



ENOUGH
JOIN THE EVOLUTION



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recycle me

Letter From the Editor

When did I start to realise that I have 'Enough'? This is a question I often ask myself. As someone with a social conscience and a deep love of nature it has been a gradual process of waking up, one that has evolved as I have grown in my understanding of myself and the Whole that I am part of. I first learned about the Gaia hypothesis when I was an environmental science student at the University of Guelph. The idea that the Earth was a living organism seemed, at that time, pretty radical and definitely shifted my thinking. Since then, so many other moments of awakening have happened that I tend to forget exactly what it was that has brought me from there to here. I have come to the conclusion that my personal evolution is occurring through a series of small shifts and experiences—some are fleeting, and others are far more profound. So it is in this transformative vein that this magazine has been written.

This magazine is a compilation of differing thoughts and perspectives about a myriad of societal issues. I invite you to join me on a journey to a place of deeper compassion, contentment, and responsibility. When these values are nurtured and lived, I feel life becomes more vibrant, abundant and meaningful.

This is the first publication by the Institute for a Sustainable Society of *Enough - Join the evolution*. Working on this magazine has been a collaborative process and I thank all of the deeply inspiring people that have helped to shape its production. Thank you to my beautiful family, wonderful friends, and brilliant teachers.

With deep gratitude,



Heidi Clark

**INSTITUTE FOR A
SUSTAINABLE
SOCIETY**



COMPASSION • CONTENTMENT • RESPONSIBILITY
www.sustainablesociety.org.nz

Join the Evolution

This magazine is about the endeavour to uplift the human heart. It is about resources for inner sustainability. It is about seeing through the façade of materialistic consciousness and connecting to the unlimited joy of knowing our true self.

“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.” (Mahatma Gandhi)

Let us begin with ourselves and be the evolution.

For more information please visit us at sustainablesociety.org.nz to share your ideas for working in collaborative, abundant, and positive ways. We are currently working on upgrading our website to enable you to share your stories, insights, and comments.

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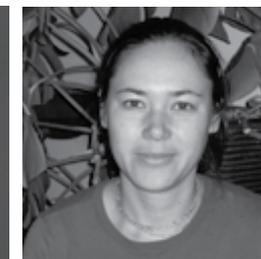
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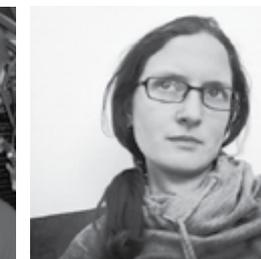
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FROM PUNK TO MONK

By Hriman Krishna



For those who have some intelligence, it is not hard to fathom in our modern so-called culture that underneath all the external hype over technological and economic expansion is the impending face of reality—a reality that is wrought with social, political, and environmental issues, just to mention a few of our present-day woes. Surely, it doesn't take much to scratch the surface of the façade and see through it.

In my teens, the increasing hypocrisy of our leaders and institutions particularly distressed me. I became disturbed to the extent that my only solace was to delight in nihilistic expressions of art, especially in music and literature. Having little faith in our present-day culture and all it has to offer, I engrossed myself in a dark, pessimistic underground scene that berated the world. With vehemence, I composed pernicious forms of sound and contrived in acts of insanity that were counterproductive for my life and the lives of others. I lived as a youthful radical, totally rejecting all established laws and organisations, and relishing the taste of destructiveness. I had morphed into an extreme skeptic, denying an all-real existence, or the possibility of an objective basis for truth, brandishing slogans such as “God is dead,” and joyfully embracing the obliteration of our society, cheering its imminent end, whilst taking everyone else to the grave.

Persons who share this skepticism cannot be all-out condemned for postulating in this way. There is only so much refuse people can accept from our crumbling paradigm, before honest and intelligent individuals must confront the precarious situation. In my youth, I could perceive the miseries of material existence but had no concrete solutions to deal with the muck. In the same way I did, others embrace the dissolution by getting involved in manic groups, only to make matters worse, and why not? We're living in hell; everything is going to hell anyway, so why not expedite the entire course of action?

According to the ancient seers of bygone ages, there are three types of men in this world: the foolish, the enlightened, and everyone else in between. The fools cannot perceive the suffering in the world, being immersed in it themselves. The enlightened are those who are truly blissful, transcending external strife and experiencing personal satisfaction. Most people fall in between—they are neither totally foolish nor are they perfect transcendentalists. Such persons have the facility to be conscious of the all-pervasive suffering inherent in our world and are qualified to fulfill the ancient aphorism: “*Om athato brahma jijnasa.*” This Sanskrit dictum of ancient India translates to: “Now one should inquire into the absolute reality.”

These wise sages affirm that the destitute nature of the world is meant to evoke elucidations into the authentic quality of the self. Who am I, beyond the smattering interactions of my body and mind? What is the self? And why must I suffer? These are the questions of one advancing in consciousness. The transcendentalists expound that genuine progression is not based on gross technology and economics, contrary to what we are led to believe. Rather, advancement is indicated by how one is reaching higher states of consciousness. Despite society's technological sophistication, we can observe that the consciousness of individuals is no better than a royal rendition of an animal's life. Therefore, one should contemplate, what is it that really differentiates me from the members of the animal kingdom?

To address this question, Srila Prabhupada, one of the world's most distinguished authorities in Indian philosophy and spirituality, provides the following insight in a verse from the reputable metaphysical encyclopaedia, the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*:

The general mass of people, unless they are trained systematically for a higher standard of life in spiritual values, are no better than animals...they have particularly been put on the level of dogs, hogs, camels and asses. Modern university education practically prepares one to acquire a doggy mentality with which to accept service from a greater master. After finishing a so-called education, the so-called educated persons move like dogs from door to door with applications for some service, and mostly they are driven away, informed of no vacancy. As dogs are negligible animals and serve the master faithfully for bits of bread, a man serves a master faithfully without sufficient reward. (2.3.19 Purport)

Tending to a wounded ego, I intently meditated on these proclamations. Consequently, my transition from punk to monk began, as I concluded that life without inquiry into a higher spiritual purpose relegates one to the platform of animalism. Whether he or she is a sophisticated mammal or a self-professed brute, or in other words, whether society deems one as a civil conformer or an antagonistic punk, there really isn't much difference in either feeble existence. The basic instincts of sleeping, eating, mating, and defending are universal to those in a material body. The human form of life is unique to other forms, because it is capable of philosophical analysis. Thus, with this realisation my exploration into monastic life began. A shift of extremes perhaps, but what was there to lose? Why not undertake a nobler outlook into resolving the issues of life?

