

ENOUGH!

JOIN THE EVOLUTION



CULTURE FILE / SPIRIT MATTERS / INSPIRE-ME-YOGI / ACTIVIST

From the Editor



Nitya-priya
Editor-in-chief



Sachi Dulal
Managing Editor



Baladev Nitai
Creative Director



Manada
Copy Editor

Welcome to the third issue of *Enough! Join the Evolution*. This issue is brimming with offbeat art and amazing realisations. With each issue we aim to provide our readers with an experience that you won't find anywhere else. I encourage you to connect with the honesty and genuineness of our writers and artists; take a journey beyond your cultural comfort zone, and become more real with yourself and the world around you.

Being real is very important to me. I have noticed as I become older I am habituated to certain ways of doing things. There is an actual scientific reason for this: any thought or action repeated many times results in a habit, and over time the brain develops a corresponding neurosignature, or brain groove. Literally, we start to respond to the deeper groove and therefore often take the path of least resistance, which results in habits. Some habits can be positive, while others may be negative, and we may wish to change these. Good or bad, many of us know that our habits determine our destiny.

In this world, there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge. Such knowledge is the mature fruit of all mysticism. And one who has become accomplished in the practice of devotional service enjoys this knowledge within himself [or herself] in due course of time. (Bhagavad-gita 4.38)

This magazine is an effort to shake things up and provide the opportunity for us all to explore our habits, which may have been formed, in part, by our worldview. When a habit of learning about spiritual knowledge develops, we may find ourselves being more real, more compassionate and loving, and as a result more happy than we ever thought possible. Now who doesn't like the sound of that!

ENOUGH! Thanks...

Alexey Dreva

Catherine Adam

Steve Lyell

Ananda Candra

Leigha Speirs-Hutton

Sukanthi Radha

Ramdas

Where to Find Us...

The Loft

1st Floor, 103 Beach Rd,
Auckland, CBD,
New Zealand
Ph: (09) 379 7301
theloft.org.nz

Bhakti Lounge

Level 1, 175 Vivian St,
Wellington,
New Zealand
Ph: (04) 801 5500
bhaktilounge.org.nz

Urban Yoga

Level 3, 123 Swanston St,
Melbourne, CBD,
Australia
E: urbanyogacentre@
gmail.com
urbanyoga.com.au

Institute for a Sustainable Society

309 School Rd,
Waimauku, Auckland,
New Zealand
Ph: (09) 411 7611
sustainablesociety.org.nz

WWW.ENOUGHMAGAZINE.ORG



What's Inside?

INSPIRE-ME-YOGI

- 09 The Heart of Freedom
- 13 A Value to Humility

SPIRIT MATTERS

- 05 Hot for the Party That's Not
- 17 It's All in the Brain, My Dear

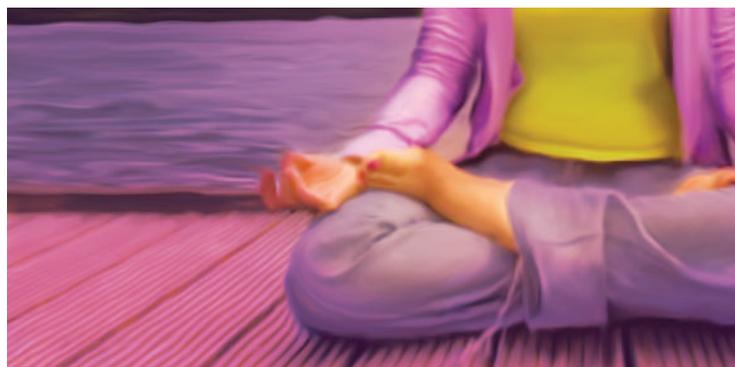
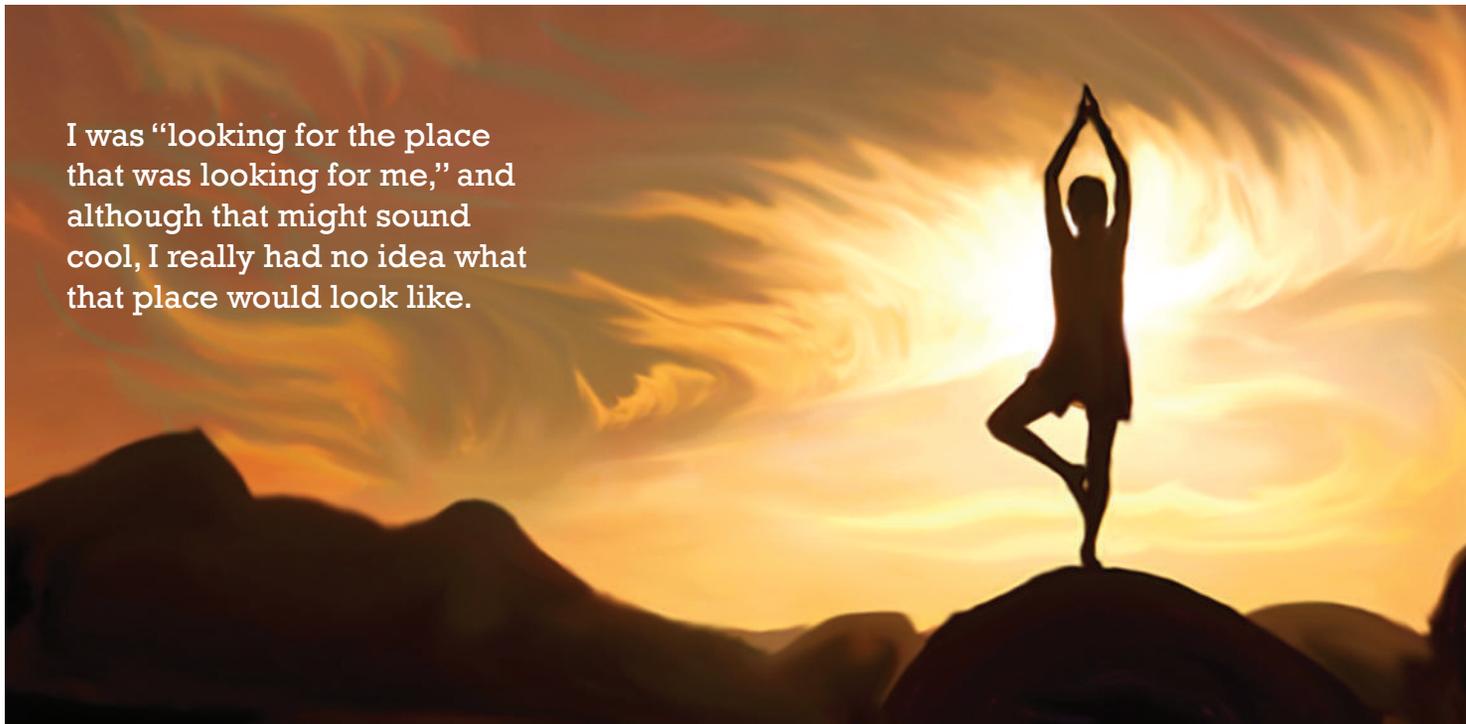
CULTURE FILE

- 03 In Pursuit of Cool
- 23 The Rise of Me

ACTIVIST

- 27 The Age of Stupid
- 31 I Seek Pleasure, Don't You?

I was “looking for the place that was looking for me,” and although that might sound cool, I really had no idea what that place would look like.



IN PURSUIT OF COOL

WRITER GOPESVARI

I didn't grow up in a religious or spiritual home. My parents are salt-of-the-earth type people; hearty, practical-minded farmers. They laugh loud, work hard, and take things at face value. How they came to have an introverted daughter who pulled their bedside clock to pieces looking for the source of time, I'm not too sure.

I always was a little different. As a child I had a secret relationship with Jesus. I derived a deep sense of calm from an illustrated copy of The Lord's Prayer, which I carried with me everywhere in my back pocket. However, Time (which I never did find in my parents' clock; nor could I return that clock to working condition) revealed one of the deep truths of teenagehood: God is seriously uncool. So I took Jesus out of my back pocket and headed out to find "cool."

I attempted for the army, but that was not to be my cool. I studied marketing, the cutting edge of cool. I worked in a five-star cocktail bar and hung out with cool. As a windsurfing instructor, I thought I was cool, and during my employment as a clown, it's questionable whether I was cool or a fool.

Truth be known, my interest in "cool" was not a strong motivation. My quiet motto while travelling was that I was "looking for the place that was looking for me," and although that might sound cool, I really had no idea what that place would look like; I simply trusted that I would know when I found it.

It took one yoga class to completely about-face the direction of my life. I walked out of that *ashtanga* room hardly able to walk; every muscle in my stiff body had been yanked to its brittle brink. For three days I hobbled painfully from the inevitable snap-back effect of overstretching. But yoga had me. And although I couldn't pinpoint it at the time, something had come alive inside of me while I lay in *savasana*.

Yoga, meditation, and the search for the divine took me far and odd. From meditating while running, to concentrating on candles

and communicating with trees, I searched to quiet my mind and understand the will of providence. One of my many self-concocted ideas found me in a van with a spirit-seeking friend, eating nothing but raw soaked chickpeas and mung beans for weeks on end and bungee jumping while offering prayers of surrender. "Surely this will take me to the heights and depths of knowing the divine plan for my life."

