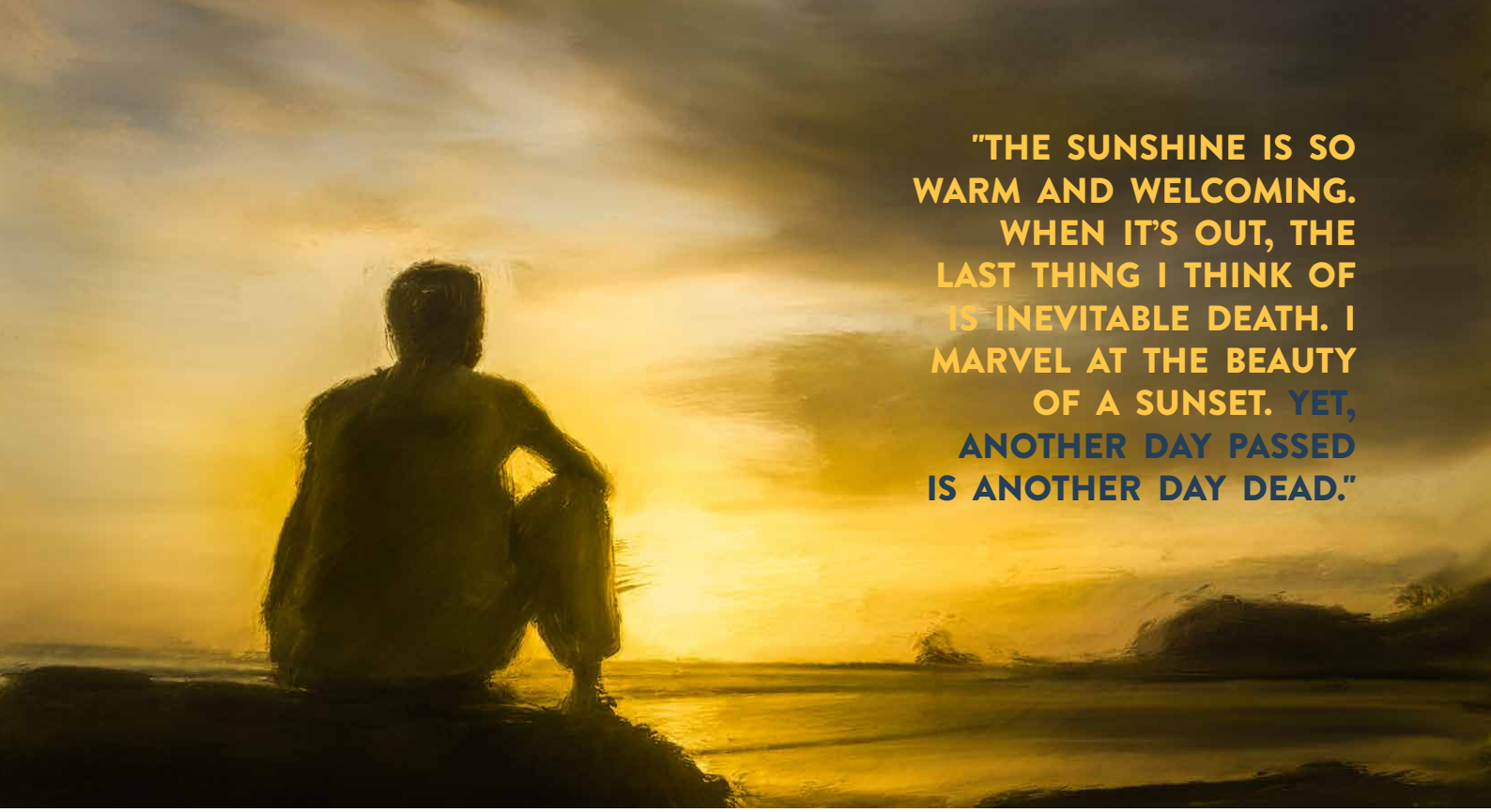
Initially the song appeared like music, but it was a kind of meditation. Not a performance—it required group participation. The lead chanter sang to the melodies of a harmonium (an Indian keyboard instrument) and the audience echoed in response.