Diary of a Wandering Traveller

By Jamie Henderson

Ah, another day down. I have a place to sleep, something to eat, and dry (semi-clean) clothes—success. Yet another night of, “Hey, what’s your name? Where are you from? Do you like New Zealand?”

Gee, sometimes I wish someone would ask me something different. I love people, and I came travelling to meet new people, but I’m just always getting the same questions and the same answers. It’s kinda like playing a game—people just want to suss you out to see if you have anything interesting to say or perhaps might party with them later. It’s not like they actually care.

I feel like most people I meet just want to have fun in the same way they did in their home country, but in different places! Tick the boxes, dot the map, take the pictures, buy the t-shirt. Then go home and get on with normal life, reliving the highs on Facebook for the next ten years.

I left home seeking something. I’m still not sure what. I’ve seen so many diverse cultures and met people from all over the world. But really, aren’t we all just doing the same thing in a different way? Whether I’m eating fried rice in Cambodia, quesadillas in Mexico, or pizza in Italy, either way I’m just eating. So much variety but still just fulfilling a basic human need! Same product, just different packaging.

How many more ways can I do the same things?! There’s only so many scenic views, so many substances, so many positions a person can try in X, Y, and Z place before they begin to ask the questions: What does it all mean? What’s the point to it all? Is there something more than this?

I just Skyped my mum back home and she told me not to waste my holiday thinking so much, just to go out and have fun. What, and wake up tomorrow morning still without answers and so hung-over I don’t remember the questions?

She doesn’t get it. It’s easier to just keep going through the motions when you’re at home, but when you’re travelling, all the safety nets and granted certainties are gone.

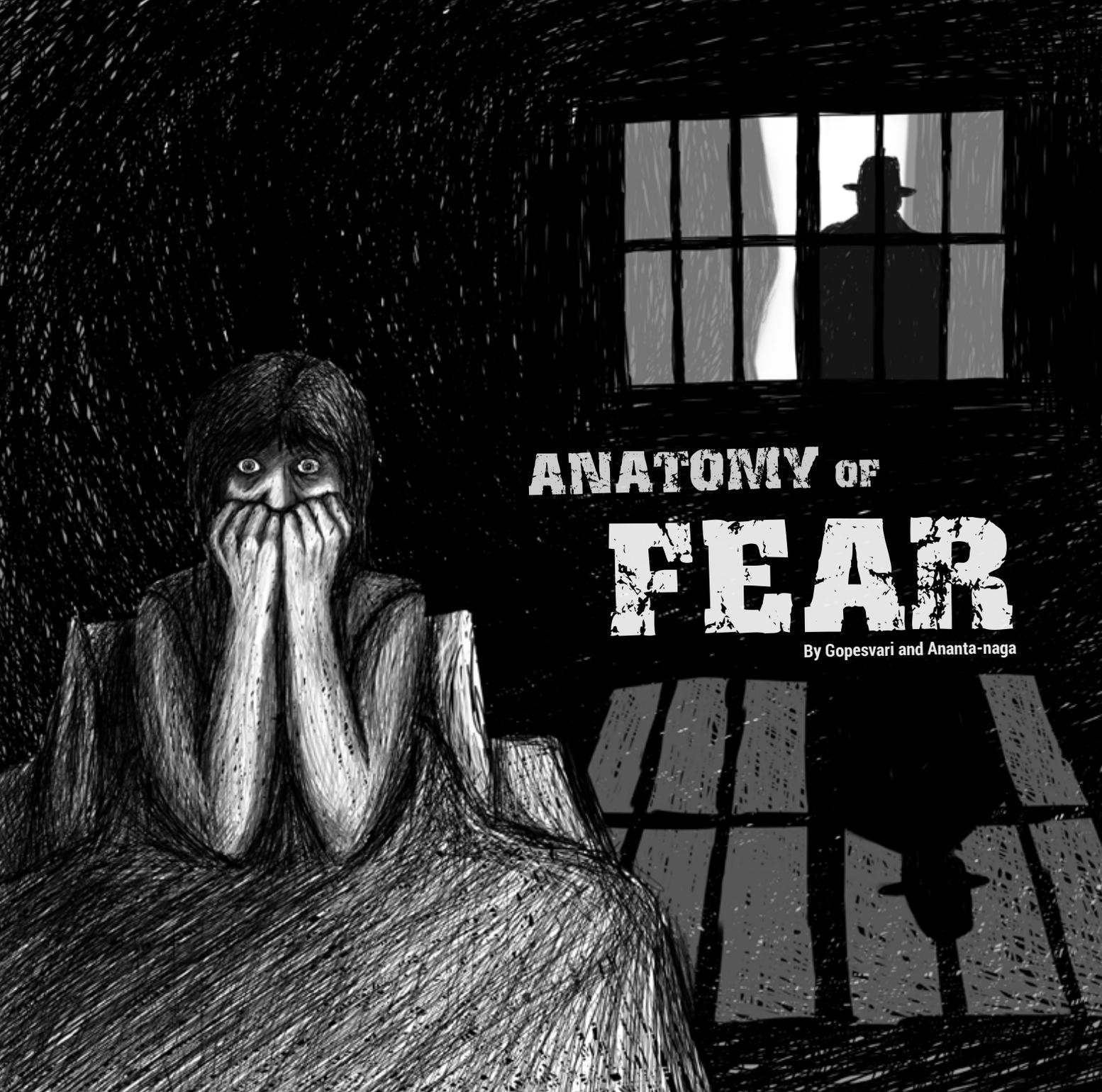
I just feel so alone. I mean, I’m never actually on my own, I think the closest I’ve been to it in the last six months is a six-bed dorm! But to find someone who thinks about this stuff too, and can actually answer these questions. Who knows, maybe someone else here is thinking the same thing, but how would anyone know when everyone is either having fun or pretending they’re having fun?