Becoming a Hare Krishna was not on my to-do list. But by chanting the three simple words of the Hare Krishna mantra: Hare, Krishna, and Rama, I was hooked. This transcendental sound vibration helped me access a higher sensory experience. Unlike ordinary experiences, which gradually diminish in intensity over time, the Krishna experience increased in intensity the more I gave it time. I discovered that Krishna consciousness is not an external imposition but an internal burgeoning, and Krishna is not something to be learned but someone to be remembered. How grateful this forgetful soul is!

My journey across four continents led me to a community of bhakti-yoga practitioners who showed me that the place I was looking for was inside me the whole time. These same people also showed me where I could find the source of time. And they taught me how to cook chickpeas.

Now THAT is cool! 🌸



Gopesvari grew up on a table grape plantation just outside of Cape Town, South Africa. Later, after her family returned to her father's roots in Australia, she studied marketing and business in Adelaide. However, she soon began to seek outside the average in the average way—by travelling, and her journey to bhakti-yoga began when she stumbled into a yoga class one day...

Real
human
progress
kicks in
when the
mirage,
the mass
consensual
trance,
exhausts us.



HOT FOR THE PARTY THAT'S NOT

Dance to Keep From Crying

WRITER DEVAMRITA SWAMI

The roomful of South African university students peered at me, silently, thoughtfully. I had delivered the goods, intact. Admirably they were processing.

“You’re too late.”

Who savours that conclusion? Flights missed, business opportunities squandered, romantic possibilities bungled? “Too late” means time has hurtled onward, forcing us to accept outcomes ranging from routine inconveniences to devastating setbacks.

My audience, young adult members of “the Rainbow Nation,” mostly African, are yearning, burning—oozing with the eagerness to succeed.

The barriers of the apartheid regime twenty years gone, eyes glued now to what appears an open expressway ahead, they’re flooring the accelerator pedal.

Zooooom!

Destination?

The hyped carnival of guaranteed, enduring material prosperity and happiness.

Craving self-immolation in a consumer paradise, they are desperate to writhe with the First World in the soul-killing flames of mythological material satisfaction. As throughout the developing world, these South African hopefuls feel they’ve stood by long enough. The global party lights flashing, bewitching—who can resist? And why? Especially the university students, afire with desire, crave their place on the planetary stage of the materialistic bash. “Our ancestors died, the freedom fighters endured, and the current national leaders connive—all to award us precious entrance to the hot party. Pursuing gratification and indulgence is a basic human right. Let’s get it on!”

But the midnight hour has long passed.

It’s 5am.

Smashed furniture, broken bottles, stained carpets

Remnants of party snacks strewn around

Drunken, drugged guests

Collapsed in stupor or colliding with one another

An argument here, vomiting there, pathetic hookups everywhere

You’ve arrived too late, I informed my audience. The all-night rave, one hell of a hedonistic blast, is over.

Politicians everywhere boldly promise to rake the dying embers, reigniting the wildfires of materialistic hopes. All the while, the gap between the haves and have-nots continues to widen. The 1 percent versus the 99 percent is a worldwide no-win situation for all.

Meanwhile, regardless of our location in the global economy, the environmental debacle has shamed us. Maddened by the fever of false progress, we’ve garbaged the planet. Though environmental woes are daily publicised, humanity can’t find the collective motivation to change course.

I beg my audience: Admit it, the main party is trashed and finished. A long shot the only hope, fire up an after-party! Rally your group of come-latelies and restart the riotous action—frantic, flickering, futile.

Dance amidst your tears.

My challenge to the students facing me: Why, here in South Africa, seek to beat the dead horse? Why compete for the chance to chomp what the First World has already thoroughly chewed? Don’t swallow

Why compete for the chance to chomp what the First World has already thoroughly chewed?

it, I plead. Let's push to build this relatively new nation on the spiritual platform.

As the phenomenal five-year-old bhakti-yogi, Prahlada Maharaja, stated in the *Srimad-bhagavatam* (7.5.30), the essential bhakti-yoga encyclopaedia:

“Because of their uncontrolled senses, persons addicted to materialistic life do indeed make progress. But, to where? Their achievement is evermore complicated, unsolvable distresses—both individually and socially. Repeatedly, energetically, they chomp what previous generations have already chewed. Consequently their dormant inclinations toward nonmaterial lifestyles, leading to the all-attractive spiritual reality, to Krishna, are never aroused.”

We need a solutions generation to grace the earth, a new wave striving to make a real difference by thoroughly comprehending that human problems are never truly solved on the same level that gave rise to them.

Real human progress kicks in when the mirage, the mass consensual trance, exhausts us. Weary of the matrix of illusion, we can no longer buy-in to what the usual material analyses promise us. When the constant stream of material attempts at solutions fatigues you, at that point mark it—your advancement in real human life has finally begun. Reject the feast of the same old stale, juiceless fibre of imaginary contentment.

In the prime yoga text *Bhagavad-gita* (4.36), Krishna assures:

“You may have been the most deluded of hardcore materialists. You may have considered that nothing exists other than matter and its movements and modifications. Nevertheless, once you're aboard the boat of transcendental knowledge, you will cross over the ocean of perpetual material bafflement and unrest.”

Transcendental knowledge means information and education beyond what has a beginning and an end. That means it's beyond the permutations and adaptations of physiology and psychology. What the Gita gives surpasses the limited, temporal domain of time and space.

Krishna goes on to declare that we'll never find in this world any prosperity or acquisition as sublime and pure as nonmundane information, transcendental wisdom. By our seeking to understand who Krishna is through authenticated, nonmaterial processes, we walk away with what no GDP or financial market indices can measure. Our priceless treasure is irrevocably beyond the gains and losses, booms and busts, of temporary material existence.

“Such knowledge is the mature fruit, the genuine culmination of all mysticism. The genuine yogi, accomplished in bhakti—the yoga of ultimate connection with Me—experiences and enjoys this knowledge within.” (Bg. 4.38)

Rather than our saluting a wanna-be civilisation insistent on partying itself to death, join with the wise who've had enough. Work to eradicate the material illusion—both individually and en masse. The timeless spiritual art, science, and culture that emanates from Krishna, the infinite Superconsciousness, awaits us, the minute particles of consciousness.

“One should meditate upon the Supreme Person as the one who knows everything, as He who is the oldest, who is the controller, who is smaller than the smallest, who is the maintainer of everything, who is beyond all material conception, who is inconceivable, and who is always a person. He is luminous like the sun, and He is transcendental, beyond this material nature.” (Bg. 8.9)

After focusing in this way, you can advance to the last stop in your quest for the most profound and comprehensive spiritual knowledge: awareness of Krishna as the Supreme Beloved and Enjoyer. 🌸

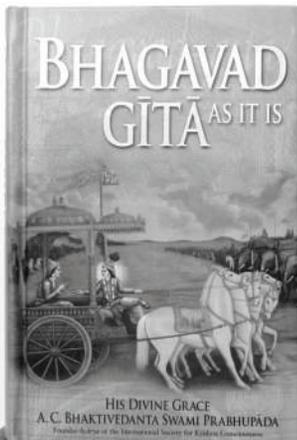


Devamrita Swami is an international speaker, author, Yale graduate, and monk. Travelling extensively on every continent of the planet, he has been sharing the path of bhakti-yoga with others for over forty years. He advocates spiritually based economics, sustainability, and environmentalism. When he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

ENOUGH! recommends...

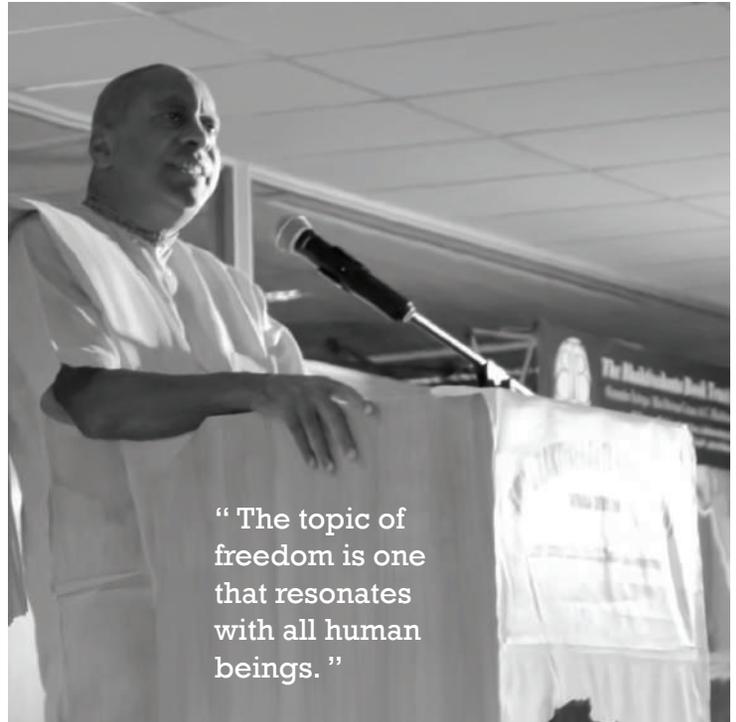
The Teachings of His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Get your copy from
www.enoughmagazine.org



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

” — MAHATMA GANDHI



“ The topic of freedom is one that resonates with all human beings. ”



THE HEART OF FREEDOM

This knocking on the chambers of the heart is a call and yearning for something more intrinsic. The knocking at the heart's door is, in fact, the desire for freedom.