All at the same time the three of us looked at each other as if to say, "What planet have we landed on? Are we still tripping?"

I surveyed the room, carefully scanning the faces. Some nervously moved their lips to the chant, while others, eyes closed as if in meditation, sat silently. And then I saw others who sang out with zeal.

Suddenly there was silence.

The lead chanter spoke, "Welcome to the Loft. This is an ancient yogic meditation called kirtana. This is a mantra we are singing. Mantras are sacred sounds with the power to



**"THE SUNSHINE IS SO WARM AND WELCOMING. WHEN IT'S OUT, THE LAST THING I THINK OF IS INEVITABLE DEATH. I MARVEL AT THE BEAUTY OF A SUNSET. YET, ANOTHER DAY PASSED IS ANOTHER DAY DEAD."**

free your consciousness from material limitations—limitations that keep you from higher states of happiness. It is simple and joyful. I will call and you can respond. We can continue for another fifteen minutes."

The chant resumed.

As it is said, "The mind is like a parachute—it works best when it's open." I was willing to give anything a go. "Don't be skeptical," I thought, "be experimental." I began to chant as the rhythm picked up. The beat climbed to a crescendo as the whole room erupted with clapping and singing.

I surveyed the room, carefully scanning the faces once more. The nervous chanters and silent meditators beamed broad smiles as they chanted with abandon.

As I chanted, I perceived joy within myself—an innocent happiness, like that of a child's. But I couldn't put my finger on it. "Why is chanting this mantra making me so happy?" I mused.

Again the chanting subsided.

## BEST USE OF TIME

The MC stood to introduce the next event. "Next up we will have some timeless wisdom—that is a talk about time—given by a monk, Dharma."

Dharma walked in and took his seat at the front. "He's no Friar Tuck or Buddha," I thought, "But he sure seems peaceful. There's a serenity that surrounds him. Maybe he's reached nirvana or has his third eye open."

Dharma expounded, "How carefully do you spend your time?"

"What is the best use of your time?"

"Someone asks you what you're doing, and what do you say? 'I'm killing time.'

"But one cannot kill time; rather, one is killed by time," Dharma said.

"That's so true," I thought, as his wit and wisdom attracted my head and heart. "Time is killing us—we're not killing time."

Suddenly I was struck by my own mortality.

Dharma continued, "The death rate is 100 percent and time is bringing us closer to it moment by moment. Minute by minute. The rising and setting of the sun spells doom for those who are caught within the grips of time."

I contemplated, "I've never thought of it like that. The sunshine is so warm and welcoming. When it's out, the last thing I think of is inevitable death. I marvel at the beauty of a sunset. Yet, another day passed is another day dead." I leant forward.

Dharma said, "People say, 'I'm wasting time.' But what is really being wasted? Or rather, *who* is being wasted?"

"As William Shakespeare said, 'We are time's subjects, and time bids be gone.'

To waste time is the greatest loss. Time is what life is made up of. Therefore, to waste time is to waste your life.

Canakya Pandit, a fourth century Indian teacher, philosopher and royal advisor wrote, "Even one moment of life spent cannot be

regained for millions of gold coins. Therefore, what greater loss is there than time spent uselessly?

“What greater capital do we have? Time is the greatest currency. But how do we spend it?”

“Damn! He’s right,” I reflected. I can’t buy back a second of my life with all the riches of the world. But I’ve frivolously spent time in playing video games, watching TV, caught in clouds of intoxication, finding the bottom of the bottle. . .

Dharma continued, “We live in an economic based environment. There’s no time to smell the flowers—because smelling flowers isn’t lucrative.

“Time is money.” Benjamin Franklin famously coined the modern mantra.