People keep telling me: “This is the best time of your life”, “You’ve gotta do it while you’re young and free,” “I’m so jealous,” etc. So if this is it, just a Rubik’s cube of different ways to eat, sleep, party, and exercise, then what happens next?

Maybe I am thinking too much.

I think it’s time for a cuppa.





ANATOMY OF FEAR

By Gopesvari and Ananta-naga

At 9:13 p.m. on Friday 25 April 2012, someone broke into my apartment. Jarred awake by the sound of laboured breathing and heavy workboots on the ledge outside my window—a sound somewhat uncharacteristic for a first-floor apartment—my entire being instantly stiffened. In less than an eighth of a second, my body's biomechanical “press in emergency” button had been tripped, and as my heart kicked in and my digestion kicked out, the most ancient of all instincts took over my consciousness: I WAS AFRAID.

As the would-be intruder wrestled with the glass louvers (the all-too-thin barrier between him and me), which suddenly snapped under his determined grip, I found myself under the grip of a billion anxiety-enhancing neural-peptides now scourging my system. Game on, I was in full fight or flight mode. Fear had me.

Fear is certainly not a modern phenomenon; the dark is still scary. In our quest to understand why, modern science has searched the brain for the roots of fear and concluded that it is simply a chain reaction that starts with a stress-stimulus and ends with the release of chemicals that trigger the physical and emotional aspects of our experience. And while underground addictions and aboveboard pharmaceuticals alike offer to soften the edges of our fear experience, at the spearhead of civilisation, we still find ourselves perplexed at how to break free of fear's shackling grip, once and for all.

In seeking alternatives to my own tussles with this corrosive emotion, I stumbled upon the Bhagavad-gita, a Vedic wisdom text dating back more than five thousand years, which explains that “fear is caused by our absorption in the illusory energy.” (Purport 10.4-5)

Illusory energy?!

Before discounting the seemingly simple use of language, let us take a moment to consider the weight of what is being conveyed: the dictionary defines an illusion as “something that deceives by producing a false or misleading impression of reality.” (Dictionary.com)

As a result, reality seen through the eyes of illusion tends to be warped in two ways:

1. We see what's NOT there
2. We DON'T see what IS there

The Bhagavad-gita cuts straight to the chase—we are absorbed in the illusion that we are separate from a greater spiritual reality. The ability to see this greater spiritual reality, and our connection to it, has nothing to do with the biomechanics of our eyeballs—a hard reality to digest in a society blind-sighted by a seeing-is-believing mentality.

So how does this relate to my would-be burglar—what was I not seeing that was there, or, vice versa, what was I seeing that wasn't there? In the Bhagavad-gita, Krishna teaches Arjuna how to cultivate a consciousness of connection—a connection with your eternal spiritual self. He explains to Arjuna that in this state of consciousness connection, he has nothing to fear in life, including death, because essentially, the spiritual aspect of his being is imperishable and indestructible; only his material body is sure to come to an end.

“Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be.” (Bhagavad-gita 2.12)

Only when we are in harmony with what and who we really are, can we begin to break free of fear. Wholly identifying ourselves with our perishable body, naturally we will experience fear should our body face danger. Had I truly been in a state of conscious connection with my higher self when the intruder rattled at my window, my experience of the situation would have been quite different.

Real security is within. Real intelligence is to understand that. Real progression is to act on it. And the Bhagavad-gita As It Is will show you how.

To be continued...

Redefining Wealth

By Yashodeva

“ Like lambs to the slaughter, they’re encouraging us now with the same enchanting tune they’ve been singing for over a century: ‘Buy things you don’t need with money you don’t have. In this way, the gears of production and consumption will keep turning, and our fantasy of unbounded growth of business, in a world of inexhaustible resources, will be realised...’ ”

A radical new breed of economists and ecologists are conjuring up what could be the most timely revolution that the “free-market economy” has ever seen.

Not surprising, considering that the current slump in economic growth has been an inescapable nuisance for almost every developed nation in the world, and despite nearly four years of instability behind us, the economic crisis shows no signs of abating.

Of course, this is an affliction that third-world undeveloped nations are already familiar with, right? So it’s quite reasonable to be more concerned with the well-being of the sensitive elite, right? That’s the uninspiring attitude that has perpetuated the same band-aid solutions we’ve seen throughout history; that is, how to shift the brunt of the burden onto the shoulders of the proletarian class, whether they’re in America or abroad. Like lambs to the slaughter, they’re encouraging us now with the same enchanting tune they’ve been singing for over a century: “Buy things you don’t need with money you don’t have. In this way, the gears of production and consumption will keep turning, and our fantasy of unbounded growth of business, in a world of inexhaustible resources, will be realised...”

Histories (and Products) Repeat Themselves

In 1929, a prominent real-estate broker in New York engineered a clever scheme to set the gears of industry in perpetual motion. The broker, Bernard London, proposed that every product on the market should have a predetermined “lease of life,” with an expiry date set by its manufacturer and designed into its workmanship, so that the need for replacement or upgrade would come sooner rather than later and so the consumer would be all but forced to purchase new products. This concept, which was dubbed “planned obsolescence”, was ignored by economists of the time. However, perhaps worse than the idea of

planned obsolescence by legal obligation, as Mr. London had envisioned, is the fact that this shrewd business objective has, since the Great Depression, become an unofficial cultural norm, one to which the helpless mass of consumers does not hesitate to acquiesce.

“ Try finding a battery for your mobile a year after you buy it and odds are you’ll be hunting for one on the Web, because your wireless carrier has long since moved on to newer models and doesn’t carry a replacement battery in stock. ”

Pause for a moment and consider, the next time you’re purchasing any nonperishable goods like clothing, electronics, and home ware, do the manufacturers of this product really want me to be satisfied with its form and function or am I being lured into an interest in future models? Am I purchasing an enduring article or a fleeting status symbol? These are the themes that drive product development and keep businesses afloat.

This phenomenon is easily noticeable in the field of cellular phones, a market into which new models are introduced, on average, and by almost every manufacturer, every four months. Try finding a battery for your mobile a year after you buy it and odds are you’ll be hunting for one on the Web, and that your wireless carrier has long since moved on to newer models and doesn’t carry a replacement battery in stock. In the United States, wireless carriers’ policies of heavily subsidising phones when customers sign up for one- or two-year contracts reinforces the idea of change, even if you’re perfectly happy with the phone you’ve been using. This is one of the classic, back-handed tricks in business psychology, as explained by Allen Noguee,

wireless infrastructure and technology analyst for In-Stat Research: “Operators do this where they can because they know if the subscriber has a better phone, he or she is more likely to use services which more than pay for the difference in cost on the phone.”