WRITER MUKUNDANGHRI

Every heart has a thumping, a beat, a steady knocking. More than just the pumping of blood in the body's biological systems, this knocking on the chambers of the heart is a call and yearning for something more intrinsic. We all have an inner quest for fulfillment and satisfaction. We all have a thirst for happiness, peace, relationship, prosperity, and love. The knocking at the heart's door is, in fact, the desire for freedom.

Freedom. A concept and an ideal that has been sought after since time immemorial. Throughout history the idea of freedom has been defined and redefined innumerable times. Slaves in Egypt in the tenure of the pharaoh Ramses defined their freedom as the Promised Land. During the peak of the Renaissance, the likes of Copernicus and Galileo sought freedom, through science, from the so-called dogma of the then common beliefs of the world. The founding fathers of the United States of America defined freedom as the opportunity for equality and prosperity. During the great battle of Bastille in France, the chase for liberty was defined by the working class revolt against the royal and religious orders for better living conditions.

The twentieth century played stage for liberation of African people from the oppressive apartheid regime in South Africa and took the form of the Civil Rights Movement in America. Music became an expression

of the desire to be free, unfolding in multifarious genres such as jazz, hip-hop, and rock. Songs of liberation fuelled the counterculture, which arose as a campaign to rebuke the injustices of war and capitalism in order to have the freedom to be an individual. The women's liberation movement shattered the shackles of stereotype so that both women and men could share the spoils of freedom. At the turn of the millennium, technology, with which we can conquer the earth's resources, has become humankind's ticket to freedom from nature's restrictions.

Yet, despite all the conquests and attempts to capture freedom, the question remains: Have we ever really tasted freedom? Or have we instead been sipping from the near-empty cup of temporary relief from our suffering? Where are we free? How are we free? Are we actually free?

In Johannesburg, at the second annual Bhaktivedanta Swami Lecture,* the question of freedom was placed on the table for discussion with secular leaders, thinkers, academia, and students. "Freedom is a thirst that cannot be quenched by politics and economics," stated Devamrita Swami, international speaker and monk, as he delivered the keynote address. He continued, "The topic of freedom is one that resonates with all human beings. It can be approached from many angles: political, economic, intellectual, religious, academic and artistic. Freedom of movement and freedom of assembly. We're all enamoured by the

concept of freedom. Whenever you hear of something being free you get the sense that there are no boundaries or limitations. Indeed, many human beings long for this feeling of freeness.”

Quoting the words of a global icon of freedom and the first recipient awarded the Bhaktivedanta Swami Honour, the late Nelson Mandela, Devamrita Swami said, “There is no such thing as part-freedom.” He continued, “But it is this part-freedom that I say our economic and political leaders have been offering the world. We need a deeper and broader understanding of freedom based not simply on materialism, but on the spiritual reality. If we’re going to have real progress, we need to consider the spiritual platform. Only then can we understand what full freedom is, in contrast with partial freedom.

“Taking care of those external priorities, we have forgotten how powerful our spirit soul is and our connection to the Supreme Soul. Unless we have a class of leaders that can uplift the people with spiritual knowledge, you’ll always see society declining. Despite so many revolutions, so many elections, so many restructurings of the political economy, you’ll see that actually, not much changes. There seems to be a potential for change. There’s a great hope. And yes, in terms of the externals, there is adjustment. But then, again and again, the people become disappointed. Often political change means the ins become the outs, the outs become the ins. But is there a way we can focus on the real needs of the human being?”

What are the real needs of the human being? An attempt to answer this question is the true beginning of the pursuit of freedom. This question does, however, naturally lead one to ask, “Who am I?” and “What am I?”

Foremost exponent and authority of Vedic literature, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, proposes in his translation and commentary of *Bhagavad-gita*, a deeper insight into the real needs of the human being and the true meaning of freedom for all to consider. “Every man is in difficulty in so many ways. Every one of us is full of anxieties because of this material existence. Our very existence is in the atmosphere of nonexistence. Actually, we are not meant to be threatened by nonexistence. Our existence is eternal. But somehow or other we are put into *asat*. *Asat* refers to that which does not exist.

“Out of so many human beings who are suffering, there are a few who are actually inquiring about their position, as to what they are, why they are put into this awkward position and so on. Unless one is awakened to this position of questioning his suffering, unless he realizes that he

doesn’t want suffering but rather wants to make a solution to all suffering, then one is not to be considered a perfect human being. Humanity begins when this sort of inquiry is awakened in one’s mind.”

It is not a matter of where humanity will find a better position in the prison house of life. The search has never been about finding lesser shades of darkness in the dense night of worldly existence. Nor has the journey to freedom been about escaping the harsh and freezing blizzard of political turmoil, economic hardship, social injustice, and environmental exploitation for a less severe winter of tolerable sufferings. If anything was clear from this year’s Bhaktivedanta Swami Lecture, it is that being less incarcerated is not freedom. Behind the cosmetic adjustments and arrangements of the world, the keynote address at this year’s Bhaktivedanta Swami Lecture brought the principle of freedom to a deeper level of consideration and meditation in the consciousness of the audience.

The knocking at our heart’s door is the call for full freedom. It is what each and every one of us so desperately yearns for. What lies beyond being slightly less imprisoned in the wintry atmosphere of a temporary world or being lost in the dark ignorance of our true identity? It is the liberation, light, and warmth of a relationship with the Supreme Soul, Krishna. Within this relationship rests the understanding of the science and culture of full Freedom. 🌸

* The Bhaktivedanta Swami Lecture series strives to profile the astounding literary and philosophical contribution, based on the Vedic science of self-realization, of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.



Mukundanghri attends Wits University in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he organizes bhakti-yoga activities on campus.



WWW.THELOFT.ORG.NZ
FACEBOOK: THE LOFT YOGA LOUNGE
103 BEACH ROAD, L1, AUCKLAND, 09 3797301

When I was on the summit of that mountain, the presence of nature's
overwhelming sublimity momentarily dissipated the burdensome
idea that I was the centre, the master, and controller.



A VALUE TO HUMILITY

WRITER HRIMAN KRISHNA

What is the value of humility in society today? Ordinary people may consider it an illusion to make their mark in this world by being humble, and rightly so. We are a species that has become defined by our capacity to exploit material nature for the sake of economic and technological gain. Social Darwinism influences people's minds—in order to survive in this world they must be selfish. My mother would encourage me to be the best, to be at the top, to succeed, or else, she would admonish, this world will swallow me, chew me up, and spit me into the gutter. What does humility have to do with this pursuit of success? How will humility get you by in times of contention and bitter rivalry, especially as humans struggle with one another and nations collide? I recall that one side of my family would brandish these individualistic impressions in one ear, but in the other, due to a reverent upbringing, the other side of my family would tell me, “the meek and humble will inherit the earth.” Can there be any reconciliation to such a perplexity?

The enlightened sages of the past claim that this value of humility is a positive quality. Indeed, we see the value of humility as a common thread in almost every spiritual path of the world, although a greater depth of understanding is required to apply the principle. Some people misconceive what is real humility, understanding it as a quality belonging to people who lack self-esteem, who wallow in moods of defeatism, or who are bound in codependent relationships. With such misconceptions of humility, people only harbour more doubts about how to apply the quality feasibly in their lives. Thus, people may resign

the value of humility as a mere aberration, or a mental disease with no positive resolve.

In beginning to explore this topic deeper, I would like to share this incisive definition of humility from a revered ancient sage of India, Narada Muni: “Wise men define utter humility as the state in which one always thinks oneself exceptionally incapable and low, even when endowed with all excellences...”*

Gopiparanadhana Dasa, Sanskrit scholar and bhakti-yogi, further comments on Narada's statement in this text: “Someone might say that the quality of thinking oneself very fallen may also be seen in persons who are simply lazy or those who abandon auspicious work... Therefore Narada specifies that one who actually has humility is endowed with all good qualities.”

So now, let's ponder how a person can feel incapable whilst being adorned with exceptional qualities. For instance, almost fifteen years ago, I was a camp leader in a high school retreat. We went to the Outdoor Pursuit Centre on the West Coast of New Zealand and took our first year students on a tramp to the top of Mount Ruapehu. Upon nearing the summit of the mountain, as we stopped to catch our breath, I scanned the scenery, which was breathtaking to say the least. Before me, snow-laden peaks glistened glamorously as the sun yonder shone its magnificent rays down on us. The ebbing forests below, scattered far and wide, marched down the slopes till the shimmering vastness of the

ocean line seemed to engulf the world from all sides. As I stopped to meditate on the wonder of what lay before me, insurmountable feelings of joy overcame my heart along with an acute sense of awe at the grandeur and opulence of nature's glories. I was content to feel insignificantly small in comparison to a much greater and more beautiful reality. It was easy not to be self-centred and egotistical in that environment. I deliberated on the notion that I was no longer at the centre of existence, but rather, a tiny part of a preeminent whole.

Reminiscing on this experience leads me to remember that a humble person is happy and comfortable at being small, and despite being decorated with all excellences, he or she remains humbled. One can achieve this state by always being conscious of the source of all opulence and by realising that one is but a tiny part of that absolute and superlative existence. For example, there are different grades of fire, but all of them derive heat from the sun. So one may have varying degrees of opulence, but to whatever extent that may be, it will always remain insignificant in relation to the source of the opulence. Such persons no longer think themselves great, nor do they want to be great, rather, they feel but a part of a universal order, and in acting in concert to that whole, they feel shelter, unity, and purpose. Hence, when I was on the summit of that mountain, the presence of nature's overwhelming sublimity momentarily dissipated the burdensome idea that I was the centre, the master, and controller.