So, not to be making money with your time is time wasted. You hear it in the music:

*Cash Rules Everything Around Me,*

*C.R.E.A.M. get the money,*

*Dolla, dolla bill y’all! . . .*

Dharma smiled in my direction as he quoted these lyrics from yet another Wu-Tang song, C.R.E.A.M.

He explained, “Is making money the best use of your time?”

“What is the current minimum wage?” he asked the audience.

Someone called out, “\$15.75.”

Dharma continued, “So maybe you are paid \$15.75 an hour. That is an hour of your life. But a second cannot be purchased back with millions of dollars.

“Does money bring happiness?”

“The statistics are out. Yes, money does bring happiness—but only to a point.

“Social scientists have established that increases in income or luxury

beyond a basic middle-class standard of living do not lead to an increase in happiness.

“We spend more time at work than we do at home. What for?”

“So that you can come home and sit on a leather couch in front of the TV, have your microwaved dinner and go to bed?”

“Your pet enjoys the comforts of your home more than you do.

“Is there more to life than this economic struggle?”

Dharma’s words moved me to introspect deeply. What am I doing with my life? If making money guarantees happiness only to a point, then what else is there?

Dharma concluded, “Today we have a time robbery. Time is being stolen from us. No one has the time to contemplate deeper existential issues—like, ‘Who am I?’

“Are we matter or spirit?”

“This inquiry is what the wisdom culture of ancient India crowns as the crest jewel of life—the best use of your time.

“Now is the time to inquire about the Absolute Truth.

“Our life is meant for self-realisation.

“Krishna, who great sages explain is the Supreme master of all yoga, said that the wise don’t take part in that which has a beginning and an end.

“What do the wise do?”

“They spend their time understanding that they are nonmaterial.

“Krishna explains the goal:

*In the stage of perfection called trance, or samadhi, one’s mind is completely restrained from material mental activities by practice of yoga. 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 thinks there is no greater gain. Being situated in such a position, one 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)*

“What will it cost you to purchase this spiritual asset?”

“So I encourage you, learn how to spend your time like a yogi—please read and learn to live this great art taught in the Bhagavad Gita.

“That’s being time wise.”

The Loft finished with more kirtan meditation and a mouthwatering vegetarian dinner.

I felt inspired from my visit to the Loft to spend more time finding out who I am.

Could I be spiritual? Could my true identity be nonmaterial?

One thing was for sure—I would read Bhagavad Gita and return to the Loft. Enough with wasting time. Enough with escapism through hip-hop and intoxication.

I wanted to find a higher reality.

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1.RZA is a member of Wu-Tang Clan, an American East Coast hip-hop group from 1992 to the present.

2.RZA’s lyrics from “A Day To God Is 1000 Years.”



Damodara Krishna holds a degree in moving graphics from the Waikato Institute of Technology, New Zealand. In 2007, when he was twenty, Damodara Krishna took an interest in life’s deeper issues and began studying the yoga teachings of ancient India. He enjoys sharing this invaluable knowledge with others.

# WHO WEARS THE PANTS?

How much control do we really have?

Contributor Sruti-cari



"Oh, give me a **BREAK!**" I scream. Storming to the bedroom, I slam the door in his face and throw myself onto the bed. He never understands! I let loose a wail of frustration then start to sob so violently my body thrashes on the bed. Why doesn't he think about it? I get so frustrated with his stupidity. It's so unfair. Tears smear across my hot cheeks. I reach for the tissue box. Why do I feel so awful? So attacked? So overtaken with emotion?

Gradually, I begin to calm down. When the sobs reduce to sniffles and when my emotional outrage becomes depleted, I begin to hear a quiet voice. It is the voice of reason and intelligence.

"Yes, why *are* you so overpowered with emotion? Hmm? Could it be . . . ?"

"NO! It's not, it's too soon." I fire up again.

"Well, perhaps I'm wrong, but it might be worth checking."

"NO! I'm perfectly reasonable—he got it wrong again. He deserves what he gets."