Abundant Maladies

A reckless culture of prodigious consumption and production will never develop into a stable economy. As romantic as it may sound to strive for unlimited growth and innovation, in reality we see that, as a result of our so-called growth and innovation, the most promising industries of today are those involved with conservation of resources, sustainability and waste management. Indeed, the idea of unbridled economic development will only produce an abundance of maladies:

“Consequently, although there is no lack of money in the world, there is a scarcity of peace. So much human energy is being diverted to making money, for the general population has increased its capacity to make more and more dollars, but in the long run the result is that this unrestricted and unlawful monetary inflation has created a bad economy all over the world and has provoked us to manufacture huge and costly weapons to destroy the very result of such cheap money-making. The leaders of the big money-making countries are not really enjoying peace but are making plans to save themselves from imminent destruction by nuclear weapons. In fact, huge sums of money are being thrown into the sea by way of experiments with these dreadful weapons. Such experiments are being carried out not only at huge costs but also at the cost of many lives. In this way the nations are being bound by the laws of karma. When people are motivated by the impulse for sense gratification, whatever money is earned is spoiled, being spent for the destruction of the human race.”

– A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Redefining Value

These criticisms of the “growth society” are familiar to most of us. We might even be inclined to say, with an air of exasperation, that we’ve heard enough. However, there is something to be said in this regard which is novel and worth getting excited about: that an interest is brewing in the appraisal of environmental resources and that people are becoming more educated about the monetary value of a more holistic world-view and a (comparatively) restrained lifestyle.

For example, ten years ago the city of New York made a decision to spend over \$1 billion to purchase land in the Catskills watershed to secure or restore the capacity of the natural ecosystem to purify the city’s water supply. The rationale? To build water-purification plants with the same capabilities would have similar initial and long-term costs. Usually, during periods of tight government spending controls, environment protection programmes constitute ready targets for restriction as the public demands that money be channelled into perceived priority areas. Is it possible that our “perceived priorities” could be undergoing a profound change?

Hence, I adamantly support the proposal that, just as the value of a natural resource can be defined monetarily, so too can the natural pleasures of human existence, such as health, family, and spirituality, be given credence in a more mature economic model. I think it’s high time for intelligent people to reflect upon the dismal history of the “unlimited growth” paradigm and consider redefining what is valuable in our lives. Are we really making progress? Or are we just running in circles? When is enough, enough!? Failing to wake up from the dream of perpetual economic development, we remain with the bitter axiom of Blaise Pascal:

“We scarcely ever think of the present; and if we think of it, it is only to take light from it to arrange the future. The present is never our end. The past and the present are our means; the future alone is our end. So we never live, but hope to live; and, as we are always preparing to be happy, it is inevitable that we should never be so.”

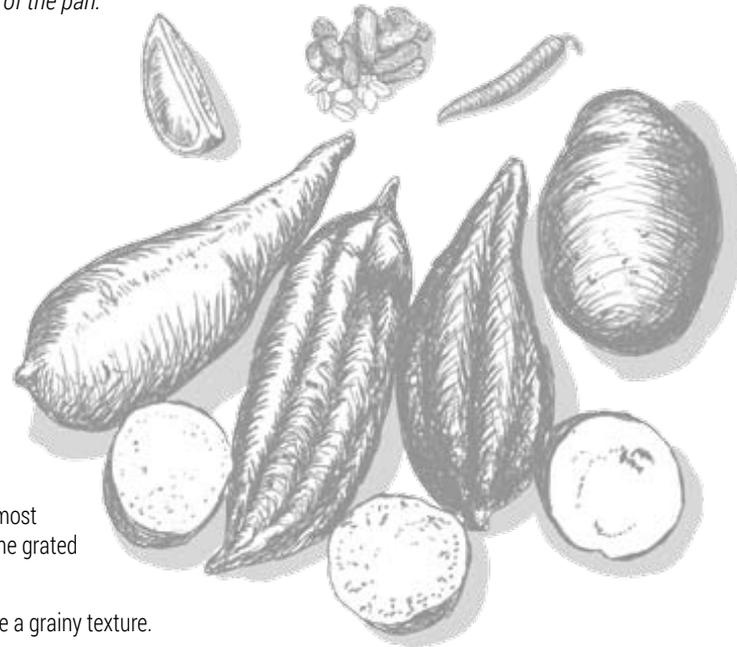
Kumara, Potato, and Roasted Peanut Stir-fry

By Shriya Chitale

Zero gluten, low in fat, high in fibre, good to freeze, and ready in 15 minutes. There is nothing more convenient than this simple kumara stir-fry for lunch. Also known as sweet potato, kumara is available in abundance in New Zealand and is bursting with vitamins and complex carbohydrates. Don't let the 'sweet' in the sweet potato mislead you; it has been shown to stabilise blood sugar levels.

For this stir-fry you will need 3 or 4 medium-sized kumara and a medium-sized pan. Just be careful to keep stirring, so that nothing sticks to the bottom of the pan.

- 3–4 medium-sized kumara**
- 1 medium-sized potato**
- 2 tablespoons unsalted peanuts**
- ½ fresh green chilli**
- ½ teaspoon cumin seeds**
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil or ghee (clarified butter)**
- Sugar to taste**
- Salt to taste**
- Fresh coriander (finely chopped)**
- Grated coconut (frozen)**
- Lemon wedge**



Soak the kumara and the potato for about half an hour in cold water. Remove, peel, and give them a spin in the food processor. Squeeze out most of the starch from the grated kumara-potato mixture. To do this, place the grated kumara in a cheesecloth, and twist. Set aside.

In a pan, roast the unsalted peanuts. Process the peanuts until they have a grainy texture.

Add the ground peanuts to the grated kumara-potato, and mix well with your hands or a dry spoon.

In a pan, heat the oil or ghee. Add the cumin and wait for it to sizzle just a bit. Slit the half green chili and remove the seeds, if you prefer to go easy on the spice. Add the chilli to the warm oil and stir a few times.