In contrast to real humility, defeatism and low self-esteem are the real psychological diseases. These issues dictate that I feel small but unhappy, because I want to be big, and because, by nature, one is not comfortable being infinitesimal. Tiny as we are, people unconsciously stride about like self-proclaimed masters of the universe, oblivious to an absolute reality of whom they are a part. If we stand back and take a look at our existential position from a more honest perspective, one can posit that we don't know how to see things as they are, especially when the tendency is to be self-absorbed in an egocentric way. What can I really perceive with my tiny mind and senses, being debilitated by all kinds of limitations? Those who conjecture in this way may find themselves in a reasonable position to learn from self-realized sages who have taught spiritual knowledge for millennia.

Indeed, in the ancient yoga texts of India, such as in the *Bhagavad-gita*, Krishna says, "Know that all opulent, beautiful and glorious creations spring from but a spark of My splendour," (10.41) and later He explains, "The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts..." (15.7) The yoga texts let us know of our infinitesimal nature as parts of a personal, complete, and infallible storehouse of energy, Krishna. The duty of the part is to cooperate in relationship

to that of whom we are a part. For example, the hand is a part of the body. In itself the hand has no meaning, having a separate existence from the body. If the hand tried nourishing itself by eating separately from the body, it would fail miserably. The hand needs to cooperate with the body by placing food into the stomach through the mouth. By this unity the hand will feel nourished and content because it is engaged in a relationship with the body of which it is a part.

A wise man used to say, "Humility does not mean to think yourself less, rather, it means to think less of yourself." (Bhakti Tirtha Swami.) In other words, we need to see past our noses and realise the bigger picture. To think less of ourselves requires that we become absorbed in reconnecting with Krishna, the source of our very existence. The culture that fails to see value to humility is a culture characterized by the idea that we are all masters. Modernity is harvesting the fruits this view engenders in the shape of mass exploitation of people and animals, mental anxieties, strife, poverty, and family instability. Under what circumstances will it take for people to learn that the deep-rooted disease that is manifesting the world's depravation is within all of us?

The benefits for a society that cultivates this mood of humility are refreshing and more realistic than the harsh arrogance of the prideful boasting of people who think themselves very important, or the meandering individual who is lacking self-worth. Neither of these attitudes will benefit anyone. Furthermore, dare I say there can be no real experience of love in a society harbouring the contrasting attitudes of arrogance and low self-worth. How can a feeling of love and grace arouse in our hearts when there is a false notion of entitlement to all things around us? Let us consider true humility as the essence of the holistic development of individuals. 🌸

* Sanatana Goswami, Sri Brhad Bhagavatamrta, Vol. 3, part 2, text 222, trans. Gopiparanadhana Dasa (Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 2002).



At nineteen years when Hrimal Krishna was a third-year tertiary student and a student of the New Zealand 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 has travelled widely, studying bhakti-yoga in many countries.

interactive
explorations
about life,
universe
& everything
mondays 6pm

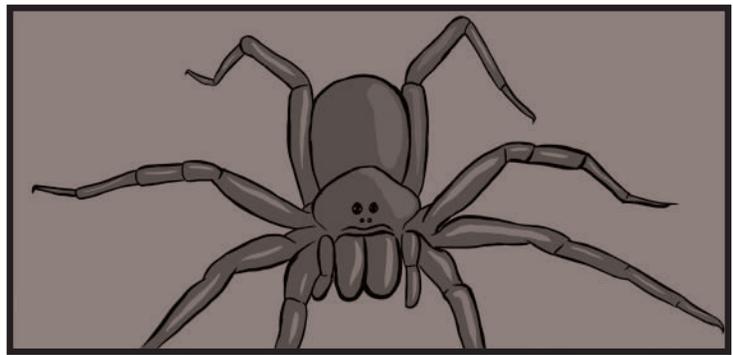
ask questions, hear others
ask questions, hear answers;
group readings, based on the
timeless Yoga knowledge
Bhagavad Gita AS IT IS.
No pre-requisites required,
just a curious mind :)

**Bhakti
Lounge**
the heart of
yoga

\$5 students/\$10 includes dinner
175 Vivian St Wellington
www.bhaktilounge.org.nz

wake
UP
sleeping
Soul





IT'S ALL IN THE BRAIN, MY DEAR!

WRITER SACHI DULAL

“We do not belong to this material world...We are not in it, we are outside. We are only spectators. The reason why we believe that we are in it, that we belong to the picture, is that our bodies are in the picture. Our bodies belong to it...Whence come I and whither go I? That is the great unfathomable question, the same for every one of us.”¹ - Erwin Schrodinger

Something in my brain must prevent me from taking the conclusions of current scientific orthodoxy seriously. The conviction that spiritual inclinations are the *product* of neural activity has eluded me.

Nonetheless, the conviction has become popular, finding an able ally in the intellectual shambles of evolutionary psychology. The human brain has been created by the awesome powers of natural selection for survival, therefore, what better weapon against formidable predators than an instrument programmed to speculate about an omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent deity? Like the gag reflex, the religious urges of the human brain cannot be controlled. Therefore, in every culture, in every region, in every era, humans have worshipped, prayed, meditated...

Not content to explain away spiritual aspirations, evolutionary psychology now explains the human predilection for beauty, war, love, marriage, gossip, and philanthropy. It explains universal preferences in the composition of landscape painting; wartime rape; envy; road rage; fear of spiders; the occasional human tendency for acts of great heroism, and the fact that most of us think that we do actually exist: It's all in the

brain. And if evolutionary psychologists have yet to confirm whether a fondness for cheese on toast is also located within the brain, then it can only be because neuroscience needs more funding before it can do justice to this perplexing riddle.

Is the capacity to believe in the statements of evolutionary psychology also a product of neurophysiological events in the brain? I ask in the spirit of newborn curiosity.

If it is not, then why assume that spiritual convictions are?

If both convictions are products of devoted neurons, then which conviction is right?

If no conviction is right, then why should we pay any attention to what our neurons tell us?

If we are not supposed to take our neural firings seriously, then why can't we tell evolutionary psychologists to go white-water rafting down the Niagara Falls?

Whatever the benefits of ontological reductionism, coherence is not one of them. “For, not only does it relegate our experiences of beauty, moral obligation, and religious encounter to the epiphenomenal scrap-heap,” physicist John Polkinghorne has reasonably observed, but “it also destroys rationality. Thought is replaced by electro-chemical neural events. Two such events cannot confront each other in rational

If the thought “I want to lace my grandmother’s tea with cyanide so that I can get my hands on her property” is simply a product of brain events, then why all the fuss?

discourse. They are neither right nor wrong. They simply happen...The very assertions of the reductionist himself are nothing but blips in the neural network of his brain. The world of rational discourse dissolves into the absurd chatter of firing synapses. Quite frankly, that cannot be right and none of us believes it to be so.”²

The Holy Grail

What can a brain do and how does it do it? Seeking to answer this question, brain researchers have been glued to their screens, documenting the subtle physiological processes taking place in intact, functioning human brains. This effort has no doubt yielded torrents of information about the black box. But can this torrent flood us with enlightenment about who we really are?

Consoling the readers of *Newsweek* that their common sense is quite common and not to be taken seriously, psychologist Steven Pinker has reassured us that “modern neuroscience has shown that there is no user [of the brain]. ‘The soul’ is, in fact, the information-processing activity of the brain. New imaging techniques have tied every thought and emotion to neural activity.”³

If every thought and emotion has been *tied* to neural activity, then what of it? Even if we can establish a perfect 1:1 correlation between different states of consciousness and the corresponding physiological processes going on in the brain, it would do anything but *show* that the two are identical or that consciousness emerges from brain processes.

When scientists claim that consciousness is a product of brain processes, they overlook an observable law of causality. For example, in the case of ice emerging from water, both ends of the causal relation are undeniably physical entities that we know how to measure and quantify in predictable physical ways. However, in the brain/consciousness causal relation it is self-evident that this is not the case. How can a set of physical events cause a very real, non-physical experience?

The most obvious conclusion of reductive physicalism is also the most unwelcome. If our consciousness is simply the inner side of outer brain events, then this conclusion annihilates any claims made on the behalf of human freedom. If the thought “I want to lace my grandmother’s tea with cyanide so that I can get my hands on her property” is simply a product of brain events, then why all the fuss? What else can the poor person do, a victim of the devilishly deterministic dictates of current scientific orthodoxy? Why subject the perpetrator to criminal courts and human rights panels?

E. J. Lowe, Professor of Philosophy at Durham University, provides a more scrupulous assessment:

Reductive physicalism, far from being equipped to solve the so-called ‘easy’ problems of consciousness, has in fact nothing very useful to say about *any* aspect of consciousness.⁴

The saints have always championed this view—consciousness drags the neural cart behind it and not the other way around. “We do not in

fact have anything even remotely resembling a full causal account of consciousness....”⁵ Edward F. Kelly and his co-authors have pointed out in their lengthy treatise *Irreducible Mind*, and though “intelligibility of causal accounts is surely something we would like to have,” perhaps we should “focus instead on the prior empirical question whether we can get one *at all*.”⁶ We can then admit there’s at least a possibility that consciousness is ontologically distinct from the brain, though functionally closely linked. This is precisely the possibility that militant atheists and all the other enemies of humanity do not want us to consider.