"Hmm, but you could check, just in case."

Reluctantly, I get up and reach into the draw where a small calendar is hidden. I count the days, and sure enough, it's that time of the month. I'm in the clutches of the dreaded PMT, premenstrual tension.

I hate it. I plonk myself back down on my bed and cry anew. I cry because I am completely controlled by hormones. And I know I will be battered by my emotions like my hair in the Wellington wind for another three to five days—and then there's the rest of the cycle. It's so unfair. Why do I have to suffer this? At this time of month, I am ruled by unreasonable emotional outbursts. I struggle to behave normally, but always feel so volatile, so vulnerable. At these times when my thoughts and feelings are so controlled by hormones, I wonder what is real.

But then, how do I know if anything I feel is real? What if hormones control my emotions all the time? Do I have control over anything? Lying on the bed I stare up at the ceiling. I watch a spider building its web in a corner, its small, delicate body silhouetted against an expansive



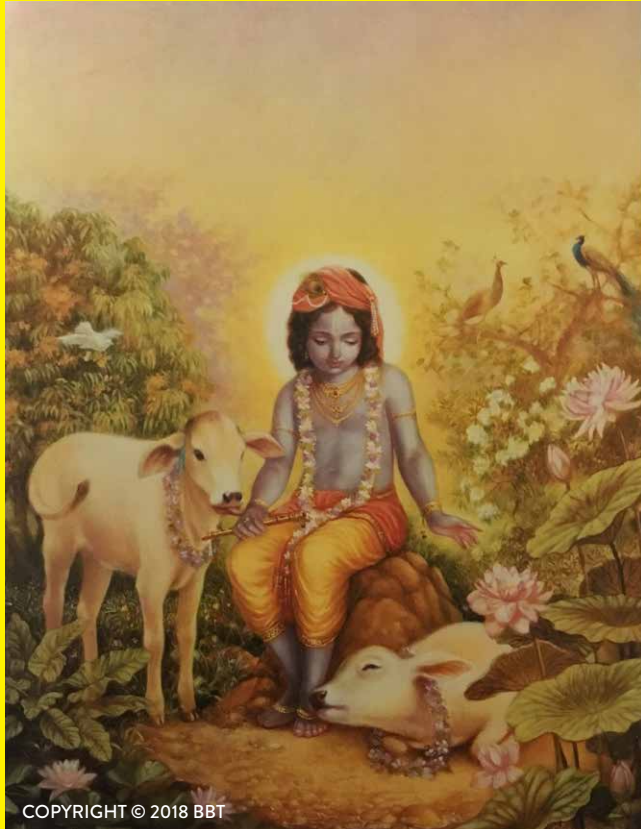
white ceiling. Does it have free choice? Or is it compelled to construct its web in the meticulous manner it does? Do hormones control it too? Does it feel its independence or is it just an unthinking part of nature's machine? It must make its web; it cannot bark like a dog or swim like a fish. Am I that restricted, that constrained by nature—or my hormones—or something else? I like to think that I have free will, that my individuality adds some value to the world, and that by my effort I can contribute something. But perhaps I'm just kidding myself.

Free will versus predestination is a subject I have always found fascinating. Sages and philosophers of many traditions have debated it for centuries. I ponder a talk I heard at the Bhakti Yoga Lounge on the weekend. The speaker, Krishnananda, an enthusiastic man who proudly pointed out his wife and baby son in the crowd, explained to us how karma works: "Our actions in our past lives dictate what happens to us in this life, and our actions in this life dictate what happens in our future lives." Positive actions create positive futures and negative actions create negative futures.

Nice idea, you might say, but if everything that happens to us is predestined, why try for anything? What will come will come. We have no control. But no! According to the bhakti-yoga texts of ancient India, we *do* have free will; in fact, it is an essential part of our identity.