Now add the kumara, potato and peanut mixture to the oil and spices. Stir and cover to steam for about 2–3 minutes.

Add salt and a pinch of sugar to taste, and keep stirring. The sugar brings out all the other flavours wonderfully. The kumara-potato mixture is cooked when it softens, loses its crunch but doesn't stick like a doughy ball.

Remove from heat and serve with the wedge of lemon on the side. Garnish with fresh coriander and some grated coconut.

Serves two.

The Queen of All Smoothies

By Radha Prasada

This smoothie is a powerhouse filled with super foods and all things good for you to kick-start your day. Goji berries have been cited as one of the most nutritionally dense foods on earth and are rich in antioxidants. Chia seeds are all the rage at the moment and with good reason. These little seeds are a high-energy endurance food that date back to the ancient Aztecs and are a good source of calcium and fiber. Flax seed oil has one of the highest ALA contents (the plant form of Omega 3) of any vegetarian source and is great for aiding the functioning of your nervous system. Spirulina is extremely high in chlorophyll, which helps to remove toxins from the blood and boost the immune system, as well as being high in iron and a good source of B12 and a wide range of other vitamins and minerals. Better still – it's quick to prepare!

- A big handful of leafy greens**
- 2 cups mixed berries fresh or frozen (blueberries, raspberries, boysenberries and blackcurrants)**
- 2 cups water (filtered if possible)**
- 20 goji berries (pre-soaked in water)**
- 1 apple**
- 1 banana**
- 2 tablespoons chia seeds (pre-soaked in half a cup of water)**
- 2 tablespoons flax seed oil**
- 1 tablespoon spirulina**
- 15 grams protein powder**

Remove and discard hard stems from leafy greens. Roughly chop leaves and put in blender. Add berries, water, apple and banana. Blend till smooth. Add remaining ingredients and blend till mixed and smooth. Serve immediately.

Serves two.





STOP THE WORLD

I WANT TO GET ON

By Devamrita Swami

Bubbling on the stove of the contemporary spiritual quest is the perennial hot question: What to do about the world? As a spiritual dabbler or a dedicated practitioner, do I immediately shun the world of pleasures and pains, the dream, the mirage? Or do I automatically embrace everything in the world as divine—and then maybe grab all the goodies I can?

What about the *Real World*?

Let's say you have just embarked on a spiritual path. You're chanting your mantra daily, freeing yourself from self-negating addictions, and plunging deep into venerable spiritual texts. Meanwhile, your friends and family observe your newfound zest with curiosity. Slightly amused, they poke you fondly: "Well, little Buddha, what are you going to do about *the real world*?"

The truth is, you're not so sure yourself. All you know is that you're tired of slogging through life with no knowledge of who you are or why whatever is you appears in this world. An intuition of your nonmaterial identity coaxes you onward—you aspire for at least a preliminary experience of enlightenment. What's more, your Internet research tells you that much of the crucial knowledge you need to know seems to thrive outside the cage of current science. Now, just ahead, looms the famous hurdle—how do I act spiritually within the matrix of materialism?

Humans: the Only Expendable Species

First, let's take a second look at that sneaky stereotype "the real world." By it what we truly mean is the pungent blend of economic, social, and sensual forces that mould us. The shrieks, grunts, squeals, and groans of the university and job marketplace envelope our consciousness, as we voluntarily shoulder a lifestyle of study, work, buy, consume, and die. Somehow, this volatile yet dreary manner of human affairs has been consecrated as the standard for evaluating our life.

When we consider the place of humans in this world strictly from the materialistic standpoint, we have no choice but to conclude we are a total disturbance. Better we all take a long hike from this planet—never to return.

This sad reality of our material relationship with the world is summed up by Harvard emeritus professor Edward O. Wilson, one of the most influential biologists of our time: "If all humanity disappeared, the rest of life would benefit enormously. The biosphere would literally breathe a sigh of relief, as forests regenerated and endangered species revived."

Even if on our ecological best behaviour, still we are materially unnecessary in this world. Let any other species disappear—for example, ants. Then nature, Wilson says, would incur "major extinctions of other species and probably partial collapse of some ecosystems."

Though the only expendable species in the ecosphere, we reign as habitat-wreckers par excellence. Humans having become weather makers, we have everything to fear. Weather patterns throughout the globe range from peculiar, at best, to extreme—in your face, crushing.

The Human Form: a Rare Gift from Nature

"Crime doesn't pay" warn the old-time TV detective-dramas in the closing scene. The human war of terror devastating the Earth brings a punishing toll that's not fully understood. We've stripped the forests, exhausted soils, emptied natural resources, and poisoned the land, water, and air with thousands of toxic chemicals. Why not lift our vision up from materialism—what's the loss?

Better nature's only disposable species seeks its reason for existence in the realm of spiritual science. The ancient yoga texts of India champion the human form, with its developed consciousness, as a rare gift from nature—specifically for the purpose of spiritual attainment. For example, the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (11.9.29) states:

After innumerable births and deaths, we achieve the rare human form of life, which, though temporary, grants us the opportunity to attain the highest perfection. Therefore a sober human being should quickly endeavour for the ultimate perfection of life as long as the body, always subject to death, has not expired. After all, sensory gratification is available even in the lowest and most gross species of life, whereas Krishna consciousness is possible only for a human being.

The wealth of knowledge in the devotional yoga treasury, revered in India and now known throughout the world, explains:

The human body, which can award all benefit in life, is automatically obtained by the laws of nature, although it is a very rare achievement. This human body can be compared to a perfectly constructed boat having a genuine guru as the captain and the instructions of the Supreme as favorable winds impelling it on its course. Considering all these advantages, a human being who does not capitalise on the human body to cross the ocean of material existence must be considered the killer of his own soul. (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 11.20.17)

The wisest sages and saints have always alerted us to the enormous human potential for spiritual development, latent in both the individual and civilisation. Ignoring that dormant spiritual promise, however, what's left for us? Try the Voluntary Human Extinction Movement.

Vanish or Transform?