The Filter Model

No one doubts that there is a correlation between conscious experience and activity in the brain. One hardly needs the advantages afforded by functional magnetic resonance imaging techniques to come to this conclusion. But to take what no one doubts and fashion it into the unalterable doctrine that consciousness *is* what the brain *does* requires a disciplined commitment to a metaphysical position; one that owes little to reason and even less to the evidence. For this reason (no reason and no evidence), doctrinaire materialists eagerly promote the brain generating consciousness as a remarkable discovery of more than four hundred years of cumulative scientific advancement. The idea is eagerly advanced, because it serves as a convenient device to nullify any attempt to go beyond the physical.

All philosophical positions on the mind-body problem hinge on different ways of interpreting the correlation between conscious experience and the physiological processes going on in the brain. Naturalists naturally claim what their faith allows them to claim: correlation implies production. Brain processes generate or constitute episodes of consciousness. But to claim that this is the *only* legitimate way this correlation can be interpreted betrays a remarkable paucity of imagination and an equally remarkable reluctance to look around. William James, one of the founders of modern psychology, had clearly indicated the pathway to wider horizons. James observed that “arrests of brain development occasion imbecility, that blows on the head abolish memory or consciousness, and that brain-stimulants and poisons change the quality of our ideas.”⁷ For many scientists of his day, these observations were all that was needed to jump onto the brain-processes produces consciousness bandwagon. Consequently, they assumed that when the brain ceased to function, the individual consciousness associated with it ceased to exist. There is, however, no actual basis for this assumption. No one has logically or demonstratively shown how or why consciousness is or should be produced by the brain. Furthermore, any such theory of consciousness being produced by the brain would have to account for the production of billions of infinitely varied episodes of consciousness in an individual’s life. This led James to say, “The theory of production is therefore not a jot more simple or

credible in itself than any other conceivable theory. It is only a little more popular.”⁸

James went on to argue that the true function of the brain might very well be *transmissive* rather than productive. A prism has a transmissive function relative to light. It does not produce light. When light passes through a prism, the prism filters or constrains it. Similarly, the brain strains, sifts, restrains, and limits consciousness to various degrees, but it does not produce consciousness.

According to the state in which the brain finds itself, [James remarked] the barrier of its obstructiveness may also be supposed to rise or fall. It sinks so low, when the brain is in full activity, that a comparative flood of spiritual energy pours over. At other times, only such occasional waves of thought as heavy sleep permits gets by. And when finally a brain stops acting altogether, or decays, that special stream of consciousness which it subserved will vanish entirely from this natural world. But the sphere of being that supplied the consciousness would still be intact; and in that more real world with which, even whilst here, it was continuous, the consciousness might, in ways unknown to us, continue still.⁹

In connection with the idea that matter is not something which produces preconsciousness, but rather something which simply limits or confines *preexisting* consciousness, James cited the following statement by British philosopher F.C.S. Schiller:

Matter is an admirably calculated machinery for regulating, limiting, and restraining the consciousness which it encases... If the material encasement be coarse and simple, as in the lower organisms, it permits only a little intelligence to permeate through; if it is delicate and complex, it leaves more pores and exists, as it were, for the manifestations of consciousness.¹⁰

Old Wine in a New Bottle

There is nothing new under the sun—not even the filter model of consciousness. Though James initially thought that he invented the filter model, he later discovered the following passage from German philosopher Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*:

The body would thus be, not the cause of our thinking, but merely a condition restrictive thereof, and, although essential to our sensuous and animal consciousness, it may be regarded as an impeder of our pure spiritual life.¹¹

The filter model can also be detected in a number of Platonic dialogues, including *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Ion*. It also shows up in

the writings of numerous other philosophers, both modern and ancient, both from the East and the West. But easily the most comprehensive depictions of the filter model can be found in the texts of the Vedic tradition. Here is one from the *Shrimad Bhagavatam* (11.10.9):

“Just as fire may appear differently as dormant, manifest, weak, brilliant and so on, according to the condition of the fuel, similarly, the spirit soul enters a material body and accepts particular bodily characteristics.”

Different bodily forms, the Vedas assert, allow for the manifestation of varying degrees of consciousness. Vedic biology therefore gradates bodies according to how much consciousness they permit. According to this criterion, the Vedic texts categorize material bodies in this universe into 8,400,000 species.

Obviously implicit in this worldview is the understanding that consciousness is in a separate ontological category from matter. The Hungarian-British polymath Michael Polanyi argued:

...once it is recognised...that life transcends physics and chemistry, there is no reason for suspending recognition of the obvious fact that consciousness is a principle that fundamentally transcends not only physics and chemistry but also the mechanistic principles of living beings.”¹²

Consciousness is the unchanging ground of all bodily and mental content; not the seen but the seer, not the experience but the experiencer, not the inquiry but the inquirer. So where does it come from?

Consciousness, so Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gita* (13.34), is the energy of the soul, the self, the living entity. “O son of Bharata, as the sun alone illuminates all this universe, so does the living entity, one within the body, illuminate the entire body by consciousness.”

And what does Krishna say about the soul?

For the soul there is neither birth nor death at any time. He has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain.

What Krishna does not directly say is that the filter model of consciousness is logically feasible; it is compatible with all of the facts conventionally interpreted under the ‘brain-states produce consciousness’ model; *and*, as a much needed bonus, it can accommodate those perplexing powers exhibited time and again by conscious agents—powers which William James called “the unclassified residuum” and what naturalists,

constrained by *a priori* allegiances, have rather annoyingly termed the “paranormal.”

Now, you have every right to ask: What is an eternal soul doing soaking up the trials and tribulations of living in a temporary body? To answer this question, among many others, Krishna spoke the perennial truths of the *Bhagavad-gita*.

We could do worse than listen to Him. 🌸

Notes

¹ Erwin Schrodinger, *Nature and the Greeks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 95-98.

² J.C. Polkinghorne, *One World* (London: SPCK, 1986), 92.

³ Article appearing in the September 27, 2004 edition of *Newsweek*.

⁴ E.J. Lowe, “There are no easy problems of consciousness” in *Explaining Consciousness—The Hard Problem*, ed. J. Shear (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 121-22.

⁵ Edward F. Kelly, “A View from the Mainstream: Contemporary Cognitive Neuroscience and the Consciousness Debates” in *Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century*, Edward F. Kelly and others (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 25.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷ William James on *Psychical Research* in ed. Gardner Murphy and Robert O. Ballou (New York: Viking Press, 1960), 284.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 292.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 300.

¹¹ William James, *Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine* 2nd ed. (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1900), 28-29.

¹² M. Polanyi, “Life’s irreducible structure,” *Science* 160 (1968): 1308-1312.



Sachi Dulal has a background in mathematics, economics, and environmental science. He loves to study and write about the intersect of science and Krishna philosophy.

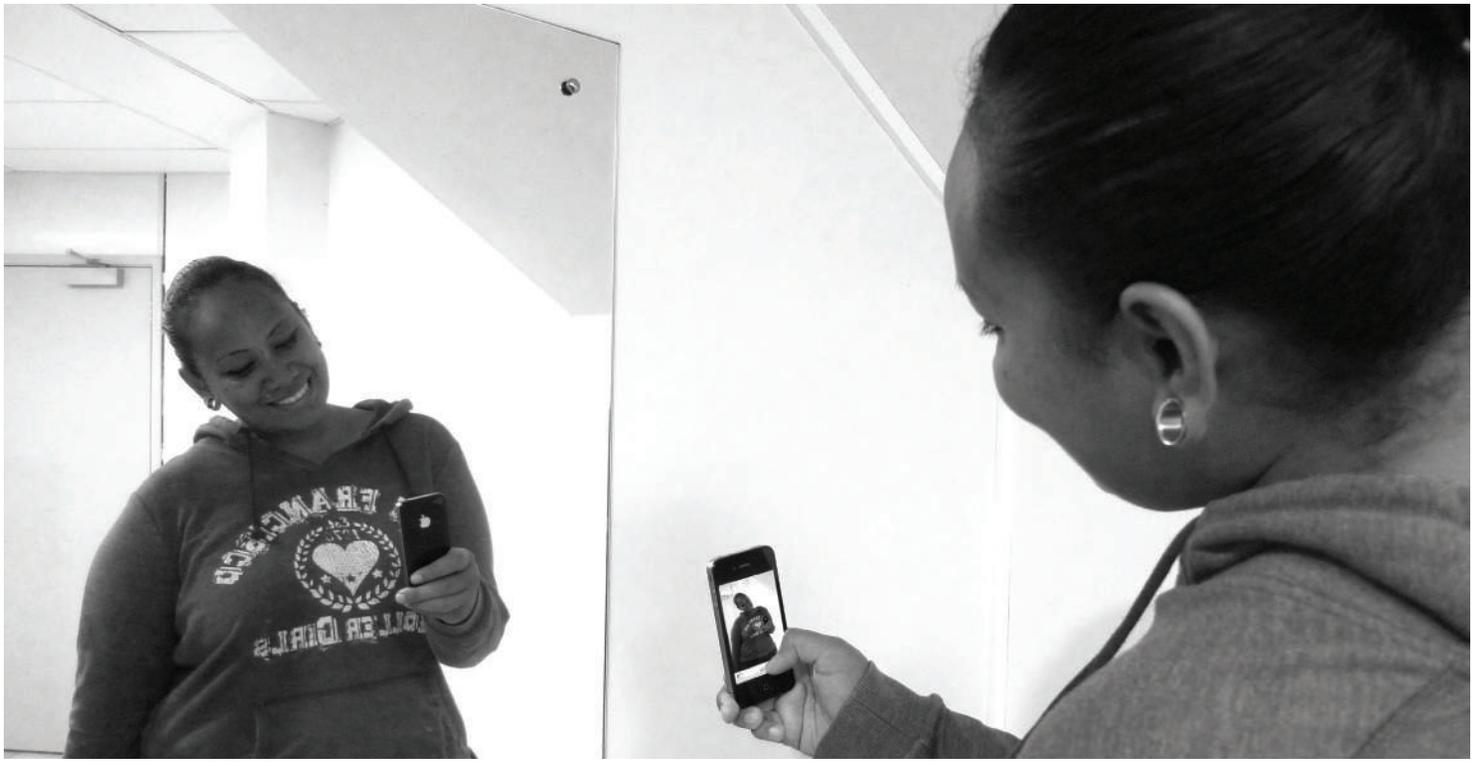


URBAN *meditations*

Learn authentic yoga wisdom to inspire & motivate positive change in your life. Easy, fun and extremely rewarding. Accompanied by a delicious vegetarian dinner.