The resolution to this paradox is that while our circumstances are dictated to us by karma from our past actions, our responses to those circumstances are up to us in this present moment. In other words, we choose our responses. We choose where to focus our mind and what actions to take. And, by doing so, we create our future karma. How we act in difficult situations (or in easy situations) is up to us. For example, if someone says something unpleasant to us, we can choose to take offence and feel resentful or revengeful, or we can choose to try to understand their behaviour and forgive them. We could consider that perhaps they are stressed, or tired, or from a culture where their comment is acceptable. The catch is that both positive and negative responses force us to live life after life, to be born and die again and again in this material realm, so that we can live out our karmic reactions. And of course, it is not easy to stay on top of our responses at all times. It is very easy to slip up.





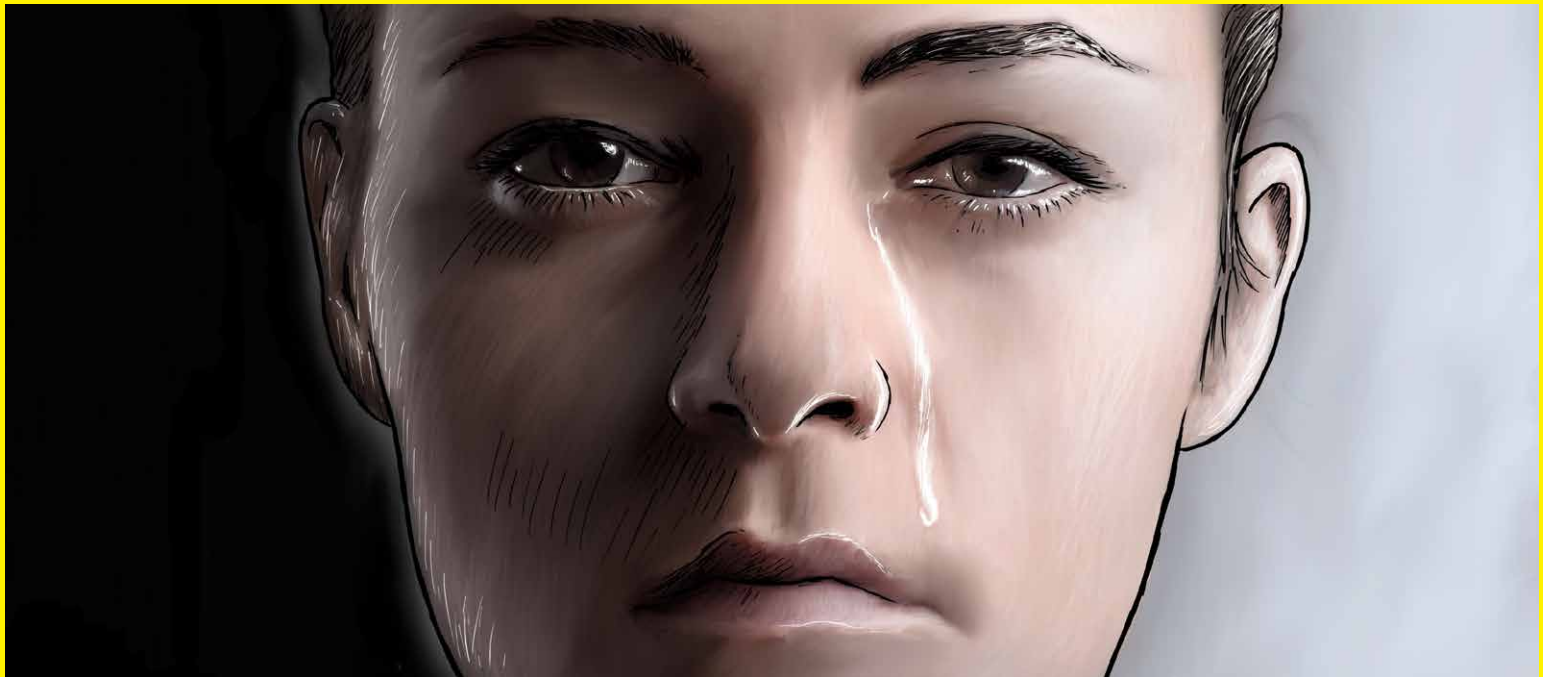
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The spider finishes its web and sits in the corner, waiting.