Popularly known as VHEMT, its planetary strategy certainly provokes thought. Determined to avoid a mad rush to global resource wars and starvation? Terrified by an impending mass die-off, when nature fully

“ Though the only expendable species in the ecosphere, we reign as habitat-wreckers par excellence. ”



retaliates against human overload and abuse? VHEMT urges us to give real peace a chance: All humans unite to stop procreating. Halt the production of new babies now. Then watch nature rejoice. In three or four decades, the Earth speeds toward full recovery. By the end of this century, it's splendidly human-free.

Timely yet ominous, VHEMT's motto is also cordial: "May you live long and die out." The movement's founder, Les Knight, on websites in twenty languages, gently lays our weary species to rest: "The last humans could enjoy their final sunsets peacefully, knowing they have returned the planet as close as possible to the Garden of Eden."

Well, thanks for the offer to voluntarily vanish, but no thanks. Generally we feel that other species should run the extinction gauntlet—not us humans, the pride of the planet. Nevertheless, our determination to survive may propel us through dire straits to an effective spiritual approach—an authentic cure for the greed, materialism, economic injustice, and environmental madness so darkening the present and future. While striving to correct the thinly disguised chaos within us, can we also significantly improve the world around us? Throughout human history, the major proponents of transformation are considered to generally occupy two camps: the this-worlders and the other-worlders, with blends in between.

The other-worlders, eyes on the prize of heaven beyond, are known to accept earthly habitation as just a training school for the celestial hereafter. Withdrawing from the temporal affairs of this temporary world, they concentrate on their own internal development.

Like mystic yogis in the Himalayas, the desert fathers of early Christianity, or some monks and nuns of today, the other-worlders seclude themselves from the din of daily life. Impressed that all things will pass, disenchanted by the despair and evil encasing humanity, they may also pray and meditate for the wellbeing of all, as they prepare for paradise—whether nirvana, heaven, the Oneness, or the Great Unknown.

The this-worlders, however, live to embrace Planet Earth en toto—all the joys and sorrows. Often avowed activists, humanitarians, and environmentalists, they plant their feet as well as their vision firmly on the ground—right here and now.

Aching to change the surrounding world economically, politically, and ecologically, they may resent the other-world perspective as a nuisance—or worse, a barrier. Why co-opt the amazing transformative potential of humanity, energy so desperately needed for global renovation, and then dreamily dissipate it into the clouds?

The common conviction is that human vigour and aspiration, when focused at least almost exclusively upon terra firma, would bring a better life to billions of unfortunate human beings.

Resolving the Divide

Resolving the divide, uniting the inner and the outer, the here and the hereafter, is a challenge the yoga classic *Bhagavad-gita* meets with consummate majesty. Known as the Gita, for short, it is the standard authoritative text for the complete yoga ladder, presenting both this-world yoga and other-world yoga interlinked.

Certainly withdrawing from the world has its place and value. Periodically, every intelligently managed lifestyle needs a personal retreat, to recharge the batteries. Yet, our times bring an intense global awareness of social, economic, and ecological crises. Without our turning a blind eye to these pressing issues of the day, can we acquire both freedom from the world and dynamic engagement in it? The Gita invites us to drink at the fount of sacred activism: the precise spiritual technology for truly being in the world while not of the world.

In Chapter 6, for example, "The Yoga of Meditation," Krishna, the source of all yoga power, instructs: "The perfect yogi, by comparison to his own self, sees the true equality of all beings, in both their happiness and their distress." (*Bhagavad-gita* 6.32)

No doubt, some yogis may opt for isolation, focusing upon their own elevation. But another type thirsts for benefitting all. The activist yogis, with spiritual strength from the inner world, scan the outer world—noting its grip of impermanent happiness and distress. Striving for more than just their own perfect meditation, these sacred activists reach out to change all dimensions of the planetary experience. Knowing with compassion the futile struggles of mundane existence, these masters of devotion yoga, bhakti, aim for the complete welfare of all creatures. Such fully balanced yogis observe the spiritual equality of all living entities, despite nature's parade of diverse biological and psychological costumes.

“ The shrieks, grunts, squeals, and groans of the university and job marketplace envelope our consciousness, as we voluntarily shoulder a lifestyle of study, work, buy, consume, and die. ”



Still worried about your role as a budding spiritualist locked into the real world? The graduate study to the *Gita*, the delightfully encyclopaedic *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, thoroughly analyses the illusions that smother human society. The text explains that the daytime of the materially overwhelmed person means complicated, often high-tech versions of basic Neanderthal pursuits. Hunting and gathering, we muscle and connive our way through the forest of education and employment. Darkness falls; we seek release.

We pin our hopes for redemption on a nocturnal brew of television, intoxication, and sex. The warm blanket of sleep grants us a temporary reprieve. But too soon day breaks; the cycle of intense struggle renews.

Why do we take what is so tedious, so deadening, so self-destructive and anoint it as the real world? How did we succumb to such low expectations of human potential?

Spiritual Transformation

The lifestyle of the genuine spiritual practitioner will triumph. Gradually the awareness will dawn that our highest spiritual aspirations and expressions are the day-to-day essence of true human life. A host of Krishna-conscious adepts can testify how *bhakti-yoga* reorders a person's lifestyle and relationships so that the spiritual energies flowing from the Supreme Soul, Krishna, assume their rightful pride of place.

This spiritual transformation culminates with entrance into divine vision and connectivity. In the *Bhagavad-gita*, Krishna Himself describes the real world in this way: "A true yogi observes Me in all beings and also sees every being in Me. Indeed, the self-realised person sees Me, the same Supreme Lord, everywhere. For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me." (*Bhagavad-gita* 6.29–30)

Available in increments, as the spiritual aspirant progresses, this attraction for the Supreme Source of Pleasure reshapes our life. Gradually we perceive that the world is a combination of material and spiritual energies emanating from Krishna, the ultimate fount. Krishna's energies are not ours to plunder or exploit, nor to discard or negate.

Since everything, whether matter or spirit, is the energy of the Supreme, therefore we necessarily must strive to hear from the Supreme how to cope. A fundamental principle of existence is that we cannot concoct our own style of interactions with those energies. Look at the earth, the sky, the water. The deepening ecological crisis reveals that—unaided by knowledge from Krishna—we are just too arrogant and tiny to handle material nature. Next, honestly look inside. Peer at our own mind. We

don't even know our self, what to speak of understanding how to handle our self. Therefore how can we ecologically deal with nature?