Wednesdays 6pm. \$8 all inclusive.





THE RISE OF ME

WRITER MANADA

Whether it captures your silliest or slickest moment, the selfie conveys a snapshot representing the height of today's increasingly self-obsessed culture. A current trend among teens, and growing in popularity over ages and cultures, the "selfie" is the almost contemporary equivalent of a self-portrait and a word that has only recently entered my vocabulary. Taking photos of myself at any dull or quirky moment in my life and inflicting the pictures on my friends and family is a novel idea to me and will probably remain just an idea. For more discerning people, the concept of the selfie is intriguing on another level—it's a visual excerpt from a life embedded in a narcissistic culture.

Many of us have heard our grandparents and even our parents comment on how self-absorbed young people are these days, and it's likely that every generation will denounce the next generation's level of self-fixation. But what we may distinctly notice about the youth of today is a profound shift in their attitudes about themselves. A shift that reflects a higher level of self-adoration and self-centredness. This rise in narcissism or self-absorption raises questions, not only about young people, but also about an individual's sense of self or self-identity.

The term narcissism is derived from the character Narcissus in Greek literature who fell in love with his image reflected in a pond. Now the name for a fascinating personality disorder, narcissism frequently captures the interest of the media and is often a subject of modern psychological and sociological studies. Infamous cases of narcissism earn the

attention of the general public. New Zealanders wondered, aghast, how Clayton Weatherston could have stabbed his former girlfriend 216 times, while psychologists attributed his horrific act of aggression and his clear lack of remorse or empathy evident in court to the symptoms of narcissistic personality disorder. Some of these symptoms include a grandiose sense of self-importance and entitlement, a need for excessive admiration, and exploitative relationships with others.

Yes, the Weatherston case is one extreme example of narcissism, but what about the average person—how self-centred are we, and why should this cause any concern? Social scientists are not so much concerned with an individual's healthy sense of self-confidence or assertiveness as they are with the ramifications of a culture that encourages people to develop an excessive sense of self-importance. For instance, Jean Twenge, Associate Professor of Psychology at San Diego University and world-acclaimed author on narcissism, says sociologists conclude that current trends in relationships reveal a pattern of numerous short-term relationships with no commitments. They term this pattern as a marriage-go-round wherein people don't get married, but just "hook-up."¹ Twenge claims, "In the US the percentage of babies born to unmarried mums is now 40% and it used to be 5% [in 1950]."² They explain that narcissistic people are only interested in how a relationship can meet their immediate needs, and when such a person's partner no longer meets these needs, it's time to find someone else.

The artificial notion of self-entitlement comes from two fundamental errors: first, thinking the body and mind of matter is ME and second, assuming that the material cosmos is my property and thus owes me a good time.

Furthermore, studies reveal the role internet technology plays in promoting these superficial relationships; social networking online provides the ideal vehicle for self-promotion; it “satiates the craving for attention, and promotes shallow relationships, all of which are associated with narcissism.”³ Many online dating services now specialise in offering people the facility to discreetly have affairs and cheat on their spouses. Most recently, the group of New Zealand school boys known as the Roast Busters used social media to brag about their sexual exploits including those with rape victims as young as thirteen years.

While not everyone can be clinically identified as a narcissist, (and obviously nor is every Facebook user a narcissist), an artificial sense of self, the Vedic texts claim, is an inherent part of living in our material world. The increasing trend of me-centred relationships is obviously not exclusive to people with the personality disorder of narcissism, and we need only look at our social crises to conclude that the human preoccupation with self-entitlement at the expense of others is at the heart of these issues.

In search for profound wisdom to aid our understanding of who we really are beyond this baffling obsession with ourselves, we turn to Vedic literature for illumination. In his *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, (Chapter 20) Srila Prabhupada, authoritative teacher of Vedic wisdom, explains where the artificial sense of self originates:

The living entities are factually beyond this covered inferior energy. They have their pure spiritual existence and their pure identity, as well as their pure mental activities. All of them are beyond the manifestation of this material cosmos. Although the living entity’s mind, intelligence and identity are beyond the range of this material world, when he enters into this material world due to his desire to dominate matter, his original mind, intelligence and body become covered by the material energy. When he is again uncovered from these material or inferior energies, he is called liberated. When he is liberated, he has no false ego, but his real ego again comes into existence. Foolish mental speculators think that after liberation one’s identity is lost, but that is not so. Because the living entity is eternally part and parcel of God, when he is liberated, he revives his original, eternal, part-and-parcel identity. The realization of aham brahmasmi (“I am not this body”) does not mean that the living entity loses his identity. At the present moment a person may consider himself to be matter, but in his liberated state he will understand that he is not matter but spirit soul, part of the infinite. To become Kṛṣṇa conscious or spiritually conscious and to engage in the transcendental loving service of Kṛṣṇa are signs of the liberated stage.⁴

So before you hurry off to complete a personality inventory to find out how narcissistic you are, consider Srila Prabhupada’s words for a moment. He points out, just by being in contact with this material world, or by being in contact with matter, we take on an endless

stream of artificial identities, which are simply insubstantial descriptions of our temporary bodies and minds. The artificial notion of self-entitlement comes from two fundamental errors: first, thinking the body and mind of matter is ME and second, assuming that the material cosmos is my property and thus owes me a good time.

Derailed by these errors, mistakenly thinking we are what we look like, feel like, what we buy, and the matter that we interact with, we dwindle in a material realm with increasing material expectations. Social and marketing forces influence these expectations, taking us off our true spiritual course. For example, according to Twenge and W. Keith Campbell, author, Professor and Head of Psychology at Georgia University, the self-esteem movement, which began in the late 1960s, contributed to this sense that the world owes us a grand time, as well as the shift in the way parents raise their children from setting limits to “letting the child get whatever he or she wants.”⁵ Moreover, we cannot ignore marketing and its contribution to shaping consumers’ self-centred attitudes. Even the language of advertising echoes this sense of self-entitlement, as shown in the taglines “Because I’m worth it,” “Have it your way,” and “It’s everywhere you want to be,” which justify people’s agendas with products they promise will fulfill one’s every desire—the desire for love and adoration, for status, and for belonging. Seldom do the products follow through on these promises, but we allow these messages to sink deeply into our psyche; we become amenable to them, and before we know it, we’ve spent a hundred dollars on a fifty ml bottle of perfume or cologne because I’m worth it! “The marketing revolution is convincing every consumer that you’ve got to be the centre of your own world; you’ve got to be an ardent narcissist,” says Geoffery Miller, Professor of Psychology at the University of New Mexico, who points out the huge effect marketing has on our sense of who we are.⁶

Despite this barrage of social and marketing influences, beyond the various material designations of one’s Facebook profile, or one’s artificial sense of self, lies the real ego, the authentic self, who craves connection with that Supreme Consciousness. This self is, in quality, the same as the Supreme Consciousness, but in quantity much smaller, just as a drop of sea water from the ocean is salty like the sea but in quantity very small and insignificant, and certainly not equal to the vast ocean. The analogy puts things in perspective: we aren’t the centre of the cosmos, but the good news is that we are in substance very much like the Supreme, possessing qualities of eternity, knowledge, and bliss, on a smaller scale. When we make that conscious link with the Supreme, we begin to break free of our artificial sense of self, gradually uncovering our real identity as spirit soul, part and parcel of the infinite.

When we begin to free ourselves from artificial identities, or the illusion that we are these temporary bodies, we find genuine self-esteem, derived from a solid understanding of who we really are as spiritual beings. This confidence in our real identity grows more and more, as we connect to the Supreme Consciousness, Krishna, in loving service. In this way one becomes inwardly satisfied, understanding himself or herself as a small part of a big whole, with a significant role to play, by cooperating with the greater purpose of this universe. Consequently, we find no need to search for false happiness through an artificially inflated ego, based on ever-changing identities. Such a self-realised person who places Krishna in the centre, not “ME,” has the ability to connect with others selflessly and develops an ocean-like capacity to care and love. 🌸

Notes

¹ Joanne Black, “It’s All about Me,” New Zealand Listener, May 2012, 18.

² Ibid., 16.