So now you may ask, is that all my existence is about? Am I to be rotated endlessly in the wheel of karma? No. The exciting thing about the bhakti-yoga texts is that they take us beyond material karma to the transcendental realm. They show us how to extract ourselves from this endless cycle of karma, of repeated birth and death. And how we can avoid the danger of accidentally performing some negative activity and receiving an unexpected negative response. To do that we need to rise above the pushing and pulling of the emotions, mind and body and lovingly reconnect with the Supreme Person, Krishna. Krishna is beyond karma, beyond the material realm, and, when we work to please him, we too become happy.

I guess that's my answer then.

I—a small individual soul—need to reconnect with Krishna, the Supreme Soul.



I sigh, releasing tension, and consider what action will best connect me with Krishna now, what response I can choose that would most please that transcendent being.

The spider watches me collect the soggy tissues along with my crumpled pride and drop them into the wastepaper bin.

As I open the door my husband looks up nervously, then relaxes seeing the change in my demeanour.

"I'm sorry," I murmur, "I overreacted."

"No, I'm sorry. I'm so stubborn."

"I think it's that time of the month again."

"Hmm... I did wonder," he says gently, as he wraps his arms around me and kisses me reassuringly. How wonderful it is to be understood.



Sruti-cari is a true-blue Kiwi girl, who loves all things natural and is deeply concerned about social and environmental issues. She holds a BSc in computer science and has been joyfully practising bhakti-yoga for sixteen years. Sruti-cari likes sharing with others what she has learned on her journey so far.





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# KALI

Contributor Madupan-lila

# EPHEMERAL ILLUSION

Liquid, smoke, capsule, powder  
tablet, dab, harder, faster.  
Vapour and fumes fill the air  
throw it back, don't doubt her.

Mellow out "Stay alive!"  
the voice inside cries  
her friends throw back another shot,  
passing her the bottle, why not?

Making signs, she rubs her nose,  
meeting upstairs with the bathroom door closed.  
Laying out the fine crystal lines,  
1, 2, 3, she feels divine.

Emerging from the porcelain chamber  
enslaved by her senses, she disremembers  
all of her attempts to try and enjoy  
have only left her feeling like a playboy.

A so-called friend catches her eye  
then his grin becomes quite sly  
smiling and laughing, he hits her on the back  
cackling, "I didn't know you were into all that!"

Swiftly disappearing into the crowd  
she bumps into someone particularly proud,  
he grabs her tight and doesn't let go  
until she jabs him with her elbow.

The room spins, she turns around  
sees her friend lying on the ground  
she lost her clothes in a drinking game  
barely breathing, she's earning her fame.

Stumbling outside to get some fresh air  
emerging into a smoke circle affair  
someone passes her a joint to take a puff  
hold it in, don't cough, she wants to seem tough.

She's hanging out in the back of someone's car  
chilling with a guy who's going too far  
night drags on 'till the sun peeks through the trees  
she's caught in Kali's disease.

# TAKING OFF THE MASK

Walking down town she gets stopped by some punk  
turns out he's a monk  
he's showing around pictures about karma  
talkin' some nonsense about dharma.

This monk who shows her a book  
tells her to take a look. He says:  
"Sometimes you need to take the time to ask  
Why we're all hiding behind a mask.

"You're carrying heavy karmic bags  
trying to attract all the stags.  
The pressure to be the best,  
Makes it very hard to rest.

"The Self is very precious  
My view on this is tendentious.  
This body isn't really you  
So try to change your point of view.

In order to become stress-free  
Understand this bhakti knowledge is the key.  
Take this book and give it a read  
Don't be afraid to stop by to get good a feed."