Insignificant Humans Wreak Significant Damage

Your grandchildren could see half the species of plants and animals on this planet either gone or on their way out. Scientists estimate that by the end of this century, if the human impact on nature continues at the present rate, then the 50 percent curtain will fall. The most conservative estimates of the current extinction rate say it's one hundred times beyond what happened on Earth before humans are said to have appeared. In the immediate decades ahead, the extinction pace, driven by climate change, is expected to worsen a thousand times or more. Naturally, the global repercussions of this human handiwork are frightening.

"We pin our hopes for redemption on a nocturnal brew of television, intoxication, and sex."



Beyond a doubt humans have demonstrated a destructive power that expands without limit, altering the biological, chemical, and other natural aspects of the planet on a geological scale. Nevertheless, from the Earth's point of view, our actual biomass is almost microscopic. Edward O. Wilson gives us a thought-experiment to highlight this strange paradox. Although we are the first species in the known history of life to become a geophysical force, nevertheless it is mathematically possible to round up all the offenders—the homo sapiens—stack us like sardines into a space measuring just one cubic mile, and then tuck away all of us in some lonely section of the Grand Canyon.

Humanity, what to do? From the remote antiquity of spiritual India, the texts known as the *Upanishads* call: "Only a miserly person lives and dies like the cats and dogs—that is, never using the human potential to solve the puzzle of how to live, never grasping the science of self-realisation." But since cats and dogs have become our best friends, we may feel no loss in living like them. As for death, it happens, right? Just as taxes do.

Two and a half thousand years ago, the classic Greek philosopher Socrates declared, "the unexamined life is not worth living." But the attempt at civilisation that dominates the world today is confident it has proven Socrates wrong. Commandeering the best intelligence, contemporary human society enforces the grand solution: make money and indulge your senses on a global scale—lasting peace and prosperity will somehow follow.

Half a century ago, the famed Nobel laureate thinker Albert Camus concluded, "There is only one truly serious philosophical issue: suicide—why not?" Be brave, put yourself on the spot, he urged. Is there any point at all to existence? Admit the absurdity, and then you can decide for yourself whether your life in the biosphere is worth living.

My home-base, New Zealand, is rated sometimes by the UN as the most ecologically conscious nation in the world. Surrounded by some of the most magnificent nature on earth, 1 in 6 New Zealanders think of committing suicide annually, 1 in 18 make a plan for it, and 1 in 22 actually attempt. Because people hesitate to admit such behavior, the statistics are considered lower than the reality. "It's too peaceful here, too virgin and serene—our minds drive us crazy," especially many small-town and rural youth complain. "There's only one thing to live for—we can get stoned, completely wasted, in the most awesome natural beauty." Suicide is the leading cause of death for ages 12 to 25.

Welcome to the Real World

Whether to deny life or affirm it, *bhakti-yoga*, the timeless science of supra-mundane devotion, teaches us that we cannot decide—based solely upon our own, limited intelligence. In the same way, justification to either reject or affirm the world also lies beyond our tiny faculties. Since we, as bodies of matter and souls of spirit, are energies of the Supreme, therefore our human existence has an in-built prerequisite. For sane management of both the energies that compose us and the energies that surround us, we must take lessons from the Supreme Reality, Krishna.

A surgeon's knife in the hand of a medical expert can accomplish great good, but that same tool in the hands of a murderer will unleash horror. A genuine spiritual practitioner seeks to neither reject the body nor indulge it; to neither coldly spurn the things of this world nor passionately embrace them. Rather than neglecting the world, the Krishna devotee engages with this world from the depths of an enlightened compassion far beyond what the mundane mind can grasp.

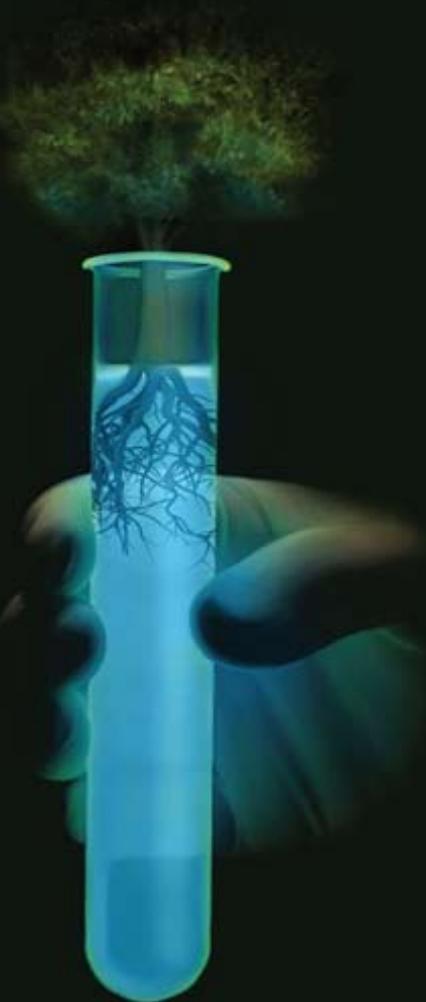
The goal of authentic yoga and meditation is to take guidance from the Source of all energies, the Ultimate Proprietor, how to deftly use even the temporary material body and the temporary material world as springboards to spiritual freedom and global shift. Welcome to the real world. *Bhakti-yoga*, Krishna consciousness, is the perfection of the Information Age.



Devamrita Swami is an international speaker, author, Yale graduate, and monk. Travelling extensively on every continent of the planet, he has been sharing the path of *bhakti-yoga* with others for over 40 years. He advocates spiritually based economics, sustainability, and environmentalism. When he is not travelling, he calls New Zealand home.

A Very Modern Delusion

By Sachi Dulal



Peter Atkins wants us to understand the glory that is science. In the course of an essay denigrating not only theology, but poetry and philosophy as well, Atkins writes: “there is no reason to suppose that science cannot deal with every aspect of existence.”¹

This is exactly what scientists write before having thought about what they are writing.