³ Laura E. Buffardi and W. Keith Campbell, “Narcissism and Social Networking Websites.” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, vol. 34, 10: (2008) pp.1303-1314. DOI 10.1177/0146167208320061

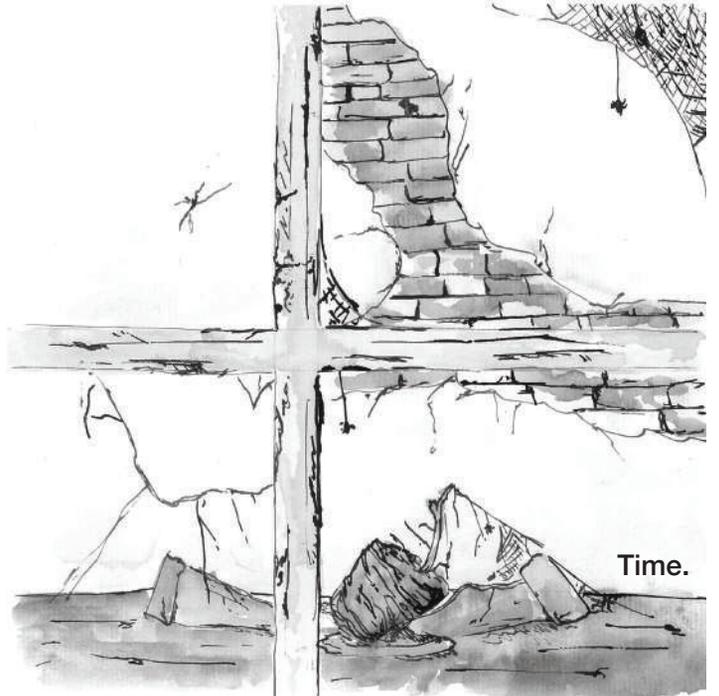
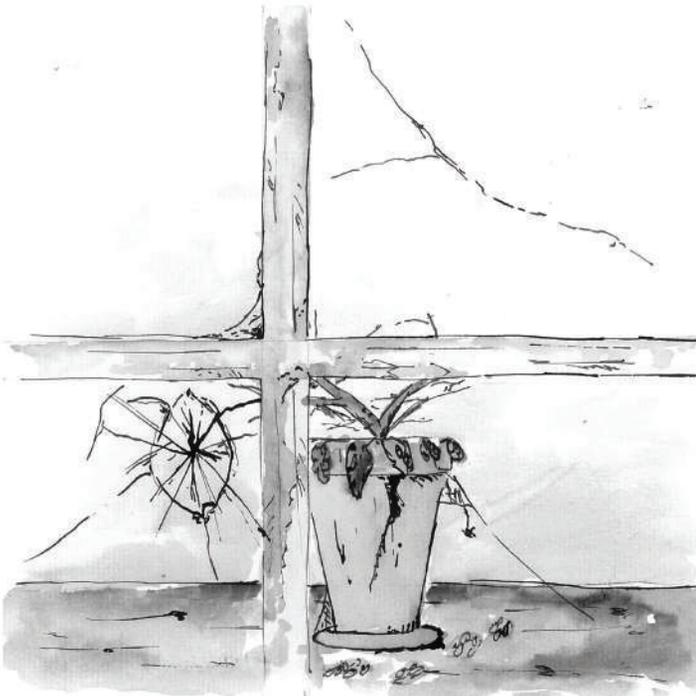
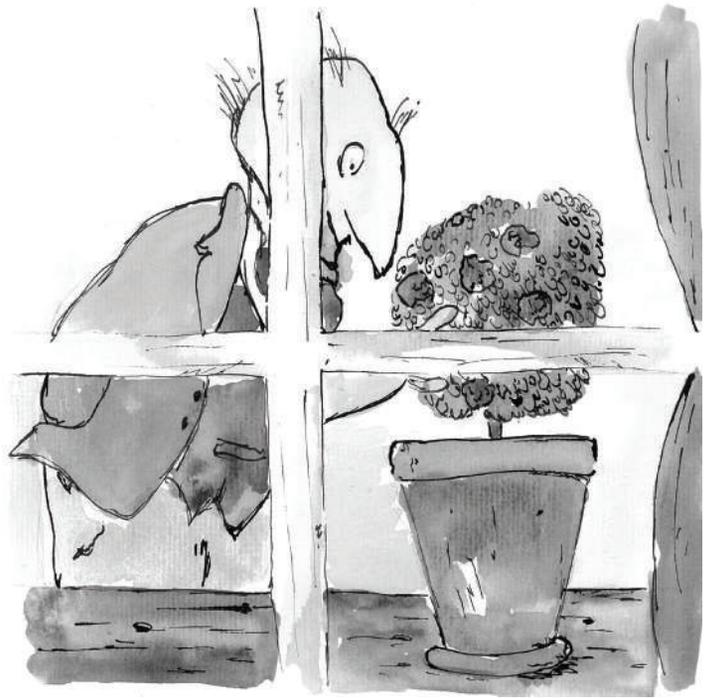
⁴ A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, (California: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1969). Also see *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* by the same author for complete information on the same subject matter.

⁵ “Have We Become a Nation of Narcissists?” Ronald Pies M.D. *Livescience* September 21, 2009, <http://www.livescience.com/5743-nation-narcissists.html>

⁶ Find documentary *Consumed: Inside the Belly of the Beast*, directed by Richard Heap, 2011, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOKl04TWVsU>



Manada is a secondary school teacher with a background in psychology. She likes to explore spiritual solutions to psychological problems. In her spare time, she enjoys beach and bush walks on the Kapiti Coast, where she lives with her husband and seven-year-old daughter.



ARE WE IN THE AGE OF STUPID?

WRITER LEIGHA SPEIRS-HUTTON

***The Age of Stupid* is a documentary-film set in 2055, a time distinguished by derelict buildings, burning plains, and poverty-stricken, war-ravaged people. A time when climate change has shown its full colours, and all that people can do is lament about all the things they did wrong. Why had they ignored the obvious signs of climate change when they “could have saved themselves”? Why had they instead kept marching forward, blindly allowing this devastating future to unfold? London is flooded, Sydney burning, Las Vegas overtaken by desert. The Amazon rainforest is completely burnt up, the Alps snowless, and India devastated by nuclear war. But our future isn’t that bleak, right? When the film ended, I shook my computer, yelling defiantly, “That’s not my future! I’m not going to let that happen!”**

That stubbornness to prove the filmmakers wrong got me thinking. But the more I thought, the more I realised that although the dismal scenario presented in the film won’t necessarily happen in forty years, eventually all those cities will fall, because of the slow, yet steady, attack of time. When I think about it logically, I realise time destroys everything. Wait a minute. Hold the phone. Does this mean time will destroy *me* too?

The *Bhagavad-gita*, an ancient yogic text I’ve been reading, confirms the undeniable fact that “All created beings [unfortunately that includes me] are unmanifest in their beginning, manifest in their interim state, and unmanifest again when annihilated.” (2.28) Hmm...okay, one look at my grandma means I can’t deny the truth in that. So what will happen to *me* then? Will I just disappear into dust? Clearly, like my grandma’s body, my body is affected by time, considering that the twenty-two-year-old me is a little bigger than the five-year-old me, but does this mean I will really cease to exist?

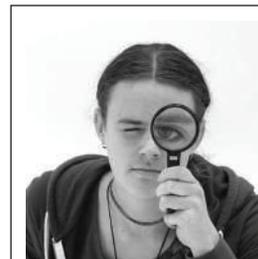
I’ve opened a whole can of worms now! Once you start enquiring about these kinds of things, it’s pretty hard to stop. For example, what is that “I” that I’m scared of losing? “I” am using *my* fingers to type these words, but I’d never say “I” fingers are typing. That’s just silly. Well, what drives those fingers then? What is that “I”? That is self-realisation. Woah, I’m *self-realised*? I guess I can now confidently say, “I am not this body.”

Darn, that just brought about a whole lot more questions. Let’s just focus on “I am not this body,” and keep things simple. Well, relatively

simple. If I examine this body, for example, I can see that it’s constantly changing throughout my life, from infancy, to youth, to old age, and yet I am still *me*. And just as my body has changed throughout my life, so has my mind. Yet, I **was *me* at birth and am still *me* now**. But who is the “I” that gives me the identity of being the same person throughout my life even though “my” body and “my” mind are constantly changing?

Krishna teaches in the *Bhagavad-gita* that the self is not the seen but the seer, not the experience but the experiencer. I am not even Leigha Speirs-Hutton, but rather the experiencer of being Leigha Speirs-Hutton. Krishna also teaches that the presence of a “living force,” or self, is the difference between a living body and a dead body. To further ignite contemplation on this essential truth, I’ll share this analogy: On a cloudy day we cannot see the sun, yet we know it’s there because of the presence of its light; similarly, although we can’t perceive the soul with our present material senses, we can determine its existence by the presence of consciousness. Without that consciousness, the body is just a mass of dead matter. Dead matter, if you haven’t noticed already, doesn’t do much.

I won’t deny the importance of the message in *The Age of Stupid*. We really need to wake up to the warning signs these scientists are concerned with and what we can see so clearly around us. We need to become more aware of what we consume and how we consume, and have more respect for the environment. But there is a similar, if not greater, urgency to explore the spiritual science of the self, which places value on the living force within this body. Bhakti-yogis, both past and present, have taught that if we truly understood ourselves, we would, as a by-product, perceive a lasting solution to the environmental, social, and economic crises that we may encounter. So why not check out what the comprehensive wisdom contained in the *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* have to offer on how to combat this Age of Stupid? 🌸



Leigha is an aspiring young videographer hoping to make films that will inspire people and help them to question, even if it’s just a little. She’s passionate about caring for the environment and is rather anticonsumerism, preferring to spend her time outdoors enjoying the beauty of undisturbed nature.