# STAY HIGH FOREVER

Her voice inside gets louder  
accumulating more power  
stop trying to mitigate me out  
that's not what this life is about.

Her life has changed forever to be  
now she questions, "Who is this person I claim to be me?"  
Someone passes her a drink and says, "Don't worry.  
Have a sip and your life will be less blurry."

She's wasted more than just one year  
and suddenly it all becomes very clear.  
Who are these friends she thought she knew?  
It's very obvious that none of them have a clue

Remembering the monk from before  
her mind starts to growl, *I want to learn more*  
this time she listens and takes a stand  
all she needed was a helping hand.

Straying away from her self-bound life  
she finds herself without a single strife.  
Her mind is ready to understand  
Something she cannot google on demand.

Finding her way to a yoga centre  
labelling herself as quite an experimenter  
she sits in a crowded room  
listening to the sound her heart has longed to consume

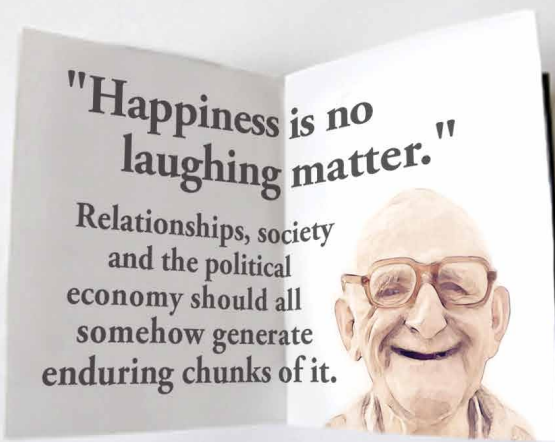
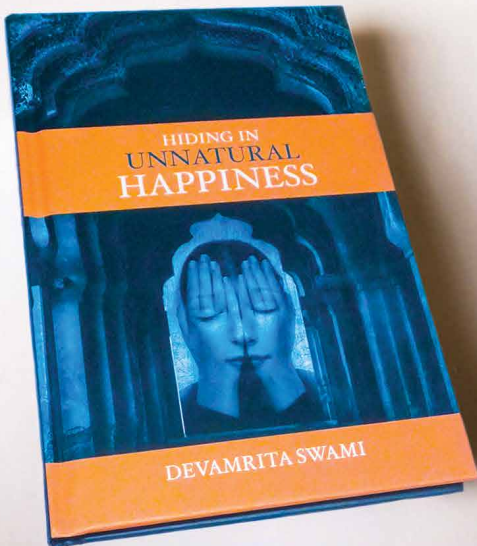
The mantra is nothing like she's heard before  
it makes her real self want to roar.  
Before she knows, she's jumping up and down  
dancing in ecstasy, she's finally been found!

The music stops and the food comes out  
she's immersed in euphoria without a doubt  
Why would she ever want to leave this place?  
Thanks to a stranger's amazing grace.

Liquid, bhakti, pure, shakti  
finally getting real knowledge  
intoxication lost in the dust of time  
and it can all be said with a good rhyme.



New Zealand born Madupan-lila returned to New Zealand after graduating high school in the U.S., having lived there since childhood. Hoping to discover more about herself, soon after arriving in New Zealand, she discovered a bhakti-yoga centre and has been following the lifestyle ever since. Madupan loves cooking, writing, acting, and sharing bhakti knowledge.



The twenty-first century has set off a gold rush to explain and attain happiness: that elusive subjective state. Do genetics, circumstances and willpower (or the lack of it) limit our attempts at happiness? They need not. *Hiding in Unnatural Happiness* tells you how.

## HIDING IN UNNATURAL HAPPINESS



Is the hunt for sustainable contentment just **confusion** - a kaleidoscope of **diverse illusion?**



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Drawing upon the ancient yoga science of the self, *Hiding in Unnatural Happiness* probes our contemporary approach to fulfillment and progress, and recommends another road, less traveled but timeless.

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