Atkins is a former professor of chemistry at the University of Oxford. When he uses the word *science*, he refers to the physical sciences, the world of boron salts and electromagnetic fields. In the English-speaking world the word *science* refers to just that. Further afield in Deutschland however, there is the parallel German term *Wissenschaft*, which includes not only the physical sciences but also the humanities—history, languages, literature, philosophy, and yes, theology. *Wissenschaft* lies in much closer proximity to the Latin term *scientia* (knowledge), from which the word science is derived. This is science in its avatar of rational thought—this is science as conveyed by *Wissenschaft*.

The aura of the physical sciences—the one to which so many scientists are reverently drawn—is due to its ability to reduce the complexities of the natural world to their underlying parts and mechanisms. You may know the fragrance of the earth after the summer rain, you may know the serenity of snow in winter, you may know the babbling brook and the languid lake, but did you know that in 1783 the French aristocrat Antoine Lavoisier sparked the two gases of hydrogen and oxygen together in a test tube, to find a residue of dew-like drops that seemed like water?

If men and women did not have the impetus to get off their philosophical posteriors and do science, Atkins has indignantly exclaimed on many an occasion, would we be able to explain things like we do now?

This is exactly what Atkins and others of his persuasion say when they are convinced about the intrinsic superiority of “scientific” knowledge over any other. It is a conviction that allows them to demonstrate their philosophical incompetence without ever having to acknowledge it.

Walking through the ochre-tinted corridors of an art museum, your attention is riveted by an exquisite painting. In hushed tones etched with obvious veneration, the curator imparts the secret: it is to Rembrandt, the celebrated Dutch painter, that you owe your amazement. Being amazed is a state of affairs that Atkins and his cohorts can

barely afford. They hand you a scrupulous chemical analysis of the paint and the canvas. Voila! The painting, they claim, has now been *explained!*

And Rembrandt, so long coughing discreetly at the sidelines, what does he have to say about all this? He may now be invited to comment, strictly as a non-scientist of course, and this is what he has to say:

Why does the darn thing, the universe I mean, exist?
Why is there something rather than nothing?

Why are the parameters and laws of nature what they are when what they are seems anything but arbitrary?

Why, there being this world, does devastation and deterioration impose its domination over it?

Why do we wake in the early hours of dawn, longing for long-lost loves that will never return?

Why do we immerse ourselves in plans for happiness knowing that our stratagems will be crushed by the inexorable wheel of time?

And knowing inasmuch, why choose a life any different from the petty and the pernicious that the media daily celebrates? Why, really, why?

“The great delusion of modernity,” observed the German philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, “is that the laws of nature explain the universe for us. The laws of nature describe the universe, they describe the regularities. But they *explain* nothing.”²

Wittgenstein’s remark suggests an obvious counsel of humility to those scientists overmuch preoccupied with gloating over the omnipotence of the physical sciences. Before frivolously dismissing the insights of “non-scientific” traditions, why not consider what *raison d’être* you have to offer for our existence?

If your reasons amount to nothing, then why gloat over them?

And they amount to nothing. So why gloat over nothing?

1. John Cornwell and Freeman J. Dyson, *Nature’s Imagination: the Frontiers of Scientific Vision* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 125.

2. John C. Lennox, *Gunning for God: Why the New Atheists are Missing the Target* (Oxford: Lion, 2011), 228.

WHERE IS THAT SHOP?

By Anjali Saroop

Auckland, where the king of mavericks is the weather and Murphy's Law applies quite well. When you carry an umbrella it won't rain, and if it does rain, your umbrella will blow away. Thus I conclude, umbrellas aren't worth it. So now when it rains while I'm walking to uni and back, I take the covered Queen Street route.

Walking on Queen Street is quite an experience. You see executives rush by in business suits, youngsters shrieking in groups, elderly couples holding hands trying to keep up with the surroundings, travellers with maps, people window shopping, and some just sitting on the street-side benches, figuring out what to do next.

The last time I was on Queen Street I observed people as they appraised items on sale: watches, clothing, jewellery, electronics, souvenirs, the works. I realised it's possible to buy almost anything on this street. There are shops selling nearly everything under the sun, for a price of course. But for something you really want, the price doesn't matter. Maybe I could find what I have been looking for too. There are so many things I need to buy; I haven't shopped in a while. I should do this in an organised way. I need to make a list of what I need, and find the shop that gives me the best quality at the best price. First up on my list would be the motivation and determination to focus on my thesis, despite what my mind tells me. Next is something to control my greed and envy. I don't think I can afford anything more than this. Oh wait! Time. That's what I need to buy, that tops my list. If I can buy time, I can work everything else out gradually. Right. What shop do I go to? I already have a fancy watch. And there is the clock tower next to Aotea Square, right opposite my office window. Every hour the gong goes off, sounding like the death knell. Time is just passing by. And so am I along with it. One moment I am in my teens, then before I even realise it, I am graduating university, then working a job, then attending friends' weddings. The prime of my youth has just whizzed by and I feel like a bystander. What do I need from my life? A fancy job? A fancy house? A great partner? Travel opportunities? Been there, done that, but I am not yet happy! What's amiss?

I need to be able to control time so I can sort out my my life. Don't talk to me about time management books and organisers, they don't work, you get a few things done at the most, but your time has gone nonetheless.

Where is that shop that sells time? I am ready to put forth all my life savings to buy time. Where is that shop that sells time?

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HUH?!
You **MUST** be crazy and mistaken.
It is **NOT** love!!!
We hardly know each other!

Hey beautiful... Please marry me!
It's **LOVE** at **FIRST SIGHT!**

Please, please, **PLEEEEEEASE** accept me, oh beautiful angel!
MY LIFE HAS NO MEANING WITHOUT YOU!!!

uff...please just stop acting like a cry baby...um...ok...ok, come back in a weeks time. If you still want to marry me I will comply with your wishes.

Over the next week the lady drank several laxatives and fasted intensely. She became emaciated to the point of appearing like a live skeleton covered with baggy skin. She stored the ingredients of her beauty in several pots.



The fateful day finally arrived....

No...loverboy...It's me! your future bride. I stored the ingredients of my beauty in these pots. You can take a peek if you like!

Skin deep beauty will fade away with time. But **TRUE** beauty—the beauty of the soul, will **ETERNALLY SHINE.**



Who are **YOU?!**
Where is my future bride??
Are you her **Grandma?**
Did she run away?

Aaaagh! These are the ingredients of **BEAUTY?!**
SICK!!!