Prestige Print

since 1965

THE FIRST CLIMATE NEUTRAL STAMP



The Original Printy4.0:
Unbelievably small, amazingly light
and made from up to 65%* post-con-
sumer recycled plastic.
This helps to save valuable
resources and up to 49%* CO2.

Investment in climate protection
projects recommended by the WWF
compensates for the inevitable CO2
footprint.

What more could you ask for!

Available from:

PRESTIGE PRINT

72 ABEL SMITH STREET
PO BOX 9256
WELLINGTON 6141
NEW ZEALAND

T: 04 802 5471

F: 04 802 5472

merv@prestigeprint.co.nz

www.prestigeprint.co.nz



ENVIRO-MARK GOLD CERTIFIED
OFFSET & DIGITAL PRINTERS



ENOUGH!
VIDEOS

&



presents

Videos that will make you
think a little, laugh a little and
maybe even cry a little.



WWW.ENOUGHMAGAZINE.ORG



I SEEK PLEASURE, DON'T YOU?

WRITER YASHODEV

Having found ourselves in the abyss of an ecological tragedy, the current inheritors of the earth are entitled to a moment of solemn reflection in which we wonder, “Am I really responsible?” It seems that the initial cause of this ecological catastrophe dates back to a time well beyond our influence, and its solution, should there ever be one, won’t really manifest until well into the future. How are the young people of today expected to feel about this mess? According to Al Gore in his article “A Climate of Denial,” published in Rolling Stone magazine in 2011, we’re expected (albeit by our well-wishing corporate overlords) to deny it, or at least feel helpless and hopeless, because that’s what is best for business.

Indeed, “green” is the new black—and the latest trend in self-indulgent consumerism. Even during a period of deadly environmental instability, we can always depend on the general population to purchase whatever meager sensual stimulation is available, regardless of ominous self-destruction. Likewise, equally determined, clever capitalists are always willing to meet the demands of self-righteous greed. Thus, an astounding array of “green” products fills your home and your heart with solemn

promises to reduce the detrimental impact on the environment and appease your guilty conscience. But while the average punters may feel peace of mind, confident in their conscientious purchasing power, the saner section of society knows that this convenient ruse can hardly evade the crisis at hand: that a predominant section of society are habituated to a lifestyle of reckless consumption.

I hesitate to repeat the usual depressing statistics for fear of making us more desensitised to the impact of thoughtless consumerism on the environment. Still, just to remind everyone of the carnage, here are some extraordinary figures from the United States, for example. The Sierra Club testifies that over a lifetime, the typical American will create thirteen times the amount of environmental damage as the average Brazilian. To grow about half a kilogram of wheat requires around 490 litres of water. For meat production, depending on the type of meat—multiply that water usage by five to ten. Considering that the average American eats about 104 kilograms of meat and poultry each year, it takes approximately 1,135 600 litres of water each year just to sustain one person’s carnivorous diet. Perhaps the statistics for electronic waste are the most embarrassing. The United States Environment Protection Agency reports that, in the year 2008, over three million tonnes of “e-waste” was disposed of in the United States alone. That’s about thirty million televisions, two hundred million computer parts, and 140 million cell phones—most of which contain nonbiodegradable



PHOTOGRAPHER BALADEV NITAI

and hazardous materials. Meanwhile, half of the world's population lives on less than two dollars a day.

But let's not pick on the United States alone; New Zealand's household consumption (expenditure per person) increased 40 percent between 1992 and 2011. This shows that New Zealanders are buying a greater volume of goods and services than in the past, a trend similar to that of other countries.¹ Vehicle Kilometres Travelled (VKT) per person is a proxy used to show the average greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants from road transport for each person in New Zealand. According to a report from the Ministry for the Environment, between 2001 and 2007, VKT per person intensified, increasing by nearly 3 percent. "By international standards, New Zealanders rely heavily on road transport. The latest Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) comparison (2002) shows that New Zealand had the second highest VKT per person out of 30 OECD countries."²

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, a four-year effort involving 1,360 scientists and other experts worldwide assessed conditions and trends regarding the world's ecosystems. At the end of the assessment in 2005, they concluded, "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..."³

The assessment reported that half the world's temperate and tropical forests are now gone.⁴ Just between 2000 and 2005, we lost forest acreage the size of Germany.⁵ Each year fifty million acres (an area the size of Nebraska) becomes too degraded for crop production or are lost to urban sprawl.⁶ About half the wetlands and a third of the mangroves are gone.⁷ Twenty percent of the corals are gone and another 20 percent are about to disappear.⁸

What's an honest person to do? Sever all dependency on excessive materialism haphazardly? History has shown, through the ineffectiveness of liquor prohibitions, austerity budgets, and abstinence campaigns, that mere abnegation is unsustainable, because of a primeval urge that impels us to seek happiness even amidst impossible circumstances. Krishna explains this condition in the *Bhagavad-gita*: "Though the embodied soul may be restricted from sense enjoyment, the taste for sense objects remains. But, ceasing such engagement by experiencing a higher taste, one is fixed in consciousness." (2.59)

Intelligent persons, who aren't blinded by the glitter of mass-produced fantasies, understand that the quest for pleasure is the inherent inclination of the soul. Therefore, a wise person does not look for solace in restraining the senses, either voluntarily or under economic pressure. The fact of the matter is that people will seek material pleasure despite diminishing vital resources, even at the expense of moral and social principles.

The Krishna consciousness network seeks to revitalize a culture of nonmaterial pleasure, nourished by an ever-enlivening spiritual experience.

To remedy this predicament, the Krishna consciousness network seeks to revitalize a culture of *nonmaterial* pleasure, nourished by an ever-enlivening spiritual experience.

Genuine spiritual experience is not like the tussle with limited resources that we're so familiar with in this material world: The more oil your country has, the less oil my country has. You're enjoying more wealth so someone else inevitably has less. Rather, spiritual pleasure is distinct from its material counterpart in one very convenient way—the more it's tapped into, the more it increases! The more I make use of spiritual technology—namely chanting the Hare Krishna mantra: **Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare; Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare**, the more the supply of Krishna consciousness increases and becomes available for others. And by the mass distribution of this technology, its effect will take the pressure off our scant material resources, because people will naturally seek satisfaction in a dimension that is unlimited.

Spiritual connoisseurs are in high demand and the marketplace is ready for them to share their wealth. Who wants to capitalize on this opportunity? Simultaneously, the current materialistic trends are leading humanity towards dismal consequences. Who is ready to take responsibility? 🌸

Notes

¹“Household Consumption Expenditure,” Ministry for the Environment, 2012, available at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/environmental-reporting/consumption/household-consumption-expenditure-indicator/household-consumption-expenditure.html>

²“Vehicle Kilometres Travelled by Road,” Environmental Report Card, Ministry for the Environment, March 2009, available at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/enviromental-reporting/transport/vehicle-kilometres-travelled-by-road.html#key>

³Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, Statement from the Board, Living beyond Our Means: Natural Assets and Human Well-being, March 2005, 5. See also Jonathan A. Foley et al., “Global Consequences of Land Use,” *Science* 309 (2005): 570.

⁴Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA), *Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: Synthesis* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2005), 31-32.

⁵Food and Agriculture Organization, *Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2005* (Rome: FAO, 2006), 20.

⁶For more on this see U.N. Environment Programme, *Global Environment Outlook, 3* (London: Earthscan, 2002), 64-65. See also “Key Facts about Desertification,” Reuters/Planet Ark, 6 June 2006, summarizing U.N. estimates; Zafar Adeel et al., “Overcoming One of the Greatest Environmental Challenges of Our Time: Rethinking Policies to Cope with Desertification” (Tokyo: United Nations University, December 2006).

⁷MEA, *Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: Synthesis, 2*; MEA, *Ecosystems and Human Well-Being, vol. 1: Current State and Trends* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2005), 14-15.

⁸MEA, *Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: Synthesis, 2*.



Yashodev is an American expat with a background in culinary arts and has recently studied Ayurveda. He has spent several years learning about bhakti-yoga, in New Zealand and abroad. Now in Australia, he makes a living on good food and conversation.



THE 21ST CENTURY
with an
ECOPOD™

**LOW ENERGY LED
HEADLIGHTS**

**BULLET-PROOF VIEWING
PANE**

**ARMoured SUBMERSIBLE
COCKPIT**

DEFENSE UNITS

**ALL
TERRAIN
LOVES RUBBLE!!**

**AVAILABLE IN :
URBAN GREY, DESERT BEIGE AND DEAD FOREST BROWN**

FLOODS? ✓
WILD FIRES? ✓
MEGASTORMS? ✓
ANGRY MOBS? ✓

**RAINWATER
HARVESTER**

SOLAR ARRAY

**ANAEROBIC
DIGESTER**

**ONLY
\$99,999.99**

WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!



MANTRA
KIRTAN
MEDITATION

WEDNESDAYS

6PM

\$5 STUDENTS/\$10
INCLUDES DINNER

Bhakti
Lounge
the heart of
yoga

175 VIVIAN ST
BHAKTILOUNGE.ORG.NZ
WELLINGTON